

CAULDRON OF VIOLENCE

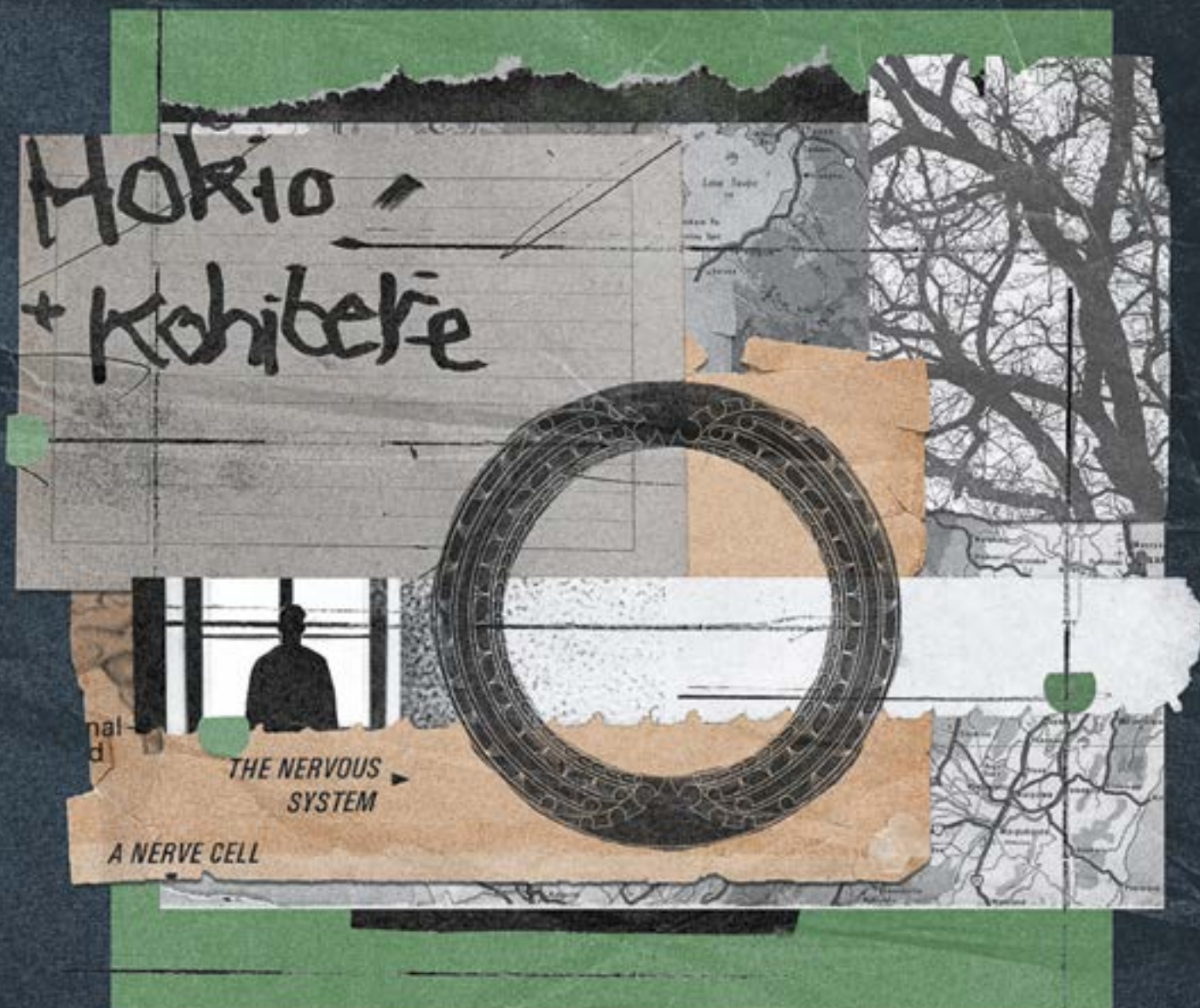
HOKIO BEACH SCHOOL AND KOHITERE BOYS' TRAINING CENTRE

A case study of the State's role in creating gangs and criminals

JUNE 2024



Abuse in Care
Royal Commission of Inquiry



He karakia

E tāmara mā, koutou te pūtake o ēnei kōwhiringa, kua horaina nei
E tohe tonu nei i te ara o te tika
E ngaki tonu ana i te māra tipu
Anei koutou te whakairihia ki te tihi o Maungārongo, kia tau te mauri.
Rukuhia te pū o te hinengaro
kia tāea ko te kukunitanga mai o te whakaaro nui.
Kia piere ko te ngākau mahora
kia tūwhera mai he wairua tau.

Koinei ngā pou whakairinga i te tāhuhu
o te Whare o Tū Te Mauriora.
Te āhuru mōwai o Te Pae o Rehua,
kaimuru i te hinapōuri,
kaitohu i te manawa hā ora,
kaihohou i te pai.

Nau mai e koutou kua uhia e ngā haukino
o te wā,
kua pēhia e ngā whakawai a ngā tipua nei,
a te Ringatūkino rāua ko te Kanohihuna.

Koutou i whītiki i te tātua o te toa,
i kākahu i te korowai o te pono,
i whakamau i te tīpare o tō mana motuhake,
toko ake ki te pūaotanga o te āpōpō e tatari
mai nei i tua o te pae,
nōu te ao e whakaata mai nei.

Kāti rā, ā te tākiritanga mai o te ata,
ā te huanga ake o te awatea,
kia tau he māramatanga,
kia ū ko te pai, kia mau ko te tika.

Koinei ko te tangi a te ngākau e Rongo,
tūturu ōwhiti whakamaua
kia tina, tina!
Hui e, tāiki e!

– *Waihoroi Paraone Hōterene*

To you upon whom this inquiry has been centered
Resolute in your pursuit of justice
Relentless in your belief for life
You have only our highest regard and respect,
may your peace of mind be assured.

Look into the deepest recesses of your being
and discover the seeds of new hope,
where the temperate heart might find solace,
and the blithe spirit might rise again.

Let these be the pillars on which the House of Self,
reconciliation can stand.

Safe haven of Rehua,
dispatcher of sorrow,
restorer of the breath of life,
purveyor of kindness.

Those of you who have faced the ill winds of time and made to suffer,
at the hands of abusers and the hidden
faces of persecutors, draw near.

You who found courage,
cloaked yourselves with your truth,
who crowned yourself with dignity,
a new tomorrow awaits beyond the horizon,
your future beckons.

And so, as dawn rises, and a new day begins,
let clarity and understanding reign,
goodness surrounds you and
justice prevails.

Rongo god of peace, this the heart desires,
we beseech you,
let it be,
it is done.

– *Waihoroi Paraone Hōterene*



Pānui whakatūpato

Ka nui tā mātou tiaki me te hāpai ake I te mana o ngā purapura ora I māia rawa atua nei ki te whāriki I ā rātou kōrero ki konei. Kei te mōhio mātopu ka oho pea te mauri ētahi wāhanga o ngā kōrero nei e pā ana ki te tūkino, te whakatūroro me te pāmamae, ā, tērā pea ka tākirihia ngā tauwharewarenga o te ngākau tangata I te kaha o te tumeke. Ahakoa kāore pea tēnei urupare e tau pai ki te wairua o te tangata, e pai ana te rongō I te pouri. Heoi, mehemea ka whakataumaha tēnei i ētahi o tō whānau, me whakapā atu ki tō tākuta, ki tō ratongo Hauora rānei. Whakatetia ngā kōrero a ētahi, kia tau te mauri, tiakina te wairua, ā, kia māmā te ngākau.



Distressing content warning

We honour and uphold the dignity of survivors who have so bravely shared their stories here. We acknowledge that some content contains explicit descriptions of tūkino – abuse, harm and trauma – and may evoke strong negative, emotional responses for readers. Although this response may be unpleasant and difficult to tolerate, it is also appropriate to feel upset. However, if you or someone in your close circle needs support, please contact your GP or healthcare provider. Respect others' truths, breathe deeply, take care of your spirit and be gentle with your heart.

Cauldron of Violence

The name of this case study was gifted by survivors put in boys homes and who subsequently went from care to custody.

Survivor acknowledgement

The Royal Commission thanks all survivors who so bravely shared their experiences of abuse and neglect in care. We also acknowledge those who were not able to come forward, for whatever reason, we send you aroha and understanding. Our hope is that this case study shines a light on your experiences and echoes your calls to ensure such atrocities are never allowed to happen again in Aotearoa.



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Executive summary

1. Hokio Beach School (Hokio School) and Kohitere Boys' Training Centre (Kohitere Centre) were long-stay social welfare institutions in the Taitoko Levin area from the early 1900s up until the late 1980s. Boys came from throughout Aotearoa New Zealand and were often far from family and whānau. These children and young people were seen by the State as "too difficult ... to remain in the community."¹ Yet it was the care system that was punitive and abusive.

Q.2 General: The Training Centres provide for young people whose behaviour has become too difficult to allow them to remain in the community whether at board, at home, at work, in a Family Home or in another type of institution.

A portion of the Department of Education Child Welfare Division's Field Officer's Manual, as noted in footnote 1

2. Hokio School and Kohitere Centre were not places of care. The State removed children and young people from their families and sent them to institutions where abuse of power, violence and racism were normalised. Survivors were brutally punished and blamed for behaviours often caused by trauma, learning difficulties, disabilities and by the very abuse they endured.
3. The 'no-narking' culture and use of the kingpin system by staff to maintain control contributed to a culture of extreme violence. A lack of supervision, staff with military backgrounds, and inadequate vetting and recruitment processes all played a part in the abuse. Survivors were often seen as manipulative or lying and both survivors and staff were silenced and complaints of abuse covered up.
4. Some survivors described prison as better than Hokio School and Kohitere Centre.² They were worse off when leaving than when they arrived. Some survivors told the Inquiry the only thing they learned was how to be better criminals.³ The abuse they experienced has led to spiritual, physical, psychological, relationship, and inter-generational impacts. Some survivors have spent most of their lives in jail or sought connection and support through gang membership with others who share similar experiences of abuse in care.
5. Abuse in Hokio School and Kohitere Centre was systemic. From the top down there was little oversight, or accountability. Not for the State, the institutions, the staff, nor for perpetrators. Survivors' lives were profoundly altered by their time at Hokio School and Kohitere Centre. Samoan survivor David Williams (aka John Williams) told the Inquiry:
*"The things that happened in those places, I don't really know how us survivors can let go of it. You can't, it's there for life until you go to your grave."*⁴

1 Department of Education, Child Welfare Division, Field Officer's Manual, part Q (1965, page 1).

2 Witness statements of Mr JV (4 May 2023, para 38); Mr RX (27 March 2023, para 4.6.8); Peter Brooker (6 December 2021, para 246) and Tony Lewis (21 August 2021, para 55).

3 Witness statements of Wiremu Waikari (27 July 2021, para 239); David Williams (aka John Williams), (15 March 2021, para 178) and Daniel Rei (10 February 2021, para 91).

4 Witness statement of David Williams (aka John Williams), (15 March 2021, para 174).

Chapter 1: Context

6. Kohitere Boys' Training Centre (Kohitere Centre) began as Weraroa State Farm in 1906 just outside of Taitoko Levin. It provided farm training for orphans, boys referred from the court, and those from "unsatisfactory homes".⁵ A 1936 State investigation found that physical discipline was excessively violent.⁶ In 1969, Weraroa State Farm changed its name to Kohitere Boys' Training Centre.⁷
7. Kohitere Centre housed boys from throughout the country mostly from 14 to 17 years old.⁸ Its purpose was described as 'rehabilitative', with a focus on training for trades, and for some children and young people, secondary schooling. A wide variety of recreation and sport choices was offered, but they depended on the skills and abilities of those organising the activities.⁹ Kohitere Centre had an on-site farm, a workshop and a forestry block where children and young people worked.¹⁰ The Residential Staff Training School opened on the grounds in 1970,¹¹ training residential staff from around Aotearoa New Zealand.
8. During the 1950s, Kohitere Centre housed a maximum of 55 children and young people, increasing to 110 by the 1970s.¹² Staff generally lived on site and by the 1960s there were approximately 18 staff residences.¹³ Kohitere Centre experienced staff shortages, particularly during the 1970s. It officially closed in September 1990.
9. Hokio Beach School (Hokio School) initially began as a retreat for staff and children and young people from Kohitere Centre in the 1920s¹⁴ but became a long-stay residential institution in 1945. Hokio School was located approximately 9km from Kohitere Centre, on the coast.¹⁵ It was very isolated and surrounded by sand dunes and rough scrub.¹⁶ It closed in December 1989.
10. Hokio School was described by the Department of Social Welfare as being concerned with the "social re-education of delinquent boys",¹⁷ with many of the children and young people seen as 'unsuitable' for other social welfare homes.¹⁸ Hokio School was seen as a feeder school for Kohitere Centre. Sometimes boys were transferred there to make space at Hokio School for new children.¹⁹

5 Swanwick, F, "Boys will be boys", The News (15 November 1989).

6 Stanley, E, The road to hell: State violence against children in postwar New Zealand (Auckland University Press, 2016, page 210).

7 Stanley, E, The road to hell: State violence against children in postwar New Zealand (Auckland University Press, 2016, page 210).

8 Ministry of Social Development, Summary of 'Understanding Kohitere' (5 October 2010, page 6).

9 Ministry of Social Development, Summary of 'Understanding Kohitere' (5 October 2010, page 3).

10 Ministry of Social Development, Understanding Kohitere (2009, page 5).

11 Parker, W, Social welfare residential care 1950–1994, Volume II: National institutions (Ministry of Social Development, 2006, page 52).

12 Ministry of Social Development, Summary of 'Understanding Kohitere' (5 October 2010, page 2).

13 Ministry of Social Development, Understanding Kohitere (2009, page 33).

14 Stanley, E, The road to hell: State violence against children in postwar New Zealand (Auckland University Press, 2016, page 208).

15 Parker, W, Social welfare residential care 1950–1994, Volume II: National institutions (Ministry of Social Development, 2006, page 77).

16 Parker, W, Social welfare residential care 1950–1994, Volume II: National institutions (Ministry of Social Development, 2006, page 78).

17 Overview of Hokio Beach School (n.d).

18 Parker, W, Social welfare residential care 1950–1994, Volume II: National institutions (Ministry of Social Development, 2006, page 77).

19 Hokio Beach School, Annual Report 1970 (page 149).

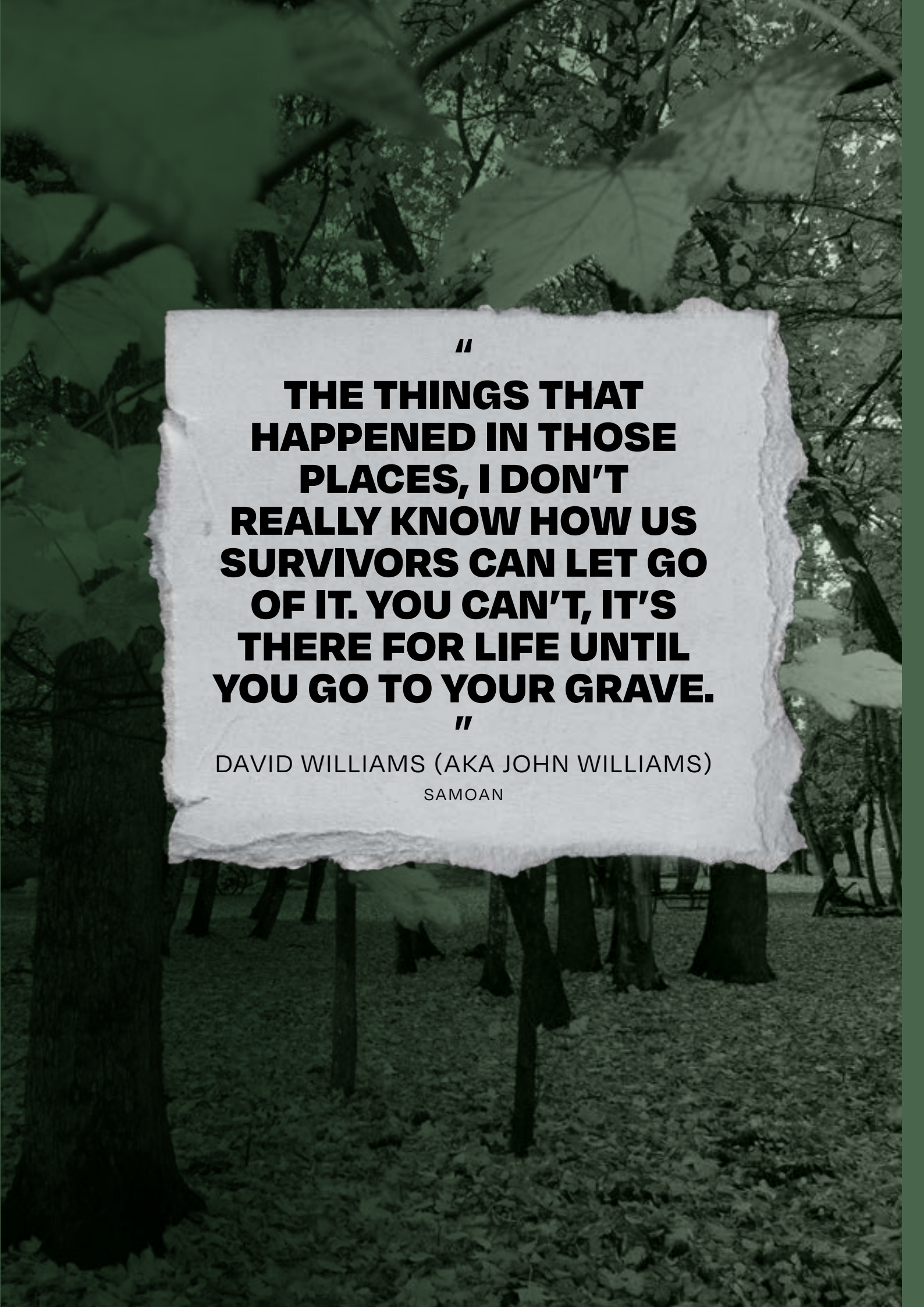
11. Before 1964 Hokio School housed up to 36 boys and was often at capacity. After an expansion in 1964, Hokio School had 61 beds with two in a secure facility, and accommodation for nine male staff was built in 1969.²⁰ An audit in 1988 found the residence had always been at or over capacity.²¹ Overcrowding coupled with understaffing often meant staff were responsible for many boys. A report prepared for Ministry of Social Development's historical claims unit described Hokio School as having "long periods when vacancies were unable to be filled".²² This was particularly a problem for the school, which faced staff shortages and large class numbers.²³
12. Although it was only a small town, Taitoko Levin was also home to the State-run Kimberley Centre (1945–2006). The Inquiry has also received evidence from survivors of abuse and neglect at the Kimberley Centre and it is discussed in a separate case study. Te Iwi Muaūpoko are the mana whenua of the rohe that includes Hokio School and Kohitere Centre.

20 Parker, W, Social welfare residential care 1950–1994, Volume II: National institutions (Ministry of Social Development, 2006, page 77).

21 Hokio Boys' Home, Internal audit report 1988 (Department of Social Welfare, 1988, page 1).

22 Parker, W, Social welfare residential care 1950–1994, Volume II: National institutions (Ministry of Social Development, 2006, pages 86–87).

23 "Hokio Beach School – Few know it exists", Evening Post (July 1977); Parker, W, Social welfare residential care 1950–1994, Volume II: National institutions (Ministry of Social Development, 2006, pages 90–91); Hokio Beach School, Annual Report 1971 (page 120).

A quote is presented on a piece of white, torn paper that is placed in a forest. The background is a dense forest with many trees and a ground covered in fallen leaves. The lighting is somewhat dim, suggesting an overcast day or a shaded area of the forest. The text on the paper is in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The quote is enclosed in double slashes at the top and bottom.

//

**THE THINGS THAT
HAPPENED IN THOSE
PLACES, I DON'T
REALLY KNOW HOW US
SURVIVORS CAN LET GO
OF IT. YOU CAN'T, IT'S
THERE FOR LIFE UNTIL
YOU GO TO YOUR GRAVE.**

//

DAVID WILLIAMS (AKA JOHN WILLIAMS)

SAMOAN

HOKIO SCHOOL AND KOHITERE CENTRE TIMELINE

1906

Kohitere Boys' Training Centre, first Weraroa State Farm, was established.

1936

A State investigation found that physical discipline was excessively violent at Weraroa State Farm.

1950s

Rising public concerns over 'juvenile delinquency'.

1956-1988

1,326 boys were admitted to Hokio School from December 1956 to July 1988.

1960s

A report was published that tried to explain the high numbers of tamariki and rangatahi Māori in Kohitere Centre, suggesting that urbanisation and an 'inability' to integrate could be to blame.

MID-1960s

From the mid 1960s onwards, the children and young people were predominantly tamariki and rangatahi Māori. The percentage of tamariki and rangatahi Māori admitted to Hokio School rose steadily throughout the 1970s, peaking at 80 percent in 1978.

1920s

Hokio Beach School initially began as a retreat for staff and children and young people from Kohitere Centre.

1945

Kohitere Centre became a long-stay residential institution.

1950 TO MARCH 1990

4,138 boys were admitted to Kohitere Centre, from January 1950 to March 1990

1957

The Child Welfare Division Field Officer's Manual set out an array of provisions that needed to be complied with when a State ward was placed in a secure unit, including that it should be regarded as an emergency procedure.

1964

Hokio School was expanded to have 61 beds with two in a secure facility. Hokio was intended to be for boys aged 10 to 14 years old, but housed boys as young as 8 years old and up to 15 years old.

Key

- Hokio Beach School
- Kohitere Centre

1968

A letter from the head teacher at Hokio School identified multiple issues with the school environment, in particular the inability to provide boys with the remedial one-to-one teaching they needed.

1970s

A new system was introduced at Kohitere Centre, where boys were expected to complete at least three months of school before moving on to work training.

1973

A study by the Department of Justice recognised the impact of targeting and discrimination. It reported that Auckland police youth aid officers "discriminated against Māori boys by sending a disproportionate number of them to court".

1986

Corporal punishment was banned.

1986

The Children and Young Persons (Residential Care) Regulations did not provide for punishment as grounds for admission to secure.

1988

An internal audit found that Hokio had always been at or over capacity.

SEPTEMBER 1990

Kohitere Centre officially closed.

1969

Weraroa State Farm changed its name to Kohitere Boys' Training Centre.

1969

A report into staff rostering at Kohitere Centre found that housemasters, who were considered a 'father figure', only spent around 8.4 percent of their time counselling children and young people.

1969

Accommodation for nine male staff was built at Hokio School.

1971

A report into long-term institutional care of boys illustrates a negative view held by much of the public, and many of the Hokio School and Kohitere Boys' Training Centre staff.

1983

Social Welfare introduced specific guidelines to ensure better monitoring of secure placements.

NOVEMBER 1983

A report noted that from January to October 1983, 43 boys at Kohitere Centre were in secure for more than 14 days, with only nine of these placements complying with the guidelines.

1987

There were 58 admissions to secure at Hokio School and Kohitere Centre that were incorrectly documented, with the reason for placement not in compliance with regulations.

DECEMBER 1989

Hokio School officially closed.

//

**STAFF AT KOHITERE
CONSTANTLY PUT ME DOWN
AND TOLD ME THAT I WOULD
END UP IN PRISON ... I WAS
ALSO THREATENED WITH
BEING KEPT AS A STATE WARD
UNTIL I TURNED 18. I WAS TOLD
I WOULD BE SENT TO BORSTAL.**

//

DESMOND HURRING
NEW ZEALAND EUROPEAN

Chapter 2: Circumstances that led children and young people being taken or placed into care at Hokio School and the Kohitere Centre

13. The pathways into Hokio Beach School (Hokio School) and Kohitere Boys' Training Centre (Kohitere Centre) for children and young people were influenced by the social attitudes of the time. Negative attitudes towards children and young people, viewed as delinquent, played a role in the increasing numbers of children appearing before and being charged in the Children's Court. Who came before the Court and was charged was impacted by racism and discrimination towards tamariki and rangatahi Māori. Pacific children were also impacted by racism and racial profiling. Ableist views and practices contributed to disabled children and young people being sent into care, and sometimes misdiagnosed.
14. For the majority of children and young people at Hokio School and Kohitere Centre, this was not their first time in care. Many were viewed by the State as difficult children, unable to remain in the community. From the mid-1960s onwards there were disproportionate numbers of tamariki and rangatahi Māori at both institutions, sometimes as high as 80 percent. After leaving Hokio School or Kohitere Centre children and young people were left without adequate support and many were sentenced to borstal or corrective training.
15. This chapter describes the circumstances that led children and young people being taken or placed into care at Hokio School and Kohitere Centre during the Inquiry period.

Attitudes to juvenile delinquency influenced pathways into care

16. Negative attitudes towards children and young people perceived as delinquent influenced decisions about who went into care and how they were treated while in care. From the 1950s, rising public concerns over 'juvenile delinquency' likely contributed to, and were simultaneously fuelled by, rising rates of appearances and convictions among children and young people in the Children's Court.²⁴ A 1971 report into long-term institutional care of boys illustrates a negative view held by much of the public, and many of the Hokio School and Kohitere Centre staff, towards the children and young people there:

*"Notwithstanding that boys over fifteen are eligible for borstal, and that many of the worst offenders are not caught, the boys in Kohitere and Hokio comprise one hundred and seventy of the most delinquent boys for their age in New Zealand."*²⁵

17. Another report, published over a decade later, showed attitudes had hardened, implying many boys were beyond rehabilitation. In this report a former Kohitere Centre principal described children and young people as "social failures" and that institutional training was "a last ditch resort for social deviants, with little intrinsic rehabilitative potential".²⁶

Racism, racial profiling and over surveillance influenced pathways into care

18. The urban migration of Māori saw rangatahi and tamariki Māori come to the increased attention of NZ Police and child welfare services. At the same time, they were expected to integrate into a Pākehā society that was racist, encouraged conformity and lacked understanding of te ao Māori. This occurred alongside, and due to, the covert and overt racism and discrimination in the education system, the justice system and within care institutions.²⁷ Tamariki and rangatahi Māori were often perceived to be a potential problem based on their ethnicity alone.²⁸

²⁴ Garlick, T, Social developments: An organisational history of the Ministry of Social Development and its predecessors, 1860–2011 (Steele Roberts, 2012, page 15).

²⁵ Campbell, JB, The long term residential treatment of delinquent boys by the Child Welfare Division of the Department of Education, Master's Thesis, Victoria University of Wellington (1971, page 7).

²⁶ Kayes, M, Twenty-three years later: A follow up study of Kohitere Training Centre Boys, 1963–1986 (n.d., foreword).

²⁷ Waitangi Tribunal, He Rito Whakakīkinga Whāruarua: Oranga Tamariki Urgent Inquiry, Pre-publication version (Wai 2915), (2021, page 5); Brief of evidence of Chief Executive Chappie Te Kani for Oranga Tamariki at the Inquiry's State Institutional Response Hearing (Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care, August 2022, paras 35–37); Māori Perspective Advisory Committee, Puao-te-ata-tu (day break): The report of the Ministerial Advisory Committee on a Māori perspective for the Department of Social Welfare (Department of Social Welfare, 1986, page 24); Transcript of evidence of Secretary for Education and Chief Executive Iona Holsted for the Ministry of Education at the Inquiry's State Institutional Response Hearing (Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care, 18 August 2022, page 357).

²⁸ Witness statement of Tā Kim Workman (5 October 2019, page 10); Labrum, B, "Bringing families up to scratch": The distinctive workings of Maori state welfare, 1944–1970", New Zealand Journal of History 36(2), (2002, pages 161–184).

19. The social welfare system was imposed within a colonial Pākehā State and predominantly impacted tamariki and rangatahi Māori. Māori survivor Wiremu Waikari (Ngāti Porou) told the Inquiry:

“State intervention was another form of colonisation. The State had many ways of breaking down our whānau. We had just been through the Second World War, we had lost a lot of men, a lot of role models. I was a child living in a middle-class family and I had never been touched by abuse, I had a good male role model in my life. Being placed into care meant the trajectory of my life changed drastically.”²⁹

20. A Victoria University of Wellington study published in the 1960s tried to explain the high numbers of tamariki and rangatahi Māori in Kohitere Centre, suggesting that urbanisation and an ‘inability’ to integrate could be to blame.³⁰ The report analysed factors such as home life, socioeconomic status and attitudes towards authority, but failed to consider bias and racism towards Māori in the justice and other State systems. A 1973 study by the Department of Justice however recognised the impact of targeting and discrimination. It reported that Auckland police youth aid officers “discriminated against Māori boys by sending a disproportionate number of them to court”.³¹
21. It is highly likely that Māori boys sent to Hokio School and Kohitere Centre would have been impacted by racist discrimination in the justice system. Whanaketia, the Inquiry’s final report, has further details on how colonisation, land loss, cultural disconnection and poverty impacted the pathway of tamariki and rangatahi Māori into State and faith-based care systems.
22. Particularly from the 1970s, Pacific fanau and tagata talavou were also increasingly surveilled and targeted by NZ Police. ‘Overstaying’ Pacific Peoples were accused of contributing to competition over jobs and being a burden on society through unemployment. This exacerbated racism towards Pacific Peoples.³²

²⁹ Witness statement of Wiremu Waikari (27 July 2021, para 62).

³⁰ Alvis, BS, A comparative study of the high proportion of Māori admissions to Kohitere (n.d., page 4).

³¹ Hampton, RE, Delinquency and social processes: labelling theory and the police decision to prosecute juveniles, Master’s Thesis, University of Auckland (1973), in Witness statement of Dr Oliver Sutherland (15 October 2019, page 2).

³² Mitchell, J, Immigration and national identity in 1970s New Zealand, Doctoral Thesis, University of Otago (2003, page 148).

Ableism and lack of awareness of neurodiversity influenced pathways into care

23. Prevailing societal attitudes during the Inquiry period devalued and dehumanised disabled children and young people, who did not receive the support they needed and were more vulnerable to abuse and neglect. Up until the late 1980s there was a lack of understanding and awareness of the conditions that fall under the umbrella term 'neurodiversity'. The term itself was not used during the scope period. Before 1980, children and young people with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) were often misdiagnosed as having childhood schizophrenia. Children and young people with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) could be seen as too difficult to manage and subsequently institutionalised. Children and young people with ASD and ADHD in care were often sedated, restrained or harshly disciplined for their behaviour.³³

Most children and young people had already been in other social welfare residences and institutions

24. Most children and young people at Hokio School and Kohitere Centre had already been in other State or faith-based care institutions. All the survivors the Inquiry spoke to had already been in care, and most had experienced multiple placements. According to Hokio School annual reports, from 1968 to 1979, between 84 and 98 percent of admissions came from other institutions.³⁴ Occasionally children and young people would come from psychiatric settings.³⁵ However, Hokio School and Kohitere Centre lacked the resources to provide proper care and support.³⁶ One survivor said he was given the choice between three months' corrective training (with a criminal record), or 12 months at Kohitere Centre (without a record). He decided to go to Kohitere Centre but told the Inquiry: "I wish I had of went to prison."³⁷

33 Webb, O, The likely impact of prevailing conditions and environments on people now considered to be neurodiverse, between 1950 and 1990, Paper prepared for the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care (25 November 2022, pages 8–9 and 12).

34 Hokio Beach School, Annual Reports 1968–1979.

35 Hokio Beach School, Annual Report 1971 (page 123); Kohitere Boys' Training Centre, Annual Report 1971 (page 170); Witness statement of Vernon Sorenson (22 July 2021, para 2.15).

36 Parker, W, Social welfare residential care 1950–1994, Volume II: National institutions (Ministry of Social Development, 2006, page 87); Department of Education, Child Welfare Division, Field Officers Manual (1965, page 13), Q.52; Information about national institutions (19 August 1975, page 3).

37 Private session transcript of Mr UT (1 October 2019, pages 7, 11).

25. Sometimes survivors were sent to Hokio School or Kohitere Centre because they had continuously run away from other institutions. Some were charged with offences such as theft.³⁸ Often children and young people's behaviour was seen as unmanageable and they were unable to remain in the community due to their offending and behaviour.³⁹ Some survivor files noted that all other resources and opportunities had been used up,⁴⁰ they were out of control,⁴¹ unwilling to change,⁴² and refusing help.⁴³ The Department of Social Welfare saw long-term institutional 'training' as the only solution to control the boys and 'correct' their behaviour.⁴⁴ However, many survivors told the Inquiry their behaviour, such as running away, was due to abuse and neglect; and that no-one ever asked why they were running away.

Who were the children and young people in Hokio School and Kohitere Centre?

26. Hokio School had 1,326 boys admitted from December 1956 to July 1988.⁴⁵ At Kohitere Centre, 4,138 boys were admitted from January 1950 to March 1990.⁴⁶ Of the survivors registered with the Inquiry, 52 went to Hokio School, 114 went to Kohitere Centre and a further 53 survivors were at both. Most children and young people were State wards, although some were placed into care by their parent entering into an agreement with the Director-General of Social Welfare for their temporary or extended care.⁴⁷
27. The children and young people in Kohitere Centre tended to be older, while those at Hokio School were younger. Hokio School was intended to be for boys aged 10 to 14 years old, but housed boys as young as 8 years old and up to 15 years old. Younger boys admitted to Hokio School and Kohitere Centre were often a target for abuse from the older and larger boys.
28. Half of the survivors registered with the Inquiry who were at these institutions were born from 1958 to 1968 and a third were born after 1968. Given the average age of children and young people on admission this means that most survivors were at both settings in the 1970s and 1980s, when violence, sexual abuse from staff, the kingpin hierarchy and gang culture were at their peak.⁴⁸

38 Case note from the Hokio School assistant principal (9 July 1973, page 2).

39 Letter from a social worker to the director (16 February 1981, page 1); Department of Social Welfare, Social Worker Report prepared for a Hearing in the Children and Young Persons Court (4 August 1983, page 23); Kohitere Boys' Training Centre, New admission report (24 June 1968, page 1); Letter to assistant director New Plymouth (18 July 1973, page 2).

40 Supplementary report to presiding District Court judge (4 July 1986, page 2).

41 Hokio Beach School: Background summary (24 September 1982, page 1); Hokio Beach School: Background summary (25 September 1981, page 1).

42 Kohitere Boys' Training Centre, New admission report (4 July 1968, page 2).

43 Plan 5 Amendment for Mr A (n.d.); Kohitere Boys' Training Centre, New admission report (27 May 1968, page 2).

44 Kohitere Boys' Training Centre, New admission report (19 July 1968, page 2); Kohitere Boys' Training Centre, New admission report (24 June 1968, page 2); Kohitere Boys' Training Centre, New admission report (31 May 1968, page 2); Plan 5 Amendment for Mr A (n.d.); Mr El: Note for file (17 July 1963, page 1).

45 Hokio Beach School, Admissions and discharge register 1956–1974; Hokio Beach School, Admissions register 1966–1986; Hokio Beach School, Admissions and discharge register 1974–1988.

46 Kohitere Boys' Training Centre, Admissions register 1935–1968 (record only goes to November 1965); Kohitere Boys' Training Centre, Admissions register 1966–1986 (record goes up to April 1987); Kohitere Boys' Training Centre, Admissions register 1987–1990.

47 Child Welfare Act 1925, sections 12(1) & (2); Children and Young Persons Act 1974, section 11(1); Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act 1989, sections 139 and 140; Witness statement of Peter Brooker (6 December 2021, para 125).

48 Stanley, E, *The road to hell: State violence against children in postwar New Zealand* (Auckland University Press, 2016, page 210).

The majority of children and young people in Hokio School and Kohitere Centre were Māori

29. From the mid-1960s onwards, the children and young people at both settings were predominantly tamariki and rangatahi Māori. The percentage of tamariki and rangatahi Māori admitted to Hokio School rose steadily throughout the 1970s,⁴⁹ peaking at 80 percent in 1978.⁵⁰ Pākehā admissions fluctuated from 40 percent at the end of the 1960s⁵¹ to as low as 10 percent of overall admissions a decade later.⁵² For Kohitere Centre, the numbers of tamariki and rangatahi Māori rose and fell from 1966 to 1979 but they remained the predominant group throughout, peaking at 78 percent of admissions in 1972. Pākehā admissions for the same period were, for the most part, less than a third of the enrolled population.⁵³ In 1976 Pacific peoples made up 2.1 percent of Aotearoa New Zealand's total population,⁵⁴ yet on average made up 6.4 percent of the children and young people at Hokio School⁵⁵ and 5.6 percent at Kohitere Centre.⁵⁶
30. Prior to 1966 ethnicity data was not recorded in the evidence provided to the Inquiry by either Hokio School or Kohitere Centre so it is more difficult to get a clear picture of the demographics of the children and young people at the residences for the earlier part of the Inquiry's scope period. One report suggests though, that Pākehā boys were the majority at Kohitere Centre during this time.⁵⁷

49 Hokio Beach School, Annual Reports 1969–1979 (pages 16, 30, 38, 48, 68, 77, 87, 106, 129, 154 and 181). See also Hokio Beach School admissions register 1966–1986.

50 Hokio Beach School, Annual Report 1978 (page 5).

51 Hokio Beach School, Annual Report 1969 (page 2).

52 Hokio Beach School, Annual Report 1978 (page 5).

53 Kohitere Boys' Training Centre, Admissions register 1935–1968 (record only goes to November 1965); Kohitere Boys' Training Centre, Admissions register 1966–1986. Note that Kohitere annual reports did not record the ethnicity of residents so this data was taken from admissions registers provided to the Inquiry and are the closest approximation from what was recorded.

54 Stats NZ and Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, Demographics of New Zealand's Pacific population (2010, page 9).

55 Hokio Beach School, Annual Report 1976 (page 2).

56 Kohitere Boys' Training Centre, Admissions register 1966–1986.

57 Parker, W, Social welfare residential care 1950–1994, Volume II: National institutions (Ministry of Social Development, 2006, page 54).

Pathway out of Hokio School and Kohitere Centre was often to other institutions

31. A former Hokio principal described boys going to Kohitere Centre as a “natural progression”.⁵⁸ From there, it was common for boys to be sent to borstal or corrective training. Some survivors even said that corrective training or time in adult prison was desirable because it meant they could be discharged from the care of social welfare before they turned 20.⁵⁹ Many staff told boys that prison was an inevitability.⁶⁰
32. Lake Alice Child and Adolescent Unit was nearby in Whanganui and Dr Selwyn Leeks would often visit Hokio School and Kohitere Centre for psychiatric assessments. Several survivors told the Inquiry that after they left Hokio School or Kohitere Centre they were sent to Lake Alice, where they experienced abuse⁶¹ and were subjected to electric shocks.⁶² Some children and young people were also sent there for ‘treatment’ before returning to Hokio School or Kohitere Centre. As detailed in the Inquiry’s report *Beautiful children: Inquiry into the Lake Alice Child and Adolescent Unit*, 19 children from Kohitere Centre and nine from Hokio School were sent by the Department of Social Welfare to the Child and Adolescent Unit at Lake Alice.⁶³
33. A 1984 Massey University study on both Hokio School and Kohitere Centre raised the issue that once boys were discharged and returned to the community, there was a lack of support from field social workers, and as a result, boys would often end up returning to care.⁶⁴ A report also said that many boys came from urban environments so farming and forestry training was not appropriate for when they were released from care.⁶⁵

58 Hokio Beach School, Annual Report 1970 (page 151).

59 Interview with former senior counsellor (20 November 2007, page 14); Witness statement of Lindsay Eddy (24 March 2021, para 140).

60 Witness statement of Tyrone Marks (22 February 2021, para 122).

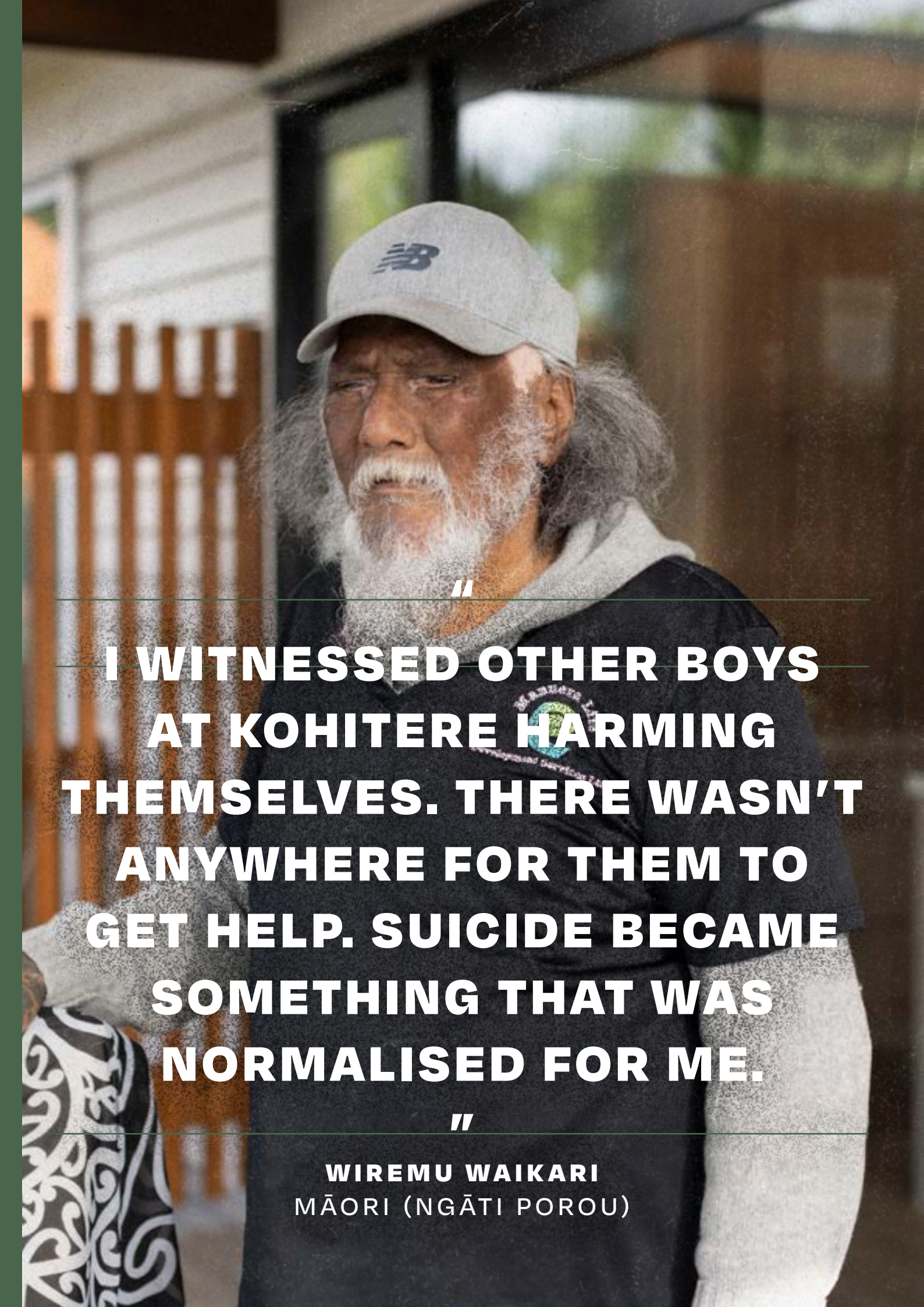
61 Witness statements of Vernon Sorenson (22 July 2021, para 2.33) and Mr AA (14 February 2021, paras 66, 88).

62 Witness statements of Fred Rawiri (16 April 2021, paras 15–19) and Charles Symes (21 March 2021, page 3). Private session transcript of survivor who wishes to remain anonymous (16 March 2022, page 30); See Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care, *Beautiful children: Inquiry into the Lake Alice Child And Adolescent Unit* (2022), for the abuse children were subjected to at this facility.

63 Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care, *Beautiful children: Inquiry into the Lake Alice Child and Adolescent Unit* (2022, page 71).

64 Hokio Beach School, Annual Report 1970 (page 148); Kohitere Boys’ Training Centre, Annual Report 1978 (page 33); Notes on national conference of principals and managers of institutions (22–26 July 1974, page 3).

65 Drew, J, “Kohitere follow-up study” (1984, page 18), in Parker, W, *Social welfare residential care 1950–1994*, Volume II: National institutions (Ministry of Social Development, 2006, page 60).



“

**I WITNESSED OTHER BOYS
AT KOHITERE HARMING
THEMSELVES. THERE WASN'T
ANYWHERE FOR THEM TO
GET HELP. SUICIDE BECAME
SOMETHING THAT WAS
NORMALISED FOR ME.**

”

**WIEMU WAIKARI
MĀORI (NGĀTI POROU)**

Wiremu Waikari

Hometown: Te Oreore Masterton

Age when entered care: 11 years old

Year of birth: 1954

Type of care facility: Family homes – Workshop Road Family Home; foster homes; girls' home – Miramar Girls' Home in Te Whanganui-ā-tara Wellington; boys' homes – Epuni Boys' Home in Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt, Hokio Beach School near Taitoko Levin, Kohitere Boys' Training Centre in Taitoko Levin; borstal – Invercargill Borstal in Waihopai Invercargill.

Ethnicity: Māori – Ngāti Porou

Whānau background: Wiremu was raised by his uncle in a whāngai arrangement until he was 7 years old. He then lived with his mother, brother and a cousin before going into care at 11 years old.

Currently: Wiremu is a social worker and has degrees in social science and counselling therapy. He and his partner work together in education and coaching people who are facing trauma. Wiremu is a grandfather.



Being placed into care meant the trajectory of my life changed drastically. I'm lucky that I survived it.

When I was 1 year old my mother gave me to my maternal uncle through the practice of whāngai. I had a happy childhood on a farm, immersed in Māori culture. When I was young, I was hit in the eye with a dart – I was declared legally blind in 1984 while in prison. I believed my adoptive parents were my real parents until, at 7 years old, my uncle gave me back to my mother. I think it was because I was very sick with eczema and asthma.

I first came to the attention of social welfare after appearing in the Children's Court on charges of burglary and theft. My mother tried her best but I was confused and angry – she was like a stranger to me. I would run away back to my uncle's. At age 11 years old, I was placed in a family home. Then I was at various places including Epuni Boys' Home twice. When I was 13 years old I was transferred to Hokio Beach School.

On the third night at Hokio, me and two other boys got a 'welcome' beating. Afterwards I was bleeding from the nose and mouth. I knew it was coming, so I was glad it was over. I experienced and witnessed physical violence and intimidation from staff and other boys almost every day. Some of the bigger boys knocked me out a few times.

By the time I got to Hokio, 'no narking' was thoroughly ingrained into me and I knew not to complain to anybody about the beatings. This was just as well, because I witnessed many boys being beaten for narking. Often, the younger, newer boys would take a while to figure out the hierarchy of boys, with the kingpin at the top, and would be beaten for narking to staff.

Another staff member set up fights in the gym a lot. It was said he was teaching us to defend ourselves, but what he taught me is that you settle matters with your fists. If you look back through my criminal record, you'll see that's exactly what I did.

One housemaster, who was ex-military, regularly punished me by making me run, duck walk and leapfrog around a huge field. He screamed and yelled at me like a drill sergeant, and repeatedly thrashed my legs, back and shoulders with a stick. He emotionally abused me, saying I was a "useless fucking black bastard".

The female nurses also sexually abused the boys. One nurse lived on site and she got me and another guy to go over to her house a lot. We weren't having penetrative sex with her, but we were masturbating and playing with her. There was no way we thought that this behaviour was abusive at only 13 years old. I had no idea. Hokio was where I first learnt about gangs. I also learnt a lot about crime. A few of the housemasters tried to teach us right from wrong, but many did not.

I was sent to the secure unit at Kohitere as punishment for converting a car. It was like a real jail – everyone was yelling and you got hit if you didn't move like they wanted you to. The cell was hosed down at about 5am each day. I was forced to perform excessive physical training, which involved push-ups, medicine balls and sit-ups. I was placed in the secure unit at Kohitere another time for breaking into a staff member's house and drinking their alcohol. On several occasions during this stay I was denied food.

I was officially admitted to Kohitere five months after that. I was in secure for about a month before I was let out into the main residence. Kohitere was different from anywhere because there weren't any boys there, most of them were young men. I was 14 years old at this stage, but I was quite hardened – I was fit and strong. I received my initiation beating the first night. It was the expected routine so I knew that was coming. I had a blanket thrown over me and was punched and kicked by other boys. I was repeatedly hit with a pillowcase filled with heavy objects.

On several occasions, staff were present when other boys assaulted me but they did nothing. I frequently witnessed boys being beaten and stomped on by other boys and staff. Staff members also forced boys to fight each other. I was beaten, kicked and punched by boys on the command of staff members. I was also verbally abused. It became standard, that was just the way that we were treated and spoken to.

I was aware of sexual abuse perpetrated on younger, smaller boys. This involved forcing boys to perform oral sex and forced anal penetration of some boys with a broom. I was told boys performed oral sex in exchange for cigarettes and chocolate.

I witnessed other boys at Kohitere harming themselves. There wasn't anywhere for them to get help. Suicide became something that was normalised for me – it happened so often that I just began to accept it when people would disappear.

I had minimal education while at Kohitere, but instead I was exposed to and learnt about criminal conduct and activities from other residents on a daily basis, without intervention from staff members who were often present when criminal conduct was discussed.

It was the links I made in Hokio and Kohitere that led me to joining the Mongrel Mob when I was 16 years old. I loved it because I already knew them – I felt more at home with Mob members than I did with my own family.

In the 1960s and 1970s, gangs in New Zealand really kicked off because the boys' homes were feeding them with disenfranchised young people who were not nurtured by Māori or the State. That is definitely where my time in State care pushed me, and hundreds of other unhappy Māori kids, who weren't sure of themselves in any world.

While in prison, I left the Mob and on my release trained to be a social worker. I like to provide a cultural element, that is the most important thing to me. As a social worker, I sit directly with my people on a day-to-day basis. I witness the ongoing issues that my people face within the current systems and I understand how the systems must be changed.

I have done a lot of bad things, I have hurt a lot of people, shed a lot of blood. I'm fortunate because I'm quite happy with where I have got to in life – I can use my experiences to help others. Now I've got all these mokos to look out for and I don't want them to run into the same problems. I want them to have a chance.⁶⁶

66 Witness statement of Wiremu Waikari (27 July 2021).

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**I WAS MADE TO DO PT
[PERSONAL TRAINING] NAKED.
THIS INVOLVED ME RUNNING
LAPS AROUND THE BLOCK,
STILL COMPLETELY NAKED,
EVERY 10TH LAP YOU WOULD
DO PUSH-UPS IN THE MIDDLE
OF THE YARD. EVERY TIME I RAN
PAST MRS [STAFF MEMBER],
SHE WOULD HIT ME WITH
A METAL HEARTH SHOVEL...**

//

MR GZ
NZ EUROPEAN

Chapter 3: Nature and extent of abuse at Hokio School and Kohitere Centre

34. Hokio Beach School (Hokio School) and Kohitere Boys' Training Centre (Kohitere Centre) were places of extreme sexual and physical abuse and described by survivors as the worst of the boys' social welfare institutions. Violence was normalised and perpetrated and incited by staff. Survivors described the two places as "a hellhole",⁶⁷ a 'nightmare',⁶⁸ 'terrifying',⁶⁹ "absolute unbelievable shit",⁷⁰ 'horrendous',⁷¹ "sadistic torture",⁷² "run on terror",⁷³ and places where you would "wake up in fear and go to bed in fear".⁷⁴ Many survivors experienced a lack of formal schooling and Māori and Pacific survivors said they had little access to their culture or language while in care. Although many survivors from Kohitere received trades training, some said it felt like slave labour.
35. The staff at Kohitere and Hokio consistently used secure as a form of punishment and control, which was a breach of the regulations. Staff also used excessive physical training, often coupled with violence as a way to punish boys. NZ European survivor Mark Goold described the Kohitere Centre staff: "They were called housemasters, but they were really screws."⁷⁵ NZ European survivor Darren Knox described Kohitere Centre an evil "cauldron of hatred".⁷⁶

Survivors experienced physical abuse

36. According to the Inquiry's analysis of Ministry of Social Development data, physical abuse was the most common kind of abuse experienced, and for some the abuse was almost daily. Most people who made a claim to the Ministry of Social Development's Historic Claims unit said they were physically abused (90 percent for Hokio School and 92.5 percent for Kohitere Centre).⁷⁷ Sixty-seven percent of survivors from Hokio School and Kohitere Centre who spoke to the Inquiry reported physical abuse from their peers compared to 55 percent reporting abuse from staff.⁷⁸ However, historic claims data shows that more survivors from both settings had far more claims of physical abuse against staff.⁷⁹

67 Private session transcript of survivor who wishes to remain anonymous (25 August 2020, page 29).

68 Private session transcript of Mr UQ (24 February 2022, page 28).

69 Witness statement of Poihipi McIntyre (14 March 2023, para 4.10.3).

70 Private session transcript of Louis Coster (21 June 2022, page 26).

71 Witness statement of Mr IA (2 June 2022, para 3.8).

72 Witness statement of Roger Kahui (6 March 2023, para 3.8).

73 Witness statement of Andrew Brown (13 July 2022, para 5.11).

74 Witness statement of Lindsay Eddy (24 March 2021), para 112).

75 Witness statement of Mark Goold (8 June 2021, para 86).

76 Witness statement of Darren Knox (13 May 2021, para 60).

77 List of allegations to MSD-data analysis, datapoint (12 June 2023).

78 One hundred and thirty-five witness statements / transcribed private sessions were analysed. One hundred and sixty-five survivors from these settings spoke to the Inquiry but some private sessions were not transcribed and could not be analysed.

79 List of allegations to MSD-data analysis.

Survivors experienced extreme physical abuse from staff members

37. Survivors experienced physical abuse from staff, including being punched,⁸⁰ slapped,⁸¹ kicked,⁸² dragged,⁸³ put into headlocks,⁸⁴ thrown into walls,⁸⁵ and stomped on.⁸⁶ One survivor from Kohitere Centre told the Inquiry a staff member choked him until he was unconscious.⁸⁷ Another survivor told the Inquiry he was hit so hard by a teacher at Hokio School that his ear drum burst.⁸⁸ Another survivor still experiences pain at the site of an arm fracture, from being tackled by a Hokio School staff member.⁸⁹
38. Corporal punishment was permitted until 1986 and could only be administered by the principal or vice-principal. However, survivors reported being strapped by other staff members, and said the corporal punishment they received was excessive. It went far beyond what they believed would be permissible.⁹⁰ NZ European survivor Mr JM said one staff member at Kohitere Centre would strap them on their genitals.⁹¹ Survivors also told the Inquiry of staff assaulting them with weapons, including bundles of keys,⁹² sticks,⁹³ belt buckles,⁹⁴ bats,⁹⁵ a shovel,⁹⁶ and a two-by-four plank.⁹⁷
39. Some staff members who felt disrespected or upset by boys responded with physical abuse.⁹⁸ Italian Māori survivor Tyrone Marks (Ngāti Raukawa) described a staff member at Hokio School:
- “Whoever made him mad knew they were going to suffer for it. This man was scary and had a voice that matched his temper. I saw him going nuts at boys quite a bit.”⁹⁹*
40. Survivors said that staff who were ex-military liked to intimidate and beat up the boys. Māori survivor Paora (Paul) Sweeney (Ngāti Porou, Ngāti Hako) described a Kohitere Centre staff member:
- “He came out of the Army ... He beat me in a way that there was no marks. He beat me with headlocks, twisting my arms and squeezing my neck until I'd be screaming.”¹⁰⁰*

80 Witness statements of Mr LT (7 March 2022, para 35); Wayne Keen (28 April 2021, para 48); Mr BY (23 July 2021, para 39) and Brian Moody (4 February 2021, para 68).

81 Witness statements of Wiremu Waikari (27 July 2021, para 196); David Williams (aka John Williams), (15 March 2021, para 89) and Earl White (15 July 2020, para 38).

82 Witness statements of Peter Porter (4 May 2023, para 118) and Mr A (19 August 2020, para 45).

83 Witness statement of Daniel Rei (10 February 2021, para 128).

84 Witness statement of Paora (Paul) Sweeney (30 November 2020, para 103).

85 Witness statement of Danny Akula (13 October 2021, para 99).

86 Witness statement of Mr SB (16 March 2021, para 44).

87 Private session transcript of Rihari.G (31 March 2022, pages 23–24).

88 Private session transcript of survivor who wishes to remain anonymous (6 September 2022, page 13).

89 Private session transcript of Mr UO (12 May 2021, pages 13–14).

90 Witness statement of Mr A (19 August 2020, para 46).

91 Witness statement of Mr JM (11 July 2022, para 32).

92 Witness statements of Mr BE (8 May 2023, para 56) and Mr A (19 August 2020, para 44).

93 Private session transcript of Mr GA (2 October 2019, page 4); Witness statement of Mr JV (4 May 2023, para 24).

94 Witness statement of Mr GD (8 July 2022, para 53).

95 Witness statement of Lindsay Eddy (24 March 2021, para 93).

96 Witness statement of Mr VV (17 February 2021, para 33).

97 Witness statement of Steven Long (15 October 2021, paras 92–93).

98 Witness statement of Daniel Rei (10 February 2021, para 100).

99 Witness statement of Tyrone Marks (22 February 2021, para 81).

100 Witness statement of Paora (Paul) Sweeney (30 November 2020, para 103).

Survivors experienced excessive physical training and other harsh punishments

41. Children and young people were subjected to extreme physical 'training' (PT) as punishment. This often took place while they were being held in the secure wing. Māori survivor Wiremu Waikari (Ngāti Porou) told the Inquiry that he was "forced to perform excessive PT, which involved push-ups, medicine balls and sit ups" and that this occurred repeatedly throughout the day.¹⁰¹
42. Several former staff members spoke about the use of physical training at Hokio School. One said the use of the 'coldie bar' where boys had to hold a netball pole over their shoulders and run around was 'inappropriate'.¹⁰² Another described the physical training as "gruelling and tedious" and, at times, excessive.¹⁰³
43. Children and young people at Kohitere Centre were also forced to do physical training, often when they were being held in the secure facilities. Survivors also described being abused during physical training.¹⁰⁴ Sometimes this was because they were too exhausted to keep going.¹⁰⁵ NZ European survivor Mr GZ described his punishment after attempting to run away:
- "I was made to do PT [personal training] naked. This involved me running laps around the block, still completely naked, every 10th lap you would do push-ups in the middle of the yard. Every time I ran past Mrs [staff member], she would hit me with a metal hearth shovel..."*¹⁰⁶
44. Staff would sometimes try and justify the personal training as a deterrent from further unwanted behaviour. A principal of Kohitere Centre in the 1970s wrote to the superintendent of the Child Welfare Division describing a "crash get fit programme" for a group of returned children and young people who had attempted running away in secure care. His rationale was that the intense physical exercise would "make them think twice before repeating the performance".¹⁰⁷

101 Witness statement of Wiremu Waikari (27 July 2021, para 248).

102 Collated information / summary from interviews with former Hokio staff members (29 April 2012, page 8).

103 Collated information / summary from interviews with former Hokio staff members (29 April 2012, page 8).

104 Witness statements of Steven Long (15 October 2021, para 96); Daniel Rei (10 February 2021, para 161); Mr A (19 August 2020, para 84); Wayne Keen (28 April 2021, paras 64–65); Mr PF (15 December 2020, para 115) and Tyrone Marks (22 February 2021, para 124).

105 Brief of evidence of [survivor] for the White trial (24 January 2007, para 43).

106 Witness statement of Mr GZ (22 June 2021, para 46).

107 Parker, W, Social welfare residential care 1950–1994, Volume II: National institutions (Ministry of Social Development, 2006, page 73).

45. Survivors were also punished in other ways. One survivor described being forced to clean a toilet full of faeces with his bare hands while a staff member stood over him. He threw up and was unable to continue so was “repeatedly hit around the head”.¹⁰⁸ NZ European survivor Desmond Hurring told the Inquiry:

“Punishments included having to watch other boys eat when I was not given any food, shovelling coal, being forced to run around the buildings, washing dishes for a week, losing smoking privileges, scrubbing pig bins, washing staff cars, and scrubbing the floors and stairs.”¹⁰⁹

46. Survivors from Hokio School also described an extreme form of punishment where they were made to move sand around the sand dunes.¹¹⁰ NZ European survivor Mr UD told the Inquiry he was made to do this as a punishment for bed wetting.¹¹¹ A former principal admitted to the use of this punishment.¹¹²

Survivors experienced initiation beatings from other boys

47. Many survivors described being subjected to initiation beatings within their first few days.¹¹³ About 40 percent of the survivors who spoke to the Inquiry experienced this.¹¹⁴ These beatings were perpetrated by a group of boys, usually at night, and out of sight of the staff. They were sometimes referred to as ‘blanketings’ or ‘stompings’, as survivors would be covered by a blanket or put inside a bag and be beaten and stomped on.¹¹⁵

48. Some survivors knew what to expect as they had gone through this at other boys’ homes but said that at Hokio School and Kohitere Centre it was worse. Survivors told the Inquiry it was particularly bad at Kohitere Centre because of the age and size of the boys.¹¹⁶ Māori survivor Daniel Rei (Ngāti Toa Rangatira) described his first night at Kohitere Centre:

“It was like adult-scale fighting with full-on punches. I suffered superficial injuries: cuts, scrapes, black eyes, a scraped face and so on. It was a familiar scenario in that the pack attack seemed to be part and parcel of anything new.”¹¹⁷

108 Statement of claim in the High Court of [survivor] (4 August 2006, pages 12–13).

109 Witness statement of Desmond Hurring (17 February 2021, para 59).

110 Witness statements of Wayne Keen (28 April 2021, para 65); Mr RX (27 March 2023, para 4.6.7); Lindsay Eddy (24 March 2021, para 78); Mr PF (15 December 2020, paras 130–131) and Wiremu Waikari (27 July 2021, para 212).

111 Witness statement of Mr UD (10 March 2021, para 53).

112 Collated notes/summary from interview with former Hokio and Kohitere principal (7 December 2012, page 2).

113 Witness statements of Mr A (19 August 2020, paras 39, 75); Desmond Hurring (17 February 2021, para 42); Tyrone Marks (22 February 2021, paras 85, 128); Daniel Rei (10 February 2021, para 101); Hohepa Taiaroa (31 January 2022, paras 26–27); of Paora (Paul) Sweeney (30 November 2020, para 97); Wiremu Waikari (27 July 2021, para 252); Harry Tutahi (18 August 2021, para 76) and Toni Jarvis (12 December 2021, para 66).

114 Based on 135 witness statements and transcribed private sessions that were analysed. In total 165 survivors from these settings spoke to the Inquiry. As untranscribed private sessions were not included in the analysis the numbers may be higher.

115 Witness statement of Mr A (19 August 2020, para 75).

116 Witness statement of Tony Lewis (21 August 2021, para 37).

117 Witness statement of Daniel Rei (10 February 2021, paras 101–102).

49. Survivors told the Inquiry that these beatings were normalised and the expectation was that they would eventually do this to new boys coming into the home. Māori survivor Wiremu Waikari (Ngāti Porou) said: "It was a sick cycle of violence."¹¹⁸
50. The Inquiry heard that staff were aware of these beatings but did not step in. A residential social worker at Hokio School in the late 1970s described two admission procedures, a formal procedure where staff inducted children and young people and "the informal initiation ... [at] the back of the sand hills".¹¹⁹ Several staff members from Kohitere Centre also acknowledged that 'stompings' and initiation beatings took place.¹²⁰

Survivors experienced bullying and violence among the boys

51. Survivors described a culture of extreme violence and bullying between the boys at both institutions. Italian Māori survivor Tyrone Marks (Ngāti Raukawa) told the Inquiry: "The bullying at Hokio was far more severe than it had been at the earlier institutions. The boys at Hokio were more aggressive and it was overall a more violent place."¹²¹ Some survivors described a 'kangaroo court'¹²² at Kohitere Centre where they were forced to move down a corridor while other boys would throw punches or objects at them.¹²³
52. Māori survivor Daniel Rei (Ngāti Toa Rangatira) told the Inquiry:
*"Boys would urinate, and even shit in my bed. They all thought it was funny. I would just wake up to find somebody urinating on me. One time I even awoke to find a boy ejaculating on me."*¹²⁴
53. Weaker, smaller and more effeminate boys were often the targets for abuse.¹²⁵ Māori survivor Mr FI (Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāti Porou) was 11 years old when he went to Hokio School and described being constantly abused by the older boys. He was 'king hit'¹²⁶ and the impact almost fractured his skull.¹²⁷

118 Witness statement of Wiremu Waikari (27 July 2021, para 189).

119 Background interview with former residential social worker (13 February 2006, page 2).

120 Interview with former senior counsellor (20 November 2007, page 6); Daniel Rei v Ministry of Social Development: transcript of interview with former staff member (20 January 2010, page 6); Daniel Rei v Chief Executive: transcript of interview with former staff member (11 November 2009, page 1); Department of Social Welfare, 3-month review of a young person in care (22 November 1983, page 5).

121 Witness statement of Tyrone Marks (22 February 2021, para 89).

122 Witness statements of Mr JL (3 November 2022, para 4.3.3) and Desmond Hurring (17 February 2021, para 51).

123 Witness statement of Tony Lewis (21 August 2021, para 39).

124 Witness statement of Daniel Rei (10 February 2021, para 117).

125 Witness statement of Danny Akula (13 October 2021, paras 90, 96); Brief of evidence of survivor (28 January 2007, para 41).

126 A violent and sudden punch intended to knock someone out.

127 Witness statement of Mr FI (30 July 2021, paras 38–39).

54. There was a strong kingpin culture at Hokio School and Kohitere Centre and everyone knew their place within the hierarchy.¹²⁸ At Kohitere Centre boys had different names depending on their place within the hierarchy. 'Spankers' were at the bottom and then it moved to 'New Boy', 'K-Boy', 'Old Boy', and the kingpin at the top.¹²⁹ The principal of both Hokio School and Kohitere Centre said he believed kingpins had a good influence.¹³⁰
55. Staff condoned and even organised fights between the boys.¹³¹ Māori survivor Wiremu Waikari (Ngāti Porou) described one staff member who did this:
- "These fights were full-on violent fights until one boy gave up or was knocked out. Some of the fights were short, some were long and lasted about 15 to 20 minutes. Some were bloody affairs. Mr Paurini would watch and directly encourage the boys to fight."*¹³²

Survivors experienced sexual abuse

56. Sexual abuse was perpetrated by staff and other children or young people. This could be a one-off event or happen multiple times, from multiple perpetrators. According to the Inquiry's analysis of historic claims data provided by the Ministry of Social Development, there were 124 allegations of sexual abuse at Hokio School and 135 at Kohitere Centre.¹³³ The number for Hokio School is remarkably high, given it had half the children and young people of Kohitere Centre.

Sexual abuse by staff happened across the decades

57. Around one third of registered survivors who spoke to the Inquiry from Hokio School and Kohitere Centre described sexual abuse from staff from the 1950s to the 1980s.¹³⁴ Survivors were watched while they showered,¹³⁵ fondled,¹³⁶ forced to give oral sex or masturbate perpetrators,¹³⁷ digitally penetrated¹³⁸ and raped.¹³⁹ Some staff members groomed survivors with gifts, such as lollies or cigarettes, before sexually abusing them.¹⁴⁰

¹²⁸ Witness statements of Poihipi McIntyre (14 March 2023, para 4.10.6); Michael Rush (16 July 2021, paras 93–96); Deane Edwards (27 March 2023, para 4.13.5) and Mr HD (27 July 2021, paras 105–106).

¹²⁹ Cooper, S, Culture of abuse and perpetrators of abuse at Department of Social Welfare institutions: A paper based on the civil legal proceedings of clients represented by Sonia M Cooper (n.d., page 22); Witness statement of Poihipi McIntyre (14 March 2023, para 4.10.6).

¹³⁰ Collated notes/summary from interview with former Hokio and Kohitere principal (7 December 2012, page 2).

¹³¹ Witness statements of Steven Long (15 October 2021, para 97); Brian Moody (4 February 2021, para 61); Mr JI (April 2023, para 4.2); Mr VV (17 February 2021, para 24) and Mr GV (27 July 2021, para 55).

¹³² Witness statement of Wiremu Waikari (27 July 2021, para 200).

¹³³ List of allegations to MSD-data analysis, datapoint 12 (June 2023).

¹³⁴ Based on 135 witness statements and transcribed private sessions that were analysed. In total 165 survivors from these settings spoke to the Inquiry. As untranscribed private sessions were not included in the analysis the numbers may be higher.

¹³⁵ Witness statement of Mr FI (30 July 2021, para 48).

¹³⁶ Witness statement of Mr PF (15 December 2020, para 140).

¹³⁷ Witness statements of Earl White (15 July 2020, para 41) and Mr GQ (11 February 2021, para 101).

¹³⁸ Witness statements of Mr UD (10 March 2021, para 47) and Mr FI (30 July 2021, para 46).

¹³⁹ Witness statements of David Williams (aka John Williams), (15 March 2021, para 104); Mr UD (10 March 2021, para 48) and Lindsay Eddy (24 March 2021, para 105).

¹⁴⁰ Witness statements of Mr GQ (11 February 2021, para 101); Mr UD (10 March 2021, para 50); Earl White (15 July 2020, para 41) and Hone Tipene (22 September 2021, para 184).

58. Survivors told the Inquiry they were sexually abused by painting instructors,¹⁴¹ the assistant principal,¹⁴² female nurses,¹⁴³ the nightwatchman,¹⁴⁴ and other staff members.¹⁴⁵ This sometimes took place in the secure facilities, or at the perpetrator's home or private quarters.
59. In one incident at Kohitere Centre in the 1980s, a boy was showering when a staff member put a plastic bag over his head and raped him.¹⁴⁶ Two survivors describe being anally penetrated with broom handles by staff in the secure wing of Kohitere Centre.¹⁴⁷ Hokio School cook Michael Ansell, who sexually abused many boys at the residence, once tied a survivor to a coffee table and anally raped him, and at other times penetrated him with different objects. The rapes were rough and caused significant pain.¹⁴⁸

Survivors were sexually abused by peers

60. Survivors were sexually abused by peers, often as part of the overall bullying and violence. About one quarter of registered survivors from Hokio School and Kohitere Centre who spoke to the Inquiry mentioned sexual abuse by peers.¹⁴⁹ The sexual abuse took place away from staff supervision in the dormitories¹⁵⁰ or in secluded areas,¹⁵¹ such as the sand dunes at Hokio School.¹⁵² One survivor described getting a "sexual stomping" when he was raped after moving from the Kohitere Centre dorms to the cottages.¹⁵³
61. Survivors at both settings recalled a sexual 'game' called 'bingo'.¹⁵⁴ At 13 years old NZ European / Māori survivor Deane Edwards (Ngāti Porou) was forced to participate with a group of older boys:

*"We played a game of 'bingo' and the boy who lost had to perform oral sex or masturbate other residents. I believe the staff knew about this as I heard staff members often ask if we were 'playing bingo tonight!'."*¹⁵⁵

141 Witness statement of Mr UD (10 March 2021, paras 93–94).

142 Statement of [survivor] for 'Operation Lake Alice' (13 June 2001, paras 33–34).

143 Witness statement of Wiremu Waikari (27 July 2021, para 226–231).

144 Witness statements of Mr PF (15 December 2020, para 149) and Hone Tipene (22 September 2021, para 178); Cooper Legal, Settlement offer of [survivor] (18 August 2020, para 54).

145 Witness statement of Mr SJ (23 February 2023, para 108).

146 Private session transcript of Mr VI (25 August 2020, pages 31–32).

147 Private session transcript of Mr UL (23 November 2022, pages 14–16); Witness statement of Mr JV (4 May 2023, para 24).

148 Witness statement of Lindsay Eddy (24 March 2021, para 105–106).

149 Based on 135 witness statements and transcribed private sessions that were analysed. In total 165 survivors from these settings spoke to the Inquiry. As untranscribed private sessions were not included in the analysis the numbers may be higher.

150 Witness statements of Brent Mitchell (15 April 2021, paras 112–113) and Philip Laws (23 September 2021, para 3.66).

151 Witness statements of Philip Laws (23 September 2021, para 3.73) and Toni Jarvis (12 December 2021, para 68).

152 Witness statement of Mr FI (30 July 2021, para 34).

153 Witness statement of Mr HD (27 July 2021, para 132).

154 Witness statement of Peter Brooker (6 December 2021, para 177).

155 Witness statement of Deane Edwards (27 March 2023, para 4.13.8).

Survivors were subjected to psychological and verbal abuse

62. Survivors were subjected to psychological and verbal abuse. Survivors were put down,¹⁵⁶ told they were worthless,¹⁵⁷ and unwanted.¹⁵⁸ Staff would swear at them,¹⁵⁹ call them names,¹⁶⁰ and constantly threaten them with violence.¹⁶¹ Survivors also described dehumanising practices such as having their clothes taken away, and being referred to as property¹⁶² or a number,¹⁶³ rather than as a child or young person needing love and care. NZ European / Māori survivor Mr GD (Ngāi Tahu) told the Inquiry:

*"[They] told me that my mother was meant to be coming up from the South Island that weekend to visit me, which got me excited...I later found out that she was never visiting that weekend at all – it was all a lie from staff, to crush me."*¹⁶⁴

63. Survivors were consistently told they were destined for prison.¹⁶⁵ NZ European survivor Desmond Hurring told the Inquiry:

*"Staff at Kohitere constantly put me down and told me that I would end up in prison ... I was also threatened with being kept as a State ward until I turned 18. I was told I would be sent to borstal."*¹⁶⁶

64. NZ European survivor Wayne Keen told the Inquiry the impact of the verbal abuse from staff: "I was always being told that I was useless, hopeless, that I couldn't do anything. I started to believe it after a while."¹⁶⁷

65. NZ European survivor Mr JM, who was at Kohitere Centre in the late 1970s, said that if a boy died by suicide, staff would force children and young people to view their dead bodies: "They would say 'this is what happens to the weak' and stuff like that."¹⁶⁸

66. Survivors also told the Inquiry they witnessed or heard other children and young people being abused¹⁶⁹ and described the impact that this had on them:

*"It really scared us and that's why they made us watch ... Seeing what happened to the other boys affected me more than what happened to me throughout my life. Being made to watch that sort of thing was a form of abuse."*¹⁷⁰

156 Witness statements of Desmond Hurring (17 February 2021, para 57); Tony Lewis (21 August 2021, para 43) and Deane Edwards (27 March 2023, para 4.13.9).

157 Witness statements of Lindsay Eddy (24 March 2021, para 80); Peter Brooker (6 December 2021, para 156); Mr JL (3 November 2022, para 4.3.4) and Mr JP (1 April 2022, para 65).

158 Witness statement of Mr SK (10 February 2021, para 336).

159 Witness statements of Earl White (15 July 2020, para 39) and Hone Tipene (22 September 2021, para 196).

160 Witness statements of Peter Brooker (6 December 2021, para 156) and Hurae Wairau (29 March 2022, para 67).

161 Witness statement of Earl White (15 July 2020, para 39).

162 Witness statement of Brian Moody (4 February 2021, para 79).

163 Witness statements of Hohepa Taiaroa (31 January 2022, para 62) and Toni Jarvis (12 December 2021, para 65).

164 Witness Statement of Mr GD (8 July 2022, para 71).

165 Witness statements of Mark Goold (8 June 2021, para 68) and Mr BE (8 May 2023, para 61).

166 Witness statement of Desmond Hurring (17 February 2021, paras 57–58).

167 Witness statement of Wayne Keen (28 April 2021, para 51).

168 Witness statement of Mr JM (11 July 2022, para 36).

169 Witness statements of Tani Tekoronga (19 January 2022, para 62) and Poihipi McIntyre (14 March 2023, para 4.10.10).

170 Witness statement of Mr SB (16 March 2021, paras 55, 57).

Use of the 'secure unit' was inappropriate and led to abuse

67. Many children and young people were put in solitary confinement, commonly known as 'secure'. The 1957 Child Welfare Division Field Officer's Manual set out an array of provisions that needed to be complied with when a State ward was placed in a secure unit, including that it should be regarded as an emergency procedure.¹⁷¹ The 1975 Residential Workers Manual placed strict conditions on the use of 'secure', including that it should be regarded as an emergency procedure, and that it should not be used routinely on admission to the institutions¹⁷² but only occasionally to prevent running away.¹⁷³ The Children and Young Persons (Residential Care) Regulations 1986 did not provide for punishment as grounds for admission to secure.¹⁷⁴ However, the secure unit was not used solely after children and young people who ran away.¹⁷⁵ The Inquiry found that solitary confinement was used for other reasons than were allowed.

F7.06 Admission direct to secure facilities

A number of admissions, particularly to district institutions, are likely to involve elements of an emergency or disturbance or difficult behaviour. They also impose on the department responsibilities for adequate care and custody. Some children and young persons will therefore need to be admitted direct to secure facilities while others will not. A decision as to how an admission is handled will need to be made in each case depending on the circumstances and the particular child or young person. Under no circumstances is it an acceptable procedure for all new admissions to be admitted direct to secure facilities. (Reference should be made to Section F7 of the manual for the department's policy on close custody).

Portion of the Department of Social Welfare, Residential Workers Manual (1975) noted in footnote 172.

68. The secure unit at Hokio School had two rooms, with concrete walls and steel doors. Bedding was removed during the day "so boys wouldn't be comfortable".¹⁷⁶ A Hokio School staff member said most of the physical abuse from staff happened in the secure unit.¹⁷⁷ One survivor described being "locked up in the secure block for months" and on each day being woken at 5am for a cold shower and Personal Training. During personal training, Māori survivor Mr SN would be booted and hit by staff who would later torment him by making him stand up in his cell for the rest of the day. He said "If I was caught lying down in my cell, [they] would come flying through the door and punch me".¹⁷⁸

171 Department of Education, Child Welfare Division, Field Officer's Manual (1957), J.124(xiv).

172 Department of Social Welfare, Residential Workers Manual (1975), F1.06 (page 118) and F7.02 (page 144).

173 Ministry of Social Development, National policies and practices outline (1 April 2006, page 14).

174 Children and Young Persons (Residential Care) Regulations 1986 (October 1986, reg 28 page 5); Ministry of Social Development, National policies and practices outline (1 April 2006, page 20).

175 Collated information / summary from interviews with former Hokio School staff members (29 April 2012, pages 2, 4).

176 Collated information / summary from interviews with former Hokio School staff members (29 April 2012, page 5).

177 Collated information / summary from interviews with former Hokio School staff members (29 April 2012, pages 4–5).

178 Witness statement of Mr SN (30 April 2021, paras 116–120).

69. As Hokio School did not have a large secure unit, boys were often sent to the secure unit at Kohitere Centre.¹⁷⁹ Sometimes they were sent to Lake Alice Child and Adolescent Unit if they “had to be locked up for longer”.¹⁸⁰ The secure unit at Kohitere Centre also held children and young people on remand or awaiting transfer to other institutions.¹⁸¹ In one case a 14-year-old boy who had murdered a 6-year-old girl was kept in isolation at the Kohitere Centre secure unit, which was “totally inadequate for long-term detention”.¹⁸² NZ European survivor Mr BY told the Inquiry he was made to share a room with a boy convicted of violent crime and sexual assault.¹⁸³
70. The conditions of the Kohitere Centre secure unit were completely unsuitable. The structure was modelled on the secure facility at Arohata prison¹⁸⁴ and described as ‘foreboding’.¹⁸⁵ Cells were small, with only a bucket for washing, and a mattress. Survivors said their mattress was removed during the day and the floor hosed down so they couldn’t sit.¹⁸⁶ Survivors said they received little to no education while in secure.¹⁸⁷ They were also physically abused.¹⁸⁸ Others told the Inquiry staff members would spit in their food.¹⁸⁹ Secure was colloquially referred to as ‘Disneyland’:¹⁹⁰ NZ European survivor Kevin England said:
- “You would joke that you were going for a holiday to Disneyland. Everyone had the attitude that you hadn’t been to Kohitere until you had been to Disneyland.”***¹⁹¹
71. Most survivors stated they were either left alone all day or subjected to excessive physical training,¹⁹² which was regularly coupled with violence from staff.¹⁹³ Several survivors said the staff in secure were trying to ‘break’ them.¹⁹⁴

179 Witness statement of David Williams (aka John Williams), (15 March 2021, para 132).

180 Collated notes / summary from interview with former Hokio and Kohitere principal (7 December 2012, page 2).

181 Witness statements of Mr IA (2 June 2022, para 3.4) and Mr KQ (6 January 2023, page 6).

182 Letter from senior education officer, Educational programmes for the secure unit at Kohitere (5 December 1977).

183 Witness statement of Mr BY (23 July 2021, para 24).

184 Daniel Rei v Chief Executive: transcript of interview with former staff member (11 November 2009, page 5).

185 Campbell, JB, The long term residential treatment of delinquent boys by the Child Welfare Division of the Department of Education, Master’s Thesis, Victoria University of Wellington (1971, page 8).

186 Witness statements of Paora (Paul) Sweeney (30 November 2020, para 113); Wiremu Waikari (27 July 2021, para 248) and Mr JM (11 July 2022, paras 30–31).

187 Witness statements of Paora (Paul) Sweeney (30 November 2020, para 115); Tyrone Marks (22 February 2021, para 135) and Mr GZ (22 June 2021, para 35).

188 Witness statements of Tyrone Marks (22 February 2021, para 123); Mr AA (14 February 2021, para 57) and Mr SB (16 March 2021, para 44).

189 Witness statement of Lindsay Eddy (24 March 2021, para 87); Private session of Dave Charlson (24 November 2021, page 30).

190 Witness statements of Desmond Hurring (17 February 2021, para 54) and Peter Brooker (6 December 2021, para 136).

191 Witness statement of Kevin England (28 January 2021, para 138).

192 Witness statements of Wiremu Waikari (27 July 2021, para 248); Daniel Rei (10 February 2021, para 106); Desmond Hurring (17 February 2021, para 53); Mr GZ (22 June 2021, para 44) and Mr JP (1 April 2022, para 64).

193 Witness statements of Mr A (19 August 2020, para 54); Darren Knox (13 May 2021, para 64) and Mr RX (27 March 2023, para 4.6.6).

194 Witness statements of Desmond Hurring (17 February 2021, para 53); Mr GZ (22 June 2021, para 45) and of Paora (Paul) Sweeney (30 November 2020, para 111).

72. In the 1970s a growing number of boys were admitted to secure. In 1973, the Kohitere Centre assistant principal described the understaffed and inadequate conditions of the secure block: "If we continue under the present physical and staffing set-up we will achieve little more than to condition boys to accept borstal later."¹⁹⁵ This sentiment was echoed in the 1976 Kohitere Centre annual report, which said prison would be preferable to the secure block.¹⁹⁶
73. In 1983 Social Welfare introduced specific guidelines to ensure better monitoring of secure placements.¹⁹⁷ All placements for more than 14 days required specific justification and notification to Social Welfare head office.¹⁹⁸ A November 1983 report noted that from January to October 1983, 43 boys at Kohitere Centre were in secure for more than 14 days, with only nine of these placements complying with the guidelines.¹⁹⁹ In 1987, 58 admissions to secure at Hokio School and Kohitere Centre were incorrectly documented, with the reason for placement not in compliance with regulations.²⁰⁰ The Inquiry did not receive any evidence to show what the Department's response was, if any, to these breaches.
74. NZ European survivor Mr BY told the Inquiry he spent 18 days in secure when he first arrived at Kohitere Centre.²⁰¹ Māori survivor Daniel Rei (Ngāti Toa Rangatira) was kept in secure for a total of more than 154 days during his placement in the 1980s, earning him the nickname the "block king".²⁰² Māori survivor Mr SK (Ngāti Porou) spent 320 days in secure over a 563-day period from the time he was 13 years old.²⁰³ After his release from Kohitere Centre, Mr SK told the Inquiry he spent most of his life in prison and admitted to being "extremely violent."²⁰⁴ In an expert report provided to the Inquiry, adolescent forensic psychologist Dr Enys Delmage discussed the risks of solitary confinement on the adolescent brain, including the breaking of social connections and a distrust of authority.²⁰⁵

195 Kohitere Boys' Training Centre, Annual Report 1973 (page 92).

196 Kohitere Boys' Training Centre, Annual Report 1976 (page 79).

197 Visit to Kohitere on 14–18 November 1983 (page 5). These were later formalised in the 1984 Social Work Manual and the 1986 Regulations.

198 Visit to Kohitere on 14–18 November 1983 (page 5).

199 Visit to Kohitere on 14–18 November 1983 (page 6).

200 Letter from Assistant Director-General to Director-General, re: admission to secure care (30 August 1988, page 3).

201 Witness statement of Mr BY (23 July 2021, para 23).

202 Witness statement of Daniel Rei (10 February 2021, para 158).

203 Witness statement of Mr SK (10 February 2021, para 375).

204 Witness statement of Mr SK (10 February 2021, para 415).

205 Expert witness report of Dr Enys Delmage (13 June 2022, page 28).

Survivors were subjected to racism and cultural neglect

75. Tamariki and rangatahi Māori were the majority of the population at both Hokio School and Kohitere Centre from the mid-1960s onwards. Although there were Māori staff at both institutions, survivors described an environment that did not encourage te reo Māori.²⁰⁶ Māori survivor Hohepa Taiaroa (Ngāti Apa, Ngāti Kahungunu) told the Inquiry: *"I couldn't be Māori. I couldn't be me. I had to act like a Pākehā. To me that's racism. That's abuse. If we spoke te reo, the staff would give us mean looks or give us all the shit jobs. It was subtle pacification."*²⁰⁷
76. Deaf NZ European / Māori survivor Mr JV described a similar experience: "I speak te reo and was raised speaking te reo. But it was like an offence to learn Māori culture in those places. Nobody spoke it, I tried to speak to a couple of staff about it but they would just tell me to shut up."²⁰⁸
77. One Māori survivor said there was little provision of any meaningful cultural education.²⁰⁹ Māori survivor Paora (Paul) Sweeney (Ngāti Porou, Ngāti Hako) said: "I just knew a Pākehā system that was thrashing me."²¹⁰ Samoan survivor Fa'amoana Luafutu, who was at Kohitere Centre in the 1960s, told the Inquiry: "The place had no function to meet the needs of a Samoan like me."²¹¹
78. Some survivors from Kohitere Centre described positive experiences,²¹² such as participating in the kapa haka group.²¹³ Māori survivor Mr GV (Ngāpuhi) remembered a visiting kaumatua: *"Mr Poutama would take all the Māori boys out of Kohitere on the weekends to teach us how to catch eels, how to set the nets for fishing and other things ... I can see now that he was teaching me about my culture and about tikanga."*²¹⁴
79. Survivors also experienced racist verbal abuse.²¹⁵ One Māori survivor remembers being called a "useless black bastard."²¹⁶ A Māori survivor said one Hokio School staff member repeatedly called him a "little black c**t" who would "never amount to much".²¹⁷

206 Witness statements of Mr LT (7 March 2022, para 42) and Mr JK (30 September 2022, para 19); Private session transcript of Mr VH(22 February 2022, page 68).

207 Witness statement of Hohepa Taiaroa (31 January 2022, para 38).

208 Witness statement of Mr JV (4 May 2023, para 33).

209 Witness statement of Deane Edwards (27 March 2023, para 5.1).

210 Witness statement of Paora (Paul) Sweeney (30 November 2020, para 202).

211 Witness statement of Fa'amoana Luafutu (5 July 2021, para 57).

212 Witness statement of Daniel Stretch (2 August 2021, para 47); Private session transcript of Rihari. G (31 March 2022, page 29).

213 Witness statement of Jovander Terry (29 June 2021, para 149).

214 Witness statement of Mr GV (27 July 2021, paras 102–104).

215 Witness statement of Jovander Terry (29 June 2021, para 147).

216 Witness statement of Michael Taylor (24 April 2023, para 2.14).

217 Brief of evidence of [survivor] for the White trial (24 January 2007, para 44).

80. Samoan survivor David Williams (aka John Williams) said that the sexual abuse he suffered at Hokio School was coupled with racial abuse: “‘Coconut’ or ‘bunga’ or ‘fresh off the boat’ was how Pacific Islanders were referred to in those years.”²¹⁸ Niuean / Māori survivor Mr VV (Ngāpuhi) told the Inquiry that the principal wrote: “I hadn’t been very productive as a member of the work group, and suggested that I could return to the Islands, ‘where his present way of life could be acceptable’.”²¹⁹
81. Because tamariki and rangatahi Māori were the majority at both institutions from the mid-1960s, they were therefore more likely to be subjected to abuse. The enduring impact of this abuse is summed up by Cook Islands / Māori survivor Tani Tekoronga (Ngāi Tahu) reflecting on the Māori cultural group at Hokio School:
- “A large number of boys that I was in the culture group with are either dead or in prison now ... some I believe by suicide ... [Another boy] died after jumping off a bridge and drowning in a river while trying to escape police, after running away from Hokio ... Every one of the boys in that photo has suffered.”*²²⁰

Survivors’ wellbeing and mental health was neglected

82. In 1971, the Hokio School Principal said of the growing number of children and young people coming from psychiatric settings: “In terms of the specialist services these children need we fell short.”²²¹ In annual reports he consistently stated that the fortnightly visits from psychological services were not enough and requested Hokio School and Kohitere Centre be provided with an in-house psychologist.²²² A psychologist was available to Hokio School by the early 1980s, however an inspection report revealed that the psychologist was not positively viewed by the staff.²²³
83. Those with psychological needs were not just confined to those coming from psychiatric settings. Many of the children and young people were neurodiverse and suffered the impacts of trauma.²²⁴ However, these institutions consistently failed to provide proper care for the children and young people they were entrusted with. NZ European survivor Philip Laws said the abuse and lack of support for his dyslexia has “ruined my life”.²²⁵

²¹⁸ Witness statement of David Williams (aka John Williams), (15 March 2021, para 112).

²¹⁹ Witness statement of Mr VV (17 February 2021, para 55).

²²⁰ Witness statement of Tani Tekoronga (19 January 2022, paras 75–76).

²²¹ Hokio Beach School, Annual Report 1971 (page 123).

²²² Hokio Beach School, Annual Report 1968 (page 199); Hokio Beach School, Annual Report 1969 (page 178); Hokio Beach School, Annual Report 1970 (page 138); Hokio Beach School, Annual Report 1971 (page 127); Hokio Beach School, Annual Report 1972 (page 101); Kohitere Boys’ Training Centre, Annual Report 1973 (page 89).

²²³ Inspection visit to Hokio Beach School 1981 (page 8).

²²⁴ Witness statements of Philip Laws (23 September 2021, para 2.6) and Mr A (19 August 2020, para 96).

²²⁵ Witness statement of Philip Laws (23 September 2021, paras 4.1, 4.8, 4.10).

84. A 1969 report into staff rostering at Kohitere Centre found that housemasters, who were considered a boy's 'father figure', only spent around 8.4 percent of their time counselling the boys.²²⁶ In 1987, Kohitere Centre's assistant principal wrote to the principal outlining the need for specialist psychiatric services that had been affected by funding cuts. The principal disagreed.²²⁷
85. Two survivors told the Inquiry they were sent to Hokio School or Kohitere Centre after attempting suicide at another boys' home.²²⁸ However, they did not receive any sort of support or counselling. Māori survivor Paora (Paul) Sweeney (Ngāti Porou, Ngāti Hako), who became an orphan at 11 years old, described the state he was in when he was transferred to Kohitere Centre in the 1970s: "I should have had grief and loss counselling for the loss of my parents and my sisters, but I wasn't given anything. I was beaten instead."²²⁹
86. NZ European survivor Tony Lewis said although he received counselling once a week at Kohitere Centre, because of the strong no-narking culture he didn't disclose his abuse. He said there were too many children and young people for counsellors to provide adequate support.²³⁰ Kohitere Centre NZ European survivor Mr A said how, despite his records saying he needed counselling for his behaviour and his use of solvents, he never received it.²³¹ He was also denied psychological treatment as he was supposedly "too sophisticated" to benefit.²³²
87. The sniffing of solvents was fairly common at Kohitere Centre²³³ but not much was done to address this, other than to punish those doing it. A registered nurse at Kohitere Centre in the 1980s, described one incident of a boy in a semi-conscious state after sniffing petrol: "I said, 'get an ambulance'. And they [other staff] didn't want to, they said, 'he's just sleeping' ... so they did very reluctantly."²³⁴

²²⁶ State Services Commission, Child Welfare Division: Kohitere (September 1970, page 5).

²²⁷ Letter from PT Woulfe to regional director re: request for specialist services (14 July 1987).

²²⁸ Witness statements of Sharyn (16 March 2021, para 153) and Philip Laws (23 September 2021, paras 3.54–3.55).

²²⁹ Witness statement of Paora (Paul) Sweeney (30 November 2020, para 89).

²³⁰ Witness statement of Tony Lewis (21 August 2021, para 51).

²³¹ Witness statement of Mr A (19 August 2020, para 79).

²³² 3 monthly report of Mr A (28 July 1987, pages 37–38).

²³³ Witness statements of Mr GQ (11 February 2021, para 98); Mr A (19 August 2020, para 52); Darren Knox (13 May 2021, para 78) and Daniel Rei (10 February 2021, para 208).

²³⁴ Daniel Rei v Ministry of Social Development: transcript of interview with former staff member (20 January 2010, page 9).

Survivors experienced educational neglect

88. Some survivors told the Inquiry they received little formal schooling while in care, particularly at Kohitere Centre, where the focus tended to be on trades and workplace training. Legally, all children and young people were required to attend school up to the age of 16, however, much of the education provided appeared to be remedial.²³⁵ The school employed qualified teachers and there was the option to complete School Certificate through the Correspondence School.²³⁶ But the quality and extent of this education was variable and impacted by staffing issues. The school was often staffed by a single teacher, or by those ill-equipped to provide necessary remedial support.²³⁷ In the 1970s a new system was introduced at Kohitere Centre, with boys expected to complete at least three months of school before moving on to work training.²³⁸
89. In 1968, a letter from the head teacher at Hokio School identified multiple issues with the school environment, in particular the inability to provide boys with the remedial one-to-one teaching they needed. A request for further teaching staff was made, noting “unless the educational needs of these boys can be adequately met in this school, educational failure will continue to plague them and this in turn could easily contribute to further breakdowns in their social behaviour”.²³⁹ Nearly a decade later, the same issues persisted.²⁴⁰ In her brief of evidence to the Inquiry, Ministry of Education Chief Executive Iona Holsted acknowledged that staffing issues impacted the education provided at the residences.²⁴¹

Admissions

1. Yesterday we transferred 10 boys to Kohitere and with 11 on our waiting list we will have no difficulty filling the vacancies. However, at the present time we are short of 2 classroom teachers and consequently 18 boys already in residence are not receiving any schooling. The house staff have the responsibility of keeping them occupied and as our establishment does not provide for this there are times when we are experiencing problems in supervision. This would only be compounded if we admitted a further 10 boys who would also have to be looked after outside the school

A portion of a letter from the Hokio School principal to the Director-General of Social Welfare, as noted in footnote 240.

235 Brief of evidence of Secretary for Education and Chief Executive Iona Holsted for the Ministry of Education at the Inquiry's State Institutional Response Hearing (Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care, 8 August 2022, page 62).

236 Ministry of Social Development, Understanding Kohitere (2009, page 31); Parker, W, Social Welfare residential care 1950–1994, Volume II: National institutions (Ministry of Social Development, 2006, page 64).

237 Parker, W, Social welfare residential care 1950–1994, Volume II: National institutions (Ministry of Social Development, 2006, page 64).

238 Ministry of Social Development, Understanding Kohitere (2009, pages 89, 227).

239 Letter from Hokio School head teacher to the principal, school staffing (11 November 1968, page 2).

240 Letter from Hokio School principal to Director-General Social Welfare (9 September 1976, page 1).

241 Brief of evidence of Secretary for Education and Chief Executive Iona Holsted for the Ministry of Education at the Inquiry's State Institutional Response Hearing (Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care, 8 August 2022, page 62).

90. The Social Work Manual in 1970 and 1984 both stated that “as far as possible State wards should be regarded in the same way as other children and should be encouraged to continue their formal schooling for as long as they are drawing benefit from it”.²⁴²
91. Niuean / Māori survivor Mr VV (Ngāpuhi), who was at Hokio School in the 1970s, told the Inquiry that he was “so focused on self-preservation” that he didn’t learn anything.²⁴³ Two survivors told the Inquiry they left Kohitere Centre barely able to read or write.²⁴⁴ Māori survivor Mr JI (Ngāti Rangī, Ngāti Raukawa) told the Inquiry: “I did not learn anything because there was not much teaching and a lot of just sitting around.”²⁴⁵
92. NZ European / Māori survivor Peter Brooker (Waitaha) said he aspired to complete School Certificate at Kohitere Centre in 1984. He achieved the “highest score they had ever had on their school entry tests” but was told he couldn’t go to school: “Instead, I learnt how to prune trees.”²⁴⁶

Work training was sometimes abusive

93. The main educational aspect at Kohitere Centre focused on trades training, in areas such as farming, carpentry and forestry. Towards the end of their placement, some boys also held jobs in the community to help prepare them for their transition out of care. Two survivors described the work as slave labour.²⁴⁷ Michael Rush, who worked at the freezing works in Levin, said he loved the job but felt as though his wages were being “ripped off”.²⁴⁸ Boys with jobs in the community were made to pay board.
94. Some survivors described the workplace training they received as one positive aspect of their overall care experience.²⁴⁹ One survivor received his tractor licence²⁵⁰; another, his welding certificate.²⁵¹ Despite this, survivors were often made to work in unsafe conditions that led to injuries. One survivor even lost his finger in the woodworking workshop.²⁵² Most injuries happened to boys in the forestry unit.

²⁴² Department of Social Welfare, Social Workers’ Manual 1970 (section J14, page 249); Department of Social Welfare, Social Work Manual 1984 (section N5.1, page 88).

²⁴³ Witness statement of Mr VV (17 February 2021, para 35).

²⁴⁴ Witness statements of Mr SK (10 February 2021, para 369) and Tony Lewis (21 August 2021, para 46).

²⁴⁵ Witness Statement of Mr JI (April 2023, para 4.2).

²⁴⁶ Witness statement of Peter Brooker (6 December 2021, paras 181–184).

²⁴⁷ Witness statements of Mr BY (23 July 2021, para 43) and Tony Lewis (21 August 2021, para 47).

²⁴⁸ Witness statement of Michael Rush (16 July 2021, para 105).

²⁴⁹ Witness statements of Walter Warner (28 June 2021, paras 113–114) and Tony Lewis (21 August 2021, para 50); Private session transcript of Mr VG (3 November 2021, page 37).

²⁵⁰ Witness statement of Greg from Owairaka (10 March 2021, para 103).

²⁵¹ Witness statement of Darren Knox (13 May 2021, para 74).

²⁵² Witness statement of Bryon Nichol (24 March 2021, para 36).

The forestry programme at Kohitere Centre led to physical abuse in many cases

95. Forestry work was physically demanding and involved planting, pruning, wood splitting and other labour. Instructors were typically younger men with forestry industry experience. Few received any additional training to be instructors or work with young people.²⁵³ Certain instructors believed that firm discipline was necessary, and that residential staff didn't understand their situation.
96. Some forestry staff physically 'disciplined' children and young people, including kicking them 'in the backside' and pushing them down a hill.²⁵⁴ Former instructor Sonny Cooper told the Inquiry that instructors were left to discipline children and young people, and they all used their own methods.²⁵⁵ A former Kohitere Centre assistant principal acknowledged that forestry instructors could "[take] the law into [their] own hands".²⁵⁶ There were numerous allegations of abuse against staff.²⁵⁷
97. Survivors did not receive any health and safety training²⁵⁸ and often suffered injuries. Boys were hurt by falling logs, cut themselves with their axes, or broke bones. One survivor ended up in hospital with a ruptured hernia from lifting the heavy logs. When he pointed out the lump before it burst he was told to "harden up".²⁵⁹
98. Not all survivors had a negative experience working in the forestry unit.²⁶⁰ Samoan survivor Fa'amoana Luafutu explained: "It was hard-as work. But us boys liked being away from the home, and they gave us time to be up there running around and yahooing."²⁶¹

253 Witness statement of staff member (1 March 2010, para 8); Forestry instructor notes he received training from forestry instructors and notes being provided social worker training but this was not taken up by other instructors. Ministry of Social Development v Daniel Rei: Interview (22 February 2010, page 3).

254 Witness statements of Daniel Rei (10 February 2021, para 139) and Craig Dick (26 March 2023, para 5.11.9); Private session transcripts of Mr UT (1 October 2019, page 16) and survivor who wishes to remain anonymous (13 August 2020, page 5).

255 Witness statement of Sonny Cooper (1 March 2010, para 34).

256 Daniel Rei vs Chief Executive: Interview with former assistant principal (11 November 2009, page 9).

257 Witness statements of Daniel Rei (10 February 2021, para 139) and Craig Dick (26 March 2023, para 5.11.9); Private session transcripts of Mr UT (1 October 2019, page 16) and survivor who wishes to remain anonymous (13 August 2020, page 5).

258 Witness statement of Kevin England (28 January 2021, para 160).

259 Private session transcript of survivor who wishes to remain anonymous (13 August 2020, page 5).

260 Witness statements of Wiremu Waikari (27 July 2021, para 264); Hohepa Taiaroa (31 January 2022, para 57); Mr HS (27 March 2022, paras 4.4.5–4.4.6) and Kevin England (28 January 2021, para 156).

261 Witness statement of Fa'amoana Luafutu (5 July 2021, para 53).

Survivors used different strategies to avoid abuse

99. Survivors used different strategies to avoid abuse and ill-treatment at Hokio School and Kohitere Centre. For some, this meant 'toeing the line' and trying to get out as soon as possible.²⁶² Others told the Inquiry they would try to isolate themselves from other children and young people, including by getting sent to secure.²⁶³
100. One common way survivors tried to exercise agency was through running away.²⁶⁴ However, once they were found they were returned to the institutions and punished, with physical abuse,²⁶⁵ humiliation,²⁶⁶ harsh physical training²⁶⁷ or being put into secure.²⁶⁸ Staff did not try to find out the underlying reason behind the running away.
101. Māori survivor Mr GQ (Te Aupōuri) told the Inquiry that, after he was sexually abused by a staff member, he:
- "Started running away from Kohitere as well because I just couldn't handle it. I was a good-looking kid but I didn't expect grown men to be coming onto me like that."*²⁶⁹
102. Running away could also end in tragedy. In one incident, two children died in a car accident after they fled.²⁷⁰

262 Witness statements of Philip Laws (23 September 2021, para 3.62); Sharyn (16 March 2021, para 158) and Hurae Wairau (29 March 2022, para 60). Interview with former senior counsellor (20 November 2007, page 9).

263 Witness statements of Mr SK (10 February 2021, para 301) and Hohepa Taiaroa (31 January 2022, para 43); Private session transcript of Mr UT (1 October 2019, page 20).

264 Witness statements of Mr SK (10 February 2021, para 351); Mr UD (10 March 2021, para 59); Lindsay Eddy (24 March 2021, para 125); Mr AA (14 February 2021, para 60); Mr GZ (22 June 2021, paras 43–44); William MacDonald (4 February 2021, para 163); Mr EI (20 February 2021, para 2.10) and Mr SB (16 March 2021, para 48).

265 Witness statements of Toni Jarvis (12 December 2021, para 81) and Mr CE (8 July 2021, para 48).

266 Witness statement of Mr GZ (22 June 2021, para 44).

267 Witness statement of Wayne Keen (28 April 2021, para 65).

268 Witness statements of Mr GD (8 July 2022, paras 58–59); Lindsay Eddy (24 March 2021, para 127); Mr UD (10 March 2021, para 103); Peter Brooker (6 December 2021, para 131); Mr A (19 August 2020, para 52) and Darren Knox (13 May 2021, para 62).

269 Witness statement of Mr GQ (11 February 2021, para 104).

270 Witness statement of Tani Tekoronga (19 January 2022, para 67); Memo director general: Abscondings and deaths in car accidents (11 May 1973); Interview with Robin Wilson (7 July 2022, page 16).

The extent of abuse and neglect

103. Abuse at Hokio School and Kohitere Centre was systemic. According to the Inquiry's analysis of historic claims data provided by the Ministry of Social Development:
- a. Of any Department of Social Welfare institution, Kohitere Centre has the highest number of allegations of abuse made by survivors (227 complainants, 812 allegations). Hokio School has the fourth highest (121 complainants, 551 allegations).²⁷¹
 - b. Of the total allegations, the most common is of physical abuse (339 for Hokio School and 550 for Kohitere Centre), followed by sexual abuse (124 for Hokio School and 135 for Kohitere Centre), and emotional abuse (78 for Hokio School and 102 for Kohitere Centre).²⁷² There were at least four prolific sexual abusers at Hokio School.
 - c. Of the six staff members from across the different children's institutions that have had more than 30 separate allegations of abuse made against them individually, and four came from Hokio School or Kohitere Centre. One Hokio School staff member had 65 allegations of abuse made against them.²⁷³

²⁷¹ List of allegations to MSD-data analysis, datapoint 12, (June 2023). This information represents total allegations and complainants but it doesn't take into account residence sizes. Of the four institutions with the most allegations (Kohitere, Epuni Boys' Home, Hokio, Ōwairaka Boys' Home), Kohitere had more residents (up to 120) than the other three (from 40 to 60). Kohitere and Hokio were both long-stay institutions while Ōwairaka and Epuni were short-stay homes.

²⁷² There also claims for neglect, 'other', or 'not applicable'. List of allegations to MSD-data analysis, datapoint 12, (June 2023).

²⁷³ Summary of abuse claims made to Ministry of Social Development.

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“I WAS SENT TO THESE PLACES TO GET BETTER, AND AS A RESULT I CAME OUT WORSE. VIOLENCE WAS NORMALISED AND THAT WAS A MODEL TO ME, FOR IT TO BE OK AND ACCEPTABLE TO BEHAVE IN A VIOLENT WAY. THAT HAS LED TO ALL SORTS OF PROBLEMS IN MY LIFE.

”

MR A
SURVIVOR

Chapter 4: Impacts of abuse and neglect at Hokio School and the Kohitere Centre

104. Survivors were impacted psychologically, emotionally and physically by the violence and abuse they experienced and saw at Hokio Beach School (Hokio School) and Kohitere Boys' Training Centre (Kohitere Centre).
105. For some survivors their time in care changed them completely and set them on a negative path. NZ European Mr A told the Inquiry:
- "I was sent to these places to get better, and as a result I came out worse. Violence was normalised and that was a model to me, for it to be OK and acceptable to behave in a violent way. That has led to all sorts of problems in my life."²⁷⁴*
106. Māori survivor Mr BE (Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Hine, Ngāti Rangī, Ngāti Tūwhareto) told the Inquiry that he felt like he has been 'marked' by his time at Hokio School and this had led to an additional layer of stigma within the justice system.²⁷⁵ Another survivor told the Inquiry: "There've been neglect from all these systems. I feel like because I was made a ward of the State that I've got no rights as a human being."²⁷⁶
107. The next chapter describes the impact of abuse and neglect that survivors of Hokio School and Kohitere Centre reported to the Inquiry.

Many survivors were imprisoned after Hokio School and Kohitere Centre

108. More than half the survivors (57 percent) who have registered with the Inquiry and were at Hokio School and / or Kohitere Centre disclosed that they have been incarcerated. Survivors told the Inquiry they became institutionalised from their time in Hokio School and Kohitere Centre,²⁷⁷ which led to incarceration. Often, after leaving the institutions, they were sentenced to borstal or corrective training²⁷⁸ before moving on to prison. Many survivors told the Inquiry being in the homes taught them how to be criminals and that staff did little to prevent this.²⁷⁹ Survivors' employment opportunities have been limited because of their criminal record.²⁸⁰

²⁷⁴ Witness statement of Mr A (19 August 2020, para 97).

²⁷⁵ Witness statement of Mr BE (8 May 2023, paras 135–137).

²⁷⁶ Private session transcript of Mr UT (1 October 2019, page 23).

²⁷⁷ Witness statements of Mr RX (27 March 2023, para 6.1.3); Wiremu Waikari (27 July 2021, para 300); Hone Tipene (22 September 2021, paras 218–219) and Mr BE (8 May 2023, paras 113, 115).

²⁷⁸ Witness statements of Paora (Paul) Sweeney (30 November 2020, para 132, 137); Harry Tutahi (18 August 2021, para 95); David Williams (aka John Williams), (15 March 2021, para 162); Toni Jarvis (12 December 2021, para 165); Tyrone Marks (22 February 2021, para 143); Mr AA (14 February 2021, para 80) and Robert Zane Thomson (16 May 2023, para 97).

²⁷⁹ Witness statements of Wiremu Waikari (27 July 2021, para 239); David Williams (aka John Williams), (15 March 2021, para 178); Daniel Rei (10 February 2021, paras 205–206) and Mr A (19 August 2020, para 57).

²⁸⁰ Witness statements of Mr GZ (22 June 2021, para 61) and Mark Goold (8 June 2021, para 87).

109. Professor Elizabeth Stanley described how interaction with the justice system can arise from abuse, multiple care placements, the destructive culture of the institutions, social disadvantage, and differential treatment in the justice system. Professor Stanley said: "Children in State care are far more likely to progress into custody as a result of maltreatment, multiple care placements, damaging institutional cultures, social disadvantages and psychological harms, as well as differential treatment in the criminal justice system. This New Zealand research also shows how two interconnected and sustaining processes – of victimisation and criminalisation increase the likelihood of a child transitioning from care to custody."²⁸¹ Samoan survivor Mr CE said: "Going to prison after being in care was a natural next step for me. To me, that was normal given the environments I was in."²⁸²

110. Some survivors have spent their adult life going in and out of prison.²⁸³ As Māori survivor Mr SK (Ngāti Porou) told the Inquiry:

*"Hokio and Kohitere created gashes. When I left Kohitere I came to prison and I have essentially been here ever since. As a result, the Hokio and Kohitere wounds are still open."*²⁸⁴

Pathways into gangs were established

111. Almost a quarter of registered survivors who were at Hokio School and /or Kohitere Centre identified as being, or having been, in a gang or as gang whānau. Professor Stanley has shown how children's homes, particularly in the 1970s and 1980s, were places where gangs emerged. Some children and young people came from families with gang connections and would recruit other children and young people once in care.²⁸⁵ NZ European survivor Desmond Hurring said that gangs and patches were growing in his time at Kohitere Centre in the late 1970s and that it was a 'production line.'²⁸⁶ Māori survivor Paora (Paul) Sweeney (Ngāti Porou, Ngāti Hako) told the Inquiry:

*"Kohitere was the start of it all, the gang problem in the country today comes from there. A lot of the boys from Kohitere were in the gangs with me later on. They were mostly Māori ... It's called 'Kohitere Boys' Training Centre', but I don't know what they were training us to do. Be gang members?"*²⁸⁷

281 Stanley, E, "From care to custody: Trajectories of children in postwar New Zealand", Youth Justice 17(1), (2016, page 58).

282 Witness statement of Mr CE (8 July 2021, para 132).

283 Witness statements of Daniel Rei (10 February 2021, para 227); Wayne Keen (28 April 2021, para 81); Craig Dick (26 March 2023, para 7.4.3); Mr AA (14 February 2021, paras 86–87) and Mr A (19 August 2020, para 95).

284 Witness statement of Mr SK (10 February 2021, para 417).

285 Stanley, E, The road to hell: State violence against children in postwar New Zealand (Auckland University Press, 2016, page 141).

286 Witness statement of Desmond Hurring (17 February 2021, para 64).

287 Witness statement of Paora (Paul) Sweeney (30 November 2020, para 130, 179).

112. Survivors told the Inquiry gangs gave them a sense of belonging with people who had gone through a similar experience of abuse in State and faith-based institutional care.²⁸⁸ Māori survivor Daniel Rei (Ngāti Toa Rangatira) told the Inquiry:

*"I joined the Black Power in 1990 when I was 16–17 and quickly became an active member ... A number of them I had met in the boys' homes or borstals. They were the only people I felt comfortable with because they had been through the same as I had."*²⁸⁹

113. The way the State treated many survivors made them feel like outcasts and encouraged gang formation.²⁹⁰ As Māori survivor Mr JI (Ngāti Rangi, Ngāti Raukawa) told the Inquiry:

*"I am sure I would not have become a gang member, with all the downstream implications of this, if I had not had these experiences ... I joined the gang because it reflected my own values – anti-Police, anti-authority and anti-agency."*²⁹¹

114. As another survivor described it:

*"Those places destroyed our fuckin' heads, man. [So we said] 'fuck the system'. If that is the way they are going to treat us, then we will treat them the same way."*²⁹²

115. The Inquiry engaged with gang whānau, including members of Mongrel Mob, Black Power, Head Hunters, and King Cobras. Their collective submission to the Inquiry highlighted the significant role the State played in gang formation and the 'pipeline' from State care to gangs. The submission described the drivers of the pipeline as he "denial of identity, the role of institutional violence in reproducing personal violence, and the role of the State in discrimination against Māori, Pacific and working class people across the education, welfare and justice systems".²⁹³

288 Witness statement of Mr TD (25 February 2023, para 5.3); Arewa Ake te Kaupapa: Gang submission to the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care (11 April 2024, page 16).

289 Witness statement of Daniel Rei (10 February 2021, para 230).

290 Brief of evidence of Tracey McIntosh for the Inquiry's Contextual Hearing (Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care, 15 October 2019, para 85); Arewa Ake te Kaupapa – an independent submissions form gang whānau to the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Historical Abuse in State Care and in Care in Faith-based Institutions (31 July 2023).

291 Witness statement of Mr JI (April 2023, para 4.2).

292 Survivor, quoted in Brief of evidence of Tracey McIntosh for the Inquiry's Contextual Hearing (Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care, 15 October 2019, para 85).

293 Arewa Ake te Kaupapa: Gang submission to the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care (11 April 2024, page 17).

Relationships with family and whānau, children and intimate partners were impacted

116. Survivors told the Inquiry their relationships with their family and whānau, including their children and intimate partners, were affected. The time they spent in care created distance between them and their whānau and they felt disconnected from their family.²⁹⁴ Some survivors have struggled to form relationships and have continuing feelings of isolation.²⁹⁵ Others find it hard to trust people.²⁹⁶
117. Māori survivor Mr RY (Ngāti Maniapoto) told the Inquiry:
*"I had always struggled to be vulnerable. Being in the boys' homes I had to harden up. Everything I went through enhanced the mistrust I felt towards people and authority."*²⁹⁷
118. Many survivors told the Inquiry they have struggled with fatherhood and maintaining relationships with their children due to family violence, anger, or incarceration.²⁹⁸ Others told the Inquiry they were overly strict or taught their children to fight back as they didn't want them to also end up in care.²⁹⁹ However, some survivors told the Inquiry that they had good relationships with their children and were proud of the fact their children had never been in care.
119. Some survivors spoke of abusing their partners, with at least 20 survivors discussing domestic violence. Some said this was due to anger over what happened to them in care.³⁰⁰

²⁹⁴ Witness statements of Deane Edwards (27 March 2023, paras 7.5.1, 7.5.4); Mr CE (8 July 2021, para 109); Peter Porter (4 May 2023, para 140) and Tyrone Marks (22 February 2021, para 150).

²⁹⁵ Witness statements of Mark Goold (8 June 2021, para 93) and Mr GZ (22 June 2021, para 63).

²⁹⁶ Witness statement of Hohepa Taiaroa (31 January 2022, para 114).

²⁹⁷ Witness statement of Mr RY (6 April 2023, para 4.4)

²⁹⁸ Witness statements of Hohepa Taiaroa (31 January 2022, para 105); Barnie Pitman (3 October 2022, para 110); Tani Tekoronga (19 January 2022, para 152); Mr GV (27 July 2021, para 148); Deane Edwards (27 March 2023, para 7.6.1) and Mr CE (8 July 2021, para 95).

²⁹⁹ Witness statements of Mr GQ (11 February 2021, para 126) and William MacDonald (4 February 2021, paras 278–279).

³⁰⁰ Witness statements of David Williams (aka John Williams), (15 March 2021, para 186) and Mr JL (3 November 2022, paras 6.1–6.2).

Survivors experienced psychological impacts

120. Survivors' time in care had a profound psychological impact. Some survivors have trouble sleeping³⁰¹ or have been diagnosed with depression or post-traumatic stress disorder.³⁰² Others described self-harming, suicidal ideation or suicide attempts.³⁰³ Māori survivor Poihipi McIntyre (Ngāi Tahu) told the Inquiry:

*"I left Kohitere with no empathy or self-worth. I gained excellent fighting skills and a fierce hatred for the world and the system. My time in Kohitere was the only time in my life that I have felt suicidal. Kohitere stole my mana."*³⁰⁴

121. Many survivors have battled alcohol and drug abuse³⁰⁵ and struggled to control their anger.³⁰⁶ NZ European survivor Darren Knox told the Inquiry:

*"I have that much violence inside of me, and that much rage, and that much resentment because of how I was treated at Kohitere."*³⁰⁷

Survivors experienced physical impacts

122. Survivors experienced physical impacts from the abuse, such as bruises, cuts, or broken bones. They have also suffered enduring physical injuries or health impacts. NZ European survivor Robert Zane Thomson told the Inquiry he remembers little of Kohitere Centre and believes it stems from constantly being choked unconscious while there.³⁰⁸ Two survivors told the Inquiry about the ongoing physical issues they have suffered due to being raped as children.³⁰⁹

123. Tattooing was a common practice at Hokio School and Kohitere Centre,³¹⁰ and some boys were given tattoos as a 'badge of honour' when joining a gang.³¹¹ NZ European / Māori survivor Peter Brooker (Waitaha) told the Inquiry:

*"All the tattoos you can see are from Kohitere. They can't be lasered off because they were made with nugget and boot polish and our own urine."*³¹²

301 Witness statements of William MacDonald (4 February 2021, para 241) and Tani Tekoronga (19 January 2022, para 118).

302 Witness statements of Daniel Rei (10 February 2021, para 247); David Williams (aka John Williams), (15 March 2021, para 189); Mr JM (11 July 2022, para 90); Michael Taylor (24 April 2023, para 4.3); Mr LT (7 March 2022, para 50) and Grant Caldwell (18 February 2021, para 9.3).

303 Witness statements of Mr RY (6 April 2023, para 3.5); Tani Tekoronga (19 January 2022, para 133); Mr SN (30 April 2021, para 176) and Daniel Rei (10 February 2021, para 270); Private session transcript of Louis Coster (21 June 2022, page 27).

304 Witness statement of Poihipi McIntyre (14 March 2023, para.4.10.17–4.10.18).

305 Witness statements of Mr FI (30 July 2021, para 68); Mr PF (15 December 2020, para 191); Philip Laws (23 September 2021, paras 4.1, 4.8, 4.9); Desmond Hurring (17 February 2021, para 69); Harry Tutahi (18 August 2021, para 126); Hone Tipene (22 September 2021, para 226); Mr JP (1 April 2022, para 79); Deane Edwards (27 March 2023, paras 7.3.1–7.3.2) and Vincent Hogg (15 December 2021, para 161).

306 Witness statements of Vincent Hogg (15 December 2021, para 158); Mr CE (8 July 2021, para 96); Mr SN (30 April 2021, para 175); Fa'amoana Luafutu (5 July 2021, para 69); Peter Brooker (6 December 2021, para 253) and Brian Moody (4 February 2021, paras 134,139).

307 Witness statement of Darren Knox (13 May 2021, para 85).

308 Witness statement of Robert Zane Thomson (16 May 2023, paras 93–94).

309 Witness statements of Mr UD (10 March 2021, para 135) and Mr SK (10 February 2021, para 357).

310 Witness statements of Toni Jarvis (12 December 2021, para 95); Earl White (15 July 2020, para 40) and Wiremu Waikari (27 July 2021, para 188).

311 Witness statement of Kevin England (28 January 2021, para 144).

312 Witness statement of Peter Brooker (6 December 2021, paras 140–141).

124. Smoking was also commonplace³¹³ and cigarettes were sometimes given to survivors by staff members.³¹⁴ For some survivors this has led to a lifetime of smoking and associated health impacts.³¹⁵

Survivors experienced loss of opportunity due to lack of education

125. Survivors told the Inquiry they lost opportunities because of the lack of education while in care. Some have struggled to find employment or financial security.³¹⁶ NZ European survivor Lindsay Eddy told the Inquiry: "I feel like I didn't get that chance in life. I put it down to the homes. Everything was stolen from you there and you can't get that back."³¹⁷
126. NZ European survivor Tony Lewis said:
- "I haven't had enough schooling and have always felt like a dunce. If I'd had a better education I could have been a completely different person. I had my right to an education taken away from me."*³¹⁸

Survivors experienced loss of culture and language

127. Māori survivors told the Inquiry they experienced disconnection from their culture and their whakapapa.³¹⁹ Some survivors went into care able to speak te reo Māori but had lost the ability by the time they left.³²⁰ Māori survivor Hohepa Taiaroa (Ngāti Apa, Ngāti Kahungunu) said:
- "I can still understand te reo Māori but I can't speak it. I've always wanted to speak on the paepae but I can't because I can't speak Māori. I'm trying to learn, but it's a real struggle for me to pick it up now. The impact from this assimilation, and loss of language and culture, has followed me all through my life ... I was never allowed to just be Māori."*³²¹
128. Two Samoan survivors also told the Inquiry they had no access to their Samoan culture in care and they lost their language because of it. Survivor Mr CE said:
- "After being in care, I couldn't speak the language and I had forgotten a lot of the fa'asamoa and how to do things the Samoan way."*³²²

313 Witness statement of Toni Jarvis (12 December 2021, para 96); Brent Mitchell (15 April 2021, para 109); Tyrone Marks (22 February 2021, para 95) and Mr CE (8 July 2021, para 45).

314 Witness statement of Hurae Wairau (29 March 2022, para 70) and Hone Tipene (22 September 2021, para 211).

315 Witness statement of Lindsay Eddy (24 March 2021, para 180); Toni Jarvis (12 December 2021, para 211) and Peter Brooker (6 December 2021, para 275).

316 Witness statements of Tyrone Marks (22 February 2021, para 46); Paora (Paul) Sweeney (30 November 2020, para 170); Mr GZ (22 June 2021, para 67); Wiremu Waikari (27 July 2021, paras 337–338) and Vernon Sorenson (22 July 2021, para 3.16).

317 Witness statement of Lindsay Eddy (24 March 2021, para 172).

318 Witness statement of Tony Lewis (21 August 2021, para 59).

319 Witness statements of Wiremu Waikari (27 July 2021, para 317); Mr FI (30 July 2021, para 74) and Hone Tipene (22 September 2021, paras 234–235).

320 Witness statement of Mr LT (7 March 2022) para 42).

321 Witness statement of Hohepa Taiaroa (31 January 2022, para 85–87).

322 Witness statement of Mr CE (8 July 2021, para 3).

129. For Samoan survivor David Williams (aka John Williams) this meant he struggled with his Samoan identity:

“When you go into a home, you lose your culture and you lose your identity. You don’t think of yourself as an Islander or a Māori, because you start to believe what they are saying about you. I recall that staff told me that I should go and kill myself because no-one wanted me.”³²³

The collective impact of abuse and neglect

130. It is not only individual survivors who are impacted by being in care: there are impacts to whānau, communities and society. The Inquiry’s interim report showed the results of a study estimating the economic cost to Aotearoa New Zealand of abuse in care since 1950. The estimated cost ranges from \$96 to \$217 billion.³²⁴ But the cost is more than financial. Going into care can severely affect family relationships and cause intergenerational harm from ongoing trauma, violence, familial disconnection, and through survivors having their own children taken into care.
131. The ‘care to custody’ pipeline not only impacts communities, but wider society, through losing generations of adults, parents, workers, and potential leaders. Former government statistician Len Cooke highlights that 70 percent of incarcerated men are fathers; the cost of such incarceration is borne by the men’s families, yet “the impacts on children and partners remain invisible”.³²⁵
132. Māori men continue to be over-represented in the prison population, particularly the remand prison population.³²⁶ This is a collective loss for Māori. Some Māori survivors have lost their connection to whakapapa, tikanga Māori and te reo Māori and generations of Māori men have been lost from the pae.

³²³ Witness statement of David Williams (aka John Williams), (15 March 2021, para 197).

³²⁴ Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care, Tāwharautia: Pūrongo o te Wā, Volume 1: Interim report (December 2020, page 95).

³²⁵ Cook, L, A statistical window for the justice system: Putting a spotlight on the scale of State custody of generations of Māori (Wai 2915), (July 2020, pages 24–25).

³²⁶ Cook, L, A statistical window for the justice system: Putting a spotlight on the scale of State custody of generations of Māori (Wai 2915), (July 2020, page 24–25).



“

**HOKIO WAS
A HELLHOLE**

”

TANI TEKORONGA
COOK ISLANDS / MĀORI (NGĀI TAHU)

Tani Tekoronga

Hometown: Whakatū Nelson

Age when entered care: 11 years old

Year of birth: 1974

Time in care: 1985–1992

Type of care facility: Foster homes; family homes – Opawa Group Home, Tahaunanui Family Home, Richmond Family Home; Boys' homes – Stanmore Road Boys' Home in Ōtautahi Christchurch, Hamilton Boys' Home in Kirikiriroa Hamilton, Epuni Boys' Home in Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt, Hokio Beach School near Taitoko Levin; girls' homes – Kingslea Girls' Home in Ōtautahi Christchurch, Miramar Girls' Home in Te Whanganui-ā-tara Wellington; youth justice facility – Rangipo Detention Centre near Turangi.

Ethnicity: Cook Islands / Māori (Ngāi Tahu).

Whānau background: Tani has two older sisters and lots of older and younger half siblings. They didn't live together but he went to school with some of them.

Currently: Tani has always been close to his mum and recently reconnected with his dad. He has a son from a previous relationship. After being in care, Tani went back to school and studied. He then travelled and lived in Scandinavia and Australia, working in forestry, farming, hospitality and the music industry.



There was lots of violence at home and the cops knew but they didn't do anything about it because they were family friends. The teachers at school knew we were getting beaten too but I think it was seen as the typical 'darkie' situation. At the time, I was the only darker-skinned pupil in the whole primary school.

In 1985, the day before my 11th birthday, my mum left my dad. It was a dark day. My parents then went through a custody battle over me. It dragged out until eventually the judge wouldn't award custody to either of them, and instead made me a ward of the State. By this time, I was already in State care. I was 11 years old.

That was the beginning of me being shipped all around the country. I remember just wanting to be with my mum. I got into a lot of trouble with NZ Police during this period and racked up a bit of a record.

I went to Hokio Beach School in 1987 when I was 13 years old and was there for just over a year. I'm not sure why I was sent to Hokio. It might have been because I was getting into trouble and playing up.

Hokio was a hellhole and the most traumatic placement I was in.

As soon as you got to Hokio, you had to 'run the line'. You had to run down a narrow hallway with boys on both sides, and they could do anything they wanted as you went down. It was carried out by the boys, but I wouldn't be surprised if the staff invented it. The physical abuse from staff was bad, and almost daily. A senior staff member would smash us if we did anything wrong, and staff would punch us in the guts or hit us across the back of our heads. We would be beaten for small things like moving too slowly, if your shoes weren't polished right, if you didn't clean quickly enough or if you answered back at all. I still have scars from that staff member's beatings.

One time, the senior staff member locked four of us into separate rooms and then went through each, one at a time, and beat us. I was the last one to be beaten. It was worse because I could hear him beating each person before he got to me. There was a strong gang and kingpin culture at Hokio. One day the kingpin got me into his room, pushed me down on the bed and sexually assaulted me. I was embarrassed, ashamed and scared. I didn't tell anyone about what was happening at Hokio because there was no-one to tell, and there was a big 'no-narking' culture. I crawled into myself and stayed there.

Several boys tried running away from Hokio and a few of them died while on the run. I tried running away too – I was caught, beaten by staff and put into the secure unit with a Bible, the only book we were allowed. I spent a couple of weeks in secure and it was horrible. The second time I ran away, my records show that I stole a school van along with three others and drove it through two fences and into a staff car. Anyone who tried to run away would be punished, along with the rest of the population – this was part of the 'jail' or 'institutional' politics.

I was eventually discharged from Hokio when I was 14 years old. I had very little life skills, and I went to live with Mum. When I was 15 or 16 years old, I went into corrective training, and then I was in and out of jail until I was about 22 years old.

I still carry this stuff around with me. It's like carrying a rock in your chest. It affects everything I do. It's painful and it makes me feel like damaged goods. Under that, there's the anger and the disappointment. I was a smart kid – if I had a chance, I could have done a lot more. It pulls me down constantly. Looking back at my time in care, there were no positives. There was nothing there that you should be doing to a kid. The only good thing was when I was able to get out of it.

I did want to do well in life, I did want to be better and to be good at something. But because of what has happened in the first 20 years of my life, and having no stability, it has made me feel like I am useless, crap, that I will never be good enough and that I don't deserve good things.

Kids need to feel loved. They need someone who believes in them and genuinely cares about them. But all I heard was, "you're a piece of shit", "you're useless" and "you're jailbait". I didn't feel loved, I didn't feel wanted, I didn't feel I could do anything.

Because of my upbringing and time in care, I have a distorted image of love. I came from shit, went into shit, came out and found a shit relationship, because that's what is familiar to me. I found it difficult to leave because shit is all I knew and maybe that's all I deserved – that's what my thinking was.

When I was at Hokio, I got involved in the culture group. A large number of boys in the group are either dead or in prison now. I have a photo from then. Every one of the boys in that photo has suffered, even the ones that made me suffer. I don't want retribution against any of them. I want the Government to know that they really screwed up some people's lives.

The system is broken – you can't treat a kid like that and expect them to come out alright.³²⁷

³²⁷ Witness statement of Tani Tekoronga (19 January 2022).

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**BEING ONE OF THE ONLY
PĀKEHĀ KIDS THERE
I RECEIVED A WHOLE LOT
OF BULLYING BY OTHER
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'HONKI' AND BEATEN
AROUND, PUNCHED IN
THE HEAD AND KICKED.**

//

EARL WHITE
NZ EUROPEAN

Chapter 5: Factors that caused or contributed to abuse and neglect at Hokio School and Kohitere Centre

133. A number of factors have caused or contributed to abuse and neglect at Hokio Beach School (Hokio School) and Kohitere Boys' Training Centre (Kohitere Centre) and allowed it to persist over many decades.
134. The Inquiry has divided these factors into four categories: personal factors, institutional factors, structural and systemic factors, and societal factors. All of these factors are inter-related.

People at the centre of abuse and neglect

Factors for entry into care became factors for abuse and neglect for care

135. Many of the circumstances that made it more likely for a child or young person would enter Hokio School or Kohitere Centre often became the factor for why they were more susceptible to abuse and neglect in care.
136. These factors included:
- a. being raised in poverty and experiencing deprivation
 - b. being Māori and racially targeted
 - c. being Pacific and racially targeted
 - d. experience of mental distress with unmet needs
 - e. experiencing sign or multiple adverse childhood events
 - i. experiencing or witnessing violence, abuse and neglect at home or other care settings
 - ii. having a family member pass away or attempt to die by suicide
 - iii. aspects of their environment undermine their sense of safety, stability and bonding such as:
 - growing up with parents experiencing substance use problems
 - growing up with parents suffering mental distress
 - growing up with instability due to parental separation or incarceration
 - f. having a deferential attitude to people in positions of authority, including faith leaders and medical professionals
 - g. other reasons such as age or gender
 - h. experiencing or being any combination of the above.

Children and young people lacked agency and autonomy

137. Children and young people lacked autonomy over their lives while in care. This imbalance of power existed at all levels. The State had the power to remove children and young people from their families and place them in the institutions. Staff at both Hokio School and Kohitere Centre held power over children and young people, enforcing regimented routines, harsh physical discipline and abuse. Former Kohitere Centre staff member Gary Hermansson told the Inquiry there was “inevitably an imbalance of power” between staff and children.³²⁸
138. Children and young people were largely powerless to stop the abuse they suffered. Even when they did speak out, they could be punished, not believed or the response was inadequate. The Inquiry heard from former staff members about the lack of voice or advocacy support for children and young people. Kohitere Centre teacher Ms SE told the Inquiry: “I felt the boys were never given a voice. They were treated unfairly with no respect ...There was no-one there to bat for them.”³²⁹
139. NZ European survivor Mr SJ told the Inquiry that he didn’t speak out about the ongoing sexual abuse he suffered from the Hokio School head teacher because he was scared. This teacher was physically violent and threatened him, saying he would have to stay at the home for “a very long time” if he spoke up.³³⁰

Pākehā survivors were a minority which could make them a target for abuse

140. Pākehā survivors, as well as former staff members from both institutions, told the Inquiry that because they were the minority from the mid-1960s onwards, Pākehā children and young people were often subjected to more abuse from their peers.³³¹ Some Māori survivors also believed Pākehā could be more of a target³³² and that this was often instigated by staff.³³³
141. A former staff member acknowledged: “If you were a puny little Pākehā boy you were in trouble.”³³⁴ NZ European survivor Earl White told the Inquiry:
*“Being one of the only Pākehā kids there I received a whole lot of bullying by other boys ... I was called ‘honki’ and beaten around, punched in the head and kicked.”*³³⁵

³²⁸ Witness statement of Gary Hermansson (27 July 2021, paras 55–57).

³²⁹ Witness statement of Ms SE (19 November 202), para 35).

³³⁰ Witness statement of Mr SJ (23 February 2023, paras 108–109).

³³¹ Witness statements of Peter Brooker (6 December 2021, para 152); Mr A (19 August 2020, para 40); Sharyn (16 March 2021, para 162); Lindsay Eddy (24 March 2021, paras 61–62) and Mr JL (3 November 2022, para 4.3.3).

³³² Witness statement of William MacDonald (4 February 2021, para 159); Private session transcript of Mr TG (26 January 2022, page 47).

³³³ Witness statement of Wiremu Waikari (27 July 2021, para 198).

³³⁴ Background interview with former residential social worker (13 February 2006, page 35).

³³⁵ Witness statement of Earl White (15 July 2020, para 37).

142. Survivor Brian Moody told the Inquiry that staff at Hokio School would get the Māori boys to beat up the Pākehā boys and the Pākehā boys to beat up the Māori boys.³³⁶ The racism and discriminatory attitudes of staff was normalised and perpetuated by the children and young people. The racist attitudes bred in these institutions continued into later life for some. NZ European survivor Darren Knox said: "I put up with being told I was a white piece of shit and my life meant nothing." He told the Inquiry his experience at Kohitere Centre left him with a lifelong hatred of Māori people.³³⁷

Peers targeted effeminate and weak boys

143. Weaker boys and those perceived as effeminate were often a target at both institutions.³³⁸ Intersex survivor Sharyn, who had started menstruating by the time she was admitted to Kohitere Centre in the 1970s, told the Inquiry that because she was "obviously feminine", she became a target of sexual abuse from the other boys.³³⁹ A survivor from Hokio School described another child who would dress as a girl and was a 'favourite' for the other boys.³⁴⁰ Māori survivor Hone Tipene (Ngāpuhi) told the Inquiry that he was bullied and abused by other boys at both settings who called him homophobic slurs.³⁴¹

144. When boys did try to disclose abuse, they were told to toughen up and not be a sissy.³⁴² NZ European survivor Philip Laws reported sexual abuse by three other boys at Hokio School, who were subsequently placed in secure.³⁴³ In his case file, the social worker wrote he "had advertised his previous homosexual experience" and that they would monitor his behaviour moving forward,³⁴⁴ implying he was culpable in his own abuse.

336 Witness statement of Brian Moody (4 February 2021, para 59).

337 Witness statement of Darren Knox (13 May 2021, para 71, 83).

338 Witness statements of Sharyn (16 March 2021, para 162) and Mr BE (8 May 2023, para 50).

339 Witness statement of Sharyn (16 March 2021, para 162).

340 Private session transcript of Dave Charlson (24 November 2021, page 32).

341 Witness statement of Hone Tipene (22 September 2021, paras 202, 208).

342 Background interview with former residential social worker (13 February 2006, page 5).

343 Witness statement of Philip Laws (23 September 2021, para 3.67).

344 Hokio Beach School progress report of Philip Laws (10 May 1988, page 3). This progress report also makes recommendations for specialist intervention but there is no indication as to whether this went ahead.

Age was a factor in abuse

145. Survivors told the Inquiry they were abused by the older, bigger boys.³⁴⁵ Pākehā / Māori survivor Toni Jarvis (Ngāi Tahu, Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāti Toa Rangatira) was only 9 years old when he went to Hokio School, and as the smallest boy he was constantly physically and sexually abused by the older boys. He told the Inquiry he was raped around 200 times:

*"I was first sodomised by an older Pākehā boy. He groomed me with lollies. He had paid for the lollies using the pocket money we could earn as part of the rewards system."*³⁴⁶

146. Māori survivor Mr FI (Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāti Porou) told the Inquiry what happened when older boys were housed at Hokio School because of a lack of space at Kohitere Centre:

*"These older boys ... would take us younger boys to a hidden spot at the back of the school and they would make us have sex with each other while they would watch. If you didn't do what the older boys told you to do, they would beat you."*³⁴⁷

147. There was the potential for significant age and size differences between the boys, with some older boys over six feet tall. Before 1958, the youngest child admitted to Kohitere Centre was 12 years old and the eldest at discharge was almost 20 years old. From 1958 to 1968, the youngest child admitted was 10 years old and the eldest at admission was 18 years old.³⁴⁸

345 Witness statements of Mr FI (30 July 2021, para 33); Grant Caldwell (18 February 2021, para 7.2); Andrew Brown (13 July 2022, para 5.18); Mr A (19 August 2020, para 47); Harry Tutahi (18 August 2021, para 83); Mr BE (8 May 2023, paras 63–64) and Mr GV (27 July 2021, para 60).

346 Witness statement of Toni Jarvis (12 December 2021, paras 68, 98).

347 Witness statement of Mr FI (30 July 2021, paras 33–36).

348 Ministry of Social Development, Understanding Kohitere (2009, page 72).

Abusers caused direct abuse to many children and young people

148. Both institutions had abusers who abused many children and young people. Many perpetrators were staff. Peers also abused peers at Hokio School and Kohitere Centre.
149. There were several prolific sexual abusers at Hokio School. John Drake, who worked at Hokio School in the 1950s and 1960s, had multiple confirmed allegations of sexual abuse made against him.³⁴⁹ He moved to Holdsworth School in the 1970s where he continued to sexually abuse children and young people.³⁵⁰
150. A visiting Catholic priest, Father Brian Kelly, allegedly sexually abused four Catholic boys at Hokio School from 1959 to 1961. The abuse often took place in a small room where he took confession.³⁵¹
151. In the 1970s, two Hokio School staff members, the cook Michael Ansell and a housemaster, Maahi Tukapua, were convicted of sexually assaulting multiple victims. These perpetrators are discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

Bystanders ignored abuse

152. Survivors told the Inquiry that staff (bystanders) knew of the abuse taking place³⁵² but they would not take no steps to address it.³⁵³ Māori survivor Mr SB described an 'out of sight, out of mind' attitude at Hokio School: "The staff knew what was happening but as long as they didn't see it, it would just continue to happen."³⁵⁴ NZ European survivor Mr BY, who was sexually abused by another boy at Kohitere Centre, told the Inquiry: "The staff weren't interested in hearing about it and there was no complaints system."³⁵⁵
153. A former Hokio School senior social worker said he sometimes wouldn't punish or acknowledge bullying, as this could result in retribution for the victim.³⁵⁶ Another social worker from Hokio School said staff were aware that boys were physically abusing new arrivals on the sand dunes so would avoid the area.³⁵⁷ He described management as having their "heads in the sand", because they took no responsibility for the abuse that was happening there.³⁵⁸

349 Statement of claim of [survivor], HC Wellington Civ-2006-485-845 (26 April 2006, page 3); Statement of claim of [survivor], HC Wellington Civ-2007-485-2143 (25 September 2007, page 4); Ministry of Social Development, Table of allegations – excerpts of specific staff (n.d., page 4).

350 Ministry of Social Development, Table of allegations – excerpts of specific staff (n.d., page 5).

351 Letter from Cooper Legal to Archbishop Dew regarding abuse by Father Kelly (14 July 2011); Letter from Cooper Legal to Duncan Cotterill Solicitors regarding abuse by Father Kelly (11 November 2005); Ministry of Social Development, Memorandum regarding liability for Father Kelly's actions (13 September 2011).

352 Witness statement of Danny Akula (13 October 2021, para 90).

353 Witness statement of Paora (Paul) Sweeney (30 November 2020, para 123) and Philip Laws (23 September 2021, paras 3.67–3.68).

354 Witness statement of Mr SB (16 March 2021, para 36).

355 Witness statement of Mr BY (23 July 2021, para 42).

356 File note: Collated notes / summary from interview with former senior social worker (28 April 2012, page 3).

357 Background interview with former residential social worker (13 February 2006, page 2).

358 Background interview with former residential social worker (13 February 2006, page 20).

Institutional factors that caused or contributed to abuse and neglect

A culture of violence contributed to abuse and neglect

154. Survivors described Hokio School and Kohitere Centre as places of extreme violence, where abuse, fights and bullying were part of the culture. Survivors said violence was normalised and that they eventually became desensitised to it.³⁵⁹ They became abusive themselves, to be 'hard' or fight back³⁶⁰ as a way of protecting themselves. Niuean and Māori survivor Mr VV (Ngāpuhi) told the Inquiry that by the time he arrived at Kohitere Centre, after being at three other boys' homes: "I was really institutionalised. I was the one dishing out the violence, because I had learned what to do at all the other institutions."³⁶¹

No-narking culture contributed

155. There was a strict no-narking culture at both institutions. This meant much of the abuse went undetected or was not dealt with. Survivors learned quickly they had to endure the abuse and stay silent. NZ European survivor Mr PF told the Inquiry: "I learnt that in a place like Hokio you never narked, you had to suck it in, choke on it and vomit when they weren't looking."³⁶²
156. Disclosing abuse could lead to further abuse or punishment. Māori survivor Mr SK recalled being attacked after reporting a sexual assault by another survivor at Kohitere Centre: "My pants were taken off and something or someone entered me. I remember that the guys were saying, 'fucken nark' and 'you narked on [survivor]'.³⁶³
157. NZ European survivor Desmond Hurring described how when he complained to staff about abuse at Kohitere Centre: "They set me up to be stomped by other boys and took away my privileges."³⁶⁴ Another survivor said that sometimes if a child did something a staff member didn't like they would tell other children that boy had narked, knowing he would be punished.³⁶⁵
158. A Kohitere Centre senior counsellor described staff responses to peer-on-peer abuse as reactionary and said there was no attempt to develop a long-term strategy for minimising bullying among the boys.³⁶⁶

³⁵⁹ Witness statement of Hohepa Taiaroa (31 January 2022, para 48).

³⁶⁰ Witness statements of Danny Akula (13 October 2021, para 100) and Craig Dick (paras 5.11.5–5.11.7).

³⁶¹ Witness statement of Mr VV (17 February 2021, para 52).

³⁶² Witness statement of Mr PF (15 December 2020, para 136).

³⁶³ Witness statement of Mr SK (10 February 2021, para 356).

³⁶⁴ Witness statement of Desmond Hurring (17 February 2021, para 60).

³⁶⁵ Private session transcript of Dave Charlson (24 November 2021, pages 34–35).

³⁶⁶ Interview with former senior counsellor (20 November 2007, page 10).

Staff used the kingpin system and other children and young people as a form of control

159. Deputy Principal Mike Doolan detailed "an alternative form of management" among the boys at Kohitere Centre and that "staff used that alternative structure as part of their own control mechanism".³⁶⁷ He attributed this to untrained staff out of their depth and working under "uncompromising bosses ... who didn't want the place to get out of their control".³⁶⁸ Other Kohitere Centre staff acknowledged the informal "kingpin system"³⁶⁹ and said it was exploited by staff. Senior residential social worker Mr PY said:

*"The kingpin culture at Kohitere was very big and used by staff positively and negatively. I challenged Tom Woulfe at one stage about him legitimising the kingpin structure by making some of the more violent kingpins members of the student council."*³⁷⁰

160. A Kohitere Centre senior counsellor said he felt as though the boys were in control and that staff allowed them to run the place.³⁷¹ Survivors from Kohitere Centre confirmed that the staff used the kingpin system to control the children and young people.³⁷²

161. If a child misbehaved, staff would sometimes inflict group punishments knowing that the child would be beaten up afterwards.³⁷³ For example, a Hokio School staff member described how, if a child ran away, the whole wing would be in trouble: "So when a kid came back – he'd answer to the other kids as well."³⁷⁴ Sometimes boys from Hokio School would be told to hunt down an absconder and that everyone would be punished later.³⁷⁵ A survivor from Hokio School said: "Can you imagine what happened to that person when he'd be found?"³⁷⁶

Recruitment and vetting were inadequate

162. Many staff did not have prior experience working with children and young people. While some were former teachers, others came from trades, given the focus at Kohitere Centre on workforce training. The lack of specialist staff adequately trained to support children and young people with complex behavioural needs and past trauma contributed to further neglect.

163. There were some Māori staff members at both institutions, but the majority of managers were Pākehā, despite most boys being tamariki and rangatahi Māori from the mid-1960s onwards. This was likely a contributing factor to cultural neglect.

³⁶⁷ Interview with Mike Doolan (6 March 2006, page 6).

³⁶⁸ Interview with Mike Doolan (6 March 2006, page 7).

³⁶⁹ Interview with former senior counsellor (20 November 2007, page 6); Daniel Rei v Chief Executive: transcript of interview with former staff member (11 November 2009, page 1).

³⁷⁰ Transcript of interview with Mr PY (23 March 2011, page 13).

³⁷¹ Interview with former senior counsellor (20 November 2007, page 6).

³⁷² Witness statements of Mr PF (15 December 2020, paras 102–103); Tony Lewis (21 August 2021, para 40); Mr JM (11 July 2022, para 34); Mr A (19 August 2020, para 41) and Hohepa Taiaroa (31 January 2022, paras 51–52).

³⁷³ Witness statement of Karl Te Tauri (2 August 2021, para 2.29).

³⁷⁴ Collated information / summary from interviews with former Hokio staff members (29 April 2012, page 4).

³⁷⁵ Witness statement of Mr SK (10 February 2021, para 300).

³⁷⁶ Private session transcript of Dave Charlson (24 November 2021, page 35).

164. Some staff came from the military.³⁷⁷ While at least one survivor saw this as a positive attribute,³⁷⁸ these staff members could be violent and militaristic.³⁷⁹ Hokio School Māori survivor Mr GV (Ngāpuhi) told the Inquiry that 'regimental' staff treated children and young people as if they were in the army.³⁸⁰ A visiting psychiatrist to Kohitere Centre described some of the staff as aggressive, authoritarian and confrontational.³⁸¹
165. A lack of vetting also contributed to abuse. Until 1976 there was no centralised NZ Police database collating prior convictions. Evidence shows that prior to the late 1970s the institutions largely relied on the honesty of applicants in relation to disclosing criminal convictions.³⁸² Even after NZ Police introduced a vetting policy in 1978, the Department of Social Welfare could only access this information as it related to adoptions and foster parents.³⁸³ By 1978 two former staff members from Hokio School had been convicted of sexually abusing children and young people at the residence.
166. A lack of appropriate vetting of untrained staff coupled with a lack of cultural knowledge left boys exposed to abuse and neglect.

Lack of safeguarding measures in place to protect children and young people

Inadequate supervision allowed abuse to occur undetected

167. There was consistent understaffing throughout the operation of Hokio School and Kohitere Centre. Both usually had more children and young people than they were designed for. These two factors created an unsafe environment where abuse was able to occur. It also meant children and young people were often unsupervised, which made abuse more likely.³⁸⁴ Pākehā / Māori survivor Toni Jarvis (Ngāi Tahu, Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāti Toa Rangatira) told the Inquiry that he was abused whenever the older boys could isolate him.³⁸⁵ He told the Inquiry they would time their assaults to be between the Hokio School night watchman's checks.³⁸⁶ NZ European survivor Ms HJ told the Inquiry that there was "no night-time supervision" at Kohitere Centre so this was when they were raped by other boys.³⁸⁷

³⁷⁷ Witness statements of Mr FI (30 July 2021, para 32); of Paora (Paul) Sweeney (30 November 2020, para 103); Daniel Rei (10 February 2021, para 130) and Mr GZ (22 June 2021, para 48).

³⁷⁸ Letter to Public Service Appeal Board from departmental witness (1980, pages 2, 4).

³⁷⁹ Witness statements of Lindsay Eddy (24 March 2021, paras 94–95) and Mr RX (27 March 2023, para 4.6.11).

³⁸⁰ Witness statement of Mr GV (27 July 2021, para 54).

³⁸¹ Letter to Mr Lucas from Dr Frazer, re: [resident] (25 February 1981, page 2).

³⁸² High Court statement of Mike Doolan (7 May 2007, para 194).

³⁸³ NZ Police, Response to Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care Notice to Produce 421 (9 June 2022, para 9.3).

³⁸⁴ Witness statements of Mr SK (10 February 2021, para 374); Mr PF (15 December 2020, paras 154–155) and Mr FI (30 July 2021, para 46); Statement of claim in the High Court of [survivor] (4 August 2006, page 17).

³⁸⁵ Witness statement of Toni Jarvis (12 December 2021, para 71).

³⁸⁶ Witness statement of Toni Jarvis (12 December 2021, para 72).

³⁸⁷ Witness statement of Ms HJ (13 December 2021, para 67).

168. In 1977, the Kohitere Centre principal described the night staff resourcing as totally inadequate: "Two men totally separated for most of the night completely responsible for up to 112 of the most difficult teenagers in the country."³⁸⁸ The requirement to check on boys in secure once an hour was described as 'impossible'.³⁸⁹
169. One Kohitere Centre staff member said inadequate staffing levels meant it was impossible to supervise the three different wings and this contributed to peer abuse.³⁹⁰ A sexual assault of two young people by four other boys at Kohitere Centre was likely have happened due to "inadequate supervision".³⁹¹ When two boys attempted suicide on the same night the Kohitere Centre principal attributed it to a lack of staff in the secure wing.³⁹²
170. Survivors were abused by staff who took advantage of the lack of supervision.³⁹³ NZ European survivor Mr UD was sexually abused by a Kohitere Centre staff member while painting the dormitories: "Unlike today where you'd have to have two people supervising, in those days it was just him alone with the boys."³⁹⁴
171. Survivors told the Inquiry that staff would take boys to the isolated dunes to commit abuse.³⁹⁵ Survivors told the Inquiry they were also abused by other boys on the sand dunes. Samoan survivor Mr CE told the Inquiry this was because they were well hidden from the residence: "A lot of the violence and sickening behaviour took place over the sand dunes because you were out of sight from the staff there."³⁹⁶ Staff members interviewed by the Ministry of Social Development acknowledged that the sand dunes were a place where abuse happened and where children and young people were unsupervised.³⁹⁷

Off-site unsupervised visits with staff and other adults led to abuse

172. Staff at Hokio School appeared to be aware of, and consented to, children and young people going on unsupervised visits to men's homes.³⁹⁸ One former staff member recalled seeing boys at the house of Hokio School cook Michael Ansell, who was later convicted of child sexual abuse. He stated that Ansell enjoyed taking boys off the property, but no-one thought anything of it at the time.³⁹⁹

388 Letter from PT Woulfe to the Director-General, Night Cover / Kohitere (4 May 1977).

389 Letter from PT Woulfe to the Director-General, Night Cover / Kohitere (4 May 1977).

390 Daniel Rei v Chief Executive: transcript of interview with former staff member (11 November 2009, page 1–2).

391 Letter from Kohitere director to the Assistant Director-General and chief executive of the Department of Social Welfare regarding sexual violation (30 March 1989, page 1).

392 Letter from Kohitere principal to the superintendent regarding secure block hazards (14 July 1967).

393 Witness statement of Paora (Paul) Sweeney (30 November 2020 paras 120–122).

394 Witness statement of Mr UD (10 March 2021, para 100).

395 Private session transcript of survivor who wishes to remain anonymous (16 March 2022, pages 24–25); Witness statement of Wiremu Waikari (para 229).

396 Witness statement of Mr CE (8 July 2021, para 40).

397 Collated information / summary from interviews with former Hokio staff members (29 April 2012, page 6); Background interview with former residential social worker (13 February 2006, page 2).

398 Letter from A McCready, MP for Manawatu to the Minister of Social Welfare (30 September 1977); Witness statement of Mr PY (18 October 2022, para 99).

399 Collated notes / summary from interview with staff member (28 April 2012, page 3).

173. A former Hokio School principal said there were no rules about children and young people being allowed in a staff member's home and it was neither encouraged nor discouraged.⁴⁰⁰ A survivor described how a housemaster at Hokio School took him to his "separate staff quarters to watch television" before sexually abusing him.⁴⁰¹
174. In 1986, several survivors from Kohitere Centre were sexually abused by photographer and filmmaker Mike Walker,⁴⁰² who was 'mates' with the principal of Kohitere Centre.⁴⁰³ Boys would be approved for day and overnight 'casting' visits with Walker. Maori / Cook Islands survivor Jovander Terry (Ngāti Raukawa) described going to his house multiple times, one of which lasted a weekend.⁴⁰⁴ Jovander told the Inquiry that during these visits, Mr Walker took naked photographs of him:
- "While I was posing, [he] touched my penis to try to move it into certain positions ... At the time I did not realise I was being groomed by him. I realise this now. I feel ashamed about what he did."*⁴⁰⁵
175. Former staff member Mr PY described the photos as 'beautiful' though 'very inappropriate' and that he thought the boys were proud of the pictures.⁴⁰⁶ This minimises the fact an adult man was able to take near-naked pictures of boys and ignores the power imbalance between them.⁴⁰⁷ According to Mr PY, an NZ Police investigation was instigated after staff saw the photos. Mr PY said nothing 'sinister' was uncovered and to his knowledge no boys had complained about the pictures. As far as Mr PY is aware, nothing further was done.⁴⁰⁸ This shows a reliance on the outcome of NZ Police investigations and a failure of both NZ Police and the institution.⁴⁰⁹

Lack of social worker and family visits limited opportunities to disclose abuse

176. Social workers were required to visit a child or young person in social welfare institutions at least every four months, and preferably more frequently.

400 Collated notes / summary from interview with former Hokio and Kohitere principal (7 December 2012, page 1); This was confirmed by another staff member, see: File note: Collated notes / summary from interview with former senior social worker (28 April 2012, page 1).

401 Witness statement of survivor who wishes to remain anonymous.

402 Summary of claim of [survivor] (n.d., page 5); Private session transcript of survivor who wishes to remain anonymous (18 September 2019, page 10).

403 Witness statement of Jovander Terry (29 June 2021, para 125).

404 Witness statement of Jovander Terry (29 June 2021, para 126).

405 Witness statement of Jovander Terry (29 June 2021, para 128).

406 Transcript of interview with Mr PY (23 March 2011, page 15); Witness statement of Mr PY (18 October 2022, para 101).

407 Transcript of interview with Mr PY (23 March 2011, page 15).

408 Witness statement of Mr PY (18 October 2022, para 101).

409 Transcript of interview with Mr PY (23 March 2011, page 16).

177. Hokio School and Kohitere Centre were national institutions, which meant that children and young people came from all over Aotearoa New Zealand. A child's family and /or social worker could be as far away as the South Island.⁴¹⁰ The distance and cost of travel meant it could be difficult for families to visit.⁴¹¹ Some survivors told the Inquiry they never saw their families while there.⁴¹² Māori survivor Mr SB told the Inquiry:

“There were four of us boys ... that were never allowed to go home at all. They said they couldn't get hold of our families, but I think that was just lies.”⁴¹³

178. Social worker visits of state wards were meant to be a critical intervention point to prevent abuse and neglect in care. Minimum visitation were set in 1957. Evidence shows that the visitation of at least once every four months was never met. However survivors told the Inquiry they were never visited by their social worker.⁴¹⁴ Māori survivor Hohepa Taiaroa (Ngāti Apa, Ngāti Kahungunu) told the Inquiry:

“When I was in trouble they always showed up, but when I needed them, no one came. I must have been the one who fell through the cracks.”⁴¹⁵

179. A former residential social worker told the Inquiry that field social workers would visit the boys at Kohitere Centre once or twice a year.⁴¹⁶ Many survivors did not mention their social workers at all in their accounts to the Inquiry, other than their involvement in taking them into care. A lack of social worker or family visits meant survivors had limited opportunities to disclose their abuse to someone independent of the institution.

410 Witness statements of Lindsay Eddy (24 March 2021, para 128) and Wiremu Waikari (27 July 2021, para 292).

411 Witness statements of Hohepa Taiaroa (31 January 2022, para 69); Fred Rawiri (16 April 2021, para 13); Wiremu Waikari (27 July 2021, para 240) and Poihipi McIntyre (14 March 2023, para 4.10.16).

412 Witness statements of Mr UD (10 March 2021, para 101) and Bernie Pitman (3 October 2022, para 36).

413 Witness statement of Mr SB (16 March 2021, para 49).

414 Witness statements of Greg from Owairaka (10 March 2021, para 111); Fa'amoana Luafutu (5 July 2021, para 60) and Brian Moody (4 February 2021, para 79); Brief of evidence of [survivor] for the White trial (24 January 2007, para 48); Witness statements of Mr JV (4 May 2023, para 31) and Mr LT (7 March 2022, para 39).

415 Witness statement of Hohepa Taiaroa (31 January 2022, para 136).

416 Background interview with former residential social worker (13 February 2006, page 17).

Institutions failed to respond adequately to allegations of abuse

180. When survivors came forward to disclose abuse, they were often dismissed, had their allegations ignored, or even seen as culpable in the abuse. Survivors told the Inquiry that staff threatened them to keep them quiet. For much of the Inquiry period, children and young people were not believed when they disclosed abuse and the testimony of adults was seen as more reliable.⁴¹⁷ Some said they wrote letters home,⁴¹⁸ to their social worker⁴¹⁹ and to the Director-General⁴²⁰ about the abuse but suspected that staff were reading their mail. Some survivors told the Inquiry they felt there was no use in complaining as nothing would be done.⁴²¹
181. NZ European survivor Mr A told the Inquiry when he reported his abuse at Hokio School to his social worker, he was called a liar and told to "toughen up".⁴²² Another survivor was told he "deserved it" because he did not try and stop the sexual abuse after the first time it happened.⁴²³
182. Even when management acknowledged abuse had taken place, they failed to take preventative steps or hold staff accountable, such as reporting them to NZ Police.⁴²⁴ They were often allowed to continue in their role,⁴²⁵ or asked to resign but not reported to NZ Police.⁴²⁶ In another instance, there were multiple allegations by different young people during the early 1980s of physical abuse by forestry instructor Paul Tatana.⁴²⁷ The allegations were recorded, and Tatana was issued warnings,⁴²⁸ but he was never removed from his position. Rather, he continued to receive high ratings for his work performance and was even promoted.⁴²⁹
183. Staff also had little ability to make complaints. Ken Cutforth, a recreation officer at Hokio School and Kohitere Centre, told the Inquiry: "there was not really a process for staff raising concerns. It felt like within the structure we were working in you couldn't really complain."⁴³⁰ This was confirmed by teacher Ms SE.⁴³¹

417 Allegation made by resident and subsequent inquiry (18 January 1990, pages 1–2).

418 Witness statement of Mr SB (16 March 2021, para 47).

419 Witness statement of David Williams (aka John Williams), (15 March 2021, para 122).

420 Witness statement of Desmond Hurring (17 February 2021, para 61).

421 Witness statements of Wayne Keen (28 April 2021, para 50) and Peter Porter (4 May 2023, para 130).

422 Witness statement of Mr A (19 August 2020, para 49).

423 Cooper Legal, Settlement offer for a survivor (18 August 2020, para 56).

424 Memorandum regarding liability for Father Kelly's actions (13 September 2011).

425 Letter from Kohitere principal to P Tatana (29 September 1981); Letter from Kohitere principal to Director-General (30 April 1982); Witness statement of Mike Doolan (29 April 2021, page 12).

426 Interview with staff member (7 September 2011, page 9).

427 Letter from Kohitere assistant principal to P Tatana (3 April 1980); Letter from resident to the principal Kohitere (23 September 1981); Minute sheet regarding allegation of assault of two boys by Mr Tatana at Kohitere (21 April 1982).

428 Letter from Kohitere principal to P Tatana (29 September 1981); Letter from Kohitere principal to Director-General (30 April 1982).

429 Work performance evaluation of Paul Tatana (8 May 1981); Work performance evaluation of Paul Tatana (31 March 1982); Letter to Mr Tatana from Kohitere principal: promotion to Chief Instructor (8 October 1987).

430 Witness statement of Ken Cutforth (3 October 2022, para 55).

431 Witness statement of Ms SE (19 November 2021, para 56).

Systemic factors that caused or contributed to abuse and neglect

Silencing of staff and covering up complaints

184. The Inquiry received evidence of senior staff and the Department of Social Welfare retaliating against more junior staff for complaining. Ms PD, a social work supervisor at Kohitere Centre raised concerns with the principal about staff treatment of boys, but her concerns were dismissed.⁴³² Ms PD also wrote to the Director-General of Social Welfare with details of the assaults.⁴³³ The principal was informed of her complaint and he was "screaming and shouting at me asking me why the hell I had written the report".⁴³⁴ Ms PD resigned after head office told her to leave because of what she wrote.⁴³⁵ This was not the first time a staff member lost their job for speaking up. In 1977, a domestic staff member wrote to her local Member of Parliament about boys being allowed to make unsupervised evening visits to the photographer and filmmaker Walker. The woman was subsequently 'sacked'⁴³⁶ and labelled as "a gossip" by the principal.⁴³⁷ Walker went on to abuse boys from Kohitere Centre in the 1980s.
185. In a letter to the Human Rights Commission in 1980, staff member Ken Cutforth raised concerns about the practice of transferring staff who had allegations of abuse against them.⁴³⁸ One case was Brian Zygadlo, who was accused of indecent assault by three girls at Palmerston North Girls' Home, where he was superintendent.⁴³⁹ In response, the Director-General of Social Welfare requested, and was granted, approval from the State Services Commission to transfer Zygadlo to Hokio School. This was considered the least disruptive to his career⁴⁴⁰ despite the conclusion that "Mr Zygadlo is not particularly suitable social worker material".⁴⁴¹
186. Zygadlo was the subject of nine allegations of abuse – six of which relate to the time after his transfer, including three sexual abuse allegations at Hokio School,⁴⁴² and three subsequent physical abuse allegations at Epuni Boys' Home and Stanmore Boys' Home.⁴⁴³

432 Witness statement of Ms PD (23 October 2022, para 2.27).

433 Witness statement of Ms PD (23 October 2022, para 3.21).

434 Witness statement of Ms PD (23 October 2022, para 3.21).

435 Witness statement of Ms PD (23 October 2022, para 3.21).

436 Letter from MP for Manawatu to the Minister of Social Welfare (30 September 1977).

437 File note by Assistant Director-General, Social Work, regarding Kohitere Inquiry and recording discussion with Kohitere principal (20 September 1977); Letter to Commissioner of Police from assistant director general, regarding ex employee Kohitere (20 September 1977).

438 Letter from Ken Cutforth to the Human Rights Commission regarding promotion and transfer of staff (21 April 1980).

439 Letter from Assistant Director to the Director-General, Social Work regarding attached letter from Rowe, O'Sullivan & Co to the district child welfare officer regarding Mr B Zygadlo (1 May 1972, page 2).

440 Letter from Acting Assistant Director to Director-General of Social Welfare regarding Mr B Zygadlo (28 May 1972, page 2).

441 Letter from DG Reilly to the State Services Commission regarding B Zygadlo, Principal, Girls' Home: Palmerston North (31 May 1972, page 2).

442 Ministry of Social Development, Assessment for David Williams (aka John Williams), (n.d., page 3); Ministry of Social Development, Response to Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse In Care Notice to Produce No 345, para 4: Table of allegations relating to staff named in Schedule B, MSD Spreadsheet.

443 Ministry of Social Development, Response to Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse In Care Notice to Produce No 345, para 4: Table of allegations relating to staff named in Schedule B, MSD Spreadsheet.

187. Staff also had little ability to make complaints. Ken Cutforth, a recreation officer at Hokio School and Kohitere Centre, told the Inquiry: "There was not really a process for staff raising concerns. It felt like within the structure we were working in you couldn't really complain."⁴⁴⁴ This was confirmed by teacher Ms SE.⁴⁴⁵

Inadequate response to proven allegations of abuse: Maahi Tukapua

188. Maahi Tukapua was a housemaster at Hokio School from November 1971 and physically and sexually assaulted many boys during this time. Deputy principal at the time, Mike Doolan, later stated: "Just about the whole population had been interfered with in some way or another."⁴⁴⁶
189. Niuean / Māori survivor Mr VV (Ngāpuhi) reported being sexually abused by Maahi Tukapua to a staff member at Hokio School, who asked if he was hurt, and when he said no, was told not to worry about it.⁴⁴⁷
190. In February 1972 a 13-year-old boy made detailed allegations of sexual abuse by Tukapua.⁴⁴⁸ The following day he was left alone at the police station without a support person, and eventually retracted his statement. He was described as leaving the police station in a "distressed state".⁴⁴⁹ Management did not punish Tukapua in any way. If staff had supported the boy when he went to NZ Police, or taken further action after this, it could have prevented further abuse.
191. Tukapua was also known to be physically abusive, using excessive force to 'control' children and young people.⁴⁵⁰ In April 1972, three months after the retracted sexual abuse allegations, Tukapua was witnessed punching and kicking two boys who had been fighting in the dining room. In reporting the incident, deputy principal Mike Doolan wrote to the principal:

"If it happens again, and I am sure it will, I feel I will have no option but to suspend him from duty until you are available. I was tempted to do so today, but was unsure of my ground, or...the correct procedure."⁴⁵¹

444 Witness statement of Ken Cutforth (3 October 2022, para 55).

445 Witness statement of Ms SE (19 November 2021, para 56).

446 Interview with Mike Doolan (6 March 2006, page 16).

447 Witness statement of Mr VV (17 February 2021, para 27).

448 Report by acting principal to the superintendent: Allegations of misconduct by staff member (28 February 1972).

449 Report by acting principal to the superintendent: Allegations of misconduct by staff member (28 February 1972).

450 Letter from assistant principal to principal regarding physical abuse by Maahi Tukapua (24 April 1972).

451 Letter from assistant principal to principal regarding physical abuse by Maahi Tukapua (24 April 1972).

192. It is not clear if the incident was reported to the superintendent as required but Tukapua continued working at Hokio School.⁴⁵² In fact, a reference letter for Tukapua written in July 1972 by Mike Doolan, then deputy principal (and later chief social worker), described him as having “considerable potential” and “a natural ability to relate well with others”.⁴⁵³ Three months later, Tukapua was dismissed and convicted of sexually abusing multiple boys.⁴⁵⁴ There was no follow up investigation or support offered to any of the children and young people involved.⁴⁵⁵ Management’s failure to adequately respond to these earlier multiple incidences of abuse directly contributed to Tukapua continuing to perpetrate abuse.
193. After Tukapua was charged, Principal Keith North tried to protect the reputation of Hokio School by seeking (and being granted) an order suppressing any evidence that might identify the institution where the abuse took place.⁴⁵⁶
194. In 2011, more allegations came to light after Tukapua was counselled by chaplain Ross Campbell. During this counselling, Tukapua revealed he had sexually abused up to 300 victims, 130 of whom were believed to have been at Hokio School. According to the Child, Youth and Family worker who spoke to Mr Campbell, when Mr Campbell took these allegations to NZ Police, they declined to investigate.⁴⁵⁷
195. The Inquiry was advised by Victoria Police in Australia that in 2021 Tukapua was convicted of sexual assault of children in Australia and imprisoned, where he remained until his death that same year.

Inadequate response to proven allegations of abuse: Michael Ansell

196. Michael Ansell worked at Hokio School from 1973 until October 1976. Ansell targeted and isolated young boys, then sexually abused them.⁴⁵⁸ This often took place at Ansell’s off-site house near the residence.⁴⁵⁹ Samoan survivor David Williams (aka John Williams) said that if Ansell called a boy to work in the kitchen, other children knew what was going to happen and ‘there was nothing we could do for the poor bugger.’⁴⁶⁰ NZ European survivor Earl White described the abuse:
- “When we went to his house, he would take boys into his bedroom ... it was always the same thing, masturbating me and I would be made to then do the same to him.”***⁴⁶¹

452 Transcript of cross examination of Mike Doolan by Sonia Cooper at the White trial (3 August 2007, page 52).

453 Reference letter for M Takupua, written by Acting Principal M Doolan (29 July 1972).

454 Letter from principal Kohitere to Director-General Social Welfare: Sexual misconduct with boys at Hokio (30 October 1972).

455 Interview with Mike Doolan (6 March 2006, pages 17–18).

456 Letter from principal Hokio to the Director-General (30 October 1972).

457 Email exchange between Garth Young and Fiona Wilson regarding allegations made by Ross Campbell (May 2011).

458 Witness statement of David Williams (aka John Williams), (15 March 2021, para 103); Cooper, S, Culture of abuse and perpetrators of abuse at Department of Social Welfare institutions: A paper based on the civil legal proceedings of clients represented by Sonia M Cooper (page 82); Ministry of Social Development, Practice review for [claimant] (12 July 2010, para 11); Ministry of Social Development, Legal advice on possible payment (27 April 2011, para 6.1); Letter from Ministry of Justice to S Cooper: Criminal conviction information (4 May 2007, page 5).

459 Witness statement of Lindsay Eddy (24 March 2021, para 103).

460 Witness statement of David Williams (aka John Williams), (15 March 2021, para 107).

461 Witness statement of Earl White (15 July 2020, para 42).

197. Survivors told the Inquiry that after they disclosed sexual abuse by Ansell, staff members made threats towards them while holding a broken pool cue: "They threatened that anyone who made false allegations about a staff member would be shipped to the Kohitere Centre Secure Block or would be severely dealt to."⁴⁶²
198. Eventually in 1976, after three boys came forward and disclosed abuse, Ansell admitted to the allegations and was 'allowed' to resign. The school did not see fit to dismiss him. A letter from the acting principal reporting his resignation clearly shows that staff saw survivors as complicit in the abuse. He wrote that three boys had been "involved most intimately with Mr Ansell" via 'mutual masturbation, anal intercourse and other forms of sexual misbehaviour'.⁴⁶³ He described the boys' reluctance in coming forward as they "had established a very close relationship" with Ansell.⁴⁶⁴ Even the NZ Police report detailing the allegations described the boys as "willing parties" in the abuse.⁴⁶⁵ Framing the sexual abuse in this way failed to acknowledge grooming behaviour and that the boys had been manipulated and abused by an adult in a position of power.
199. Ansell was convicted of eight indecent assault charges involving the three boys. Evidence given in the White trial (discussed further in Chapter 6 of this report) suggested that even though staff were aware of allegations of sexual abuse and anal rape,⁴⁶⁶ the more serious offences may not have been reported to NZ Police, as Ansell was only convicted of indecent assault.⁴⁶⁷ The acting principal said that, as no other boys had come forward, they assumed there were no other victims.⁴⁶⁸ However, because of the strong no-narking culture and the way complaints were treated, it is certain survivors would have chosen to stay silent. NZ European survivor Earl White (one of the brothers in the White trial) did not find out Ansell had been convicted until he was an adult.⁴⁶⁹ Given that this was the second staff member to be convicted of sexual abuse within four years, it is hard to understand why management, and the Department of Social Welfare, didn't appear to take the abuse more seriously.
200. Ansell had a prior conviction of sexual assault before his employment at Hokio School,⁴⁷⁰ but this was neither disclosed nor discovered at the time he was hired.⁴⁷¹ Had children at Hokio School's complaints of sexual abuse by Ansell been properly investigated prior to him being arrested, the Department of Social Welfare could have discovered that he had convictions for sexual abuse. Not only could subsequent abuse have been prevented, but more efforts could have been made to see if he had abused other boys.

462 Witness statement of Mr SN (30 April 2021, para 135).

463 Letter to principal Kohitere: Resignation of M Ansell (20 October 1976, page 1).

464 Letter to principal Kohitere: Resignation of M Ansell (20 October 1976, page 1).

465 Letter from Ministry of Justice to S Cooper: Criminal conviction information (4 May 2007, page 9).

466 Draft brief of evidence for Parati Paurini in the case of Earl White (11 February 2004, para 28).

467 Draft brief of evidence for Parati Paurini in the case of Earl White (11 February 2004, para 32).

468 Draft brief of evidence for Parati Paurini in the case of Earl White (11 February 2004, para 33).

469 Witness statement of Earl White (15 July 2020, para 64).

470 Supplementary Criminal Offence Report: Michael James Ansell.

471 High Court statement of Mike Doolan (7 May 2007, paras 258–262).

Societal factors that caused or contributed to abuse and neglect

Attitudes towards children and young people were that they were 'delinquent' and untrustworthy

201. Survivors told the Inquiry that staff would often see them as 'bad' kids⁴⁷² and not deserving of love and care. Children and young people were described in their case files as dishonest or as outright liars.⁴⁷³ These descriptions may have influenced the way in which staff treated allegations of abuse by children and young people. NZ European survivor Robert Zane Thomson said:

*"The assumption was that you were damaged before you came into care. I wasn't damaged when I came into care. The damage occurred because of how I was treated when I came into care."*⁴⁷⁴

202. A staff memo following the hospitalisation of a boy at Kohitere Centre after an attempted overdose gives a good indication of dismissive attitudes: "This was not a serious suicide attempt ... Rather, this was a manipulative act by a disturbed and calculating youth."⁴⁷⁵

203. Former social worker Mr PY said some staff in the secure unit had no "vision of hope for some of the young people".⁴⁷⁶ Pacific survivor Mr RX agrees:

*"In the past when I have read information held about me by the DSW, I recall a comment saying 'there is nothing we can do for him'. This is something that should never be written about a child."*⁴⁷⁷

472 Witness statements of Philip Laws (23 September 2021, para 6.7) and Desmond Hurring (17 February 2021, para 57).

473 Case file of undisclosed survivor: Report from Rongotai College (22 August 1978); Case file of Mr AA: Progress and holiday (30 November 1973, page 1); Psychiatric assessment for the Department of Social Welfare (27 July 1970); Memo: Supplementary case report on survivor (29 September 1970, page 5, para 3).

474 Witness statement of Robert Zane Thomson (16 May 2023, paras 109–11).

475 Memo to Director-General of Social Welfare from Kohitere acting principal regarding issue of drugs (21 May 1975).

476 Witness statement of Mr PY (18 October 2022, para 90).

477 Witness statement of Mr RX (27 March 2023, para 4.6.13).

Disablism contributed to abuse and neglect of Deaf and disabled survivors

204. At least two Deaf survivors were admitted to Kohitere Centre, which was not an appropriate placement to meet their needs. Even in former senior social worker Mr PY's description of a Deaf child the onus appears to be on the Deaf child to communicate, rather than on the institution to help him be understood:
- "He was physically strong and had outbursts, I think through not being understood and not being able to express himself ... I think he could lip read, and he would try to talk, but he was very hard to understand."*⁴⁷⁸
205. The 1981 annual report for Kohitere Centre indicates that a Deaf specialist attended to the needs of a Deaf student, but this appeared to be a visiting, rather than a permanent role.⁴⁷⁹
206. Māori survivor Mr FI (Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāti Porou) told the Inquiry that he witnessed a staff member at Hokio School who had sexually assaulted him, also abusing a disabled survivor: "[He] was always taken advantage of by this housemaster because he was handicapped. [He] was a bit shy to ever say anything."⁴⁸⁰
207. Of those survivors registered with the Inquiry who were at Hokio School and Kohitere Centre, 13 (6 percent) identified as disabled, most commonly with cognitive impairment or being neurodiverse.⁴⁸¹ However, it is likely the number of disabled survivors is much higher.

478 Witness statement of Mr PY (18 October 2022, paras 94–95).

479 Kohitere Boys' Training Centre, Annual Report 1981 (30 June 1981, page 17).

480 Witness statement of Mr FI (Royal 30 July 2021, paras 51–52).

481 This could be an under-representation of the actual number of disabled survivors who registered with the Inquiry as this is self-disclosed data.

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**A LARGE NUMBER OF BOYS THAT
I WAS IN THE CULTURE GROUP
WITH ARE EITHER DEAD OR IN
PRISON NOW ... SOME I BELIEVE
BY SUICIDE ... [ANOTHER BOY]
DIED AFTER JUMPING OFF A
BRIDGE AND DROWNING IN A
RIVER WHILE TRYING TO ESCAPE
POLICE, AFTER RUNNING AWAY
FROM HOKIO ... EVERY ONE
OF THE BOYS IN THAT PHOTO
HAS SUFFERED**

//

TANI TEKORONGA
COOK ISLANDS, MĀORI (NGĀI TAHU)



“
**STAFF KNEW THERE
WAS SEXUAL ABUSE
BUT WANTED TO
COVER IT UP.**
”

PHILIP LAWS
NZ EUROPEAN

Philip Laws


Year of birth: 1973

Type of care facility: Foster homes; boys' homes – Epuni Boys' Home in Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt, Stanmore Road Boys' Home in Ōtautahi Christchurch, Hamilton Boys' Home in Kirikiriroa Hamilton, Hokio Beach School near Taitoko Levin, Kohitere Boys' Training Centre in Taitoko Levin; health camps – Glenelg Children's Health Camp in Ōtautahi Christchurch.

Ethnicity: NZ European

Whānau background: Phillip has one brother. His parents separated when he was 6 years old and he and his brother lived with his father. He lived with his mother sometimes in between stays at boys' homes.

Currently: Phillip has a daughter. He is on the supported living benefit because his post-traumatic stress disorder keeps him from working. He has a good relationship with his mother and his relationship with his father is better now, but difficult.

 **I've had serious dyslexia my entire life – I believe I was one of the first to be diagnosed in 1983. This has made reading and writing difficult for me throughout my life. I struggled with school and I never received adequate support for my disability.**

My parents separated when I was 6 years old and I chose to live with my father. Because I was struggling with school so much, I became a handful. My brother and I were afraid of him and were acting out at school.

My father is, and always has been, highly religious. He had a hard time dealing with my brother and me as a single father. He wanted to work more and did not want to take care of us. Whenever my father got involved with another woman, we were pushed aside, ignored and left to our own devices.

Sometimes there was normalcy, but it depended on my father's emotional state. I would express myself at school – I would be angry just like my father was.

My father had a breakdown when I was around 9 years old and I went to Glenelg Children's Health Camp. I was sexually assaulted there. I ended up in State care – in Epuni, Stanmore and Hamilton boys' homes. There was lots of physical violence between the boys and I ran away a lot. In the end I was placed at Hokio because I was considered to be too difficult to manage.

It didn't take me long to discover that violence was encouraged and promoted at Hokio. In secure at Hokio, we were required to have a freezing shower at 5.30am. There was a clear punishment system – if you ran away, you got put back in secure. They would force us to run around in a circle and exercise until we were absolutely exhausted. While exercising, other boys would chase us down with racist slurs, and staff watched.

One day, after I'd been there for about a month, three boys forced me to perform oral sex on each of them. I reported the abuse – I was sick of being sexually abused. I told a staff member who seemed to listen to me. He told me he knew they had sexually assaulted me and that they would be punished, but that I was not allowed to tell any of the other boys what had happened, or I would be punished.

Staff knew there was sexual abuse but wanted to cover it up. I don't know if there was any documentation taken about this sexual assault.

The only punishment those boys got was being put in secure. But when they got out of secure, they didn't try to assault me again. They harassed me but the anger inside me was growing, and I started to stand up to them.

One night, a boy accidentally spilled tea on me and burnt me. I was angry and a staff member got us to fight it out in the gym. I was a monster. I destroyed the other boy. I still feel so guilty about this and think of myself as the villain in that situation. I had been the victim so many times and then I victimised someone. Those places bred criminals.

I stayed at Hokio for approximately three to four months and did not run away in that time. I started thinking if I was going to survive, I was going to survive the right way. There were some good staff members and the education was a lot better than what I'd previously had. I got more help with my dyslexia, and got involved with sports.

I was sent to Kohitere over the school holidays. A boy dragged me into a room and made me perform oral sex on him, then he raped me. I ran away for two weeks before I was caught and taken back to Hokio. The staff asked me why I had run away. I told them who raped me but they put me in secure anyway. I got some counselling, but I didn't find it helpful. I've never seen any documentation about this.

After the rape, some staff started sticking up for me a bit. They'd let me visit my mother for a weekend. I didn't run away while on leave because I didn't want her to be blamed. I waited until I returned to Hokio before I ran away for a final time, and they never caught me again. I was discharged as a State ward when I was 15 years old.

The abuse I suffered, and the lack of education and support for my dyslexia have ruined my life. The sexual, physical and emotional abuse I suffered in State care has destroyed most of my relationships. I've had substance abuse issues and been in prison. I self-medicated with drugs and alcohol to block out the trauma – to the point where I didn't care if I died. I've been quick to fly off the handle throughout my life so I decided I had to get help. I've been in regular counselling for about three-and-a-half years. It's made a huge difference.

I blame the State for what happened to me in the system. Children need care and protection – it's not a prison, it should be about care, not punishment. Case workers should be better trained to recognise issues and protect children. They should be able to show children that there are options out there other than drugs, alcohol and prison.

There were several opportunities for someone in the system to help me. I needed a case worker who would listen and could deal with a child. No-one ever asked me why I was running away, not once.

Everyone just said I was a bad kid.⁴⁸²

482 Witness statement of Philip Laws (23 September 2021).

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**I HAD ALWAYS STRUGGLED
TO BE VULNERABLE.
BEING IN THE BOYS'
HOMES I HAD TO HARDEN
UP. EVERYTHING I WENT
THROUGH ENHANCED THE
MISTRUST I FELT TOWARDS
PEOPLE AND AUTHORITY.**

//

MR RY

MĀORI (NGĀTI MANIAPOTO)

Chapter 6: The State's response to allegations of abuse at Hokio School and Kohitere Centre

208. The State failed in its responsibility to properly oversee and monitor these institutions and ensure children and young people received proper care. One example of this is how they responded to reports of abuse. Principals were required to report to the Director-General of Social Welfare any incidents of physical assault by staff.⁴⁸³ However, these reports laid the blame on the child or young person for 'provoking' the staff member and therefore did not hold the staff member to account.⁴⁸⁴ They all recommended that no further action be taken, and it appears the Social Welfare Department did not take any further action. They accepted the reports from management, taking the managers at their word.
209. There were also very few NZ Police investigations into abuse at Hokio School and Kohitere Centre, another failure of State oversight. NZ European survivor Lindsay Eddy told the Inquiry the Levin Police saw the boys as a nuisance more than anything else, and this stopped him from reporting abuse to them.⁴⁸⁵ Other survivors have told the Inquiry that when they did make complaints to NZ Police, they often retracted their statements because of the police process. When complaints were referred to NZ Police by the staff, such as the grooming and sexual behaviour of Mike Walker, the investigations were inadequate. Serious questions are also raised by the NZ Police decision not to investigate the hundreds of allegations of sexual abuse by Maahi Tukapua that were brought to them by a chaplain.
210. All this points to systemic failings by NZ Police and the State in relation to complaints of abuse of children and young people in social welfare institutions.

483 Letter from superintendent to the manager of Kohitere: Definition of corporal punishment (28 September 1961).

484 Note from manager to the superintendent, Levin Boys' Training Centre regarding use of physical force by staff member (20 March 1964, page 1); Note to superintendent, Levin Boys' Training Centre regarding physical punishment by staff member (7 February 1964, page 1); Note from manager to superintendent, Levin Boys' Training Centre regarding corporal punishment (3 October 1963, page 1); Note from manager to superintendent, Levin Boys' Training Centre regarding corporal punishment (30 October 1962); Note from manager to superintendent: corporal punishment (27 August 1962).

485 Witness statement of Lindsay Eddy (24 March 2021, para 110).

The State acknowledges abuse and neglect occurred at Kohitere Centre and has offered some concessions

211. At the Inquiry's State Institutional Response Hearing in August 2022, both Oranga Tamariki Chief Executive Chappie Te Kani and Chief Social Worker Peter Whitcombe acknowledged the no-narking culture at Kohitere Centre, and that the language used there was reminiscent of a prison environment.⁴⁸⁶ Mr Te Kani also agreed the culture of extreme violence and no narking contributed to the abuse and silencing of children and young people in Hokio School and Kohitere Centre.⁴⁸⁷ Mr Te Kani acknowledged that aggression, assault and violence was used to control boys.⁴⁸⁸
212. When asked if he agreed that sexual abuse was systemic, Mr Te Kani instead said that there was "a large number of instances of sexual abuse" during the scope period.⁴⁸⁹ When asked for clarification, Mr Te Kani agreed it was a systemic problem.⁴⁹⁰
213. Known sexual abusers were moved to Hokio School instead of being reported to NZ Police.⁴⁹¹ Management sought name suppression to prevent sexual abuse from being made public, saw boys as complicit in their own sexual abuse, and failed to further investigate allegations of sexual abuse. Based on that evidence, along with the evidence of multiple staff members sexually abusing children, the conclusion of the Inquiry is that the sexual abuse was systemic.

486 Transcript of evidence of Chief Executive Chappie Te Kani and Chief Social Worker Peter Whitcombe for Oranga Tamariki at the Inquiry's State Institutional Response Hearing (Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care, 24 August 2022, pages 807–809).

487 Transcript of evidence of Chief Executive Chappie Te Kani and Chief Social Worker Peter Whitcombe for Oranga Tamariki at the Inquiry's State Institutional Response Hearing (Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care, 24 August 2022, pages 807–809).

488 Transcript of evidence of Chief Executive Chappie Te Kani for Oranga Tamariki at the Inquiry's State Institutional Response Hearing (Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care, 23 August 2022, page 710).

489 Transcript of evidence of Chief Executive Chappie Te Kani for Oranga Tamariki at the Inquiry's State Institutional Response Hearing (Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care, 23 August 2022, page 747).

490 Transcript of evidence of Chief Executive Chappie Te Kani and Chief Social Worker Peter Whitcombe for Oranga Tamariki at the Inquiry's State Institutional Response Hearing (Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care, 24 August 2022, page 807).

491 Letter from acting assistant director to Director-General of Social Welfare regarding Mr B Zygaldó (28 May 1972, page 2).

The State response to historic claims was limited

The Ministry of Social Development report into Kohitere Centre was not balanced

214. In 2008, the Ministry of Social Development's Historic Claims unit commissioned qualitative research into Kohitere Centre, which involved face-to-face interviews with former staff members and children and young people who were sent to the residences from 1950 to 1985. The Understanding Kohitere report prioritised the staff point of view and minimised that of former residents. Of the 94 interviews, 68 were with former residential, departmental or external staff and just 26 were with former residents. Of these 26 residents, 18 were Pākehā, eight were Māori and one was a Pacific person.⁴⁹² This is not representative of the children and young people at Kohitere Centre, most of whom were tamariki and rangatahi Māori. The report was peer reviewed by three people, two of whom were part of the Historic Claims team and were also former staff members of Kohitere Centre.⁴⁹³ The fact that two of the peer reviewers were former staff members of Kohitere Centre can be seen as a significant conflict of interest.
215. Two things are apparent from the Understanding Kohitere report and its findings. First, the report paints a very different picture of the institution compared to the survivor testimony the Inquiry has heard. Second, the report consistently uses language to frame survivors as 'delinquent', dangerous and the main perpetrators of violence, while reiterating that staff abuse was isolated and infrequent. While the report does acknowledge that abuse by staff took place, the Inquiry finds that the conclusions drawn by the report appear to downplay the extent and severity of the abuse.

492 Ministry of Social Development, Understanding Kohitere (2009, pages 24–25).

493 Ministry of Social Development, Understanding Kohitere (2009, page 27).

216. The report described the children and young people as 'anti-social',⁴⁹⁴ 'unpredictable',⁴⁹⁵ "extremely disobedient",⁴⁹⁶ 'volatile',⁴⁹⁷ 'unruly',⁴⁹⁸ and 'problematic'.⁴⁹⁹ On more than 18 occasions, children and young people are described as dangerous to staff and other boys, or as having access to dangerous weapons. Staff are never referred to as dangerous, instead they are described as fearful,⁵⁰⁰ in danger,⁵⁰¹ threatened⁵⁰² or vulnerable.⁵⁰³ In one instance the report states:
- "Residents could, and did, make it particularly difficult for staff they did not like, and their abusiveness and refusal to comply drove some staff members to leave Kohitere Boys' Training Centre."***⁵⁰⁴
217. The Understanding Kohitere report acknowledged that different staff hit and punched children and young people in the face.⁵⁰⁵ However, several times the report claims these were occasional occurrences⁵⁰⁶ or described it as "physical punishment."⁵⁰⁷ Calling it punishment appears to justify the act as discipline, rather than as abuse. In the report, staff also described children and young people being given "a cuff around the ear",⁵⁰⁸ or "a light boot in the bum",⁵⁰⁹ to get them to do what they wanted. While the report acknowledges these as acts of physical mistreatment it also described the physical punishment of children and young people in the forestry unit as "well-intentioned", though 'inappropriate'.⁵¹⁰ This downplays the fact that these were still acts of physical abuse.
218. The report minimised the severity and extent of staff abuse and concluded that it was not systemic.⁵¹¹ It instead described an environment of peer bullying and violence,⁵¹² and so shifted the blame to the children and young people. Given that this report helped Ministry of Social Development staff judge survivor claims, it provided the ministry some justification for not holding itself or former staff to account.
219. Despite describing instances of physical discipline, and serious and covert acts of physical abuse, the Understanding Kohitere report ultimately concludes that: "Although not quantified by this research, it appears that most residents went through Kohitere Centre without being physically punished by staff."⁵¹³ This is contrary to the accounts and sworn testimony given to the Inquiry by survivors. They independently gave consistent, compelling evidence of serious and regular physical abuse by staff members across the decades. These accounts and the way in which the report was compiled persuades the Inquiry that the report likely minimised the extent and degree of physical abuse by staff.

419–512 Ministry of Social Development, Understanding Kohitere (2009).
513 Ministry of Social Development, Understanding Kohitere (2009, page 17).

Survivors were not believed and the redress process was inadequate and limited

220. According to the Inquiry's analysis of Ministry of Social Development data, there have been 348 individual claims made to the agency for abuse at Hokio School or Kohitere Centre. Survivors have been paid settlements or ex-gratia payments ranging from \$2,000 up to \$90,000.⁵¹⁴ Some survivors have also received payments from ACC.⁵¹⁵
221. Of the survivors the Inquiry spoke to from Hokio School and Kohitere Centre, 33 told the Inquiry they had received some form of compensation from the Ministry of Social Development or ACC.⁵¹⁶ A further 18 were still awaiting on the outcome of their claims. Some survivors told the Inquiry they were not interested in pursuing redress, while others were considering it. Survivors told the Inquiry the redress process was drawn out, taking years for an outcome to be reached, and they felt worn down by it. One survivor said it was 17 years from when he first lodged his claim until it was finally resolved.⁵¹⁷ Survivors also told the Inquiry that when they received their case files, these were often heavily redacted.⁵¹⁸
222. Once an offer was made, survivors often felt rushed or coerced into accepting it and like they had no other choice.⁵¹⁹ They described the payments as "blood money" or hush money.⁵²⁰ NZ European survivor Mark Goold said:
- "The whole historic claims process was an insult. I felt cheated and as though I was violated all over again. \$12,000 for a lifetime of abuse is a disgrace, an insult – it's not even a year's wages on the dole."***⁵²¹
223. Some survivors told the Inquiry it was not about the money but rather having someone acknowledge and be accountable for the abuse. Many said the apology from the State was not genuine and did not show accountability.⁵²² NZ European survivor Desmond Hurring told the Inquiry: "I feel like the money I got from MSD is 'dirty money', mainly because MSD has never shown any real remorse or given me a proper apology or acknowledgement for the abuse and harm I suffered."⁵²³

514 Ministry of Social Development, Response to Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care Notice to Produce 14, Schedule A, para 4a, Allegations of abuse in residences.

515 Witness statements of Mr LT (7 March 2022, para 50); Vincent Hogg (15 December 2021, para 182) and Tani Tekoronga (19 January 2022, para 159); Private session transcript of survivor who wishes to remain anonymous (21 January 2021, page 14).

516 Based on 135 witness statements and transcribed private sessions that were analysed. In total 165 survivors from these settings spoke to the Inquiry. As untranscribed private sessions were not included in the analysis the numbers may be higher.

517 Witness statement of Toni Jarvis (12 December 2021, para 213).

518 Witness statements of Poihipi McIntyre (14 March 2023, paras 5.2–5.3) and Mr TD (25 February 2023, para 8).

519 Witness statements of Wiremu Waikari (27 July 2021, para 351) and Michael Taylor (24 April 2023, para 5.1).

520 Witness statements of Danny Akula (13 October 2021, paras 247, 250) and Kevin England (28 January 2021, para 235).

521 Witness statement of Mark Goold (8 June 2021, para 110).

522 Witness statement of Mr RY (6 April 2023, paras 5.3–5.4).

523 Witness statement of Desmond Hurring (17 February 2021, para 90).

224. Some survivors decided to take their case to trial. The Inquiry investigated the White brothers' case in the Inquiry's interim report *He Purapura Ora, he Māra Tipu – From Redress to Puretumu Torowhānui*. Their case was tried at the High Court, which ruled in favour of the Crown, and then again at the Court of Appeal, with the same outcome. Despite the High Court judge accepting it was likely Earl White (one of the brothers) had been sexually abused by Hokio School cook Michael Ansell, having considered the expert evidence of consultant psychiatrists called by the brothers and the Crown, the judge found that this had "not made a material contribution to his [psychological and psychiatric] difficulties".⁵²⁴ In the Inquiry's report *He Purapura Ora, he Māra Tipu – From Redress to Puretumu Torowhānui*, the Inquiry found that the Crown did not behave as a model litigant in the White case and approached and conducted it in 'win at all costs' manner.⁵²⁵
225. Māori survivor Daniel Rei (Ngāti Toa Rangatira) made a claim that was being tracked towards trial in the High Court. It made allegations of the abuse he had suffered in the Kohitere Centre forestry unit, as well as the long periods he had been kept in secure. In the end he settled out of court,⁵²⁶ and he told the Inquiry this was because of the difficulties he experienced going through the preliminary processes before trial: "I was very anxious about being grilled in cross-examination and more generally about talking about the subject matter."⁵²⁷

524 Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care, *He Purapura Ora, he Māra Tipu: From redress to Puretumu Torowhānui*, Volume 2 (December 2021, page 21).

525 Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care, *He Purapura Ora, he Māra Tipu: From redress to Puretumu Torowhānui*, Volume 2 (December 2021, page 27).

526 Crown Law, Deed of settlement and release (22 March 2010).

527 Witness statement of Daniel Rei (10 February 2021, para 260).

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KOHITERE WAS THE START OF IT ALL, THE GANG PROBLEM IN THE COUNTRY TODAY COMES FROM THERE. A LOT OF THE BOYS FROM KOHITERE WERE IN THE GANGS WITH ME LATER ON. THEY WERE MOSTLY MĀORI ... IT'S CALLED 'KOHITERE BOYS' TRAINING CENTRE', BUT I DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY WERE TRAINING US TO DO? BE GANG MEMBERS?

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PAORA (PAUL) SWEENEY
MĀORI (NGATI POROU, NGATI HAKO)

Chapter 7: Hokio School and Kohitere Centre – the Inquiry’s findings

226. The Inquiry finds:

Circumstances that led to individuals being taken or placed into care

227. There was targeted over-surveillance and prosecution of Māori and Pacific children and young people by NZ Police and other authorities from the 1960s.
228. Most of the children and young people placed at Hokio School and Kohitere Centre from the mid-1960s were tamariki and rangatahi Māori. At times about 5 percent were Pacific fanau. The decisions by judges and social workers to place them there were often strongly influenced by racial discrimination against Māori and Pacific Peoples in the justice, social welfare and education systems.
229. Many children and young people placed at Hokio School and Kohitere Centre had already been in multiple State or faith-based institutions, including other residences, foster care or psychiatric settings.
230. Decision makers wrongly believed that training and residential care run by the State provided a safe environment to control and correct behaviours of boys considered juvenile delinquents or social deviants.
231. Decision makers were also influenced by ableist and disablist attitudes of State authorities that devalued and dehumanised disabled children and young people and those with unrecognised neurodiversity.
232. Most children and young people were placed at Hokio School or Kohitere Centre as an outcome of youth justice charges.
233. Other children and young people were placed in the residences because they were in need of care and protection and had been removed from their whānau. Some had absconded from other social welfare residential placements or foster care where they had been abused and neglected.
234. It was inappropriate to place children and young people who required care and protection at Hokio School and Kohitere Centre with those who were placed there as an outcome of youth justice charges.
235. The State failed to engage with and properly support hapori and whānau Māori and Pacific families to care for their own.

Nature and extent of abuse and neglect

236. Hokio School and Kohitere Centre were among the most abusive of all social welfare residential boys' homes in Aotearoa New Zealand. Each had cultures of normalised and pervasive violence.
237. Extreme physical abuse was routinely meted out by staff members to punish, contain and humiliate boys. Many survivors experienced severe corporal punishment from staff, sometimes inflicted with weapons and to the genitals.
238. Staff also punished boys with extreme physical training and inhumane tasks. They were often physically assaulted at the same time.
239. Survivors also experienced significant violence from other children. Younger or physically smaller boys, including the few Pākehā boys, were often a target for abuse from other children and young people.
240. Staff often condoned, encouraged or ignored peer-on-peer violence through a king-pin system, including violent 'stomping' initiations of new boys, who were then expected to do the same to others.
241. Sexual abuse was also pervasive. It was inflicted on survivors by staff members, occasional adult visitors, and other boys. One third of registered survivors from these institutions were groomed, sexually abused, or brutally raped by staff. Groups of older boys raped and sexually abused younger boys – one quarter of survivors described being sexually abused by their peers.
242. Solitary confinement or seclusion was misused. Some survivors were kept for days, weeks and sometimes months in prison-like solitary confinement or 'secure' as a punishment. Survivors were often physically and psychologically abused while in secure.
243. The facilities used for solitary confinement were understaffed and inadequate, and standards for the duration and reporting of 'secure' introduced in the 1980s were continuously breached.
244. Survivors were also placed in secure for attempting to escape abuse and neglect at Hokio School and Kohitere Centre by running away. Most absconders were returned, often by NZ Police, without enquiry as to the reasons for the absconding and were further punished.
245. Senior staff at Kohitere raised concerns with the Department of Social Welfare's head office that the conditions of secure were inadequate, but they were not remedied.
246. Racism and cultural abuse were normalised. Tamariki and rangatahi Māori were overrepresented and were therefore more likely to be abused and to experience racial abuse and cultural neglect. Despite some positive experiences such as kapa haka and kaumatua visits, there was little meaningful cultural or te reo Māori education. This was a transgression against whakapapa.

247. Pacific children and young people were also over-represented and experienced racial abuse and cultural neglect.
248. Psychological and emotional abuse and neglect was also prevalent and often dehumanising.
249. Access to trained staff and psychological support was inconsistent and inadequate for children and young people with complex needs including trauma, grief, suicide attempts and learning difficulties. Senior staff regularly raised concerns about the need for further psychological and psychiatric services for boys, but those concerns were not met.
250. Most children and young people experienced educational neglect and were unable to adequately access or continue their primary and secondary education.
251. The trades training provided as an alternative form of education at Kohitere Centre was often physically demanding but for some children was a positive aspect of their time there. For others, it was dangerous, exploitative and abusive. Boys were often exposed to unsafe working conditions, were injured in work accidents and from on-site punishments.

Impacts of abuse and neglect

252. The abuse and neglect at Hokio School and Kohitere Centre harmed survivors' physical and mental health, their psychological, emotional, cultural and spiritual wellbeing, and their educational and economic prospects.
253. Many survivors suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, nightmares, depression and suicidal ideation. Some have died by suicide.
254. Many survivors had issues with drug and alcohol use and addiction later in life, and many committed offences connected to their addictions and trauma.
255. More than half of the survivors from these institutions who spoke to the Inquiry have been in prison at some point in their lives. Some survivors intentionally committed offences sufficiently serious to ensure they would be discharged as a ward of the State, with borstal or prison seen as preferable to care.
256. Hokio School and Kohitere Centre were places where gangs were formed. The State placed children and young people who were already vulnerable in these places, allowed abuse and neglect to occur, and provided no assistance to survivors to work through the impacts of abuse, neglect and trauma. Instead, many survivors found protection, connection, support and understanding by joining gangs.
257. Many survivors described difficulty with intimate relationships. Some survivors were violent to their partners. Some survivors were, or continue to be, estranged from their children.

258. Many survivors did not receive adequate or any education and had reduced employment and career opportunities as adults.
259. Māori survivors experienced a lack of access to their culture and identity. This diminished their mana and was a transgression against their whakapapa. Although there was some attempt at providing cultural education, such as kapa haka, survivors were still punished for speaking te reo Māori and lost this ability due to cultural neglect by the institutions.
260. Some Pacific People survivors also lost their identity and the ability to speak their languages due to disconnection from their family and their cultures.
261. The harm to survivors has been transferred over generations.

Factors that caused or contributed to abuse and neglect

262. The following personal factors caused or contributed to abuse and neglect at Hokio School and Kohitere Centre:
 - a. Abuse was carried out by staff and peers of the children and young people that were placed in the two institutions.
 - b. Abuse was carried out by some peers of the children and young people that were placed in the two institutions.
 - c. Staff who were abusers used their unlimited access and positions of power and control to abuse and neglect children and young people in their care.
 - d. Many staff and other bystanders who suspected, knew of, or witnessed abuse and neglect failed to intervene to stop it, and some discouraged children and young people from complaining. Only a few staff tried to help the boys in their care.
263. The following institutional factors caused or contributed to abuse and neglect at Hokio School and Kohitere Centre:
 - a. Hierarchical cultures existed at both institutions driven by managers with an ethos of conformity, discipline and harsh punishments in which physical abuse and neglect were tolerated and condoned.
 - b. A strong 'no-narking' culture existed among both staff and children and young people. Children and young people were threatened and beaten by other boys, and sometimes staff, if they attempted to complain about the abuse and neglect.
 - c. Staff recruited to Hokio School and Kohitere Centre often lacked relevant qualifications and expertise. Few were properly trained for their positions of trust. Prior to the 1970s, they were not subject to NZ Police vetting.
 - d. Managers at both institutions did not comply with State policies and limits on corporal punishment were generally not complied with.

- e. The State failed to ensure adequate safeguarding policies and regulations were in place at both institutions. Staff left children and young people unsupervised and permitted them to go to the homes of staff and other adults, increasing the risk of abuse and neglect.
- f. A lack of safeguarding and poor supervision were compounded by overcrowding and an unbalanced staff-to-child ratio. For much of their existence, the institutions were at or over capacity.
- g. Social worker and family visits were infrequent or not at all. This was a further barrier to children and young people making complaints.
- h. There was no adequate complaints process for survivors or staff at either institution. Some staff members lost their jobs after coming forward with allegations or concerns about the behaviour of other employees.
- i. When complaints were made, staff at Hokio School and Kohitere Centre often failed to properly investigate and respond to allegations of serious abuse or to inform the Department of Social Welfare of the complaints.
- j. When staff members were convicted of abuse, Hokio School and Kohitere Centre failed to investigate further, to see if other children and young people had been abused.

264. The following structural, systemic, and practical factors caused or contributed to abuse and neglect at Hokio School and Kohitere Centre:

- a. The physical locations of the institutions and the visiting practices isolated survivors from their whānau, communities and society.
- b. State and institutional policies and practices prioritised the needs of the institutions over the individual needs of vulnerable children and young people in their care and requiring protection.
- c. The Department of Social Welfare and its successors did not comply with practice standards, including safeguarding measures such as social worker visits, which left children and young people unsupervised and without safe and effective complaints procedures.
- d. The Department of Social Welfare and its successors failed to hold itself, the institutions and abusers to account for the systemic abuse of children and young people.
- e. The response of the Department of Social Welfare to complaints of abuse in some instances was to move an alleged or confirmed abuser to another social welfare setting or ask the person to resign, but not report the abuse to NZ Police. Some staff members lost their jobs after making complaints or raising concerns.

- f. The Department of Social Welfare and its successors failed to adequately monitor the two institutions and ensure the children and young people entrusted into State care were safe and looked after. These failures allowed abuse and neglect to continue unchallenged at Hokio School and Kohitere Centre.

265. The following societal factors caused or contributed to abuse and neglect at Hokio School and Kohitere Centre:

- a. Negative social attitudes towards 'delinquent' children and young people and those living in poverty were pervasive among those making decisions to place children at the institutions, and among staff at both institutions. Staff considered that boys required discipline and believed boys were prone to making false complaints.
- b. Racist societal attitudes were reflected in the institutions, including an ignorance of te Tiriti and the principle of active protection of Māori language and culture. Te reo Māori was suppressed and discouraged and efforts to include Māori culture could be tokenistic.

He waiata aroha mō ngā purapura ora

Kāore te aroha i ahau mō koutou e te iwi I mahue kau noa
i te tika
I whakarerea e te ture i raurangi rā Tāmia rawatia ana te
whakamanioro
he huna whakamamae nō te tūkinō
he auhi nō te puku i pēhia kia ngū
Ko te kaikinikini i te tau o taku ate tē rite ai ki te kōharihari o tōu
Arā pea koe rā kei te kopa i Mirumiru-te-pō
Pō tiwhatiwha pōuri kenekene
Tē ai he huringa ake i ō mahara
Nei tāku, 'kei tōia atu te tatau ka tomokia ai'
Tēnā kē ia kia huri ake tāua ki te kimi oranga
E mate Pūmahara? Kāhorehore! Kāhorehore!
E ara e hoa mā, māngai nuitia te kupu pono i te puku
o Kareāroto
Kia iri ki runga rawa ki te rangi tīhore he rangi waruhia
ka awatea
E puta ai te ihu i te ao pakarea ki te ao pakakina
Hei ara mōu kei taku pōkai kōtuku ki te oranga
E hua ai te pito mata i roto rā kei aku purapura ora
Tiritiria ki toi whenua, onokia ka morimoria ai
Ka pihī ki One-haumako, ki One-whakatupu
Kei reira e hika mā te manako kia ea i te utu
Kia whakaahuritia tō mana tangata tō mana tuku iho nā ō rau
kahika Koia ka whanake koia ka manahua koia ka ngawhā
He houkura mārīe mōwai rokiroki āio nā koutou ko Rongo
Koia ka puta ki te whaiāo ki te ao mārāma
Whitiwhiti ora e!

– Paraone Gloyne

A Love Song for the Living Seeds

A Love Song for the Living Seeds

The love within me for you, the people, remains unchanged

Left alone, abandoned by justice and order

Subjected to the silent suffering of mistreatment

A heaviness in the core, silenced into stillness

The gnawing of my heart cannot compare to the anguish of yours

Perhaps you are hidden in the depths of the night, Mirumiru-te-pō

A night dark and dense

Where there may be no turning in your memories

But here's my thought: 'Do not push open the door to enter!'

Instead, let us turn to seek life and well-being

Is memory dead? No, certainly not!

Arise, friends, let the truth resound loudly from the heart of Kareāroto

To ascend to the clear skies, a sky washed clean at dawn

Emerging from the troubled world to a world of promise

A path for you, my flock of herons, to life

So, the precious core may blossom within you, my living seeds

Scattered across the land, cherished and growing in abundance

Rising in One-haumako, in One-whakatupu

There, my friends, lies the hope to fulfil the cost

To restore your human dignity, your inherited mana from your ancestors

Thus, it will thrive, flourish, and burst forth

A peaceful feather, a treasured calm, a serene peace from Rongo

Emerging into the world of light, into the world of understanding

A crossing of life indeed!

– Paraone Gloyne







Abuse in Care

Royal Commission of Inquiry

Presented to the Governor-General by
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