

**ABUSE IN CARE ROYAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY
TULOOU – OUR PACIFIC VOICES: TATALA E PULONGA**

Under The Inquiries Act 2013

In the matter of The Royal Commission of Inquiry into Historical Abuse in State Care and in the Care of Faith-based Institutions

Royal Commission: Judge Coral Shaw (Chair)
Ali'imuaamua Sandra Alofivae
Mr Paul Gibson
Dr Anaru Erueti
Ms Julia Steenson

Counsel: Mr Simon Mount QC, Ms Kerryn Beaton QC,
Ms Tania Sharkey, Mr Semisi Pohiva, Ms Reina Va'ai, Ms Nicole Copeland, Ms Sonja Cooper, Ms Amanda Hill for the Royal Commission
Ms Rachael Schmidt-McCleave, Ms Julia White and Ms Alana Ruakere for the Crown

Venue: Fale o Samoa
141r Bader Drive
Māngere
AUCKLAND

Date: 19 July 2021

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

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1 [9.30 am]

2 **Hearing begins with opening ceremony**

3 [11.45 am]

4 **CHAIR:** Talofa lava, Ni sa bula vinaka, Mauri, Fakaalofa lahi atu, Noa'ia, Tālofa, Kia orana,
5 Mālō nī, Mālō e lelei, Munumunu leana, Tēnā ra koutou katoa. Our warm wishes to you
6 all. Particularly we welcome our survivors, whether they are here today in person or
7 whether they're watching via the livestream, you are very welcome, your presence is very
8 important to us.

9 To our esteemed guests, thank you for honouring us with your presence today. We
10 are truly honoured that you have taken the time and the trouble to come along to support
11 this extremely important issue.

12 I want to particularly thank the students of Mangere College who, through their
13 youthful passion, have covered us with a warm Pacific mantle. And also to those who
14 brought their fine mats and honoured us with that presence as well, thank you very much to
15 all of you.

16 So, welcome to all of you to the Royal Commission into Abuse in Care. This
17 hearing is a very important part of our wider Pacific investigation in which we are
18 examining the experiences of Pacific people who have been abused in care, both care of the
19 State and in the care of faith-based institutions.

20 This is the first of its kind, this hearing, not only for New Zealand but particularly
21 for Pacific survivors for Pacific communities, and the wider Pacific regions. Our Pacific
22 team has named the hearing 'Tulou - Our Pacific Voices: Tatala e Pulonga'. Others much
23 more knowledgeable than I will explain to you the full depth and breadth of this Tongan
24 saying. But I want to let the voice of one of our survivors, Leoni McInroe, a Pacific
25 survivor, to speak instead. What Leoni said was this: "The darkness and shame we have
26 carried has begun to lift in the light of exposing the truth of what we suffered at the hands
27 of so many for so long."

28 My name is Coral Shaw, I'm the Chair of the Royal Commission and I'm very
29 pleased to now introduce to you my Commissioner colleagues. Commissioner Paul
30 Gibson, who is absent, sadly met with an accident while he was running on Saturday and
31 that means that he cannot travel at the moment. We are hoping that he will join us once he
32 has recovered and we are keeping his seat warm for him. I'll now introduce each of the
33 Commissioners who are able to be here and I'll start with Commissioner Steenson.

34 **COMMISSIONER STEENSON:**

1 E mihi ana kia tātou, tātou kua whakakotahi mai ki te tautoko I te kaupapa I tēnei rā. Nō
 2 reira tēnā tātou tēnā rā tātou katoa. Ko Julia Steenson tōku ingoa, ko Ngāti Whātua rāua ko
 3 Tainui ōku iwi. I just want to say what an absolute privilege the opening ceremony was
 4 this morning. It was an important part of this hearing and it's a very important
 5 acknowledgment of the Pacific whanau that we are here to look after, so kia ora.

6 **CHAIR:** And to my left is Commissioner Anaru Erueti.

7 **COMMISSIONER ERUETI:** Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa kā nui te mihi ki ā koutou ngā iwi
 8 taketake o Pacifica, tēnei te mihi nui kia koutou katoa mauria mai o koutou mana o koutou
 9 reo o koutou tikanga ki waenganui ia mātou. Nau mai hāere mai. Ko Anaru Erueti tōku
 10 ingoa nō Taranaki, kō Ngā Ruahinerangi te iwi, ko Arakuku te hapu, ko Ngārongo te
 11 marae.

12 My name is Anaru Erueti and it's a real honour to be here this week and next week
 13 amongst my Pasifika brothers and sisters. I expect it will be two weeks of a lot of tears and
 14 sadness but also joy and laughter too I'm hoping. And so pleased to be here amongst you
 15 all recognising the importance of hearing Pasifika voices for our mahi, so kia ora koutou.

16 **CHAIR:** And last but no means least, somebody who will be very familiar to all of you, that is my
 17 colleague, Commissioner Ali'imua Sandra Alofivae.

18 **COMMISSIONER ALOFIVAE:** Fa'afetai lava. I la ava ma le fa'aaloalo lava, oute fa'atalofa
 19 atu i le pa'ia ma le mamalu o lau affio ua mafai ona fa'atasi i lenei aso. Sui matagaluega
 20 ese'ese, sui mai le malo susuga faafegaiga ae maise uo ma aiga o e faatatau i ai le tatou aso,
 21 ma le tatou fonotga, o le upu palagi e ta'u o tatou 'Survivors'. A o tatou o e ua o'o i ai mea
 22 mata'utia. Fa'afetai fa'afetai lava le o'o mai, fa'afetai le susū mai. Ia fa'amanuia le Atua I
 23 le tatou fonotga i lenei aso.

24 **CHAIR:** Thank you to each of my colleagues. The hearing is now officially opened and I have
 25 the pleasure of calling upon our leader, our counsel for the Pacific investigation, Ms Tania
 26 Sharkey.

27 **OPENING SUBMISSIONS BY MS SHARKEY**

28 **MS SHARKEY:** Talofa lava, Noa'ia, Ni sa bula vinaka, Mauri, Fakaalofa lahi atu, Tālofa, Kia
 29 orana, Mālō nī, Mālō e lelei, Tēnā koutou katoa. Good morning Commissioners, my name
 30 is Tania Sharkey, Lead Counsel Assist of the Pacific investigation, one of the three
 31 thematic investigations within the Royal Commission of Inquiry alongside the Māori and
 32 disability investigations. I am joined by my senior Counsel Assisting, Simon Mount QC
 33 and Kerryn Beaton QC here with me today.

34 I wish to begin by acknowledging the survivors present, those watching the

1 livestream and those Pacific survivors who will be taking part in Tulou - Our Pacific
2 Voices: Tatala e Pulonga. I acknowledge all other Pacific survivors who have come
3 forward to register or are engaged with the Royal Commission, those survivors who have
4 passed on and are no longer with us, and those who have not yet come forward or who, for
5 a many number of reasons, are unable to do so.

6 I acknowledge the family members and friends supporting our survivors and
7 members of support groups who are here today. I acknowledge all dignitaries and members
8 of the public who are present or watching the livestream.

9 The experience of Pacific peoples in care in New Zealand is framed by the context
10 of the overall experience of Pacific peoples in this country. The first big wave of migrants
11 from the Pacific Islands began in the 1950s. Government and industry turned to the Pacific
12 for workers and actively encouraged Pacific peoples to come and meet the demands for
13 unskilled labour in order to support and grow New Zealand's economy. But despite that
14 encouragement, Pacific people's experienced discrimination as immigrants when compared
15 with how Palagi immigrants were treated. There was a general preference for Palagi
16 immigrants and that preference explicitly enshrined in public policy until the mid-1970s.

17 What research shows is that as a Non-Palagi immigrant community, Pacific peoples
18 have been consistently marginalised, discriminated against and trapped in cycles of
19 socioeconomic deprivation. This experience is rooted in New Zealand's colonial
20 relationship with Pacific nations, the sourcing of Pacific migrants to fill labour intensive
21 jobs for low wages, and subsequent racist singling out of Pacific peoples from the highest
22 levels of Government. The resulting disparity and equality experienced by the Pacific
23 community has created a vulnerability towards Pacific young people coming to the
24 attention of Social Welfare and entering the care system.

25 Tulou - Our Pacific Voices is the first public hearing of its kind for Pacific
26 communities in Aotearoa. The Tongan metaphor Tatala e Pulonga is included in the title as
27 it describes what this hearing will do. The revealing, the peeling back, the lifting of the
28 darkness which, in the context of this hearing, is to make public the experiences of abuse
29 suffered by Pacific peoples in State and/or faith-based care and to also prompt a serious
30 discussion of where to from here of Pacific peoples in care in Aotearoa.

31 By way of general background, over 100 Pacific survivors are registered with the
32 Royal Commission. Many, many more are engaged but for varying reasons have not or are
33 unable to formally register with us. A number of survivors are no longer with us. Of our
34 survivors, the overwhelming majority in terms of Pacific ethnicity are from Samoa and the

1 Cook Islands. They are followed by Tonga, Fiji, Niue, then Tokelau. Further research is
2 required to identify whether this data represents a general reflection of the migration pattern
3 of these countries to Aotearoa, their relative population size in this country, or whether any
4 particular cultural aspects have affected Pacific survivors from those smaller affected
5 nations from coming forward.

6 The art of oratory and storytelling to pass on knowledge and experiences is
7 ingrained and deeply rooted in Pacific history. This two-week public hearing will continue
8 that tradition. The experiences, the evidence you will hear over the next two weeks
9 represents an overall Pacific story. What I mean by that is the experiences we have
10 received from all our Pacific survivors to date provide us with very clear themes which
11 form the narrative of this public hearing and will be told in this way.

12 Days 1 and 2 begin with the contextual background of Pacific peoples in
13 New Zealand. We will hear from voices speaking to the migration story of Pacific peoples
14 to Aotearoa, voices relating to the circumstances which led to them being placed in care,
15 voices from witnesses who speak to the targeted racism of Pacific Islanders. The Dawn
16 Raids did not just suddenly occur one day in 1974. For a long period before that, there was
17 increasing tension towards Pacific Islanders. Pacific Islanders walking down the street
18 being questioned and arrested by Police was not uncommon. Pacific children as young as
19 14 years old being held at Mt Eden Prison.

20 During the Dawn Raid era, Pacific peoples were told to carry passports if you did
21 not look like a Kiwi. Police task forces set up to specifically target Pacific Islanders
22 resulting in significant numbers of arrests and appearances in court by Pacific peoples but
23 without any interpreters available. The word "overstayer" became synonymous with
24 Pacific Islanders. Factories were raided, church services interrupted, dogs were used to
25 scare and intimidate, Pacific peoples were encouraged to nark and to dob each other in as
26 overstayers. There are many other examples and I acknowledge Dr Oliver Sutherland and
27 ACORD, who are watching today via livestream, for providing information invaluable to
28 this aspect of our hearing and our final report.

29 We continue the remainder of this week with the theme of silence which our
30 survivor voices tell us comes in many forms. Silence as to ethnicity, including the data and
31 recording of ethnicity of Pacific peoples in Aotearoa, silence as to shame and fear in a
32 Pacific cultural context, silence as to one's identity and well-being.

33 The experience of Pacific peoples in both State and faith-based care in New Zealand
34 is a severely neglected and under-researched topic. It is made all that the more difficult by

1 the fact that official institutional records largely omitted and obscured Pacific peoples for
2 much of the period between 1950 and 1999.

3 Continuous change around statistical methods and flawed reporting by staff and
4 institutions has resulted in a highly flawed historic account of Pacific peoples in care.
5 Pacific peoples were at times recorded as Māori or combined with Māori in a joint
6 Polynesian category or simply recorded as non-Māori.

7 Inaccurate recording is effectively a form of neglect and, as will be heard from
8 survivors throughout this public hearing, has resulted in distinct forms of abuse for Pacific
9 peoples. An expert witness will give evidence that for the period within the scope to this
10 present day, methods of recording Pacific ethnicity by Government agencies remain
11 inconsistent across the board and this has direct links to the outcomes for Pacific peoples.

12 There are socio-cultural factors present within Pacific communities which may
13 inhibit the disclosure of abuse by survivors, by their families, or survivors who witness
14 abuse. Respect for authority, respect for one's elders, the hierarchical structure of Pacific
15 cultures inhibits abuse disclosure. The importance of protecting the family name and
16 reputation and not bringing shame upon one's family inhibits abuse disclosure. Gender
17 roles, taboo topics such as talking about abuse inhibits abuse disclosure. There are also
18 specific cultural factors and perspectives for Pacific peoples that shape understandings of
19 mental health, disability, and the role of faith.

20 For many Pacific peoples, speaking out against the church is considered a sin
21 greater than no other, given the position which the church and members of the clergy hold
22 within Pacific communities. We will hear evidence from a witness who did speak out. We
23 will hear her experience and the impacts of coming forward. We will hear from a witness
24 who experienced abuse at a faith-based boarding school and the significant impacts of this
25 abuse on his cultural identity. We look at the appropriateness of care placements and
26 adoption in particular and hear from a witness whose Samoan identity and culture was
27 silenced when the State placed her with a Palagi family.

28 In week 2 we continue with themes relevant to the nature, extent and impacts of the
29 abuse in care experienced by Pacific survivors. The survivor accounts of Pacific peoples as
30 a marginalised community demonstrate unique experiences of abuse which differentiate
31 them as a demographic from both Māori and Palagi care survivors.

32 Pacific survivors experienced racist abuse that was directed towards them
33 specifically as migrant Pacific peoples. Survivors speak to Pacific Islanders being treated
34 the worst of all ethnic groups and a preference not to say you were a Pacific Islander for

1 fear of harsher treatment. Staff were ignorant of Pacific cultural norms and characteristics.
2 State and faith-based care systems devoid of any facilitation, strengthening or support of an
3 individual's Pacific culture and identity.

4 You will hear from survivors who lost their language in care, and survivors who
5 were stripped of their cultural identity. What you will see and hear from our Pacific voices
6 is that these survivors, although perhaps different in timing of care, placements, settings,
7 and abuse, have been affected by the themes which form the overall Pacific story.

8 The Talanoa panel held on 29 July marks the beginning of a discussion about two
9 very significant matters relevant to the experiences of abuse in care by Pacific peoples. The
10 first panel will consider the circumstances that see our Pacific peoples go into care and the
11 second panel will consider redress, which, in its simplest form, means righting a wrong.
12 What does redress look like through a Pacific lens. The Government's apology in relation
13 to the Dawn Raids is timely, it's timely for discussion and future consideration of what
14 redress through a Pacific lens might look like.

15 The Talanoa panel is the start of these important conversations. This work does not
16 end here, it is just the beginning. We will go into our communities following this hearing
17 and hold focused fono with Pacific survivors, stakeholders, NGOs, faith-based institutions,
18 community leaders and other relevant agencies to continue gathering information necessary
19 to inform our final report.

20 The decision to hold a Pacific public hearing is not one that was made lightly.
21 There are many different ways a survivor of abuse in State and faith-based care can share
22 their experience with the Royal Commission and this, a public hearing, is just one of them.

23 Our Pacific communities should know there are Pacific voices, including and in
24 addition to those whom you will hear from over the next two weeks, who do want the
25 public to hear their story in this forum, who want the opportunity to speak their truth as
26 other survivors have done in other public hearings.

27 The majority of our survivors appear in person. We have a survivor appearing via
28 video link from prison where there are other survivors, Pacific survivors of abuse. Some
29 survivors are pre-recorded due to their particular situation, some are anonymous. The
30 priority is the survivor and how they wish their experience to be heard. This is how they
31 want the dark cloud to lift, Tatala e Pulonga.

32 We emphasise that what is seen and heard at this public hearing is not the extent of
33 the Pacific investigation. Public hearing time is necessarily constrained and not all matters
34 of importance to the Inquiry under its terms of reference can be dealt with over two weeks.

1 Other work occurs outside of the public hearing domain. The opportunity for Pacific
2 survivors and witnesses to participate is not over. We encourage all survivors and
3 witnesses to abuse in care to contact us and come forward to give an account to the Royal
4 Commission.

5 Considerable thought has gone into the way this public hearing would be run. It
6 was the request of the Pacific investigation to bring the Royal Commission here to the Fale
7 o Samoa, Māngere. South Auckland is home to the largest Pacific population in
8 New Zealand. To bring our Pacific survivors to this fale is important, a Pacific space which
9 for many can represent home and/or a Pacific space for survivors to share their experiences.

10 To bring the Royal Commission to the community is important to make it easily
11 accessible to our Pacific people, our communities, the NGOs and agencies who work with
12 our Pacific survivors with our children and young people; that is important.

13 The Pacific investigation is small in number but big in heart. We are made up of a
14 number of multi-disciplinary teams within the Inquiry. I will mention my team because
15 they have done the hard yards and I am merely fortunate to be the public facing
16 mouthpiece.

17 I am joined by our well-being Maikali Kilione, community engagement Fa'afete
18 Taito, Fonoti Pati Umaga and Tofa Fagaloa; research and policy Fraser Williams, Elaina
19 Lauaki-Vea and Tania Woodcock who is no longer with us; our planning lead Miriama
20 Williams; the investigators who have worked hard Helenā Kaho and Moana Ilalio;
21 solicitors Stephanie Philcox, Reina Va'ai, Lafaai Tims, Hene Taufalele, senior solicitor
22 Alex Leulu and my co-counsel Semisi Pohiva. The Pacific investigation also wish to
23 mention our evidence management team Josh Bannister, Tim Armitage and Kelly Curran.
24 I make special mention to Fraser Williams whose research findings I have quoted in parts
25 of this delivery.

26 The manner of this hearing has been done with the best of intentions, balanced
27 against many factors, many complex issues, both cultural and otherwise. Ultimately the
28 decisions in relation to the selection of witness, the manner and delivery of the Pacific
29 people's experience of abuse in State and faith-based care in this public hearing is delivered
30 by Pacific for Pacific.

31 In closing, the impacts of abuse are far-reaching and cause ripple effects throughout
32 the family and the community. Abuse does not discriminate and given the added layers of
33 cultural complexities, including silence, shame and fear, the effects of abuse in care for
34 Pacific peoples are particularly devastating, the effects are intergenerational.

1 Any discussion or measurement of success for Pacific peoples must be assessed by
2 those in our communities who continue to be disadvantaged. A great number of
3 disadvantaged Pacific peoples can be found in the Care and Protection and Justice spaces.
4 Many of the answers to the questions on how to build thriving Pacific communities for all
5 Pacific peoples can be found in the reasons behind why increasing numbers of our Pacific
6 children are ending up in care and why we are over-represented in the Justice system.
7 Those involved in improving Pacific well-being and outcomes for Pacific peoples and
8 communities must get involved in these spaces, understand and engage in this
9 uncomfortable topic.

10 This hearing will allow survivors a voice to share their experiences, for experts to
11 give insight into a great many issues relevant to Pacific peoples. It is also for the
12 institutions who were responsible for the abuse and those who are responsible for the care
13 and/or future well-being of our children and young people, the chance to listen,
14 acknowledge, learn and make genuine meaningful change to prevent further abuse from
15 occurring.

16 Malo 'aupito, thank you Madam Chair.

17 **CHAIR:** Thank you Ms Sharkey. Before the first witness is called, I'm going to invite Ms White
18 who appears for the Crown.

19 **OPENING SUBMISSIONS BY THE CROWN**

20 **MS WHITE:** Tēnā koutou ngā Kōmihana, Julia White appearing for the Crown. With me today
21 is Alana Ruakere who is the Director of the Crown Secretariat and she will be presenting a
22 brief opening statement. I'd also like to alert the Commissioners at this stage that Rachael
23 Schmidt-McCleave will be appearing for the Crown in week 2 of the hearing.

24 **CHAIR:** Welcome Ms Ruakere.

25 **MS RUAKERE:** Talofa lava, Mālō e lelei, Kia orana, Fakaalofa lahi atu, Ni sa bula vinaka,
26 Taloha ni, Tālofa, Noa'ia, Mauri, Tēnā koutou katoa. On behalf of the Crown response to
27 the Royal Commission, I would like to thank the Commissioners for the opportunity to
28 present a brief opening statement.

29 Firstly, I want to acknowledge the courage and strength of the survivors who have
30 come forward and talanoa, kōrero to the Royal Commission and the hard mahi of the
31 survivors group, their whanau, aiga and supporters who have stood with and helped them
32 sometimes for many years with little recognition or support.

33 I would like to acknowledge her royal highness Princess Mele Siu'ilikutapu, Sir
34 Anand Satyanand and I also wish to acknowledge the Minister for Pacific Peoples and

1 member of parliament for Māngere, Lau Afioa Honourable Aupito William Sio and Lau
2 Afioa Honourable Luamanuvao Dame Winnie Laban and the many Pacific community
3 leaders and supporters who are here today.

4 The Crown's approach to the Royal Commission of Inquiry overall and to
5 Tulou - Our Pacific Voices: Tatala e Pulonga in particular, is to listen and learn from
6 survivors, their communities and leaders about their experiences with the New Zealand
7 State. I am Director of the Crown Response Secretariat, a small team established
8 specifically to co-ordinate the Crown's response to the Abuse in Care Inquiry. Our role is
9 to make sure the Royal Commission gets the historical information and other support it
10 needs from the State agencies to do its job.

11 In addition to the Crown Response Secretariat, the agencies represented here today
12 are the Ministry of Social Development, Oranga Tamariki, the Ministry of Education,
13 Immigration New Zealand, the New Zealand Police and the Ministry for Pacific Peoples.
14 Multiple other Government agencies are listening remotely on the livestream.

15 The importance of survivors' voices is recognised by the Crown. Their contribution
16 to the work of this Royal Commission cannot be overstated and their courage and strength
17 inspires us all. This Inquiry and this hearing will be an opportunity for the Crown to
18 confront some uncomfortable events in the history of our nation, a history of racism and
19 abuse of some of the most vulnerable members of our communities and the devastating
20 impact this has had on Pacific survivors and their families.

21 The Crown is listening carefully so that survivors' stories can drive change to
22 improve Government systems to prevent further abuse and to provide redress to those
23 abused.

24 The Crown is being held to account by survivors' lived experience and is committed
25 to improve. The Crown welcomes the opportunity to hear first-hand from Pacific
26 survivors, to hear their stories and to learn from what they have to say about their
27 experiences in the care system.

28 As in the Royal Commission's previous hearings, the Crown will not be seeking to
29 question any survivor witnesses, nor to have any questions put to survivor witnesses
30 through Counsel Assisting. The Crown's objective at this hearing is to listen actively and to
31 supply information to assist the Royal Commission's inquiry so we can learn and,
32 importantly, change. Fakaaue lahi, malo 'aupito, meitaki maata, fakafetai, fa'afetai lava mo
33 le avanoa.

34 **CHAIR:** Thank you Ms Ruakere. Are there any other statements that anybody else wishes to

1 make? I believe we're there. Thank you for acknowledging your team, Ms Sharkey,
2 I meant to do that and I forgot, but I'm only too conscious that you have a small but
3 perfectly formed team who are assisting you and I do acknowledge them.

4 It is time to call your first witness?

5 **MS SHARKEY:** Yes.

6 **ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR HONOURABLE**
7 **LUAMANUVAO DAME WINNIE LABAN**

8 **CHAIR:** Dame Winnie, if I may call you that. Before you begin your evidence, can I ask you to
9 take the affirmation. Do you solemnly, sincerely and truly declare and affirm that the
10 evidence that you give to the Commission will be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but
11 the truth?

12 A. I do.

13 **QUESTIONING BY MS SHARKEY:** Malo le soifua Luamanuvao Dame Winnie Laban. Thank
14 you very much for being here with us today. You've got your statement in front of you?

15 A. Yes.

16 **Q.** Before we begin, I just wanted to ask whether there are any opening remarks you would
17 like to make?

18 A. E muamua ona ou ta le vai afei ma ou fa'atulou i le pa'ia lasilasi ua fa'atasi mai. Tulou ou
19 ponao'o Samoa i le afio o Tupu ma E'e. Tulou ou Faleupolu. Tulou auauna a le Atua. Oute
20 fa'atalofa atu i le pa'ia ma le mamalu o le aso. Kia ora koutou, Talofa, Kia orana koutou
21 katoatoa, Taloha ni, Fakaalofa lahi atu, Ni sa bula vinaka, Mālō e lelei, Noa'ia, Gude tru
22 olgeta, Shalom and warm Pacific greetings. I greet you all in the sacred languages of the
23 Pacific.

24 Like many migrants from the Pacific Islands, my parents came to New Zealand
25 seeking education and opportunity for their children. Not all families found success. Some
26 children became the victims of the circumstances of the poverty and hardship.

27 Unemployment, relationship break-down and limited family support contributed to child
28 abuse and neglect and led to behavioural psychological and social problems offending and
29 subsequent State intervention. It is my hope that the Royal Commission of Inquiry into
30 Abuse in Care will provide an opportunity for our Pacific people to tell their stories, to be
31 heard and to be understood, and that we build a path grounded in our Pacific cultures and
32 communities leading towards hope, healing and reconciliation. Thank you.

33 **Q.** Thank you. So just for the benefit of those who are watching the livestream and those who
34 are in attendance today, Luamanuvao has kindly provided a statement that will be published

1 on the website following her evidence. So I'm just going to begin at the beginning of your
2 statement and we're looking at migration from the Pacific to Aotearoa and I just wanted to
3 start with your own family's migration, how did they come, what was the story about your
4 parents travelling to this country?

5 A. My parents came in the 50s and, like many Pacific people, there was a draw to the land of
6 milk and honey and opportunity. So, there was a thinking at the time in the different
7 Pacific countries that New Zealand would be a good place to come to get paid work, but
8 also support education and opportunity for their children.

9 Q. How did they end up in Wellington?

10 A. I think what happened was they came to Wellington because family were there and also,
11 they got married at the PIC church in Newtown. And what was also interesting was that
12 they were both the eldest of their families back in Samoa and decided to just come to live in
13 Wellington and we subsequently ended up living in Wainuiomata.

14 Q. Thank you. So just in the context of the migration of Pacific peoples, and in my
15 introduction, I had said the first big wave begins from the 1950s, is there anything you can
16 add to the migration of Pacific peoples to Aotearoa from the 1950s onward?

17 A. You know Bob Marley said if you don't know your history you don't know where you're
18 coming from. Aotearoa New Zealand is a Pacific nation. Its indigenous people are related
19 to Polynesia and the rest of the region, and I've always prayed and hoped many of our
20 people in Aotearoa New Zealand would embrace the Pacific identity in a much more
21 familiar way that builds on that historical connection and our navigators that paddled that
22 ocean, the biggest ocean in the world, for connection, but also for a better life.

23 Q. And just following on from that, the relationship between New Zealand and the various
24 Pacific nations, and in discussions you've mentioned the Treaty of Friendship and the
25 Realm Nation relationships that New Zealand has with Pacific. And I just wanted to ask
26 you whether you could take us through New Zealand's relationship with various Pacific
27 nations?

28 A. As you know, a lot of the Pacific history is not taught in schools in New Zealand and that
29 almost feeds an ignorance and non-understanding of our journey. New Zealand has an
30 interesting history with the Pacific countries and the whole Treaty of Friendship, that was a
31 very, very sad part of our history, the quest for independence and the lives that were paid
32 with that. The Treaty of Friendship also is an acknowledgment about New Zealand's part
33 in the history with Samoa. They also have various historical connections with Cook
34 Islands, Tokelau and Niue and other parts of the Pacific, and it's something that we can

1 reflect on and learn from. The second issue is that 60% of the Pacific population in
2 New Zealand are Kiwi born. They're actually New Zealand born, and that's part of the glue
3 between Aotearoa New Zealand and our kin and our family in the region.

4 **Q.** Just following on from a comment you just made, because in your statement you talk about
5 the Pacific Island context, and at paragraph 18 of your statement you say there is a
6 tendency to view Pacific Islanders as recent immigrants speaking English as their second
7 language. This is not an accurate picture and you outline some statistics for us. I'm just
8 wondering whether you could please take us a bit further through that and elaborate on
9 Pacific Island context.

10 **A.** At the last census, 2018, Pacific peoples constituted 8.1% of New Zealand's total
11 population. We were up from 7.4% in the 2013 census. As I mentioned before, 60% of our
12 Pacific people living in New Zealand are Kiwi born, they're New Zealand born. 20% of
13 Pacific peoples are in the age bracket 15 to 24 years old, 60% of our Pacific peoples are
14 under 30 years of age. Pacific peoples are the major ethnic group in New Zealand with the
15 highest population of our children, 0.14 at 35.79%. Projections for 2026 show that Pacific
16 peoples will just be under 10% of New Zealand's population, 1 in 10 people, and the Pacific
17 youth population will be 14.4% of New Zealand's total youth population. In summary,
18 most of our people who live in New Zealand were born here, they're young and English is
19 their first language.

20 **Q.** If you could continue that please Luamanuvao.

21 **A.** So the Pacific Island population is fast growing and it is absolutely critical that we address
22 the demographics now, not tomorrow, but now. Whilst many Pacific people are doing very
23 well in New Zealand, our health, education, housing, employment, youth offending and
24 socio-economic status are the poorest in New Zealand. Consequently, many Pacific people
25 grow up in material poverty and our young people often become casualties.

26 **Q.** Thank you. And your next part of your statement talks about cultural identity.

27 **A.** Yeah.

28 **Q.** And in the beginning of your statement you say that you aim to talk about strengthening
29 cultural identity and belonging because that's a way that can point forward. So, looking at
30 paragraph 22 of your statement, if you could please comment on the cultural identity
31 aspects.

32 **A.** It is my belief that families and communities can provide our children with support, a sense
33 of belonging, and a cultural identity to help them navigate the often-turbulent path of
34 growth and development. Each of our Pacific Island communities, and that was shown

1 with the gifting this morning, have similar cultural values. While our people have moved
2 and mingled as people of the Pacific, we have retained a set of cultural and spiritual values
3 that have been passed down by our ancestors through our families and our communities to
4 this generation. So maybe I can use an example.

5 So I wanted to say to my other Pacific Island brothers and sisters, I'll just use the
6 Samoan example, but you will know similarities and have similarities. As a Samoan,
7 I know my culture, the fa'asamoa is based on families and extended families, we're talking
8 about aiga, aiga potopoto. Our community in turn is based on the Samoan values of alofa,
9 fa'aaloalo and agaga; love, respect, reciprocity and spirituality. These values are
10 demonstrated through tautua, service; service to family, service to church, service to
11 community, service to our nation and region.

12 At the heart of the fa'asamoa is lands and titles. Where we come from and who we
13 are, our place of belonging and identity, our gafa, our genealogy, our ancestry. Families
14 and communities are the bearers and transmitters of cultural and spiritual values. The loss
15 of cultural identity in a rapidly globalising world is a challenge many people are facing here
16 today in Aotearoa New Zealand. Many of the children who have ended up in State care are
17 the products of families that have struggled to adapt and fit into New Zealand society and
18 have lost their sense of belonging.

19 **Q.** Thank you Luamanuvao. In your statement you say that you've worked with Pacific Island
20 children, families and communities as they negotiated a path through the Social Welfare,
21 justice and education systems. And some of these children have been placed in State care.
22 Could you please describe this work?

23 **A.** I think part of the immigrant story and the cultural identity is when there's a lot of pressure
24 on families, not that that should be used as an excuse with unemployment, dare I say
25 racism, misunderstood, the desire to maintain culture and also to support families back in
26 the Islands, a break-down actually occurs. And the other issue for me is there's been an
27 absence of culture with institutions and decision-making. It has never ever been
28 acknowledged and part of the policy development and the implementation of programmes
29 and responses to where our children are being processed has been lacking. So there is a
30 need for us to break the silos between Government agencies and with NGOs and to work
31 better together and to look at authentic engagement with our communities at the grassroots
32 and our families.

33 **Q.** Okay, so just picking up on a comment that you've just made there; is that departments and
34 providers working in silos, is that right?

1 A. Yeah, my feeling is that, as we know, we have Pacific presence, we also have a ministry,
2 which is very important to have. But what I find with working with agencies is the silos
3 that occur, that families' lives get divided between housing, income, labour, education,
4 health, there is a lack of co-ordination and working together to listen carefully to what the
5 families and our children's needs are and to meet it with vigour and rigour.

6 **Q.** Right, and those silos result in inequalities?

7 A. Yes, because many of our people are also absent from the decision-making. I think it's very
8 important that Pacific people are in decision-making roles, and I'm not talking about
9 anybody, I'm talking about people who have a proven track record who have competencies,
10 who can provide a voice where decisions are made and priorities are made so that the
11 resources and the programmes absolutely meet the needs of our children and our families.

12 **Q.** And so part of that is having Pacific people at the decision-making tables?

13 A. Definitely. And I have a line, if you're not around the table you're on the menu. So if
14 you're not around the boardtable, you're on the menu. And statistics show, you know, much
15 as we've advocated for a very long time, it's very, very important to have our people who
16 have competency, a demonstrated track record and integrity in loving and meeting the
17 needs of our people and ensuring those needs are being met authentically. And if I can dare
18 to use, Tania, education, I don't think education is doing enough. 70% of our Pacific
19 children go to low decile schools and we need to be aspirational, we need to grow success
20 at the highest level, should make university entrance compulsory, dare I say it. It's only
21 because it's important that they have that piece of paper, because it gives us voice, it also
22 gives us thought and intelligence to be able to contribute to better responses from agencies
23 but also to meet the needs of our people.

24 **Q.** So in terms of the 70%, you're talking about education, the 70% that are in low decile
25 schools, do you have any views on the background of that and why that is?

26 A. Well, it's directly linked to where people live and their lower socio-economic position. I'm
27 not saying all low decile schools are not performing. I actually see the results where
28 I work, 65% of the Pacific students are girls, we have a missing brown boys issue with
29 university, many of our children study the arts and we need to be able to grow a stem,
30 business and other topics for study. It's also heart-warming to see many of our people are
31 in trades but we also need to be ambitious to grow in all the other sectors so we can occupy
32 those positions at the board table.

33 **Q.** Thank you. We'll come back to that a little bit soon. In your statement you've said
34 "Throughout my career I have focused on facilitating opportunities for young Pasifika to

1 develop their cultural identity and establish their place of belonging in Aotearoa
2 New Zealand. It is my belief that when young people understand who they are and where
3 they come from, they are better able to safely navigate their way through the challenges
4 they face in life and achieve success." My question was in relation to elaborating on that
5 and explaining that further for those that are listening today.

6 A. Well, what is really encouraging is that we are seeing a group of Pacific people who are
7 coming through articulate but also very grounded in who they are and where they come
8 from. And it is very important to encourage that voice to work alongside mainstream to
9 ensure that our people's needs are being met but to ensure the culture and the language is
10 being addressed. I think one of the examples with Covid was the way that the Ministry of
11 Pacific I think did the Pacific languages. I think it's important that we can see in
12 decision-making roles like Judge Ida Malosi and there's other people here who occupy key
13 roles, that's a light in the tunnel but we need to grow more.

14 Q. Just taking a step back in time a bit and you entering politics. Why did you enter politics?

15 A. Aotearoa New Zealand owes us and that's not being derogatory. They need to reciprocate
16 and thank our people's enormous contribution that they've made to build this country and
17 this society and this economy. For me, coming into politics was because I was very upset
18 about a factory that closed where I live in Wainuiomata when Employment Contracts Act
19 was there, which actually disadvantaged and marginalised workers and unions. And many
20 of our people worked in those factories and they were told that the factory was closing, that
21 there was no redundancy, there was no holiday pay, and they had to go home to their
22 families and still work out ways to support them. What I was annoyed about is why do we
23 have policies that continually perpetuate our marginalisation without working with our
24 communities and coming up with an alternative. If the factory was going to close, why not
25 work out a package with our people and others who have the skills to up-skill them so they
26 can stay in employment, and what happened was the reason why I went in and ran for
27 Parliament was to give back to those workers who had given much of their lives to those
28 factories and New Zealand's economy and they did not deserve to be treated like that.

29 Q. And what was it like, young Pacific Island woman at that time entering politics?

30 A. Well, we also know that within our communities and cultures we have very strong women,
31 you know, our great grandmothers and grandmothers and the women in our communities,
32 we also have strong men, I wanted to acknowledge our fathers and our brothers and
33 cousins. So it really was another continuation of serving and giving back to our people and
34 working really hard to ensure that their needs are being met.

- 1 **Q.** And you'd mentioned before about education and just looking at your work now, Associate
2 Professor for Pasifika at Victoria University, your views on Pacific outcomes in terms of
3 education at paragraph 11 of your statement you say that education institutions need to
4 remove barriers to Pacific Island participation and put in place programmes and processes
5 that enhance Pacific Island achievement. And I was going to ask if you could elaborate on
6 that further.
- 7 **A.** Well, I think one of the areas is that it's important to be driven by data and evidence. We
8 need to grow more academics at university and I'm not saying any academic, academics
9 that actually honour and give back to our cultures and communities. The second issue is
10 that we're not growing PhDs and postgraduates achievement in the numbers that we should
11 be. The third issue is, and I wanted to share about the Borrin project with law, why is it
12 that we only have 3% or just less than 3% of the legal profession who are Pacific. We're
13 severely under-represented in the judiciary and also that group as well. So the Borrin law
14 research project is to work with all the law schools and our communities, lawyers and
15 students as to what is happening that we're not growing numbers in that area, for example.
- 16 **Q.** And as Assistant Vice Chancellor is there a focus on increasing Pasifika student enrolment?
- 17 **A.** Yeah, I think what is important is that we support a pathway for our children, whether it be
18 a trade, whether it be in academia or in business, so they do not end up wasting their lives
19 on drugs and alcohol, and that needs to be addressed seriously and stopped.
- 20 **Q.** You mentioned in your statement the Dawn Raid era. What do you recall of that period of
21 time?
- 22 **A.** To be brown was to be vulnerable and I really wanted to acknowledge the Panthers and
23 those ones who stood up, Tigilau, Fete, all that group that actually stood up to have the
24 courage to say this is not acceptable, you're not going to get away with it. It was horrific, it
25 was abusive, and it should never ever happen again. It also had intergenerational impact,
26 and I only found out recently that some of our children were put into State care. And I just
27 feel that it's very important that never ever gets repeated. And that again was the
28 Government of the day, the policies which were racist and short-sighted and we are having
29 this Inquiry so that we can put a stop to that sort of behaviour and that ever happening
30 again.
- 31 **Q.** At paragraph 30 of your statement you begin a discussion about the way forward.
- 32 **A.** That's right.
- 33 **Q.** Just in that paragraph a bit about the background context and history. I just wondered
34 whether you could take us through.

1 A. Okay. So I'll start with 30. Yeah, so this provides a context to New Zealand. So it's clear
2 there have been major failings of State interventions in the care of children and young
3 people. The process has been evolutionary. The industrial schools of the 19th century, for
4 example the story of life in Burnham Industrial School as told in John A Lee in his books
5 Children of the Poor and Runaway gave way to the Social Welfare institutions of the 20th
6 century. For example, Kohitere, Hokio, Epuni, Ōwairaka, Holdsworth and other boys'
7 homes and their girls equivalent, Kingslea, Stanmore Road, Strathmore, Arbor House etc
8 and eventually led to deinstitutionalisation in the early 21st century driven by an awareness
9 of the rights of children and the training and professionalisation of staff, for example,
10 housemasters and mistresses became residential social workers.

11 In the 19th century, mental health institutions, asylums, were sited in rural
12 locations, away from the gaze and sensitivities of normal society. The same model was
13 used for homes of juvenile delinquents, Kimberley Hospital and Kohitere were both located
14 in rural Levin. These institutions housed and treated children and young people far away
15 from their families and communities. A greater understanding of the roles of families and
16 communities in supporting their young people was one of the drivers of the closure of these
17 facilities and the increase of community-based support programmes for young people and
18 mental health programmes.

19 The evidence is clear that institutions housing children and young people isolated
20 from their families and communities and staffed by non-professionals led to questionable
21 practices and abuse. These are structural and historic matters compounded by the criminal
22 actions of some individuals. It is important that we acknowledge the failings of the past,
23 bring to account those who have abused the trust that they were given and provide
24 opportunities for healing for those who suffered. Furthermore, State agencies must learn
25 from past failures and develop modern, enlightened and culturally appropriate programmes
26 and processes that support the development of children and young people.

27 **Q.** Thank you. So just in terms of your earlier work, you worked with Pacific Island children,
28 families and communities, some of those children had been placed in State care. Were any
29 of the families you worked before within those institutions that you've just spoken about?

30 A. So there were issues in families where it wasn't safe for them, they weren't seen as safe to
31 keep their child or young person. Where the breakdown came was in -- and I'm saying not
32 all State intervention was bad, a lot of it was bad, and with faith institutions as well. But
33 there was a disconnect around who worked with them, the communication with the family,
34 and that also made the problem worse.

- 1 **Q.** So in terms of, you made some comments before about policies and your views on what
2 needs to be improved better in terms of policy work. Could you explain further what you
3 mean by that?
- 4 **A.** What worries me about the continued marginalisation, and I'll only talk about our
5 community, Pacific community, is that there is some goodwill in policy-making agencies
6 but there is a huge disconnect. There are a lot of policy wonks in Government agencies,
7 there's a lack of connection direct with the communities and families that they serve. And
8 what needs to happen is there needs to be a greater coherence and listening to what the
9 needs are from our grassroots communities and families so that the policies and responses
10 that are developed meet those needs. And I said right at beginning, the silos are not helpful
11 and if anything, Covid made a lot of the agencies work together and I think that's something
12 we need to address, but also ensure that Pacific communities' voices are around that table
13 and amongst that group.
- 14 **Q.** Okay, so if we look at the situation with Covid and how things changed, we got a bit of an
15 example about how things can work with different agencies pulling together and working
16 together, what would that look like? Is that between Government agencies and the
17 community and our NGOs and other educational institutions, what are we looking at in
18 terms of what your recommendations would be?
- 19 **A.** There is a need to have a hard look at the demographics and to have a look at the needs and
20 to get a very clear snapshot of our people who are struggling with living a life of dignity.
21 There is a need for a serious addressing of bringing all the parties together, State, faith,
22 NGOs, communities to address these needs. And we need to look really at causes of why,
23 of what is happening and address those seriously.
- 24 **Q.** You talk in your statement about a process that has promise being restorative justice. I'm
25 just looking at paragraph 35 of your statement and your comments that it's been used for
26 Māori in the criminal justice system and has much in common with Pacific values of
27 community and family responsibility. And I just wanted to ask your thoughts if you could
28 elaborate on that further.
- 29 **A.** One of the things that I've always loved about Pacific people is their deep sense of
30 humanity and their ability to heal and despite how hard the abuse might have been, this
31 ability to be able to forgive. Restorative justice is a very natural way of healing between
32 the victim, the perpetrator and the families and communities. It's used in Māori, it's used as
33 the ifoga in Samoa and all the other Pacific equivalents. We can learn by encouraging this
34 mode of bringing people together. And again, this is another piece of cultural knowledge

1 that we can enhance the mainstream system to appreciate, but there is this amazing
2 humanity and generosity of spirit that's very strong in terms of our people and I hope they
3 never lose it.

4 **Q.** And just, you mentioned ifoga before, and for those watching who might not be familiar
5 with the concept of ifoga, could you please explain that?

6 **A.** So basically what happens is if abuse in the worst form or any form occurs, the family of
7 the perpetrator or from the same village will want to come and ask for forgiveness and a lot
8 of the forgiveness is deep, not in money, but in the culture of the fine mats that are often
9 put over the perpetrator's head and the request for forgiveness cannot only take a day, it can
10 take more than a day. So it's very much a way of our people seeking forgiveness in the
11 most profound sense, but that the wrong was not only done by the individual, it actually
12 meant the whole family and the whole village also took that collective responsibility.

13 **Q.** And you talk about the concept of fa'alelei le va, I wonder if you could please describe the
14 va for us for those that aren't familiar with that concept?

15 **A.** So the va or the concept of fa'alelei le va, an English translation would be something like to
16 make good the space or the distance between yourself and others around you. It's an
17 ancient Pacific word and concept which is about one's physical, emotional and spiritual
18 space in relationship to our ancestors and those around us. So for example, Tania, if I look
19 at you, I see that you come from ancestors on your mother's side and your father's side,
20 there's an enormous respect of that va because if I violate you, I violate all of the families
21 and the genealogies in which you come from. It's primary to Pacific cultures, we all know
22 it is taboo to soli le va. Even if you disagree or whatever, it's very important to put that
23 wrong right in a way that doesn't diminish one's humanity and dignity.

24 **Q.** So the concept of the va is relational?

25 **A.** Yeah.

26 **Q.** Between Pacific people; is that correct?

27 **A.** That's right, it's very important you see when somebody goes past, you saw the people
28 bringing the mats, Tulou, so they bow, they don't walk in front of you, because that's
29 covering your face, and your visibility as well. There's a respectful way of behaving and
30 taking responsibility. It is sacred and it's very much a Pacific value that we all know.

31 **Q.** So in terms of damage to the va, is that what abuse does to that va relationship?

32 **A.** It does, because it's not -- that individual comes from genealogies, that individual is not Joe
33 Bloggs, that individual comes from genealogies on the mother's side, the father's side and
34 the extended family.

- 1 **Q.** Right, and --
- 2 **A.** So -- go on.
- 3 **Q.** And so the concept you were talking before about ifoga and restorative justice being a
4 method to repair?
- 5 **A.** To repair the damage that wasn't just about one individual, it was about a whole family and
6 a whole village, including the -- especially the victim.
- 7 **Q.** My apologies, Luamanuvao, can you please say that again?
- 8 **A.** The victim also comes from sacred genealogies and family and community, village and
9 country, so this is why to soli the va is really bad and not done and it's important to heal and
10 to go for reconciliation and the hope is that never happens again.
- 11 **Q.** And it's to make good that relationship, that space between people?
- 12 **A.** Absolutely.
- 13 **Q.** So you were able to view a number of the statements that survivors who consented to pass
14 on. Did you have any views or comments you wish to make about what you had read or
15 seen, themes that had really stood out for you in terms of our Pacific survivors?
- 16 **A.** The survivors are our brothers and sisters. What I wanted to say was we really have to deal
17 with denial and silence and almost the cultural acceptance or the misuse of theology to say
18 that abuse is okay and it's not. What our survivors have shared is an open statement of
19 what happened which was true. What we have to do from inquiries like this is to work out
20 from those voices and those experiences what we need to do and to do better. What worries
21 me is that there's a lot of -- and I've worked with intergenerational abuse where some of the
22 women have tended to cover up for the brother or the father that did wrong. And that's not
23 acceptable. We have to collectively take responsibility to keep everyone safe and we need
24 to stand up to the horrors of abuse in all its forms and say no, it's not acceptable.
- 25 **Q.** So in terms of that collective responsibility, is that the Pacific community?
- 26 **A.** It's all of our responsibility, including other members of society and institutions that impact
27 on our lives, we have to work together.
- 28 **Q.** So at paragraph 46 of your statement you outline some issues that have been identified by
29 Pacific people who have participated to date and how that is complex and difficult. Then
30 you outline some underlying principles. I wondered if you could take us through that
31 please.
- 32 **A.** Sure.
- 33 **Q.** We're at 46 and 47.
- 34 **A.** The issues identified by our people, Pacific people who have participated today, are very

1 complex and difficult. They include the challenge of modern New Zealand life to
2 traditional Pacific family and cultural structures. For example, the emphasis on
3 individualism, you know, and nuclear families. The second one is how do we address
4 serious violence in Pacific communities and families, the third one is how do we recognise
5 and deal with sexual abuse, the third(sic) one is what are our attitudes to alcohol and drugs,
6 and the fourth one is gambling and financial education. So some underlying principles
7 have been identified, including, the first is greater community responsibility for reporting
8 and responding to offending and designing solutions. More Pacific role models and
9 leadership from within Pacific communities, there's a saying in Samoan, "E le taua le tofi a
10 e taua le fa'amaoni", it's not your status or who you are, it's in your ability to work hard and
11 to serve others.

12 The third one is supporting the positive role that can be played by Pacific
13 churches, the fourth one is more Pacific providers, and I'm talking about capable and
14 effective providers, to work with and treat Pacific offenders and to support victims. The
15 next one is the need for training and cultural awareness among mainstream providers and a
16 greater commitment to establish connections between our Government agencies, our
17 communities and families especially, our providers and offenders.

18 **Q.** Just picking up on a couple of comments you made there where you talked about
19 individualism.

20 **A.** Yeah.

21 **Q.** What did you mean by that?

22 **A.** You know, there's a lot of focus on me, my rights, me as an individual, and it's quite
23 paradoxical because the "me" is tied to a genealogy and a collective of cultures and
24 extended families as well. And if I reflect, the one thing about many of our people is they
25 do tend to put the "we" ahead of the "me", and that's challenging when there's not enough
26 money or whatever at times, but there's that generosity of spirit, that deep humanity that's
27 connected to our va and our gafa and genealogies that teach us that the well-being of the
28 family and the collective is more important.

29 **Q.** So it's that collective part of Pacific cultures, and are you saying the importance of
30 individualism, sometimes?

31 **A.** I'm saying that for me, and this is me personally, I'm quite idealistic about that until all of
32 our people are free in terms of marginalisation, I can never claim to be free. I'm talking
33 about middle class Pacific people who also need to take responsibility along with everyone
34 else, including Pākehā, to really address these serious issues of inequality and

- 1 marginalisation. After all, New Zealand, as I said at the beginning, is a Pacific nation, she's
2 part of this region, she doesn't sit on top of the Pacific countries, she sits alongside them.
- 3 **Q.** Then just some of those underlying principles that you mentioned, you said when you came
4 to more Pacific providers you made the comment that good, excellent Pacific providers and
5 ensuring that the job is done for our people. Is that correct?
- 6 **A.** Yeah, I think what is important is we want Pacific providers who absolutely have empathy
7 and listen very carefully to what the needs of our families and communities are and meet
8 those needs. And it's important that the providers that are given the support to deliver and
9 to do that work for our people is done effectively and this is where the connection with our
10 families and communities need to be greater, because they can tell us who's doing the job
11 and who isn't.
- 12 **Q.** Right, so the next principle is increased cultural awareness among mainstream providers.
13 And that would be done by Pacific people?
- 14 **A.** Yeah, I think it's important that competent Pacific people, you know, people like Dr Lisi
15 Petaia, Dr Julia Ioane, people who are appearing this fortnight have those skills, and
16 alongside some of our own people the elders also have cultural and language skills that we
17 can pull together to support others who are working with our people in the mainstream.
- 18 **Q.** So in terms of care institutions, those who are providing care for our Pacific children, is it
19 important that they have that Pacific cultural competence?
- 20 **A.** It's very important, because it's also about cultural safety.
- 21 **Q.** Can you expand on that?
- 22 **A.** Yeah, it's very important that they have an understanding and a respect for our culture, for
23 our history, for our values, and that things like -- little things like pronouncing the names of
24 the families, like Ioane, you know, properly, learning about respect and hearing very
25 carefully to what they are saying, to ensure if it's the Samoan or Tongan language that
26 perhaps that would be a good way to actually communicate with the families.
- 27 **Q.** You would have heard or read some of the survivor stories of Pacific survivors losing their
28 language, their culture, their identity in care. And do you have any views on how for our
29 Pacific people going into care they can maintain their language, their culture, their identity?
- 30 **A.** Well, it's very important that programmes that are provided have that as the centre, and
31 people can reclaim and can reconnect for all sorts of reasons. I mean I do this with my own
32 family, we have New Zealand born Samoans, who people say they can't participate because
33 they don't know the language, and I go they'll learn the language, they'll pick up the
34 language, but it's very important that their voices get heard. So I think there needs to be an

1 openness to accommodating that, but also supporting our children to have the courage, to
2 learn their language and learn their cultures, because there's beauty in those languages and
3 values and culture, so that disconnect needs to be addressed in terms of belonging,
4 reconnection, and feeling whole.

5 **Q.** And part of that disconnection, the loss with their identity, in your view possible factors
6 leading to our children getting into further trouble or issues later on in life; is that correct?

7 **A.** That's right, and I think that's something that we need to look at. One of the things I wanted
8 to say, Tania, is we have a lot of good resourceful people in our communities that should be
9 brought in to look at how best we can support our children in this.

10 **Q.** And what would that look like?

11 **A.** What it would look like is that we have, and dare I mention names, but we have some very
12 good Pacific people who have done well in their fields of work who care passionately about
13 the well-being of our people. And we need to facilitate that group to come together to look
14 at how we can enhance and add better responses in meeting our people and our children
15 who are victims --

16 **Q.** So the importance --

17 **A.** -- and perpetrators.

18 **Q.** Sorry, my apologies. So the importance of having Pacific people involved in decisions
19 around our children being in care?

20 **A.** Absolutely.

21 **Q.** And providing that support for our children in care in terms of maintaining their language,
22 their culture and their identity?

23 **A.** That's right and that they should not be without voice simply because they can't speak the
24 language. It's really important that that's included.

25 **Q.** So just in terms of the restorative justice, and a comment you said about accountability not
26 being a choice. What does that mean?

27 **A.** You know, in New Zealand there's this play around term "accountability". I firmly believe
28 for Pacific people accountability is not a choice. We're brought up to know that we're
29 accountable for our behaviour, for everything we do and say, back to our communities to
30 our families.

31 **Q.** And in terms of accountability and the Dawn Raid issue, we've got an apology that's about
32 to be made by the Government and I just wanted to ask for your views on that and your
33 thoughts about the upcoming Dawn Raid apology?

34 **A.** Well, you know, I think it's a positive that there will be an apology from Government.

1 I remember being asked by some of the media in Wellington about the apology and I said
2 that it's important, apologies are important, but we have to remember the hurt and what
3 happened to our people at that time, that there needs to be a commitment that that never
4 happens again. But it would be good to see something tangible in addition to the apology,
5 that can address, you know, what's happening with our people now and to go forward.

6 **Q.** Because it might well be the first kind of public redress for Pacific that we've seen, so it's
7 interesting that it is going to happen and good for us to have a look at. And when you say
8 "tangible", do you have any thoughts about what that might look like?

9 **A.** Well, you know, we have an issue within New Zealand in terms of our people, but I also
10 have a deep affinity for the countries in which our parents and grandparents came from.
11 The impact of Covid has been enormous, and sometimes New Zealand forgets -- I talked
12 about relationship, respect and reciprocity -- forgets the enormous contribution our people
13 have made to this country and to this economy and society. But also the trade figures are
14 nearly 2 billion and the return from the countries are miniscule. Put alongside that, the
15 remittances that our people, despite Covid, still send their money because they worry and
16 fear for their families. I think tangibles like the RSE scheme where we bring some of our
17 people here to work the orchards and horticulture, that needs to be expanded because the
18 business, the apple and pear people, the turner and growers they're crying out for their
19 labour, our people need that money, the minimum wage or the living wage is more than
20 what they earn back in the Islands. There's huge evidence that shows when they come and
21 work here it's a win/win for New Zealand but they send money back to their families and
22 they can build schools, and they can still businesses. It's that kind of tangible, it's not just
23 rhetoric, it doesn't put food on the table rhetoric, some practical actions that our people can
24 feel encouraged that they're being heard and they're being reciprocated.

25 **Q.** That scheme you're talking about when you say RSE, could you just tell us what's the full
26 name of that scheme is?

27 **A.** It's the Regional Seasonal Employment programme and it's been proven to be very, very
28 successful. There are countries in the Pacific like Samoa and I think Tonga who don't have
29 Covid. This is one tangible way that can also support the horticultural owners and the
30 farmers in New Zealand to get that labour into this country. They work, they pay taxes and
31 they send their money back home which can absolutely contribute to tangibles in their
32 families and villages and communities.

33 **Q.** Right, so you've said that that's one way the Government can repair its relationship with the
34 Pacific. When you talk about repair, that's because of the strained relationship between

- 1 New Zealand and the Pacific because of the Dawn Raids?
- 2 A. Well, you know, New Zealand and Australia are seen as quite dominant in the region
3 because they're bigger, they're developed countries, they have resources, but they're part of
4 the Pacific, New Zealand is of the Pacific. And it needs to look after that relationship
5 because Pacific countries have lots of other countries who want their attention too. But
6 New Zealand is in a wonderful position because of its people, its values, that can really
7 work to strengthen that relationship. Samoa's going to be independent 60 years next year,
8 so it would be interesting to see what the Treaty of Friendship looks like and all the other
9 island groups, are they happy? A lot of Pacific countries are losing a lot of their young
10 people as well to countries like Australia and New Zealand. So, you know, there's some
11 areas and serious issues that we need to be talking about of how we can support each other
12 better.
- 13 Q. One question I have is around educating our children, when we're looking at the Dawn
14 Raids issue, the period leading up to the Dawn Raids, the years before that. Is it important
15 that our Pacific children be taught, how important is it that our children be taught about our
16 history here in this country?
- 17 A. It is very important. I mean it's encouraging to see Māori history in the curriculum; it's
18 very important Pacific history is alongside that. Because it not only benefits our children
19 but also all children of New Zealand should be growing up understanding and knowing the
20 history of Māori and also the Pacific.
- 21 Q. And that's not just the Dawn Raid era, it's also the time, the years leading up to that, would
22 that be correct?
- 23 A. Very much so.
- 24 Q. Just coming to the end of this session, Luamanuvao, I just wanted to ask whether you had
25 any closing remarks that you wished to make before any questions from the
26 Commissioners?
- 27 A. Yeah. Perhaps what I want to say is that I was deeply troubled when I found out that some
28 of our children ended up in State care as a result of their parents being deported during the
29 Dawn Raids. I understand that some of these children suffered from abuse in care and
30 I trust that this Inquiry will investigate those cases and provide opportunities for restorative
31 justice. In conclusion, we can learn from history, we can learn from our past mistakes, we
32 can right the wrongs and together we can heal and build a better world for all of our
33 children. That's really all I have to say and I wanted to thank everyone for the opportunity
34 to contribute to the Royal Commission of Inquiry Into Abuse in Care Tania.

1 **Q.** Fa'afetai. Happy to receive questions from the Commissioners Luamanuvao?

2 **CHAIR:** Yes, thank you. I'm going to ask my colleagues if they have any questions or comments
3 they wish to make.

4 **COMMISSIONER ERUETI:** Tēnā koe te rangatira.

5 A. Kia ora.

6 **Q.** Ka nui te mihi ki a koe. I don't really have any questions. I was struck more, I know Ms
7 Sharkey emphasised the particular nature of the experience of abuse and neglect for
8 Pasifika whānau in her opening statement and that's the point of us being here over these
9 two weeks. But I was also struck by the commonalities in your evidence with Te Ao Māori
10 in terms of rangatahi learning in their own environment and culture and language and how
11 empowering that is. Discovering buried histories, educating the New Zealand public about
12 our histories and the role of discrimination and our histories to the lack of effective -- not
13 being around that table and being on the menu, these sorts of things, so I found it very
14 enlightening for all those reasons. The commonalities but also recognising, I think, the
15 distinctions that are there too. But I just want to thank you for providing that context for us
16 and setting the scene for a continuing exploration of this kaupapa, so ka nui te mihi ki a koe
17 e te whaea, tēnā koe.

18 A. I wanted to say, Dr Erueti, that, you know, Pacific have always supported Māori in terms of
19 the Treaty of Waitangi, we've all been on those marches, but one of the things I wanted to
20 remind people was we have an ancient connection back to Tagaloa, to Tangaroa in terms of
21 our Polynesian connection and we can also learn from each other.

22 The second thing I wanted to say was that, you know, I've worked as a family
23 therapist and I wanted to say that I've worked with a couple of really good Palagi clinical
24 psychologists in our work with our families and I found that the skill set and knowledge
25 those partnerships can bring can also help heal our families, because I know I've been really
26 pushing the culture and that because it's so absent, and languages, but I think bringing
27 together those skills and that knowledge can really help.

28 **Q.** Tēnā koe.

29 **COMMISSIONER STEENSON:** Tēnā koe e rangatira. Ngā mihi nui ki a koe mō o kōrero.

30 Thank you for your really well-educated and articulated insights, particularly into the Dawn
31 Raids and just one pātai from me, one question is around some of these -- you talk about
32 the different treatments of immigrants and how there have been a preference for Pākehā
33 immigrants. Firstly, do you think that continues, and secondly, are there any stand-out
34 policies that you think contributed to that?

1 A. Well, as you know I'm not the Government, but immigration policy would be interesting to
2 look at in terms of who gets to come to New Zealand. There's a lot of focus on business
3 migration and the population demographics of New Zealand. Secondly, I'm surprised that a
4 lot of the blue collar jobs and low paid jobs are not open to peoples of the Pacific to come
5 before any other group, and I'm not being racist but I think it's only right that we should
6 look after our region and our neighbours first. The third thing is that scholarship, you
7 know, we offer scholarships for children from the Pacific to come and there's lots of other
8 countries who do the same, including China, and yet they're prevented from travelling
9 because of Covid and yet they're in countries where they're Covid free, you know, and
10 those opportunities mean that our children can also come here and meet others here and
11 those relationships are gold, because at the end of the day, many of them end up going back
12 to the Islands, being promoted very quickly and become very important connections for
13 Aotearoa New Zealand.

14 Q. Tēnā koe.

15 **COMMISSIONER ALOFIVAE:** Lau Afioa Luamanuvao, fa'afetai lava mo le fa'asoa. Isn't it
16 an unfortunate tragedy that we require a pandemic to get our Government agencies to move
17 much more in alignment is what I think I was hearing. But it gave us much hope in that we
18 saw that thing structurally in terms of those silos were able to be moved. Some of the
19 things that we're hearing, Luamanuvao, directly from our survivors is that what brings them
20 into the system is stuff that is happening in the home and you've outlined very clearly for us
21 around the support that's really required, the investment that's got to go into our homes.
22 And I think you were also alluding to difficulties that we have, or our agencies and our
23 wider communities have in able to be well-informed about what that support actually
24 looked like. Which is why your comments that we need people around the table who are
25 able to make good decisions, that can make everybody feel safe. Not just our communities,
26 but those who basically hold the purse strings. I just want to confirm with you, that in
27 terms of what you're saying, I'm hearing really clearly is the difference between individual
28 and collective and that for Pacific it really is a world view, that you can't keep going back
29 between the two, and this is really important because it's about our recommendations. You
30 talk about the relationship between the big nations, so Samoa and New Zealand, Tonga and
31 New Zealand, the Realm Nations and New Zealand; but then we talk about our Pacific
32 communities in New Zealand actually nationally and then regionally and you break it right
33 down. And the agility that's required is what I'm hearing you say by our decision-makers,
34 but also with our communities to be able to get to the point of being able to influence

1 policy, because that's the real -- that's a real structural barrier for us. Would you say?

2 Yeah.

3 A. No I agree, and also, you know, it's interesting, because when we undertook the Borrin
4 research study which has only just started, we found out that most of our people who have a
5 law degree work in Government departments. So I'm not sure what's happening in terms of
6 policy areas. I mean one of the things I wanted to acknowledge is that, you know, we have
7 Aupito as the Minister of Pacific and I know he works very, very hard, but that's only one
8 person, you know, and others who are also ministers who are Pacific. But there is a
9 disconnect between policy, who writes the policy, who do they consult with, who benefits
10 from it, and there needs to be much more openness and transparency about that, and
11 secondly to have good qualitative and quantitative research which really brings out what
12 Pacific people truly look like so that those agencies can address it. I mean there's examples
13 where they work together, but the difference is still not being made in the way it should be.

14 And the second thing I wanted to say was that there's a lot of work that also needs
15 to be done with our churches and our communities in terms of the work with the families in
16 partnership with those agencies that we have to look how do we prevent abuse, how do we
17 stop abuse and how do we heal, and there just needs to be a greater bringing together of this
18 to address these issues seriously, otherwise this issue is going to become intergenerational
19 and we don't want that.

20 Q. Thank you, and in terms of restorative justice and the use of our cultural intelligence, so
21 like the concept of ifoga, we'll just refer to that because that was the concept you referred
22 to, often in our situations is that you've got the survivor who is in the State care which
23 makes the State, for want of a better frame, they're really, in terms of accountability, that's
24 where we're looking. Whereas with ifoga you've got the perpetrator and the victim. I guess
25 it's about how we translate our concepts without actually losing the essence, the mana, the
26 power, the dignity of what it actually stands for so that there really can be restoration and
27 healing?

28 A. I think it's in the way you translate that, because it's only possible if the victim agrees.

29 Q. Yeah.

30 A. And to understand I think the power of healing, the power of being able to reconcile, to
31 come together, and I think for Pacific people all they want is abuse to stop. I think that's
32 why we're all here. And we have numerous ways in which we can enable that, including
33 restorative justice and the ifoga.

34 Q. Thank you, thank you Luamanuvao.

1 **CHAIR:** Luamanuvao Dame Winnie Laban it falls to me to thank you. I don't have any
2 questions, because this is the beginning of the conversation. This is the beginning of the
3 talanoa, and what I want to acknowledge that has struck me is important, is your ability in
4 placing New Zealand as a Pacific nation beside its Pacific cousins. I think the whakapapa
5 links between are ones that are important, both in terms of individual families, of tribal
6 connections, village connections, but also of State connections, and thank you for sharing
7 that with us. Because what it does is that it brings to mind our collective responsibility.
8 Everybody in New Zealand is collectively responsible for our children, for our young
9 people, and let's not forget our vulnerable adults, those in psychiatric care, in disability
10 care, we are all responsible.

11 What you've also brought to us is the recognition of the deep cultural underpinnings
12 that have to be understood by all of us before we can start repairing. So recognising the va,
13 recognising the particular forms of healing that if we don't do it right, we won't do it at all
14 and you have set the tone of this whole hearing, for this whole hearing for our talanoa about
15 how to analyse the reasons for abuse, but also importantly how to look at ways of healing
16 that isn't just the usual cookie cutter method, but recognises the full richness of all Pacific
17 communities. If we can't do that then we can't do it.

18 So we're very grateful to you, our very first witness at this Pacific hearing, our
19 honoured guest, but also a source of great learning and you've given us much to think
20 about. So thank you so much for your contribution.

21 A. And thank you very much for giving me an opportunity. You know we serve our people
22 and we love our people. Thank you.

23 Q. That is why we're all here, thank you so much. On that note I think we should take a break.
24 We all need our food don't we. So we will take a break now and we will resume again, Ms
25 Sharkey, do you have a time that we should come back?

26 **MS SHARKEY:** 2.30.

27 **CHAIR:** We will resume again at 2.30, thank you.

28 **MS SHARKEY:** 2.30 sharp.

29 **CHAIR:** 2.30 sharp, okay.

30 **Lunch adjournment from 1.30 pm to 2.30 pm**

31 **CHAIR:** Good afternoon and welcome back everybody to the second half of today's hearing. Ms
32 Sharkey.

33 **MS SHARKEY:** Next is Fa'amoana Luafutu.

34 **FA'AMOANA LUAFUTU**

- 1 **CHAIR:** Before we start your evidence, would you like to take the affirmation which I'll read to
2 you.
- 3 A. Pardon?
- 4 **Q.** I'm just going to read you the affirmation and ask you to agree, is that all right?
- 5 A. Yeah.
- 6 **Q.** Do you solemnly, sincerely and truly declare and affirm that the evidence that you give to
7 the Commission will be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?
- 8 A. I do.
- 9 **Q.** Thank you very much.
- 10 **QUESTIONING BY MS SHARKEY:** Malo le soifua Fa'amoana Luafutu. Thank you for being
11 here with us today. Just before we get into things, I'm aware that I've been told I might
12 need to slow down so we just need to be mindful that there are some sign language
13 interpreters, stenographer interpreting what we're both going to be talking about this
14 afternoon.
- 15 A. Okay.
- 16 **Q.** Okay?
- 17 A. Yeah.
- 18 **Q.** Fa'amoana, are there any opening comments you would like to make?
- 19 A. Not really. Just to say that my name is Fa'amoana Luafutu.
- 20 **Q.** Thank you. Fa'amoana, what year were you born please?
- 21 A. 1952.
- 22 **Q.** 1952?
- 23 A. GRO-C.
- 24 **Q.** Thank you. And you were born in Samoa?
- 25 A. Yes, I was, in Falealili, Poutasi.
- 26 **Q.** And what villages are you from in Samoa?
- 27 A. Satalo and Poutasi.
- 28 **Q.** Okay, Fa'amoana, we're going to begin by me asking you to take us back to Samoa and you
29 and your parents, they're getting ready to come to New Zealand?
- 30 A. Yeah.
- 31 **Q.** Can you please tell the Commissioners, tell the Inquiry what it was like at that time?
- 32 A. I remember as a small boy my parents, they packed their dreams in banana boxes. By that
33 I mean that they grew bananas and they sold bananas and I watched them make the cases to

- 1 put the bananas in, and it was all to get our fare so we can move over to the new country
2 which was here.
- 3 **Q.** So them packing those banana boxes and you were selling them at the markets, where were
4 you selling them?
- 5 **A.** They used to have a Government truck come around and pick up all the bananas that each
6 families have amassed. That's how they used to do it, they'd go around all the villages and
7 grab all the bananas that the various growers had packed up ready for sale.
- 8 **Q.** When they were sold that money was put together to save up for the fares?
- 9 **A.** For our fares to New Zealand, yes.
- 10 **Q.** Why did your parents come to New Zealand, what was the dream?
- 11 **A.** The dream of a better life, like all migrants. But for me, myself, I was quite happy in my
12 ignorance, I was quite happy as a little kid in my village. I knew everybody, I knew all my
13 friends and I felt quite safe there, yeah.
- 14 **Q.** You felt safe in your village?
- 15 **A.** In my village, yeah.
- 16 **Q.** And that's what was known to you?
- 17 **A.** That's, yeah, that's how I felt safe and felt I belonged.
- 18 **Q.** And so then you arrive in New Zealand, you're just a little boy?
- 19 **A.** Yeah, I was six years old when I arrived in 1958.
- 20 **Q.** And what did New Zealand look like to you through the eyes of this young boy having just
21 come from the Islands?
- 22 **A.** It looked really pretty from the plane. The little squares of green at the backyards of houses
23 as we were coming over Whenuapai, because Whenuapai was the national airport in those
24 days, the airline was called Teal, T-E-A-L and the irony about the bananas is they didn't
25 have an airport in Samoa in those days and so we hopped on a banana boat to go to Fiji to
26 catch the plane. So that was a bit of an irony for me and we slept on the deck of the banana
27 boats on the way to Fiji to catch our plane.
- 28 **Q.** Thank you Fa'amoana. Fa'amoana, who were you named after?
- 29 **A.** My grandpa.
- 30 **Q.** Your grandpa?
- 31 **A.** Yeah.
- 32 **Q.** What was your grandpa like?
- 33 **A.** Strong, he was one of the best fishermen and he had a plantation as well, so he was -he
34 fished in the ocean and he fished in the bush, if you want to put it that way, you know, he

1 had a garden and a bush and he was a good fisherman. And sometimes I'd go with him and
2 I'd be on the canoe and I'd be baling the water of our canoe as he paddled along. So I was
3 very close to my granddad, in fact I was named after him.

4 **Q.** And did he stay back in Samoa when you came?

5 **A.** Yeah, I was the oldest of four children, because only four could come, and we were -- my
6 parents were the only ones that had a family, all the rest of the crew or the passengers that
7 came with us, there were quite a lot, they were all single people, we were the only family,
8 me and my two younger sisters and the youngest was a boy, my brother, so there was four
9 of us that came in 1958.

10 **Q.** And when you come to New Zealand, Fa'amoana, you go to school and on your first day of
11 school, Fa'amoana, what did your teacher say to you about your name?

12 **A.** I think it was hard for them to pronounce my name, I don't know why, but they found it sort
13 of like too hard to say, so they opted for an English name that was easier to say, and
14 I became John right there and then.

15 **Q.** So from that day on, you became known as John Luafutu?

16 **A.** Yes, that's right and in retrospect there was a big disconnection between Fa'amoana and
17 John.

18 **Q.** Yeah. And so that name sticks with you at school and in State care and later on?

19 **A.** Yes.

20 **Q.** Right, okay. And we're just going to bring up a document, Fa'amoana.

21 **A.** Okay.

22 **Q.** And the first one, this is from Kohitere Boys Training Centre?

23 **A.** Yeah.

24 **Q.** Because they see Fa'amoana, they see John on some of your records. So you'll see that
25 document there.

26 **A.** Yes, I see it.

27 **Q.** And the question is, made to the Registrar General, what is this boy's name and they're told
28 it's Fa'amoana Luafutu. If we can bring up the next document this is where the principal
29 says "Since this lad came to notice he has been consistently known as John Luafutu and to
30 avoid any confusion I suggest this name be adopted for official purposes." And my
31 question, Fa'amoana, is, did anyone at Kohitere ever ask you what name you wanted to be
32 known by?

33 **A.** No.

34 **Q.** And so just thinking about paragraph 8 of your statement, and we're talking about the

- 1 impacts and you said before then the disconnection?
- 2 A. Yeah.
- 3 Q. I think Feke has your statement that we're going to pass over to you. Fa'amoana, we're
4 looking at paragraph 8.
- 5 A. Yeah.
- 6 Q. We're just asking what were the impacts, if you could explain, of them changing your name
7 and how it made you feel?
- 8 A. Well, I'll take you back to the plantation. I used to go with my grandfather every morning,
9 or you know, when it was time for weeding, or go to the garden, and take off his lavalava,
10 put on an old one and he would start weeding. I would stand there as a little boy, hold his
11 tobacco and made sure the matches never got wet. So that was my job and I watch him
12 work on the plantation, I see him sweating, his tattoos glistening in the sun, and that was a
13 powerful image in my mind. And like I said, I grew really close to him, my father was
14 quite busy, he drove a bus sometimes, but I was mostly with my grandfather a lot, and yes,
15 I'm very close to him and the effect that when they took his -- when they took his name
16 away from me that day at school, that's when this whole feeling of feeling not good enough
17 sort of started coming into my mind, you know, I started questioning myself why wasn't my
18 grandfather's name good enough, you know, as a kid when I loved my granddad so much,
19 you know. But then I just put that away and just went with what was before me, you know,
20 so it's like getting on, playing what was before my eyes and that was my new reality was
21 John, I was still trying to come to terms with that.
- 22 Q. Thank you Fa'amoana. So, one question I had was what were the difficulties in speaking
23 up? It might sound like a silly question, but for those who are here listening, tell us why
24 you weren't able to speak up to that teacher who changed your name and to those who
25 insisted on calling you a name that wasn't yours?
- 26 A. Well, I was just a kid, you don't answer your elders back. And that's the thing with our
27 people, or my parents anyway, they're more worried about how I behaved as opposed to
28 any kind of academic achievement. They looked upon me favourably if I knew how to say
29 Tulou in front of people and how, you know, just to know etiquette around people, that was
30 more important to my parents, how to behave around people. They have a saying that a
31 prince is known by his princely ways, my mother used to say to me. So you know, it was
32 like keep your Ps and Qs, know what you are around people. You being a doctor doesn't
33 matter, you know, but if you're a doctor and you knew your etiquette as well, well then
34 you're extra special. But, you know, it's more important that you knew etiquette around

1 people and just good behaviour, that's what my parents valued most. And yeah, so but they
2 never took the chance or they never took time out to learn English, you know.

3 So homework for me and school in general was a non-event because I couldn't get
4 any help from my parents, you know, and the same was "We brought you here to go to
5 school, to educate you, we didn't come here to get educated, we brought you here to go to
6 school." So it was always the sons will return back home. "You're going to be a doctor,
7 you're going to go back to Samoa and help the Government go forward." That was the big
8 dream of our parents back then, you know, but obviously that's not how it turned out.

9 **Q.** Okay, thank you Fa'amoana. So just clarifying what you were saying before with the
10 teachers you couldn't you- felt like you couldn't- ask them to say your proper name, your
11 real name, there was a power imbalance?

12 **A.** Pardon? Yes.

13 **Q.** Was there a power imbalance?

14 **A.** Yeah, definitely.

15 **Q.** With those --

16 **A.** And from the parents again, it's like they were very subservient to the white man, the white
17 culture, you know, do what they say, they know better and that's the attitude that I took
18 with me, you know. And so as you say, how did I feel about my grandfather's name being
19 taken off me? I felt bad, I felt not good enough, but I had to accept the new reality and my
20 mother's voice was right behind me.

21 **Q.** Right, thank you. So what is your message to those who educate our Pacific children who
22 have names that may be hard to say or pronounce?

23 **A.** Well, I'm talking 50 odd years ago now, and I'm glad to see there are some changes in the
24 curriculum, teachers are encouraged to speak the ethnicity of the child at hand. And, yeah,
25 it doesn't matter whether you're from the Islands or whether from Middle East or wherever,
26 you know, it's really important, for me anyway, that they keep the child's name that he's
27 proud of.

28 **Q.** And what is your message to our Pacific people about giving our children Pacific names
29 that may be hard for others to pronounce?

30 **A.** Don't worry about it, I mean, you know, that name's been in your family for hundreds of
31 years, why are you going to change it over because of a new culture that you're in? You
32 know, you've got to maintain the culture that you're born with because that's the source of
33 your pride, I feel, you know, you take your name away then it's almost like saying that
34 culture's no good, this is the new way, it's the English way, this is the proper way, and that's

- 1 it. And as a kid I really couldn't say anything, you know, I just accepted that these people
2 are cleverer than me, they know better and that I'll be a better person if I listen to them.
- 3 **Q.** Because part of our Pacific names bring the history along with us and you think that's
4 important?
- 5 **A.** Yeah, that's right, and most families keep those names, you know, and it's familiar, like
6 I live in Christchurch now, but I come up here, I hear my mother's name amongst my
7 cousins, you know, so it just helps keep the family knitted together by keeping those names
8 from the old culture.
- 9 **Q.** And that's a way we can maintain --
- 10 **A.** Yes.
- 11 **Q.** -- our identities?
- 12 **A.** Identity, dead right.
- 13 **Q.** Okay, thank you Fa'amoana. Just moving along through your statement. We're looking at
14 paragraphs 11 to 13. You speak in this part of your statement about the creation of the
15 oldest Pacific Island gang back in the 60s. Can you tell us more about when and why the
16 first Pacific Island gang was formed?
- 17 **A.** Right. When I first got here in 1958 the King Cobras had just been formed. I didn't know
18 anything about it, you know, I was just a freshie, but that's when the King Cobras were
19 born. And I mention them because those were the guys we looked up to because a few of
20 those old Cobra guys had already been in the boys' home system. And us being naughty
21 kids, as it were, by the Social Welfare Department, the only people we could really relate to
22 was those older guys that had already been in the system, you know, those were the guys
23 we could get along with because they understood us. And by saying that, some of our other
24 people, there's nothing worse than getting judged by your own people to say that you're bad
25 and that, when really we just we- were just mixed up, we were just brown little kids trying
26 to make sense of this whole new world we were in. And we grew up in GRO-B, me and
27 my cousins. They lived in GRO-B and I lived in GRO-B. It was like we were the
28 generation that started the browning of Auckland way back then in 1958. Like I say,
29 that's- when the King Cobras started and we looked up to those guys, because they showed
30 us how to behave when we met up with difficulties on the street, you know.
- 31 **Q.** And how did the name come about?
- 32 **A.** King Cobras? Well, yeah, there you go, it's a migrational gang, it's a migrational story.
33 How did the King Cobra migrate to New Zealand? Well, Ponsonby being the melting pot

1 of New Zealand, I suppose, there were so many languages going there, the only language
2 I didn't hear much of was the Māori language, but it was Niuean, it was Rarotongan, it was
3 Samoan, it was Tongan, it was all over Ponsonby. The state of what South Auckland looks
4 like was what Grey Lynn and Ponsonby used to look like when I was young and I was quite
5 happy there hearing all these colourful languages, our people in flowery clothes and things,
6 you know. So yeah, that's the Ponsonby that I grew up in. Sorry, did I go away from your
7 question?

8 **Q.** That's all right, we can come back to it.

9 **A.** Yeah.

10 **Q.** But I just want to pick up on something you said there. So you're saying that when you
11 were younger in Ponsonby, you were hearing Pacific languages all over the place?

12 **A.** Yeah, yeah.

13 **Q.** Right. And just the name of the King Cobras, how did they come up with that name?

14 **A.** Well, let's say several boys down in Grey Lynn Park on a Wednesday night watching
15 athletics and they wanted something to identify with because, you know, they were migrant
16 children and there was no patch as such, the skin colour was your patch. All the migrant
17 kids that were around at that time made friends with each other. So you had your
18 Pacific Island guys and you had your other guys. One particular guy that was there that
19 was a friend came from India, and as the boys were asking around they were trying to find
20 a group name for their wee group as a means of identity. So they sat around and said
21 "What do you think?" You know, "Oh what about the sharks, it's a feared thing back where
22 I come from", you know, this kind of thing being bantered about. They asked the Indian
23 mate, what was the most feared thing where you come from? And he said the King Cobra.
24 King Cobras, wow, that's us. So that was like, you know, nobody knew much about the
25 name, it was very, you know, how would you say, very Hollywood, I suppose, and nobody
26 knew much about the King Cobras, let alone those young fellas and it just seemed a nice
27 name to have and it came from their little Indian friend.

28 **Q.** Right, and that's the history?

29 **A.** Yeah, and that's the history of the Cobras, and that's how a lot of people say to me, "How
30 did a Pacific Island, predominantly Pacific Island gang get a name like the King Cobras?"
31 Well, because we were migrant children and that migrant friend of the boys mentioned
32 King Cobras, so that's the name they took.

33 **Q.** Thank you Fa'amoana. So what was the attitude towards Pacific peoples back then which
34 made you boys come together like that?

- 1 A. Well, it was like, you know, kids can be cruel, you can go down to the park and go for a
2 swing and being in a minority, you know, you mightn't get a swing. So you knock around
3 with friends same colour as you and same attitude, come from a different place. Like
4 I said, migrant kids all getting together, so they stick together as a means of protection and
5 to survive in the new place they were in and, like I said, they were very much in the
6 minority, it was like not many Tongans, not too many Samoans, not many Indians etc, it
7 was all coming in together, so the young kids got to, yeah, become friends, and be part of a
8 group that they can feel safe, yeah.
- 9 **Q.** And you had said before there weren't patches, your skin colour was your patch?
- 10 A. That's right.
- 11 **Q.** And is that what brought you boys together?
- 12 A. Everyone knew each other, yeah.
- 13 **Q.** Then you say in your statement that there were other gangs formed by brown people after
14 the King Cobras?
- 15 A. Yes.
- 16 **Q.** Why was this, what was happening in our society at the time?
- 17 A. What was happening at the time?
- 18 **Q.** With the turf wars.
- 19 A. Well, yes, I'm talking about the King Cobras, I was 6 at the time, by the time 1964 came
20 around The Beatles had come out, I suppose, yeah, but I was in form 2 and we were waiting
21 for our friends one time at the bottom of Francis Street and Richmond Road, there was a
22 few of us Island boys and a couple of Palagi friends, and a lot of these white kids yelled out
23 that we were a bunch of niggers, you know, out of the bus, that was just how we were, kids,
24 you know, 13, 14 years old at that time, yeah. And so we took that name proudly, we
25 called ourselves the Niggs, that was the name of our gang, and that was --we never made it
26 up, that was thrown at us and we kept it. We kept that right through until it changed again
27 in the late 60s.
- 28 **Q.** And out of one of the gangs that was formed after, did a member go to form on the
29 Polynesian Panthers?
- 30 A. Well, there's a story to that. When the Niggs started, that was 1964, and then the next year,
31 1965, Seddon Tech had just opened up behind the zoo, it's now called Western Springs
32 College, but it had a bad reputation because it was where all the Island kids went to from
33 Ponsonby and Grey Lynn and from all the other schools around. So Seddon Tech was
34 where all the Island kids went to. And halfway through 1965 I was made a State ward and

1 I ended up down through Ōwairaka, down to Kohitere Boys Training Centre in Levin, and
2 then a couple of years after that I got out in 1967 and the whole of Ponsonby had different
3 gangs by then, they had Apaches, they had the ex-hostel boys, that was run by GRO-B they
4 call themselves the Blurples. There were all these other little crews going around and it
5 was like all the kids in Ponsonby, it was like it imploded.

6 Everyone was fighting each other, we kind of knew some of the guys in the
7 Apaches, you know, from around the area. But everyone was fighting and so there was a
8 big brawl outside the Ponsonby Billiard Saloon one night and the Apaches and the Niggs
9 were having a fight, I was in that as well, and what happened was these two older King
10 Cobras, GRO-B, they pulled up in a taxi and they told us off for fighting. "Why are you
11 young fellas fighting, you're all from here, what are you're doing? You better stop
12 that." And so we stopped the fight and GRO-B that runs the King Cobras now, he said
13 "We want a meeting with you young fellas next week at Vermont Street", that's where we
14 had one of our flats, opposite Marist school. So we had a meeting there and some of the
15 older King Cobra guys, who all we looked up to with respect because they knocked around
16 with our older brothers and uncles, so we looked upon them as older brothers; and when
17 they told us to stop we stopped. And then we had our meeting and they came down and
18 they said "From now on there'll be no more gangs in Ponsonby, you're all going to come
19 under the Black Panthers."

20 So they dropped the King Cobras, we were so honoured that they were willing to
21 drop their original King Cobra guys, they dropped that and said "We are now going to go as
22 one under the Black Panthers", and that's the older King Cobra guys and all the different
23 gangs around Ponsonby at that time. So we became one, Black Panthers. And that was
24 mostly party up, Jake the Muss-type parties, you know, girls, bit of crime, what do you call
25 it, sly grog because we weren't allowed in the pubs, so there was all that culture happening
26 at the time.

27 Now we had a friend, his name was GRO-B and he was knocking around with us
28 in the Niggs, you know. And we always kept him clean, we used to have a lot of fights
29 with different gangs, but we always made sure that GRO-B got away from the Police
30 because we wanted him to have a clean record, because he was the brainy one of us, he was
31 making it through tertiary and we wanted him to be a lawyer. Because those days there was
32 no Legal Aid, and any of our people that go up before court they'll end up in Mt Eden
33 because you're not represented. So we wanted our mate to go through university and

1 become a lawyer so he can defend us all.

2 And what happened was around '68, something like that, going on '69, All Along
3 the Watchtower just hit the charts and [GRO-B] came along to one of our parties on a
4 Thursday night and he brought all these books by Malcolm X and Bobby Newton or
5 whatever, Seize the Time from the Black Panthers over in America, you know, that
6 political thing. In other words, [GRO-B] was trying to politicise us, he wanted to us come
7 from a street gang to be part of this political movement that he was getting involved with.
8 We said "Hey [GRO-B] we wanted you to be a lawyer, we don't you to bloody" you-- know,
9 and he says "Look we've got to protest this and protest that, they're taking the Māori land."
10 He got all involved with all those guys up there, and we got disappointed, you know, said
11 "[GRO-B] we're not that, we're here for good times, drinking, girls, you know, and crime
12 and money. We don't want to do any of what you protest the Vietnam war or anything like
13 that, you know, so go away with your fiddling around." So he leaves us but he took a few
14 of our guys because he didn't like what he was seeing, you know, being educated he didn't
15 like the way we were treating women, fighting amongst ourselves and fighting in general,
16 the Police and things.

17 But like I said, he was all right because we kept him clean. So he left the Black
18 Panthers and went with [GRO-B] so there was four of our guys left because of [GRO-B] and
19 they wanted to go political and start something up for our people. Because back then, yeah,
20 we're people from the grass huts, you know. Like we got to Ponsonby, it was flash to us,
21 but by today's standards and looking back it was past its used by date, you know, they had
22 the rat problem, they had the rubbish problem, they had all sorts of problems around
23 Ponsonby, it was home to us and we loved it, you know. So that's how it was for us back
24 then.

25 **Q.** Thank you Fa'amoana. I'm just going to go back a little bit. So you were saying before
26 when you started school --

27 **A.** Yeah.

28 **Q.** -- you could only speak Samoan?

29 **A.** That's right.

30 **Q.** And at home your parents said only Samoan in the home?

31 **A.** Yeah, we weren't allowed to speak Samoan at home. It was obvious because they couldn't
32 speak English, so it was us to retain our language and in a funny way it's helped me keep
33 my language, even though it didn't help me with my homework back then, but my parents

1 didn't want us to, or encourage us, because they couldn't speak. So it was no use asking
2 them anything about any kind of homework, and they made it a rule that when we came
3 home we're back to Samoa, when we're outside of the home we're back to New Zealand, so
4 it was kind of like growing up with a foot in both worlds.

5 **Q.** And with that struggle to speak and understand English, can you explain what it was like at
6 school, what was the struggles you were having at school?

7 **A.** Well, I'll give you an example. I was given the task of doing homework and I went home
8 and I asked one of my cousins what does "homework" mean? They said "Oh things that
9 you do around the house, you know, home and work." I went "Oh yeah okay", so I went
10 and swept up the rubbish and cut a little bit of grass or something. And the next day at
11 school they said "Oh what did you do for homework?" I go "I cut the grass and picked the
12 rubbish." So it was like everyone laughed, you know, and so it was like why are they
13 laughing, you know, I felt like the end of a joke, you know. And to be told that's not
14 homework and put a pointy hat on you and made to sit at the back of the class, that didn't
15 make me want to go back to school at all, you know. So me and my cousins, we decided
16 not to go to school and in that way we came in contact with the system.

17 **Q.** Right, so because you were struggling at school and not feeling like you --

18 **A.** Belonged.

19 **Q.** -- wanted to go back there?

20 **A.** Yeah.

21 **Q.** You start truanting or not going to school?

22 **A.** Yeah, not going to school, yes.

23 **Q.** And that's how you come into contact with the State?

24 **A.** Truant officers and the rest of it, yeah.

25 **Q.** And your files talk about the trouble, the offences that get you brought before the
26 Children's Board. Can you share some of the trouble?

27 **A.** I think one of my first charges was I went with my cousin Atenai out to Manurewa and we
28 were dying it-- was a hot day, we wanted an ice cream, we only had enough for a bus fare
29 there and back, so we were standing at the bus stop and we seen all these people going to
30 the matinees on a Saturday afternoon, all the kids go there and they had all their bikes. So
31 me and my cousin ran across the road, grabbed a bike each when everybody went inside
32 and brought an ice cream with our bus fare, ate the ice cream and then we started biking
33 back to Grey Lynn. And it was the first -- I'd never ever ridden a bike in my life, but my
34 cousin he was such a guy, you know, he helped me learn to ride a bike all the way to Grey

1 Lynn from Manurewa.

2 **Q.** And so there was stealing the bike?

3 A. Yes, I was charged with that, yes, for stealing a bike, the local constable, Mr Carson, yeah,
4 he charged us with stealing bikes, yeah.

5 **Q.** And what was the trouble you got into that brought you before the Children's Board?

6 A. That was one of them, I got probation for that and supervision, and then one day at
7 Pasadena we were down at the transit camp, that was before Western Springs was
8 developed they used to have all these old houses at the back there where they used to have
9 returned soldiers come. But these houses were abandoned by now and they were wrecked,
10 it was just, you know, just a frame really.

11 Anyway, we were around there one day having a cigarette after school and we saw
12 this possum. So we'd never seen a possum before, you know, so we got curious, so we
13 started trying to find it and grab it, it was hissing at us from the corner. So we lit a fire
14 trying to smoke it out, trying to we could have a real good look at it, because it was in the
15 dark, we could only see its eyes shining. So we were trying to smoke it out and the whole
16 damn thing caught alight, the whole place. And it had a bit of a tar roof those days, you
17 know, on the roof of these old houses had sheets of tar on it before they put the iron on.
18 Well that caught on fire really fast and it just went up, boof.

19 But yeah, so the next day at school we were at assembly and me and my cousins'
20 names were called out in front of the school and we were charged with arson, you know.
21 That was one of my other charges, and I was told it was a heavy charge to have on you, but,
22 you know, I didn't really think much of it myself, you know, I just thought it was nothing
23 because the thing about that was me and my cousin were the youngest of the group of boys
24 that were there, there was about eight of us there, but me and my cousin got charged and
25 the other six didn't. You know, so we got taken before the police station, it used to be up
26 by the university then, the old police station, that's where we were charged and, yeah, from
27 school.

28 **Q.** Thank you Fa'amoana. So you come before the Children's Board?

29 A. Yeah.

30 **Q.** Can you tell us what you remember about the day you said goodbye to your mum and went
31 to Ōwairaka Boys' Home?

32 A. Me and my cousin and my aunty and my mother, both of us were going up before the court
33 for this charge and the Children's Court used to be down the bottom of Queen Street
34 opposite what they call the South Pacific Hotel back in those days, and the Children's Court

1 was above the Queens' Arcade in one of the offices upstairs. And, yeah, got sentenced
2 there. Both our mothers were crying and as we were being led away, you know, these
3 Samoan mothers they get out the hanky and they wave, she was crying and saying in
4 Samoan, "Be a good boy, listen to them, listen to the directions they give you." That's what
5 stayed in my mind as I was getting escorted away by the house masters to go to Ōwairaka.

6 **Q.** Thank you Fa'amoana. So that was you and your cousin both went away?

7 **A.** Yeah.

8 **Q.** So you say that the older boys at Ōwairaka didn't like you?

9 **A.** No.

10 **Q.** Why was that?

11 **A.** I don't know, like I said, you know, kids can be cruel, and us being foreigners, you know,
12 we were called coconuts, a couple of little coconuts, you know. And this is from
13 our -- from the other boys, some Māori, but that's what we were called. So right away we
14 were on the back foot battling. But I was so glad because I had a cousin with me, I wasn't
15 by myself, so, you know, and he spoke better English than me anyway, so he was able
16 to -- we were able to stick up for ourselves.

17 **Q.** And how were Pacific Islanders treated compared to others?

18 **A.** I think everyone got treated the same, it was that same kind of treatment, you know, it was
19 all based around discipline and chores and, yeah, things like that, you know, but I can't
20 really say that we were treated any different, you know, and that's what made me think, you
21 know, like once you get into those places, you know, you're all the same, you know,
22 institutions, all jails is a good equalisers, everyone's the same.

23 **Q.** Who were calling you boys "coconuts"?

24 **A.** Some of the guys in there, some Māori fellas, we never got along with the Māori fellas in
25 there, I don't know why, that was at the start. I don't know what that was about, but yeah.

26 **Q.** And at the time that you were in care, Fa'amoana, did you know of any other Islanders
27 being in care around the same time as you?

28 **A.** Yeah, yeah, there were a few, some of them were lying about their names, you know,
29 because of the shame thing, you know. Let me just say one thing about shame. You know,
30 I felt that shame too, I felt the shame of my father, you know, he said "Look son, I'm sick of
31 seeing my family name in the court pages", you know, and I felt his pain and his shame,
32 you know, I realised what he was trying to say to me, but I was on a roller coaster then,
33 even though I could hear him, you know, there was really nothing -- I was on my way, you
34 know.

- 1 **Q.** And before your time --
- 2 **A.** Yeah.
- 3 **Q.** -- before you were in care, did you know of any other Islanders who went through the boys'
4 homes?
- 5 **A.** Yeah, some of the older King Cobra guys were there, that's why we identified with them
6 because they kind of told us how to behave on the street, you know, like "Look, anybody
7 get smart to you, smack them in the mouth", you know, that was some of the older boys
8 that had already been before us that I mentioned, like **GRO-B** and the such like, they'd
9 already been in care and they would have been the first lot, you know, the first lot of guys
10 that were in there. But in my time, yeah, I saw Niueans in there, Tongan, other Samoans,
11 Rarotongans, yeah, there were other Pacific Island kids there.
- 12 **Q.** Thank you Fa'amoana. Some of your records that you've seen, you're recorded as
13 non--Māori. What is your response to that?
- 14 **A.** I could have done that on purpose, you know, because of what I said about the shame of my
15 father's name, you know, I felt his pain and his shame and I didn't want to let my dad down,
16 and, yeah, if my name is spelt my name(sic) and I know a lot of other Samoan inmates, like
17 when they go in for, to get into the police station to get charged, they say "What's your
18 name?" I'll give you an example, "My name is so and so", "What's your last name?" "My
19 name's Bule". "Oh yeah, how do you spell that?" "B-U-L-E", so the policeman writes
20 down B, but there's no B in the Samoan language, it's a P, so it was Pule. So I say "Your
21 name's really Pule", and they go "Yeah but my dad, you know, so I keep it like that." So
22 there's a lot of us guys that wanted to shield our families by letting those names be spelled
23 wrong, let it be said wrong, let them think we're Māoris because the shame of our Island
24 parents, you know.
- 25 **Q.** So that shame factor making you want to hide your Pacific ethnicity.
- 26 **A.** Hide, exactly.
- 27 **Q.** Thank you Fa'amoana. So we're not going to go into the details of your abuse in the homes,
28 it's all in your statement that will be made available afterwards. So just briefly, you say in
29 your statement "I experienced all forms of abuse at Ōwairaka Boys' Home. I experienced
30 abuse at other placements but for me Ōwairaka was the place that changed my life. By the
31 time I left Ōwairaka the gun was already loaded and the dye had been cast because of what
32 happened to me in there." So could you please tell us, Fa'amoana, what did the abuse at
33 Ōwairaka Boys' Home do to you as a boy, a man, a future father, and husband?

1 A. Totally confused, mixed up, and thinking back about what my mother was saying that I was
2 to obey everything that's been put before me, you know. But I know good touches and bad
3 touches, you know, and it was good that I had my cousin there, because if any of those
4 approaches had been made, you know, like it would just be like feral cats, you know, but
5 for some of these other guys, they didn't have anybody, or they were scared, or they were
6 too weak to try and react to what was being proposed or, you know, being put in front of
7 them, you know. But yeah, it definitely changed me Ōwairaka, I became straight after that,
8 after experiencing that, I became non-conformist, hated everybody, hated the cops
9 especially, hated authority, and it was getting to the point where I was starting to hate
10 myself, you know, and hate my culture. I had a love/hate relationship with my culture,
11 seeing the money go over for fa'alavelaves and things, which I understand now. But to try
12 and compare that to going to school with holey shoes and, you know, different socks and
13 things, you know, like that's my reality, you know, and I'm not ashamed to say that yeah,
14 we're poor, our family were poor. But as poor as we were, we still gave as --my father gave
15 as much as he can to his father back in the Islands, you know. So that was my reality and
16 I suppose that's why I had kind of a --I love my culture and I hate my culture too at the
17 same time. I don't know if you can understand that, but that's where I was.

18 Q. I think there might be a few who can understand that, Fa'amoana. So you talk about by
19 way of surviving Ōwairaka you nursed this deep anger within you?

20 A. It's what kept you going, you know, like all the hard men, they all got hurt little babies
21 inside of them, you know, that's what I know because I was carrying that little hurt baby
22 and every time I got angry with someone that baby wakes up and, yeah, bring it, you know,
23 that was the attitude.

24 Q. And you say "I was confused and didn't know myself. The place had no function to meet
25 the needs of a Samoan like me." What did you mean by that?

26 A. Well, everybody's a clean page and we're all born in innocence, you know, and what was
27 written on my page by going into those homes made me the way I was when I came out,
28 that was just total rejection of everything about this world, you know, I was quite happy to
29 be back in the Islands, like I said, but now that I'm here, we'll have a look at it, you know,
30 and the whole thing is it got back into this about what's success in life, you know. We all
31 come here for the big dream we're going to be a doctor and that, but when you end up in a
32 world like mine, you better try and run the place otherwise you'll be bent over a desk or
33 something. So you've got the success in places like jail and that, is that you've got to be
34 hard or you've got to run the place so that nothing can be done to you, and that's how it is,

1 that's the measure of successes for boobheads like me. If I can run the jail then I'm
2 successful.

3 **Q.** So in the boys' homes and in jail it was about being the worst so that you could look after
4 yourself?

5 **A.** Yeah, yeah. You've got to nut off, you know, when the time's right and it's needed you've
6 got to show form, what they call form, so you've got to be more aggressive than the next
7 guy if you want respect. That's the life of jails.

8 **Q.** And was that like a cycle, being, you know, more hard meant that you'd get in trouble more
9 within the prison?

10 **A.** That does --you don't care anymore, you know, somebody crosses you in there you whack
11 them and whatever you get well that just get it on --you just --that gets on top of what
12 you're already serving. You might get charged with assaulting another inmate but so what,
13 that inmate knows not to mess with me anymore.

14 **Q.** And that was a way to protect yourself?

15 **A.** That's right, that's the way you got on and earned respect amongst those guys.

16 **Q.** So Fa'amoana, what happens to you in prison that sees the beginning of you turning things
17 around?

18 **A.** They didn't trust me outside the prison or anywhere, so the best place they could put me in
19 was the library, it was nice and safe in there, there was no-one there, just books. So they
20 locked me in the library and that's where I was, sort out, you know. Long story short was
21 I came across a book by Albert Wendt, Sons For the Return Home, and when I read that the
22 pictures of the banana boxes and what my parents were doing for us to get here, it call came
23 back and it just, you know, I broke down and I went and saw the therapist because they
24 give you a therapist, it's like (inaudible) for the psycho this morning.

25 So I was up there talking to my psychotherapist and I was saying to him that I was really pissed off
26 with how my life has turned out and I just read a book by Albert Wendt and I feel like a
27 failure to myself and my parents and to my family, you know. The last lag I was doing my
28 wife was carrying our last son so he was born while I was in jail. We have another son, our
29 middle son has got, what is that baby? Cerebral palsy and our elder son, yeah, he's all right.
30 So we have a cerebral palsy son in our middle, the youngest one was born while I was in
31 jail and my other son, the oldest son, he was born when I was on the outside, yeah, so I
32 have three sons, yeah. I don't know, I might have lost track of what we're going on, I'm
33 sorry I'm a bit nervous.

34 **Q.** No, that's fine, Fa'amoana, thank you. That was just about you being in the library because

1 they you- lost your privileges, is that right, and they wouldn't- let you out into the main part
2 so they stuck you in the library?

3 A. That's right, so I read the book, talked to my therapist about it, he says "What do you feel?"
4 I says, you know, "Guys like Albert and them they already knew the language, they grew
5 up in Apia or around there and so they had a bit of an advantage as opposed to us that came
6 straight from the village." I wasn't saying that in a bad way or in a jealous way, I was just
7 stating fact, you know, and he says, "Why don't you write to Albert?" So I did, so I wrote
8 to him and told him about my situation and he was very, very kind and he, --me and him
9 started writing to each other like pen pals. He said "Why don't you write something about
10 where you're at?" I mentioned that to my therapist and he said "It's good to write things
11 because when you write things you start going back and then you can understand yourself
12 better in the now when you examine your past." And I believe that to be true and, you
13 know, when you write you write for yourself first, and that's what I intended to do, I wrote
14 it for myself so I can understand and try and figure out why my life has turned out this way
15 when other people that I was in school with, they made it, you know, one of my classmates
16 became Superintendent of New Zealand Police. I thought how come the cookie crumbled
17 different for him than for me. So that's what got me to write. Like I say, when you write
18 you write for yourself, and then I had to go right back to the beginning, why we came, just
19 like very much what you're doing to me here. And that way I got to understand myself a bit
20 better and, yeah, and that's why I started writing and then I wrote my book Boy Called
21 Broke, which is about leaving Samoa and coming over here for the better life.

22 **Q.** Thank you Fa'amoana. That was my next question.

23 A. Okay.

24 **Q.** A Boy Called Broke, good timing. A Boy Called Broke: My story, so far.

25 A. Yeah.

26 **Q.** Can you recall when you wrote that book?

27 A. Yeah, 1989, Rolleston Prison, that's where I started and I finished it off when I got out.

28 **Q.** And there's a passage of that story in your statement and I was going to ask you if you
29 could read that out?

30 A. Okay, which?

31 **Q.** I'm not sure if it's there. I've got it here. Can you see that writing there, Fa'amoana?

32 A. Yeah, I've got glasses here now.

33 **Q.** You've got your glasses?

34 A. Yeah. Which number?

- 1 **Q.** So it's the small poem. Take your time.
- 2 **A.** At the end?
- 3 **Q.** It's at paragraph 65.
- 4 **A.** Is it number 65?
- 5 **Q.** Yeah. Maybe Feke can --
- 6 **A.** Sorry.
- 7 **Q.** No, no that's fine. We're running for time so that's all right.
- 8 **A.** Yeah. Yeah, I'm there. Do you mind me to write it out.
- 9 **Q.** Can you read it out please, this is part of your story?
- 10 **A.** Okay. "Sometimes I'd be angry at God or whoever it was that made this world. I had no
11 idea what I was going to do once I got out. Of the time I've spent here the only good thing
12 I learned was how to plant trees and scrub cutting. But I did learn everything negative like
13 burglary, shoplifting, drinking booze, home brewing, armed robbery, safe cracking,
14 tattooing and rebel rebel rebel and the hatred for authority arising from house masters in
15 Ōwairaka going on to screws in prison. When I think of Satalo and Poutasi and Falealili,
16 the villages where I was born and my present situation, I realised sadly I would never be the
17 same again. Somewhere between Fa'amoana and John there was a break-down of sorts
18 which had a devastating effect, leaving me here staring at the concrete ceiling of my cell."
- 19 **Q.** Thank you, Fa'amoana, that's very powerful.
- 20 **A.** Thank you.
- 21 **Q.** After writing this story, you're involved with two plays?
- 22 **A.** Yes, yeah.
- 23 **Q.** We'll start with the play The White Guitar. Why was it named The White Guitar?
- 24 **A.** Because my mother had a white guitar in the village, her sister from American Samoa
25 brought it and gave it to her as a present. I remember her seeing her playing it and her
26 playing me songs on it.
- 27 **Q.** And what was that play about?
- 28 **A.** Exactly what we're talking about, you know, leaving for a -- a dream of a better life, you
29 know, that's what it was about.
- 30 **Q.** And then there's a play A Boy Called Piano. Why was it called A Boy Called Piano?
- 31 **A.** You know, my people are so funny, you know, they name their kids after all sorts of things.
32 I know somebody that's named Hellaby after Hellaby corn beef. So but, yeah, my mother
33 called me Piano because she used to play piano for a church and she had to give that up
34 when she got pregnant and married my dad. So that story is piano was her first love, and so

- 1 I was her first born and I became Piano.
- 2 **Q.** That's beautiful. What was that play about?
- 3 **A.** It was an in-depth look at time in the boys' home and the damage done.
- 4 **Q.** And who was involved in your plays, were there people in your family involved?
- 5 **A.** Yes, I got my son and my grandsons all playing parts of the story in there, and while we're
6 here it took the courage of The Conch picture theatre to come and put on plays like this,
7 you know, real plays, real life plays and The Conch theatre belongs to Nina Nawalowalo
8 and Tom McCrory, they're a couple that run this theatre company that help put these stories
9 on.
- 10 **Q.** How did you get involved with The Conch, how did that relationship start?
- 11 **A.** That was funny. My eldest son, he liked acting and he was in Toi Whakaari and he was
12 being taught by Nina Nawalowalo's husband Tom. Anyway, long story short was he didn't
13 finish it, he's got issues and it's to do with me being a bad dad, and anyway, he had a talent,
14 but he ended up running away from Toi Whakaari. But what he did was left a copy of my
15 book A Boy Called Broke that I done in jail, he left it at Tom's locker box, Tom is Nina's
16 husband, so he read the book and he wrote --he rang me up and he says "I'd really like to do
17 a play concerning your story", you know, I got suss straight away, who's this Palagi guy,
18 Carol, "There's this guy Tom, GRO-B teacher and wants to talk to you about making a
19 play." "I don't want to talk to nobody, I don't trust white people much anyway, you know."
20 So anyway I got to talk to Tom and I felt his soul through his voice and he said he loved my
21 son and that's all it took. I said "You love my son? If you love my son I love my son too,
22 so I'm in it if you want me to do anything", so he said yeah. So I wrote The White Guitar.
- 23 **Q.** At one of your plays you had children in State care come to watch the play?
- 24 **A.** Yeah, and The White Guitar, they all came down, we were doing it in Christchurch at The
25 Court Theatre, about eight or nine of them came, you know, got us to sign their phone.
26 Some of them were crying because they identified with what we were saying, you know,
27 even though for them it was in the present, they realised that way back there in my time,
28 you know, nothing had changed. And that's the other thing I want to mention, you know,
29 the reason why I'm here is because I see one of my younger cousins get up here and give
30 his statement, you know. And I saw it on the radio, we were halfway doing the Boy Called
31 Piano, we were still writing it at that time and I said to Tom and Nina, I said "Look that's
32 one of my cousins there giving evidence at the Royal Commission, I said I've got to come
33 in, I've got to go in now."

1 I just try to hide behind my plays and my stories, I didn't really want to come out
2 in a public forum like this and tell it. But when I saw my cousin do it I just thought I've got
3 to get behind this and support Feke because what he was talking about was exactly my
4 story, only mine was 15 years earlier. So I thought nothing's changed, so that's why I'm
5 here, to support Feke and to point out the fact that nothing has changed at all, you know, if
6 you want to look back two weeks ago what happened on TV with that little boy being
7 thrown around, that's the same scene that we've experienced, you know. So thank you to
8 Feke, my man.

9 **Q.** So Fa'amoana, with you doing your writing --

10 **A.** Yeah.

11 **Q.** -- and getting involved with The Conch and doing your plays --

12 **A.** Yeah.

13 **Q.** -- how have you found that, how can drama and the creative arts create social change?

14 **A.** Oh, like I said, it's like writing, you write it for yourself first and then when you do examine
15 your life in the past and look at it, you know, in a positive way or look at it in a way that
16 could help you go further in the future, you've got to do that. So, you know, like writing
17 that book and writing those plays helped me come to terms with myself and to accept what
18 happened in my life and to have a belief that God had a purpose for me to be here today.

19 **Q.** Thank you Fa'amoana. I'm mindful we're coming up to --

20 **CHAIR:** Yes, we're exchanging very strange looks here, Fa'amoana, that means it's time for
21 afternoon tea.

22 **A.** Okay, I'm all for that.

23 **Q.** I'm sure you won't disagree with that. We'll take a break for 15 minutes?

24 **MS SHARKEY:** Yes, thank you.

25 **CHAIR:** We'll come back in 15 minutes time.

26 **Adjournment from 3.29 pm to 3.53 pm**

27 **CHAIR:** Welcome back everybody.

28 **QUESTIONING BY MS SHARKEY CONTINUED:** Fa'amoana.

29 **A.** Yes.

30 **Q.** Not long to go now.

31 **A.** Hope so.

32 **Q.** So we had started talking about the theatre and the creative arts and your story writing.
33 And I just had a question about our Pasifika kids and youth and us being traditional orators
34 and my question was, do you think that our Pacific children and youth can relate to the

- 1 creative arts, music and drama like you did?
- 2 A. Yeah, definitely, and I think it's a good help, you know, a lot of our kids are really talented,
3 as far as the arts go. Polynesian people I suppose are sight learners, you want to learn how
4 to weave a mat you sit next to your grandmother, you know, the academic world of reading
5 books and that wasn't in our thing, you know, so sight is how I learned anyway, you know,
6 to play the guitar, I watch other guys, where they put their fingers and such, you know, so
7 yeah, I'm a sight learner and I definitely think that the arts and creative writing and stuff
8 like that will be good for our youth. A lot of them are good, they're natural storytellers
9 anyway, you know, a lot of our kids.
- 10 Q. And how was it for you expressing yourself through the plays and your writing?
- 11 A. Well, it depends on your life, but because I've had such a traumatic life, to have my story
12 being acted out, it was like being transported back to the boys' home and reliving it. So it's
13 kind of hard and cathartic to write about something that's not very nice about yourself and
14 then to watch it being reproduced live on stage, and yes, every time I watch that play I'm
15 back in the boys' home again. And that's the skills of the people that are around me like
16 The Conch theatre, they were able to bring out those truths out of me in a nice, safe way,
17 you know. And like I say, it's - it wasn't a very nice story, but I'm sure, you know, our
18 Pacific people have really nice stories and our kids will be able to bring that out through
19 theatre and help themselves at the same time, you know, like how it helped me was by
20 writing about my life, I was able to go back as a kid and retrace and come back as to where
21 the road went wrong-.
- 22 Q. Did it help you understand?
- 23 A. Yes, and understand and to accept and to finally forgive yourself, you know.
- 24 Q. And so for our children in State care, you mentioned before that some came to watch your
25 play?
- 26 A. And some pre-release prisoners as well, yeah.
- 27 Q. And some of them were crying?
- 28 A. Yeah, they were really touched for it because like I said, you know, like they identified and
29 it's sad that they could identify it when really this was happening to me 50 years ago. It's
30 the same thing as I see it with Feks, how he gave his testimony here in front of all you
31 people, and yet I was before him by about 15 years, you know, so I just thought man I've
32 got to really come and support this whole kaupapa of denial about Pacific people being in
33 these institutions. There were lots of them that I'd seen, you know, and I've given the
34 reasons why some of them hid it etc., but yeah, definitely there's no denying a lot of our

1 young people were in there and I was one of them.

2 **Q.** Thank you Fa'amoana. So just coming back to the theatre and the arts, you would want to
3 see those opportunities available for our children?

4 **A.** Definitely it would be good in the schools, all those type of things, you know. In fact when
5 I said to Nina Nawalowalo of The Conch about this play that we were developing, she said
6 "Where would you like it to be played first?" I said "I wouldn't mind it to be played in
7 Pare", you know, in the jail because what I'm doing, that's the kind of work I like to get
8 involved with, is try and change people's lives by sharing my story. And like I said, you
9 know, like a lot of guys my age who are still in gangs now, I probably know them from
10 those times as kids in State care, because I think that -- I know that a lot of kids my age that
11 were in State care, when they left the boys' home they went back to gangs or they left the
12 boys' home and started gangs. The reason for that is because gangs are usually people who
13 have been in care and other people that come out of care, they're the only people they can
14 get on with, it was very much like what I said about the King Cobras, the older King
15 Cobras and we as younger ones looking up to them as how do we go forward in this new
16 world. Of course, what they were experiencing was not good, so they became violent and
17 they said to us if we meet up with that attitude, violence was the way. Violence is its own
18 language isn't it, you know. You can convince somebody to do something you want by
19 being violent. And that was the kind of attitude to give back to people who didn't like us
20 here or thought we were monkeys or something.

21 **Q.** So violence was a language that was used?

22 **A.** Yeah, if you want something anyway. Especially in places like the homes and the whole
23 gang thing, you know.

24 **Q.** So we're coming towards the end of the session Fa'amoana. There will be people in our
25 communities watching this, there are Pasifika youth listening to you and watching this, and
26 some Pacific survivors who might be listening and who haven't come forward. Is there
27 anything you would like to say to our community and to other Pacific survivors?

28 **A.** Yeah, for all those that are in care or are still struggling as to who or why they're in the
29 positions they're in, you know, all I can say is, you know, you've got to examine your past,
30 you've got to have a really good, deep, long look at yourself, write about your story, write
31 your life, you know, all these things will help you come to terms with where you are if
32 you're on the wrong side of the tracks.

33 **Q.** There's one question I forgot to ask, it's about the film Ghost in the Shell that you starred in
34 with a Hollywood super star. I just wanted to ask you a question about that. What was that

- 1 like?
- 2 A. It was amazing, you know, I was spoiled rotten. I just thought I was Marlon Brando. I had
3 people coming around with all these hors d'oeuvres or whatever they call them, little bits of
4 food and I had my own little caravan, I was sitting there like a star and people were just
5 catering for me, you know. And yeah, it was an experience eh, you know, I don't know if
6 it's something I'd like to do full-time, but yeah, it was something new for me and meeting
7 up with that Johanna Scarlett woman, she was a young mother, she'd just had her baby and
8 she was just like any other young mum, she was kind, she was good and I had a good
9 experience there, yeah.
- 10 Q. And what did they use from you, was it imagery?
- 11 A. Yeah, I think it was imagery. I'm covered in tattoos, I've got my Samoan pe'a and all my
12 body's covered in tats and that's what they wanted, they wanted a guy that looked like an
13 Yakuza gangster and they picked a Samoan guy from a play, so yeah.
- 14 Q. Fa'amoana, you say in your statement, and this is how you opened your statement, you say
15 "I always considered myself to be like a taro shoot trying to grow in the snow, it can never
16 happen you know." Fa'amoana, I just wanted to ask what do you mean by that?
- 17 A. Well, like I said, I used to go with my grandpa to, --and my father sometimes, to the
18 plantation. A tiapula is a taro shoot which is something that you put in a hole, you dig a
19 hole and you put the taro shoot in and it grows and it becomes a taro. I just felt that the
20 cold attitude that I felt as a kid in the boys' homes and that, I related it back to a tiapula
21 being grown in the snow, you know, it could never happen, because it can only grow in
22 warm, loving, caring place, environment. I found that this place was really cold for a
23 tiapula like me to grow into a taro.
- 24 Q. Thank you Fa'amoana. So without the right environment, the right support and nurturing --
- 25 A. And love.
- 26 Q. -- it's hard for Pacific children.
- 27 A. To adjust, yeah.
- 28 Q. Right, thank you. And at the end of your statement you mention your sisters who have now
29 passed and your cousins as well?
- 30 A. Yeah.
- 31 Q. All who were in State care?
- 32 A. Yes.
- 33 Q. And I wish to acknowledge them.
- 34 A. Yes.

1 **Q.** Is there anything you would like to say in memory of them?

2 **A.** My sister Losa and I were both in the Black Panthers, we were both in gangs. And when
3 we got to Christchurch we sort of saw what the Polynesian Panthers that all our mates
4 started with **GRO-B** and the rest of them. We saw that was a good thing. So when we got
5 to Christchurch we actually started adopting some of the things that the Polynesian
6 Panthers were doing, writing for funding for computers. And at the youth centre we used to
7 have them all there so that our Pacific Island kids can come and use computers there,
8 because we were still with that attitude of, that's a waste of money, this money's got to go to
9 the fa'alavelave, you'se get brainy, but without the tools. So we realise that was in our
10 Pacific culture, you know, our other people in the Islands came first sometimes, at the
11 sacrifice of our own needs as children in this new environment.

12 So me and my sister, or my sister mostly, and Carol, they started up a youth centre
13 down there and it was to promote our Island kids coming in to do their homework because
14 they haven't got computers at home. So those were just some of the things that we got off
15 the Polynesian Panthers that we're doing up here which we took down to Christchurch.
16 From that we got Pacific Underground, we got the women's group, we had the men's
17 support group for the Pacific community down there. And out of Pacific Underground
18 theatre you get the likes of Dave Fane, Oscar and all them making their names with the
19 plays that my sister's theatre group put on, yeah.

20 **Q.** So all of that support is about being there for our youth?

21 **A.** Yes, definitely for the future of our people and realising that that's why our parents took the
22 brave move to bring us out here in the first place, you know.

23 **Q.** Thank you Fa'amoana. We have some footage that we're going to play.

24 **A.** Okay.

25 **Q.** And this, Fa'amoana, you talk about changing people's lives by sharing your story.

26 **A.** Yeah.

27 **Q.** This is an important part of your story is us watching this footage. Is there anything you
28 would like to say before we get this footage up and we play it for everyone who is
29 watching?

30 **A.** I just hope that all my efforts have been a way of saying, you know, give back, to
31 encourage our youth and just to give thanks, you know, for life and, yeah, that's about it.
32 I just want to be involved because I want to see our future children. Because as a parent
33 you only want the best for your kids, you know, and I never want to be in the same cell as

1 my son, and I've seen it a couple of times, you know, father and son in the same cell,
2 I thought I'd never want to be in the same cell with my son, you know. And this is just
3 some of the things that help you as a man change, yeah.

4 **Q.** Fa'afetai lava Fa'amoana. Are we ready? Thank you, we're going to have a watch now.

5 **A.** Okay, thank you.

6 (Video played)

7 **FA'AMOANA:** "Innocence, we all begin in innocence. All that was the biggest forestry done by
8 children in care, yeah. Being out here just took me away from the fact that I actually don't
9 belong to my parents, I belong to the Government, you know, so yeah. Wash all the pain
10 away.

11 **GRANDSON:** Seeing my grandfather take his pain and create this beautiful like story and
12 experience and learning experience of growth and understanding not only just for our
13 family but for others, for everyone out there who's been affected. Always knowing
14 Grandpa's the greatest guitarist ever, everyone knows about him eh, everyone, all the older
15 cuzzies or dad's generation, they all want to learn from him.

16 **FA'AMOANA:** No one's born bad, you know. I was the first one here when they built it. The
17 pipes was how we used to communicate with our cell mates.

18 **SURVIVOR(?):** The system is protecting these people. I don't know why. I just got angry.

19 **FA'AMOANA:** The story of thousands of children has to be heard. For all my friends who were
20 in care with me and have passed on, that will never get an apology. Our history must be
21 faced. May the truth set us free. (Guitar music). In the beginning, you know, like we were
22 just brown kids, brown poly kids growing up in Grey Lynn, Ponsonby, just arrived from
23 Samoa and somehow the system got a hold of us because they deemed our parents couldn't
24 control us, we were roaming the streets but at that time our houses were full. (Guitar
25 music). It was a mixture of feelings, you know, because like I was leaving my mum but I
26 was also excited about where I was going, you know. And from what my mother was
27 saying, you know, this place will be good for me, so did the probation officer, said they'll
28 make a good person out of me and I'll be a better person. I thought I would be, you know,
29 because I was getting it "Trust him, trust the staff, trust the instructions they give you, be a
30 good boy", you know, that was what I got as I was being led away. And of course he's
31 crying at the time, you know. So for me it was like I was sad for my mum but the
32 adventurous boy side of me was curious too, you know, it was a new world, I thought
33 I wonder what the boys' home is like. Once we got into the home, they discouraged visiting
34 us because, you know, they didn't want us to be too attached to our families but start to be

1 attached to what they're telling us to be attached to, which is their system. Hard core
2 disciplinarian stuff eh. The windows, you know, it's like glass with wire through it, and
3 then there's bars outside that, you know, so you -and the boiler, there used to be a whistle
4 for the boiler, so, you know, that goes off at lunch time, so that was another timeliner.
5 Otherwise there's just light of day you get to know, you know, certain light of day in the
6 cell you know lunch is coming up or something like that, or must be nearly teatime-. You
7 can see a few things like this, you know. Shadows on the window. (Music).

8 They turned everybody into files, reports, you know, on your behaviour at certain
9 places that they put you and then they compile all those files up and that's your character,
10 that's you in their eyes. When I left Ōwairaka I was, like I said, I was already starting
11 to -- the rot had already started to set in in myself, you know, and by the time I left there
12 and left Levin it was like I was just full of hate. I hated myself really, because when you
13 don't give a damn about yourself you don't give a damn about anybody else, you know.
14 And that's how I was getting, that's the kind of cycle I was getting into. All that came of
15 that was just heaps of porridge and, yeah, lost freedom. You live in hope somehow we
16 don't want to bring up our kids to have a life like I have, say, you know, I don't want my
17 kids to go through the boys' homes and stuff like I have. So I try and be a better dad, even
18 though I didn't know how to be a dad, you know. I was able to make children but I didn't
19 know how to be a father. As a dad and a parent and a grandpa now, all you want is for your
20 kids to do better than you done, you know. And that's my wish, that they go on and don't
21 go through what I went through.

22 **SON:** I really didn't think I'd end up here, it was one of the things as a kid I was going to be a
23 good boy, but I guess, yeah, the skills my father had picked up from the borstals he did the
24 best he could but, you know, the damage that happened, you know, sort of spilled into our
25 relationship. Yeah, I wanted to impress him, I wanted him to be proud of me and I thought
26 this was the way for myself. And the thing was, yeah, a lot of my friends were also sons of
27 men that had gone through the borstals, so it didn't seem like it was, you know, it wasn't out
28 of the norm.

29 **GRANDSON:** And I'm just blessed I had a mother who loved my dad the way she loved him and
30 understood him the way she loved him, she was able to explain why things were the way
31 they were, you know, and just tell me to accept that and learn and it was hard to understand
32 growing up until taking this journey with my dad and my grandfather now, I feel more
33 centred and strong where I stand and know who I stand for, not only just for the future but
34 for the past as well. (Music).

1 **MS SHARKEY:** Fa'amoana, thank you very much, that was very moving and very powerful. I
2 have concluded my questions for Fa'amoana and I'll hand it to the Commissioners now.

3 **CHAIR:** We have decided that we have no questions for you, but we're very grateful and I'm
4 going to ask my colleague, Ali'imuumua Alofivae to thank you.

5 **COMMISSIONER ALOFIVAE:** Lau susuga Fa'amoana. A proud son of Falealili district. The
6 villages of Satalo and Poutasi and there'll be people, Samoans in this room and others who
7 may be connected to Samoans who can trace their ancestry back to these villages as well.
8 Often silence can be interpreted, Fa'amoana, as one of those pauses where people feel
9 they're not sure what they're feeling. But in this particular case, Fa'amoana, there is just an
10 overwhelming sense of gratitude.

11 Fa'amalo le loto toa, fa'amalo i lou loto alofa ma le loto fesoasoani i le matou
12 galuega, le matou komisina ae maise le tatou atunu'u pele, o Niu Sila. E le lava ni matou
13 upu, Fa'amoana, e momoli atu i ai le fa'afetai. Fa'afetai ia oe, i lou aiga pele. Carol, you
14 and your boys who have travelled this journey so patiently, so valiantly and so
15 courageously with Fa'amoana. Fa'amoana, you said that you have a pe'a and as you well
16 know, i le tatou atunu'u, a ta le pe'a, ua e ofu i le measina a le atunu'u. You are wearing
17 our cultural dress lau tautala, lau savali, lau tu. How you walk, how you talk, how you hold
18 yourself. The significance of your name, Fa'amoana Luafutu from Poutasi.

19 Ua filogia le tatou afiafi. There are many in this room who won't understand if
20 I continue to say salutations to you in Samoan. But your gift to our Commission this
21 afternoon, the precious gift from Poutasi is the story that you want your life to make a
22 difference, Fa'amoana on behalf of the Commission, on behalf of our Chair and my fellow
23 Commissioners who sit beside me, we receive your story in its entirety. We receive it and
24 we want to use it for exactly what you are gifting it to us for: to create change.

25 Thank you for being able to outline so succinctly for us over the decades the way
26 that your own personal family has contributed to the richness of the arts and culture
27 beginning with the Pacific Underground movement in Christchurch. But even before that,
28 what you're beginning to do with the Panthers. Many may not understand why we don't go
29 deep and actually talk about the abuse itself. It's because we understand, Fa'amoana, you
30 have provided us with your document. We understand and for many of us here sitting in
31 this room today you will appreciate the hurt, the mamae, the shame, but the fact that
32 Fa'amoana has come along today, Tatala e Pulonga, to lift the dark cloud, Fa'amoana, our
33 blessing for you is that your life will continue to create change in all of the different spheres
34 in which you populate in which you move. Your life counts.

1 For all of your friends who did not make it and who have passed on, we want to
 2 honour them as well. For your family members that have passed on, we want to thank them
 3 as well. Fa'amoana, for your parents, your grandparents and the rich, the rich ancestral
 4 lines that you come from, Falealili is a proud district. We want to honour the contribution
 5 that you have made through our Pasifika hearing this afternoon. Ia manuia oe ma lou aiga
 6 ma mea uma e pa'i i ai ou lima.

7 A. Fa'afetai.

8 **Q.** Fa'afetai lava. [Applause]

9 A. I just want to say that may God's name be praised and glorified with all the efforts that
 10 I and The Conch and my life can bring for our people. That's me, thank you very much for
 11 listening.

12 **Q.** Thank you.

13 **CHAIR:** Judge Ida Malosi would like to say something. Would you like to come forward please.

14 **JUDGE MALOSI:** Madam Chair, with your Your Honour's leave I'd like to address Fa'amoana
 15 directly on behalf of us all.

16 Fa'amoana; I've never had the privilege of meeting you in person. Maybe God had
 17 a plan that it would happen today in front of our people. My name is Ida Malosi, I've been
 18 a judge of the District Court. I've been privileged to have been a judge of the District Court
 19 for nearly 20 years. But I've been a Samoan and a child of God for all of my life. So
 20 I could not sit here and not respond to you and not claim you. On behalf of all of our
 21 people, all of our community, I claim you.

22 I offer myself, my success, whatever that means to you, because you and I together
 23 are the sum total of our people and together we make a whole. Together we are a whole.
 24 The lesson in me standing at this time for the Commission is that sometimes in this process
 25 the right thing has to be done, which is not part of the process. So I stand for us. I stand for
 26 the might of our people, and I honour you. I honour you.

27 A. Thank you.

28 **JUDGE MALOSI:** Because you show the best of our people, you are the best of our people,
 29 you are enough, and in my eyes, in his eyes, in our eyes, you are whole.

30 A. Fa'afetai lava. [Applause]

31 **CHAIR:** May I say that we have no process, we have people speaking from the heart and thank
 32 you so much for doing that.

33 **COMMISSIONER ALOFIVAE:** This brings us now to the conclusion of our first day and as is
 34 typical for Pasifika can I now invite Reverend Mose to the front to close our proceedings.

1 Fa'afetai lava.

2 **REVEREND MOSE:** There is a Samoan saying that says "Se'i lua'i lou le 'ulu taumamao"
3 which translates "gather the breadfruit from the father's branches first", which is simple
4 translation and an analogy for us is do the most difficult things first and today we begin the
5 difficult work. But before we leave today, I wonder if you would indulge me for a couple
6 of minutes as we join together to bring our day to a close and to prepare ourselves for the
7 two weeks to come, but also to leave all the things that you have heard here today and you
8 don't have to carry them.

9 So I'm going to invite you all if you could sit right back in your seat and put
10 yourself in a comfortable position, comfortable and alert. You can close your eyes if you
11 wish and hopefully my voice is not annoying for you to listen to. I invite you to find length
12 in your spine, your chest open and letting your shoulders soften and release. Having that
13 tension melting away. Let there be space under your chin and be long through the back of
14 your neck.

15 Take a few deep breaths in and out, becoming aware of your breath, the coolness
16 going in and the warmth coming out. Be aware of any tension that you might be carrying
17 in your body. Be compassionate with it, softening that area as you exhale and go back to
18 breathing normally, noticing your breath, in through your nose and out through your mouth,
19 breathing. Imagine you are walking along carrying a bag. It is heavy and it is difficult to
20 manage. You're tired but you feel you must keep going. You decide to stop and rest beside
21 a river, which is flowing fresh and clear. You put the bag down and sit next to it. You
22 watch the water flowing for a while and let its music soothe you and you begin to sense that
23 God is inviting you to set down the things you have been holding and to let the water carry
24 them away as it flows.

25 What do you notice in yourself as you contemplate releasing the things you have
26 been carrying with you in the bag. Take a look into the bag and see what you have been
27 carrying. What are the fears, worries, plans, and hopes that are wearing heavily on you. As
28 you look into the bag, put your hand and begin taking out whatever comes to you in no
29 order, just draw out one thing at a time and whatever comes to hand, let yourself feel the
30 weight of it and notice where it shows up most often in your life and perhaps also where it
31 lies hidden.

32 When you feel ready, start throwing the things you have taken from your bag into
33 the river. Watch them bob up and down on the water as they are carried away, floating into
34 the distance. What do you notice about how it feels to do this. Once your bag is empty, or

1 as empty as you are ready for it to be rest in the quiet. You may want to talk to God or say
2 something out loud of the things that you let go from your bag, or you may want to talk
3 about what senses still with you. Take a little time. When you feel complete in that
4 exchange, imagine yourself fully at rest. Trust yourself to this moment, to the love that
5 surrounds you and sustains you. Let this moment be fully sufficient, allow this moment to
6 fill you with a sense that nothing is lacking and everything is gift.

7 Find your breath again, in through your nose and out through your mouth. And as
8 you breathe we ask these things of God. Look down upon us with a heart full of
9 compassion, with eyes filled with a non-judgmental stare and help us to reflect on our
10 experiences of today, the things that may have brought some joy, the things that we found
11 hard, the feelings that came up all of these we share with you. Whatever pain that we might
12 be going through, remember the words of the psalmist, the Lord is close to the broken
13 hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. We ask all of these things in the name of
14 your beloved, Amen.

15 **Hearing adjourned at 4.34 pm to Tuesday, 20 July 2021 at 10 am**

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