

**ABUSE IN CARE ROYAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY  
LAKE ALICE CHILD AND ADOLESCENT UNIT INQUIRY HEARING**

**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'imuamua Sandra Alofivae  
Mr Paul Gibson

**Counsel:** Mr Simon Mount QC, Ms Kerryn Beaton, Mr Andrew Molloy,  
Ms Ruth Thomas, Ms Finlayson-Davis, for the Royal  
Commission  
Ms Karen Feint QC, Ms Julia White and Ms Jane Maltby  
for the Crown  
Mrs Frances Joychild QC, Ms Alana Thomas and Tracey Hu  
for the Survivors  
Ms Moira Green for the Citizens Commission on Human  
Rights  
Ms Susan Hughes QC for Mr Malcolm Burgess and Mr  
Lawrence Reid  
Mr Michael Heron QC for Dr Janice Wilson  
Ms Frances Everard for the New Zealand Human Rights  
Commission  
Mr Hayden Rattray for Mr Selwyn Leeks  
Mr Eric Forster for Victor Soeterik  
Mr Lester Cordwell for Mr Brian Stabb and Ms Gloria Barr  
Mr Scott Brickell for Denis Hesseltine  
Ms Anita Miller for the Medical Council

**Venue:** Level 2  
Abuse in Care Royal Commission of Inquiry  
414 Khyber Pass Road  
AUCKLAND

**Date:** 18 June 2021

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**TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS**

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**Hearing opens with waiata and karakia tīmatanga by Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei**

**[9.39 am]**

**CHAIR:** Ata mārie koutou ki te rā mutunga o tēnei wiki. Nau mai haere mai. Morning Mr Molloy.

**MR MOLLOY:** Kia ora Kōmihana, kia ora katoa. I'm going to hand over again, ma'am, to our friends Ms Joychild and Ms Thomas.

**CHAIR:** Mōrena kōrua.

**MS A THOMAS:** Tēnā koe e te Kaiwhakawā otirā koutou katoa ngā Kaikōmihana, āe ko ahau tēnei ā matua rā e tika ana kia mihi ki to tātou Pāpā, nāna i para i te huarahi kei mua ia tātou, mai i te tīmatanga o tēnei wiki, tae atu ki tōna whakamutunga, kua tae tātou ki te ra whakamutunga e tautoko ana au i āu kupu e te Kaiwhakawā, me taku mihi ki ā ia ko Ngāti Whātua tēra e pupuri ana i te taha tikanga Māori me te tika hoki o tātou noho kei wāenganui i tēnei whare, no reira, i runga i te ra.

It is my privilege to introduce the two speakers we have this morning. So the Commissioners are aware, these two witnesses are a mother and a daughter. Ms Sharyn Collis is a survivor of Lake Alice and will be speaking to her experiences that she has set out in her statement.

We will then move to Amy Bethune who will be speaking to the intergenerational trauma, but also as a voice to those whānau members that have also been affected and she's here to represent them today.

So I just wanted to thank you both for coming today, I know there's a lot of risk involved with you coming and also sacrifices that you've both made to be here today. So we all thank you for your presence and for the kōrero you're about to share. Before we get started I will pass it over to our chair for the affirmation.

**SHARYN COLLIS, AMY BETHUNE**

**CHAIR:** Hello.

**MS COLLIS:** Hi.

**CHAIR:** How would you like me to refer to you, is it all right if I call you Sharyn?

**MS COLLIS:** Yeah.

**CHAIR:** Good, what about you, Amy is it alright if I call you Amy?

**MS BETHUNE:** [Nods].

**CHAIR:** Thank you for coming. I'm just going to ask you if you'll take the affirmation before you start giving your evidence. And I'll ask you both at the same time and just ask you to agree. Do you both solemnly, sincerely, truly declare and affirm that the evidence you give today

1 to the Commission will be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Sharyn?

2 **MS COLLIS:** Yeah, I do.

3 **CHAIR:** And Amy?

4 **MS BETHUNE:** Yes.

5 **CHAIR:** Thank you very much. I'll leave you with Ms Thomas.

6 **QUESTIONING BY MS A THOMAS:** Thank you ma'am.

7 Like we spoke about, Sharyn, we're just going to go through the statement that you  
8 have prepared. And just take your time, pause when you need to, and both of you if you  
9 need to take any breaks at any time, feel free to do so. So do you have your statement in  
10 front of you Sharyn?

11 **MS COLLIS:** Yeah.

12 **MS A THOMAS:** Could I take you to paragraph 1 starting at "I am"?

13 **MS COLLIS:** My name is Sharyn Collis. I was born in Napier 1958. I'm 62 years old. I have  
14 six children and I am now a great grandmother. I am a survivor of Lake Alice. Do you  
15 want me to read the whole page?

16 **MS A THOMAS:** Now to paragraph 3.

17 **MS COLLIS:** My parents are --

18 **MS A THOMAS:** You don't have to say those names.

19 **MS COLLIS:** Okay. I was born in Napier but we moved around a lot because of my father's job.

20 **[Mic issue]**

21 **MS A THOMAS:** The first home at paragraph 3.

22 **MS COLLIS:** The first home I remember was in the Manawatu. Do you want me to continue?

23 **MS A THOMAS:** **[Nods]**.

24 **MS COLLIS:** I have two older sisters and two younger brothers. I don't have much to do with  
25 them and I'm not very close to them at all. I was the only one that was sent to Lake Alice.

26 **MS A THOMAS:** Paragraph 6.

27 **MS COLLIS:** In 1973 my mum sent me to live in Napier with my aunt and uncle, not blood  
28 related, they were friends of my parents. While I was there I was taken off the streets with  
29 two other girls I had met at a festival on Marine Parade -- how do I read that out?

30 **MS A THOMAS:** You don't have to say those words there.

31 **MS COLLIS:** Okay.

32 **MS A THOMAS:** I might just ask you the question, is that okay?

33 **MS COLLIS:** Yeah.

34 **MS A THOMAS:** So you say in your statement here that while you were living down there you

1           were gang raped, is that right?

2   **MS COLLIS:** Correct.

3   **MS A THOMAS:** Continue on with the paragraph.

4   **MS COLLIS:** I reported this to the Police but nothing ever happened and they weren't charged at  
5           all, in fact they said that I was a willing participant. I was 14. After that I was sent back  
6           home and my mother's attitude was that it didn't happen and I was lying or I deserved it.

7           I started acting out like running away and not attending school. I was disruptive at  
8           home and swearing all the time, but that was typical of a rape victim, I guess.

9   **MS A THOMAS:** Can I just pause you there, Sharyn, just for a moment. Because I know you're  
10          going to start talking about how you get into Lake Alice. But I just wanted to pull up an  
11          exhibit. If we could pull up Exhibit 344003 and this is a report that was done by a  
12          psychologist on 30 April 1973. So that was before you were in Lake Alice, wasn't it?

13   **MS COLLIS:** No, I went into Lake Alice in March I think it was.

14   **MS A THOMAS:** That's not on the record, isn't it?

15   **MS COLLIS:** No.

16   **MS A THOMAS:** Yes. So what I wanted to point out in this report, if we could highlight the  
17          third paragraph "In January". This is what you were talking about in your statement, isn't  
18          it, while you were staying with relatives you were indecently assaulted?

19   **MS COLLIS:** Yeah, correct.

20   **MS A THOMAS:** So they were very aware that this happened to you and that you were  
21          struggling?

22   **MS COLLIS:** Correct.

23   **MS A THOMAS:** And if we could just then go to the third page of this report. The last page.  
24          And the second paragraph starting "This girl". This is one of the conclusions or the  
25          recommendations and it says, "This girl faces an adolescent identity crisis and severe  
26          emotional disturbance, apparently originating in family relationships."

27          So again they're aware that the struggle you're going through is from home and  
28          those behavioural issues are coming from the experiences that you went through.

29   **MS COLLIS:** Correct.

30   **MS A THOMAS:** Thank you Sharyn. If I could just take you back to your statement. Paragraph  
31          8.

32   **MS COLLIS:** It was my GP who decided it was time for me to get help. I also think he was the  
33          one that agreed with Leeks to send me to Lake Alice. I asked him for my medical notes  
34          one time and he said he didn't have any. I find this hard to believe because he was always

1 my family doctor before Lake Alice and after Lake Alice. In March 1973 he sent me to  
2 Manawaroa to have counselling sessions with Leeks for the rape and the fact I wasn't  
3 coping after it. Do you want me to continue?

4 **MS A THOMAS:** Yes continue, thank you Sharyn.

5 **MS COLLIS:** So I started going to Manawaroa to see Leeks for counselling. It started as family  
6 counselling and then become one-on-one sessions with Leeks these were mostly one-sided  
7 sessions, him talking and me screaming and walking out. These sessions went on for about  
8 a month and then I was sent to Lake Alice.

9 Leeks kept telling me when I was in Manawaroa that I would end up in Lake Alice  
10 if I didn't behave. He used Lake Alice as a tool to threaten me. I felt trapped and I did not  
11 have any protection at home either. Leeks, my GP, my mother and others were all part of  
12 sending me to Lake Alice.

13 I was at Lake Alice between 1973 and 1974. I have never been able to find a copy  
14 of my full nursing notes. There are only two pages. My records say that I was admitted on  
15 3 August 1973. But they also say that I was discharged on 2 August 1973. They are -- I  
16 can't even read that word.

17 **CHAIR:** Obviously.

18 **MS COLLIS:** -- wrong. I recall being discharged in April 1974, Grant Cameron second  
19 statement paragraph 95. I recall being there for Christmas as I recall decorating the tree  
20 and going home for Christmas so I was there for at least eight months. It felt to me to be  
21 much longer than that.

22 **MS A THOMAS:** Can I just pause you there for a moment, Sharyn. So your point in that  
23 paragraph is that your notes can't be trusted because you remember being there for eight  
24 months but the dates provided are incorrect?

25 **MS COLLIS:** Correct.

26 **MS A THOMAS:** Thank you. Continue on to paragraph 12.

27 **MS COLLIS:** I recall talking to a woman at the Whanganui District Health Board in the records  
28 section about 20 years ago when I was trying to find my nursing notes. She said they didn't  
29 have them but she did say "You do know you were admitted twice." I said I didn't know  
30 that. But I do recall being sent to Lake Alice a few weeks into the school year, around  
31 March 1973. That date sticks in my head. So the August admission may have been my  
32 second admission. In any event, I was 14 years old on my admission. No-one should rely  
33 on our medical notes to find out what truly happened at Lake Alice. What we say is what  
34 happened and we want people to believe us.

1 I clearly remember the day that I was sent there. I had just run away from home and  
2 had come back again. I would do this quite a bit when I was this stage as I just didn't want  
3 to be home with mum and dad. A Police car arrived at our home and my mother started  
4 packing my bag. She told me I was going to Lake Alice and I just lost it. I remember  
5 bolting for the door to escape but I couldn't get it open. I knew that Lake Alice was full of  
6 crazy people and there was no way that I wanted to go there.

7 I ended up blacking out and when I come to I was at Lake Alice. I don't remember  
8 arriving there, I just come to in an office with a lady sitting there. I can't remember if I was  
9 assessed or anything like that. The first day I was locked up in my room and stayed there  
10 for most of the day. I was locked up in my room for the next three to four days coming out  
11 only to be taken to have food.

12 I don't understand why I was there. I thought it was because I got raped and that  
13 I kept running away.

14 **MS A THOMAS:** And you don't have to read that paragraph 16. I might just put that to you, is  
15 that okay Sharyn, and you can agree or not?

16 **MS COLLIS:** Yeah.

17 **MS A THOMAS:** So in your statement it says, "Dr Leeks recorded me having a reactive  
18 depression and antisocial character disorder. Dr Fernando recorded me having an  
19 adolescent personality disorder. In one file record Dr Leeks is recorded as saying he only  
20 wanted me at Lake Alice for two weeks for abreaction treatment. If that didn't work  
21 I would be sent to Porirua Hospital. Maybe that was to reassure the Education Department  
22 that it was safe to send me there." That's what you say?

23 **MS COLLIS:** Yeah.

24 **MS A THOMAS:** Continue on to paragraph 17.

25 **MS COLLIS:** I do not believe I was mentally ill and in need of being locked up and given  
26 unmodified electric shock and antipsychotic medication. I was an unhappy teenager due to  
27 a difficult relationship with my mother and once I had been gang raped and not listened to  
28 or believed I became angry, difficult teenager. I needed love and support and appropriate  
29 sexual abuse counselling, not to be imprisoned in a mental hospital and treated like a  
30 worthless bad person. Dr Leeks' counselling was worse than useless. The only mental  
31 health problems I have now are as a result of the treatment I got in Lake Alice. Problems  
32 today include depression, trauma, migraines, memory loss and nightmares. It's got here I  
33 was in villa 6, but that's not right.

34 **MS A THOMAS:** Would you like to correct that?

1 **MS COLLIS:** I was in villa 7, they changed the numbers on the villas, so originally it was villa 7  
2 that I was in.

3 **MS A THOMAS:** Villa 7?

4 **MS COLLIS:** Yeah.

5 **MS A THOMAS:** Thank you Sharyn.

6 **MS COLLIS:** There were four or five girls there and about six or seven adult women. Some were  
7 long-term. One had come and went and was a married woman. She was kind to us and we  
8 called her mum. There was quite a high number turnover of girls, about four or five left  
9 and new ones come in my time. I remember an adult woman in our section who come from  
10 GRO-B who was accused of GRO-B. She was found not guilty but sent to Lake Alice.  
11 She was in with us sometimes and the nurses would say to us if we didn't do what we were  
12 told we would be put in the room with her. That was frightening, it was psychological  
13 abuse.

14 You could go into the laundry of our villa and see the maximum security people and  
15 you could see the boys in the cage with the men that were in there for murder. My  
16 understanding is that they were put there as punishment, more psychological abuse. It was  
17 terrible to see that because we thought we were going to get that too.

18 I was given the contraceptive pill every morning as part of my medical treatment.  
19 We were forced to have it and the nurses would check that we swallowed it. I was not, by  
20 consent, sexually active.

21 I got Paraldehyde on about three occasions for punishment. One was for smoking  
22 and another was for damaging a lounge chair. I also got ECT for that the next day.  
23 Paraldehyde was given as a punishment to boys and girls often and I'm not sure why. My  
24 statement to Grant Cameron does not refer to this. I would have told the interviewer, I  
25 think it is an omission.

26 **MS A THOMAS:** Can I just pause you there, Sharyn. Are you able to describe -- and if you don't  
27 remember that's absolutely fine -- how you felt when you got Paraldehyde?

28 **MS COLLIS:** It would knock you to the floor, it was so painful, and it would leave a horrible  
29 taste in your mouth. But it would be sore for a couple of days on the site where you got it.  
30 Find it hard to work when you -- walk when you had it, because it was given on the top of  
31 the thigh or into the buttocks.

32 **MS A THOMAS:** Do you remember how many times you were given Paraldehyde?

33 **MS COLLIS:** About three or four.

34 **MS A THOMAS:** Thank you Sharyn.



1 **MS COLLIS:** What are we up to, 23?

2 **MS A THOMAS:** 22.

3 **MS COLLIS:** There was a huge drying room on the site and sometimes we were put in there for  
4 punishment. I recall after a few minutes the heat was absolutely horrible and distressing  
5 and I would be near to fainting.

6 In my statement to Grant Cameron I set out my experience with getting ECT. I will  
7 briefly explain here but all the detail has already been set out in my previous statement.

8 I received ECT while I was in Lake Alice both modified and unmodified. This  
9 means either with or without anaesthetic to put you to sleep. This started about six weeks  
10 after I arrived at Lake Alice. I was to be taken by the nurses down to these side rooms in  
11 villa 7.

12 **MS A THOMAS:** So that should be villa 7 too?

13 **MS COLLIS:** Yeah, yeah.

14 **MS A THOMAS:** Thank you Sharyn.

15 **MS COLLIS:** There were a number of these side rooms and they weren't used for sleeping, they  
16 were used for torture. We were tortured in that place. I know that if Leeks come in with  
17 his trolley and a tray I was going to be put to sleep by injection and get ECT. If he come in  
18 with just a trolley and no tray, I was going to get ECT and not be put to sleep. I would hide  
19 under the table when they come to drag us to give us shock treatment in the small side  
20 rooms. It was always Leeks that gave me ECT. The pain was like my head was exploding.  
21 Sometimes I would wet myself, sometimes I would vomit and I would get the shakes  
22 afterwards.

23 We would get ECT as punishment. I got it a lot. The first time I got ECT it was  
24 because we had picked a door lock with hairpins and we got up to mischief because it was  
25 so boring being there. There was nothing to do. Another time was because we had  
26 damaged a lounge suite.

27 **MS A THOMAS:** Could I just pause you there again, Sharyn. Just when you say "we", are you  
28 talking about you and some of the other girls in the villa?

29 **MS COLLIS:** Yeah, two other girls.

30 **MS A THOMAS:** Paragraph 27.

31 **MS COLLIS:** I remember when they brought boys into our place to get ECT, we would have to  
32 clean up the urine and vomit after their treatment. About seven to ten boys were brought  
33 over to villa, should be villa 7, when ECT was happening. There were more Māori boys  
34 than Pākehā boys. Mostly they were around 13 and 14. One was 19 and some were

1 younger.

2 My dad told me later that they never signed anything for me to get shock treatment.  
3 They didn't know anything about it. But I remember telling my mum about it after about  
4 eight weeks of being there. She thought I was lying and making stuff up just to get out of  
5 Lake Alice.

6 I don't know what was worse, receiving ECT or having sessions with Leeks where I  
7 was raped. I don't know what the --

8 **MS A THOMAS:** If you go to paragraph 32 thank you Sharyn.

9 **MS COLLIS:** In my statement to Grant Cameron I set out the sexual assaults that I suffered in  
10 Lake Alice. First witness statement --

11 **MS A THOMAS:** You don't have to read that.

12 **CHAIR:** You don't have to read the bits in brackets.

13 **MS COLLIS:** I believe I was raped by Leeks and give full details in my earlier statements. This  
14 happened many times. He would take me into the small side room, get the nurses to tie me  
15 down with leather straps and give me a needle of drugs to put me to sleep.

16 I don't remember a lot of what happened because of the drugs he would inject into  
17 me. The first time he did this I woke up and he was standing at the end of my bed, my top  
18 had been pulled up over my breasts and my jeans were down to the top of my thighs. He  
19 put me back to sleep again and when I woke up for the second time he was gone. I was  
20 sore and sticky between my legs. I felt drunk and ready to pass out. I knew that he had  
21 raped me.

22 He continued to have these sessions right throughout my stay at Lake Alice. I knew  
23 he was raping me each time we had our sessions because my vagina was swollen and  
24 bruised and there would be a sticky discharge when I woke up. I told the staff what Leeks  
25 was doing to me but all they said I was lying. And I kept telling them but they just didn't  
26 believe me. A nurse told me it was my imagination playing up because of the drugs I was  
27 on. After the third or fourth time of him raping me I gave up telling anyone.

28 While out of Lake Alice I'm not sure I got taken to where --

29 **MS A THOMAS:** You don't want to say that paragraph?

30 **MS COLLIS:** I don't know what -- no, I'll leave that out.

31 **MS A THOMAS:** Let's go to paragraph 39.

32 **MS COLLIS:** I was so depressed and tortured in Lake Alice. I would often contemplate suicide.  
33 I discussed these things in detail in paras 88 to 93 of my second statement for the Grant  
34 Cameron proceedings. I would talk about it with the girls I shared a room with and we

1 would talk about how we would do it and what would happen if we did. We thought about  
2 running away but we just couldn't escape. We would get so angry we would end up tearing  
3 our clothes and crying ourselves to sleep. At night time I would hear girls screaming.  
4 They were missing from the rooms and I think they had been taken by the male nurse and  
5 raped.

6 Dr Leeks always gave me the creeps even at Manawaroa. He was sadistic. I don't  
7 remember all the names of the staff at Lake Alice. Most of the nurses in my villa were  
8 women. There was at least one male nurse that would come in in the evenings. Sometimes  
9 I would see Dr Fernando but it was mainly Leeks.

10 We did not really have counselling out there. We had group therapy sessions but  
11 they were nothing, no-one said anything. How could you when the people who are abusing  
12 you are running the group therapy sessions.

13 There was a school at Lake Alice and it started at 9 am. Most of the kids went. I  
14 was not allowed to go the first few days of being at Lake Alice because I was locked up.  
15 The second was in another villa close to the boys. We would do pottery and art but not  
16 much else, we were only just mucking around.

17 **MS A THOMAS:** If you could go to paragraph 46 please Sharyn.

18 **MS COLLIS:** Dad visited me a few times and he brought my sister once. I found out later that  
19 they had tried to actually come inside to see where I was living but they weren't allowed to.  
20 They had to stay outside and I would just talk with them out there. I guess this was so they  
21 couldn't see how horrible it was inside and how we were being treated. Mum come once  
22 and I told her I had been raped by Leeks. And she told me to stop lying and I yelled at her  
23 to never come back.

24 **MS A THOMAS:** Can I just pause you there, Sharyn, because we're about to go into the part of  
25 your statement after Lake Alice which I think is very important as well. Is there anything  
26 that you want to say about your -- anything else you want to say about your time in Lake  
27 Alice before we move on?

28 **MS COLLIS:** No, not that I can --

29 **MS A THOMAS:** Okay. Let's go to paragraph 48.

30 **MS COLLIS:** I don't know why I was eventually let out. Maybe it was because I kept threatening  
31 to kill myself if I wasn't let out. I come out and lived with my parents for a small time but  
32 that didn't last long as I couldn't put up with my mum's abuse again. I had to work in shop  
33 factories because it was all I could get as a job, even though I wanted to be an accountant. I  
34 had lost all my education as a result of my time at Lake Alice.

1                    Shall I just leave out that next bit?

2 **MS A THOMAS:** Yeah, paragraph 51.

3 **MS COLLIS:** Between the years 1978 and 1989 I had six children, three miscarriages and one  
4                    abortion. I was not a very good mother to my children, I was distant and unaware of how  
5                    to raise my kids. When I was bringing up the kids we moved all over the place. This was  
6                    because of the abusive relationships I was in but ultimately it was because of what  
7                    happened at Lake Alice.

8                    I currently get ACC compensation for my neck injury which I hurt in 1994 at work  
9                    when I was lifting a cabinet. In 1995 I reinjured my neck and had to give up the job I had  
10                   altogether. In the more recent years I was employed as a carer and now I do voluntary  
11                   work at the Salvation Army. In another three years I will be of National Superannuation  
12                   age.

13                   In about 1995 I become heavily depressed and at the same time I was having  
14                   problems with my son and was suicidal. I ended up seeking professional help. This is very  
15                   hard for me to do. I find it hard to trust anyone going back to hospitals and psychiatric  
16                   institutions brings back all those horrible memories.

17                   It got so bad that I couldn't even look after my children and I ended up sending them  
18                   away so I could carry out a treatment plan. I was put on medication to help me but after  
19                   about 18 months on the medication I ended up taking it all and overdosing. The ambulance  
20                   was called and I wasn't taken to hospital. I told everyone it was a mistake, but I think it  
21                   was a genuine suicide attempt. The only thing that stopped me from trying again and  
22                   thinking that Leeks would win if I died.

23                   Other staff members also need to be held accountable, not just Leeks. It's about  
24                   getting justice for what happened to us and what happened to our families. Why we were  
25                   sent there in the first place, very few of us would have actually had mental health issues.

26                   I went back to the hospital in 2005. I had asked if I could go inside and they agreed.  
27                   All the villa numbers had been changed but I still recognised my villa number, it was no  
28                   longer numbered villa 6.

29 **MS A THOMAS:** 7; correct?

30 **MS COLLIS:** Yeah, 7. In my statement to Grant Cameron I set out how Lake Alice had an  
31                   overall effect on my adult life. I think I had kids to compensate for what happened to me at  
32                   Lake Alice. I do have the biggest heart and I don't think I would have treated my kids the  
33                   way that I did if I had never gone to Lake Alice. I was controlled in Lake Alice and I think  
34                   I sought that out in my relationships with men. I've been on my own for a while now and

1 that's better.

2 The stigma associated with Lake Alice is horrible as well. I can Google my name  
3 and everything that happened to me is all over the internet. How do I tell my story but then  
4 deal with all these people judging me? I want some process to help me with that.

5 I got addicted to prescription medication within six months of leaving Lake Alice. I  
6 had been prescribed a morphine-based tablet DHC. I was also on Pethidine for my severe  
7 migraines.

8 I have been suicidal many times. I have been so depressed over the years constantly  
9 reliving what happened to me there.

10 I have regular nightmares about what happened in Lake Alice. I don't sleep well. It  
11 has been very hard trusting anyone and even harder to ask for help to deal with the trauma I  
12 was suffering from. I have been on and off medication for years, but I hate being on  
13 medication because I don't feel safe on it.

14 My memory is terrible and I can't recall much what happened before 13 and I can't  
15 recall much about my kids growing up. I have short-term memory loss and it is a horrible  
16 thing to have. I get migraines all the time though less than I used to. I didn't have them  
17 before Lake Alice but have had them ever since. They are triggered by stress which I am  
18 constantly under. I get nervous around people. I don't go out much, I hate being in the  
19 public and don't really have many friends. I don't like having people near me and feel safer  
20 by myself. I guess that's why I isolate myself.

21 As I said, the only thing that kept me from actually committing suicide in those  
22 really dark times was the thought of finally seeing Leeks pay for what he had put us all  
23 through at Lake Alice.

24 I am a great grandmother now. I love my grandkids and I think they love me too,  
25 but it has been a hard road. They are the only positive thing that I have in my life and I am  
26 so grateful to have them.

27 What I went through in Lake Alice has had an impact on my ability to think and to  
28 process just simple things. I struggle to remember things every day.

29 **MS A THOMAS:** These next sections, Sharyn, I think are very important because it shows how  
30 in the past years you've tried to hold people accountable and you've actually been very  
31 brave to go to the Police and lay complaints but you haven't seen any justice yet. So I'd like  
32 to have you start reading from paragraph 67 to explain please.

33 **MS COLLIS:** I was involved in the Grant Cameron proceedings. I prepared two statements. One  
34 in 1998 and one in 2000, second statement of Sharyn Collis dated 28 December 2000.

1 They were done over the phone by staff. I saw Justice Gallen and told him about what had  
2 happened to me. I think I received \$35,000 in the hand and had been awarded 60. Grant  
3 Cameron's law firm got the rest. I am grateful to Grant because without him no-one would  
4 have known whatever went on. I don't believe what I got was true compensation for what  
5 happened to me and I don't believe we should have had to pay for our legal fees. After I  
6 had gone through that process all my trauma was back and I just wanted the case to be over  
7 and I didn't care, I was willing to accept anything. My husband brought a truck with the  
8 money and gave me \$1,000.

9 I am still angry that Leeks hasn't been prosecuted. Around 2002 I went to the Police  
10 and laid a complaint of sexual abuse against Dr Leeks. It was horrible doing the Police  
11 statement. I had a support person but it was not very nice. I felt like the Police were not  
12 listening to me.

13 **MS A THOMAS:** Can I just pause you there, Sharyn. So in 2002 you went to the Police and laid  
14 a complaint of sexual abuse. Do you remember which Police Station that was?

15 **MS COLLIS:** I think it was the Palmerston North Police Station.

16 **MS A THOMAS:** And that was in 2002?

17 **MS COLLIS:** Yeah, yeah.

18 **MS A THOMAS:** Carry on thank you.

19 **MS COLLIS:** On October 1, 2004 my lawyers wrote asking to get a copy of the Police complaint  
20 and report. The Police had not kept records of my complaint. They never came back to me  
21 asking for further interviews. Why is Dr Leeks not been jailed for all the horrible things he  
22 did? Lake Alice ruined not only the people that went there but their whole families.

23 **MS A THOMAS:** And I'll just pause you again there, Sharyn, because I do want to bring up the  
24 exhibits that show the attempts by your lawyer at the time to get some sort of response from  
25 the Police. So the first document we're looking at is dated 1 October 2004 by Steve  
26 Winter?

27 **MS COLLIS:** Yeah.

28 **MS A THOMAS:** And he says there that he has been advised by you that you made a complaint  
29 of sexual violation at Lake Alice and he says, "I would be grateful for urgent advice as to  
30 the progress of the inquiry into whether a prosecution is likely and if so whether it is  
31 imminent." So that's 1 October 2004?

32 **MS COLLIS:** Yeah.

33 **MS A THOMAS:** Go to the next exhibit. So six days after that, 7 October 2004, this letter --  
34 sorry, this one is the response from the New Zealand Police, it's a fax cover sheet from the

1 New Zealand Police dated 8 October 2004.

2 **MS COLLIS:** Where was that sent to?

3 **MS A THOMAS:** This is a fax cover sheet from the Police to the prosecution -- sorry from, the  
4 prosecution's clerk looking for your file, so they're asking, trying to follow-up. And what  
5 they say is after speaking -- "I could find no information on our system relating to either  
6 Collis or Leeks." So that was on 8 October, four days after your lawyer asked for the  
7 information.

8 **MS COLLIS:** Okay.

9 **MS A THOMAS:** And the next exhibit is a letter from Crown Law to your lawyer saying that  
10 they received the letter and they say, "This office has not been instructed by the New  
11 Zealand Police to provide any advice in relation to a complaint by Sharyn Collis in respect  
12 of Leeks. I advise you to pursue your inquiry with the Detective Inspector of the Police  
13 Commissioner's office." So that's Crown counsel, Crown Law saying they have not been  
14 instructed on that.

15 **MS COLLIS:** Okay.

16 **MS A THOMAS:** And then the next exhibit -- and this is just to show --

17 **MS COLLIS:** I haven't seen these.

18 **MS A THOMAS:** Aah, well, I will show you to them right now and after this as well. And then  
19 the next one is dated 12 October 2004 and this is from your lawyer again, Winter Woods  
20 and they say:

21 "I advise again that I act for Sharyn Collis who has asked me to inquire into the  
22 progress of your allegation that you were raped. Various people have been written to and  
23 the last correspondence I have is from Crown Law suggesting I contact you."

24 So again, this is your lawyer trying to follow-up as to what is happening with this  
25 complaint that you made.

26 And then the last exhibit in this bit, Sharyn, is dated 2 February 2005 and it is an  
27 e-mail from Detective Superintendent Larry Reid to your lawyer saying, "I now have your  
28 correspondence relating to Sharyn Collis and her assertion that she has made a complaint to  
29 the Police alleging rape." He says "I have no record of that complaint, though I do have  
30 some other documents from former Lake Alice patients alleging mistreatment."

31 And that was the end of that complaint that you made, wasn't it, nothing happened  
32 further?

33 **MS COLLIS:** No, nothing at all. Then Kevin went to see this lawyer. I didn't realise he did more  
34 work, never went back to him.

1 **MS A THOMAS:** And never heard anything else from the Police?

2 **MS COLLIS:** No, nothing.

3 **MS A THOMAS:** And just to clarify that complaint that you did make to the Police when you  
4 went in to the police station, it was a full interview --

5 **MS COLLIS:** I think so, yeah.

6 **MS A THOMAS:** -- of all the evidence that happened in your allegations.

7 **MS COLLIS:** [Nods].

8 **MS A THOMAS:** Thank you, Sharyn, I think that was important to clarify.

9 So just taking you back now to your statement.

10 **MS COLLIS:** What are we up to?

11 **MS A THOMAS:** We are up to paragraph 69.

12 **MS COLLIS:** I also made a complaint to the Victorian Medical Board where Dr Leeks was  
13 practising. I was going to give evidence against him but before the hearing he agreed to  
14 surrender his licence to practise. I received a letter about this on 20 July 2006. I was very  
15 disappointed that yet again Dr Leeks had avoided a public inquiry into what he did to us.

16 I was also involved in the 20/20 documentary series investigation. I think it was in  
17 2006 or 2007 and was organised by CCHR. I wanted people to know what happened to us  
18 all there and I was doing the best I could to bring Leeks to justice. It was hard to be  
19 involved in that and to share everything about what happened to me, but I was lucky to  
20 have the support of another survivor of Lake Alice. And I were interviewed for the  
21 Evening Standard. I believe that through all of our efforts the Government are starting to  
22 listen and it is the main reason why this Inquiry has been set up.

23 I got ACC cover for the rape but not for Leeks raping me or the ECT. I did not use  
24 counselling through ACC as I was already getting counselling through the mental health  
25 services.

26 I believe we should all get compensated for the horrors we saw and went through at  
27 Lake Alice, but that is just the beginning. The Government should set up support groups  
28 for all the families that are connected with Lake Alice survivors. The help is just not there  
29 for us or our families at the moment and it needs to be.

30 I think the Lake Alice survivors who got ECT and other traumatic things such as  
31 drug treatment should all have ACC cover for medical misadventure. We should receive  
32 compensation for this and for the awful adult lives we have had from it.

33 Even if we don't get this we should all have full mental health support for ourselves  
34 and our families. The Government needs to believe the kids, the survivors that went



1 through Lake Alice.

2 I want to see Leeks pay for what he did to all of us. The Police said they wouldn't  
3 extradite him because of the cost to make that happen. But how can that be right, he needs  
4 to be held accountable and for everyone to see what a monster he is.

5 I feel the same way about all the nurses and the staff that helped him so what he did  
6 to do so many kids that went through Lake Alice. Is that it?

7 **MS A THOMAS:** Thank you Sharyn. Is there anything else you want to add to that statement?

8 **MS COLLIS:** I want ACC to accept our claims and I'd like my fees back from Grant, but -- and  
9 that needs to come from the Government, not from Grant, because he did all he could, yeah,  
10 I don't know what else I want.

11 **MS A THOMAS:** Thank you for sharing that kōrero and we have had other survivors tell us that  
12 they appreciate the attempts you've made going to the Police which was really brave in and  
13 of itself, so thank you for sharing that with us Sharyn.

14 **MS COLLIS:** That's all right.

15 **MS A THOMAS:** Ma'am, would you like us to go to Amy now before any questions?

16 **CHAIR:** I've got a couple of questions I'd like to ask Sharyn but I'll just check with my  
17 colleagues. Do you mind if we ask you a couple of questions?

18 **MS COLLIS:** Sure.

19 **CHAIR:** We'll start with Sandra Alofivae.

20 **COMMISSIONER ALOFIVAE:** Good morning, Sharyn. Thank you so much for being so  
21 generous in sharing the details of everything that you went through. I just want to ask a  
22 couple of peripheral questions around your family, because you sound like you came from  
23 a big family, but you don't have much contact with them now.

24 **MS COLLIS:** No.

25 **COMMISSIONER ALOFIVAE:** Was that as a result of what happened at Lake Alice and  
26 everything that followed afterwards?

27 **MS COLLIS:** I think so. It just changed the whole family dy -- you know, the way the family  
28 was. I've got two older sisters and two younger brothers. I only really had contact with one  
29 sister. I don't see much of the others at all. But, yeah, it changed completely when I come  
30 back out of there.

31 **COMMISSIONER ALOFIVAE:** So before that were you quite a tight-knit family, did lots of  
32 things with siblings?

33 **MS COLLIS:** Yeah, we were. But, yeah, I just left home so young and just fended for myself,  
34 so...

1 **COMMISSIONER ALOFIVAE:** When you were in Lake Alice, I know that your mother visited  
2 you, were you able to have any other visitors?

3 **MS COLLIS:** Not for the first six weeks, which I think that needs to be changed. When you go  
4 into an institution or a home, they had a six week thing where you weren't allowed to  
5 contact anybody. So it would have been after the six weeks that I saw her and I only saw  
6 her once. My dad come out and my sister but they weren't allowed in the villas. So, yeah.

7 **COMMISSIONER ALOFIVAE:** So it was very hard.

8 **MS COLLIS:** Yeah, yeah.

9 **COMMISSIONER ALOFIVAE:** Thank you very much Sharyn.

10 **MS COLLIS:** That's all right.

11 **CHAIR:** Sharyn, I've got a couple of questions about things that you talked about in Lake Alice.  
12 Do you mind me something a bit of detail?

13 **MS COLLIS:** It's all right.

14 **CHAIR:** Please say so if you don't want to answer okay? This is really important to fill in the  
15 gaps, you know, we're building a picture of what life was like for you and all the other  
16 people admitted there. But a couple of things that I want to ask you about.

17 The first is, and it's back in paragraph 19, and that is you said that you'd go into the  
18 laundry of the villa. I'll just check, go through it with you. Go to the laundry and you'd see  
19 the maximum security people and then you say you could see the boys in the cage with the  
20 men who were in for murder. Now when you said that I could see you were upset by that,  
21 so I don't want to upset you further. But are you able to tell us what you meant by "the  
22 cage"?

23 **MS COLLIS:** It was -- you had the villa and connected to the villa was an outside area that they  
24 could go for -- they used to go out there. It was actually connected to the villa. It was like  
25 an exercise yard but it was all caged.

26 **CHAIR:** Right.

27 **MS COLLIS:** You couldn't get out of it at all.

28 **CHAIR:** Roughly how big was it?

29 **MS COLLIS:** About the size of a double bedroom.

30 **CHAIR:** Oh, I was going to say compared with this room.

31 **MS COLLIS:** No, very tiny. It would be about the size of a double bedroom.

32 **CHAIR:** So it was an outside exercise area attached to the men's?

33 **MS COLLIS:** Yeah.

34 **CHAIR:** Maximum security area?

- 1 **MS COLLIS:** [Nods].
- 2 **CHAIR:** How many people would be in that area, do you remember?
- 3 **MS COLLIS:** Sometimes when they put the boys over there they'd put them out -- they'd be out  
4 in the exercise yard with somebody from actually in from the secure unit, because they  
5 were totally separate from -- they never come out like we did.
- 6 **CHAIR:** Right.
- 7 **MS COLLIS:** We could leave our villas but they couldn't, they were -- it was locked up 24/7.
- 8 **CHAIR:** With the male or the adult who had been put in the maximum security area?
- 9 **MS COLLIS:** Yeah, they'd be -- the boys would be put in to the cage with a patient from  
10 maximum security.
- 11 **CHAIR:** And you say that was punishment?
- 12 **MS COLLIS:** It was. It was a sweat, it was a sweat that we listened to because we witnessed it,  
13 what they did to them.
- 14 **CHAIR:** Thank you for that detail. The other thing you talk about was the drying room.
- 15 **MS COLLIS:** Yeah, it was a big -- it's a laundry room and you could shut the door and it would  
16 lock on the outside and they'd lock you in 5 or 10 minutes. It was just -- yeah, you could  
17 just about faint with the heat.
- 18 **CHAIR:** So this is a room where they were drying clothes or laundry or something?
- 19 **MS COLLIS:** Yeah, yeah, it was just a drying room.
- 20 **CHAIR:** With heat fans or something in there?
- 21 **MS COLLIS:** Yeah, yeah I think so. I don't know where the heat come from.
- 22 **CHAIR:** Yeah, you were put in there?
- 23 **MS COLLIS:** Yeah.
- 24 **CHAIR:** Do you remember why?
- 25 **MS COLLIS:** It would be just either smoking or talking back to the nurses, minor things, yeah.
- 26 **CHAIR:** And the last point, sort of technical but I think it's important. You weren't -- some of the  
27 young people who were put in Lake Alice were put there under the care of the Social  
28 Welfare or CYFS, but I don't think you were under Social Welfare?
- 29 **MS COLLIS:** No, I wasn't, my mum told me it wasn't until I was 18 but then I found out that  
30 I wasn't, I wasn't under Social Welfare care at all, but they would just come and visit, social  
31 worker would come out to the home. I think the Special Education service come out as  
32 well.
- 33 **CHAIR:** Did they talk to you, did they come and talk to you?
- 34 **MS COLLIS:** Yeah, it was a family thing when they come out, decided how my schooling was

1 going to go. That was before I went to Lake Alice. So they played a part in me being  
2 admitted there.

3 **CHAIR:** That's very interesting. So it was -- you said it was your -- Leeks, it was the GP and  
4 your mother, but you're also now saying that there were other Government agencies  
5 involved, like special ed?

6 **MS COLLIS:** Special Education, yeah, they were involved as well because they did a report as  
7 well.

8 **CHAIR:** Yes, I saw that.

9 **MS COLLIS:** Yeah, and it was after that that I was sent out there.

10 **CHAIR:** Okay. And did the special ed people visit you while you were in Lake Alice?

11 **MS COLLIS:** No, I had no visitors beside my father.

12 **CHAIR:** And so just to clear it, and no social worker ever came to see you?

13 **MS COLLIS:** No, none.

14 **CHAIR:** All right, that's really helpful. I'm sorry to have to --

15 **MS COLLIS:** That's all right.

16 **CHAIR:** -- dig down but that was very helpful evidence, thank you.

17 **MS COLLIS:** That's all right.

18 **CHAIR:** Now I'm going to hand you over to somebody I think you know already, is that right?

19 **MS COLLIS:** Yeah.

20 **COMMISSIONER GIBSON:** Sharyn, it's great you've come forward again with the courage  
21 which you've always displayed to talk to us here today. A couple of questions. Do you  
22 know who prescribed the contraceptive pill to you?

23 **MS COLLIS:** It would have been Leeks I think. Yeah, I don't think it -- no, it would have been  
24 Leeks that would have prescribed that.

25 **COMMISSIONER GIBSON:** And you're about 14 years old at this time?

26 **MS COLLIS:** Correct.

27 **COMMISSIONER GIBSON:** Including when what happened to you, you describe as raped?

28 **MS COLLIS:** Yeah.

29 **COMMISSIONER GIBSON:** Looking throughout -- you didn't read all of your statement.

30 **MS COLLIS:** No.

31 **COMMISSIONER GIBSON:** But having heard your story and it's embedded in me forever, you  
32 believe there are other girls there?

33 **MS COLLIS:** I believe so.

34 **COMMISSIONER GIBSON:** Including one who you think left the place pregnant?

1 **MS COLLIS:** Yeah. I believe there were other girls that he done it to. We'd wake up some  
2 nights and at the end of our dorm the door was locked and you'd wake up and a girl would  
3 be missing and you'd try and go out but the dorm doors were locked. You couldn't get out,  
4 but you could hear them screaming, they come back and they were crying. Yeah.

5 **COMMISSIONER GIBSON:** And also at times were you and other girls were made to punish  
6 girls who had run away?

7 **MS COLLIS:** One girl ran away and when they brought her back we were made to give her a  
8 bath and made to cut her hair off. Yeah, we used to have to clean up after people who had  
9 shock treatment.

10 **COMMISSIONER GIBSON:** Yeah. Thanks Sharyn, really appreciate your answering.

11 **CHAIR:** Now we're going to hand over to Amy.

12 **MS A THOMAS:** Thank you for that, Sharyn. Are you okay to continue now Amy?

13 **MS BETHUNE:** Yes.

14 **MS A THOMAS:** So if you could start at paragraph 1.

15 **MS BETHUNE:** My name is Amy Bethune, I was born in 1983. I am the third of six children  
16 and the only girl. My mother is Pākehā, my father is Māori. I am -- my tribe is Ngāti  
17 Porou. I call myself a New Zealand Māori.

18 My mother Sharyn Collis who spent time in Lake Alice as a teenager. I am giving  
19 this evidence to show how her experience at Lake Alice affected me. But I'm also speaking  
20 for the other children of the survivors in Lake Alice.

21 I have also included some of my ACC notes and Oranga Tamariki notes which I  
22 think are relevant. They are listed in the table at the end of this statement.

23 I would describe my childhood as miserable and unhappy. It was very difficult,  
24 I didn't have a carefree childhood. I was born a baby but immediately become an adult.  
25 My mother had major memory problems and was nearly always out to it and not able to  
26 care for us children properly. She was very distant unemotional and cold. I was aware of  
27 this as early as I was a pre-schooler.

28 I have blotted out a lot of what happened to me in my childhood and adolescence  
29 because it was too painful to keep remembering. The biggest feelings I had was that I had  
30 to take responsibility for my younger siblings.

31 **MS A THOMAS:** Can I just stop here.

32 **MS BETHUNE:** Can you read that.

33 **CHAIR:** Two things, first of all would she like to take a break, and secondly maybe if this was  
34 easier if you were to read her rather than her having to read it all out.

1 **MS COLLIS:** Can we take a break?

2 **CHAIR:** Would you like to take a break Amy?

3 **MS BETHUNE:** Yes please.

4 **Adjournment from 10.35 am to 10.50 am**

5 **CHAIR:** You okay?

6 **MS BETHUNE:** Yeah, I'm fine thank you.

7 **MS A THOMAS:** Amy is going to read her statement herself.

8 **CHAIR:** If that's what you want to do, very happy.

9 **MS A THOMAS:** Let's start at paragraph 4 when you're ready, Amy.

10 **MS BETHUNE:** I would describe my childhood as miserable and unhappy. It was very difficult.

11 I didn't have a carefree, happy childhood. I was born a baby but immediately had to  
12 become an adult. My mother had major memory problems and was nearly always out to  
13 lunch and was not able to care for us children properly. She was very distant unemotional  
14 and cold. I was aware of this as early as a pre-schooler.

15 I have blotted out a lot of what happened to me in my childhood and adolescence  
16 because it was too painful to keep remembering. The biggest feelings I had was I had to  
17 take responsibility for my younger brothers, my younger siblings, and make sure they were  
18 okay. I was always away --

19 **MS A THOMAS:** I think that's supposed to be aware isn't it?

20 **MS BETHUNE:** I think so. I was always aware that there was no-one to support me in my times  
21 of need as a child and adolescent.

22 Mum was always forgetful. She always seemed to be taking one or other of her  
23 prescription drugs. That seemed to make her more vacant. Her lack of memory created  
24 many dangerous situations for us children. For example, I recall once when a cousin was  
25 staying he had pushed the heater that was on against the couch which it had melted the  
26 couch but if it caught fire it would have burnt the house down. My mother hadn't noticed  
27 it. In an ACC psychiatric recommendation report in 2016 I described the way I was  
28 parented.

29 **MS A THOMAS:** And you don't have to read the brackets, so just go on to paragraph 7, thanks  
30 Amy.

31 **MS BETHUNE:** When I was 10 years old I had a deeper realisation that mum was far from all  
32 right. She had taken us to the shops to buy ice cream and lollies and as soon as we come  
33 back home and walked in the door she suggested that we go to the shop to buy ice cream  
34 and lollies. When I told her we had just been, she had no memory of it.

1 I recall mum telling me as a child that she had been in Lake Alice and had been  
2 raped by Dr Leeks. She had woken up and was alone with him on top of her and he had put  
3 her back to sleep. Also she had been gang raped --

4 **MS A THOMAS:** And you don't have to say the name there thank you.

5 **MS BETHUNE:** Because of the way my mother was, I did not have a childhood as other children  
6 did. I was a good kid. I never ran away from home or got up to mischief. I spent my time  
7 caring for my mother and my three younger brothers and looking out for my mother.

8 I would see my younger brothers were clothed, washed and fed and had what they  
9 needed for school and other activities. I would make sure they got to bed on time. I had to  
10 look out for and protect my brothers from my mum's forgetfulness. She was always  
11 forgetting important stuff in their lives and was unaware of dangerous situations. I always  
12 felt that I had to protect my mother and my brothers.

13 **MS A THOMAS:** And you don't have to finish that sentence.

14 **MS BETHUNE:** Another very damaging feature of my childhood was how many times we  
15 moved as a family. We moved from Taihape to Tauranga to Palmerston North to  
16 Whanganui to Te Puke to Palmerston North to Auckland and many more moves. My  
17 parents were constantly separating and then getting back together, and that precipitated  
18 many of our moves. It was hard to develop friendships and to have a steady schooling.

19 Police not protecting my family from violence. I remember once when I was 11 or  
20 12 years old just about killed my --

21 **MS A THOMAS:** Blank name.

22 **MS BETHUNE:** Yeah, just about killed my brother when he threw him down the stairs.

23 Someone called the Police and when the policeman turned up he said "You didn't touch him  
24 did you?" The Police knew he had but were protecting him from any consequences for his  
25 domestic violence. We felt totally powerless and voice less as children. There was no-one  
26 to help us.

27 **MS A THOMAS:** Take your time, it's okay, just let me know if you'd like me to take over.

28 **MS BETHUNE:** I was first sexually abused as a 5 year old. It went on for at least a year. The  
29 abuser was --

30 **MS A THOMAS:** Someone you knew.

31 **MS BETHUNE:** Yes. I could not tell my parents. I recall my mother taking me to the GP  
32 regularly because I was always sore and he told my mother that it was a urine infection.  
33 Mum took me just about every two weeks.

34 I recall telling my aunt when I was 5 that I was being abused and the Police were

1 brought in. I was made to have an extremely painful smear test. The abuser was never  
2 brought to justice. The Police said that they did not have enough evidence.

3 I was abused by two other boys when I was 11.

4 **MS A THOMAS:** Go from "there".

5 **MS BETHUNE:** There had been problems with him for several years and he had been placed in  
6 foster care homes in Auckland. It was when he come home in between those placements  
7 that he would abuse me. It was terrifying and he would hold knives to my throat.

8 My mother was so out to it she wasn't aware what was happening and I was not able  
9 to defend myself. I knew that if I told her she would not have been able to help me  
10 anyway. I didn't tell anyone in the family until six years ago. It had been agony having  
11 him around my family, around the family gatherings over the years, I hated being in his  
12 presence. I had to always keep looking out for my own children if he was around. After  
13 I disclosed the abuse, I now make sure that I am not around him and I do not coincide with  
14 him at family events. The second abuser was my brother's friend.

15 My parenting of my younger siblings took a serious toll on my education. I was  
16 tired in class and would often fall asleep, especially at secondary school. I went to four  
17 different high schools between the ages of 13 and 15. Te Puke High School, Mount  
18 Maunganui High School, Queen Elizabeth High school and Whanganui College.

19 **CHAIR:** There's a difference between Whanganui College and Whanganui Collegiate, it was  
20 collegiate?

21 **MS COLLIS:** Yeah, yeah, it was.

22 **MS BETHUNE:** I was absent a great deal and the schools did not understand that this was not  
23 because I was wagging but because I was at home looking out for my younger siblings,  
24 particularly my younger brothers.

25 From the age of 13 I half attempted to kill myself. In 1997 when I was 14 I went to  
26 the doctors and told the doctor that I felt like killing myself and that I needed counselling.  
27 It was in that context that I first disclosed to anyone that I had been sexually abused. The  
28 doctor helped me apply for ACC. However, ACC would not process my claim as I was  
29 underage. As they would state in my file it was because I was only a child and that was  
30 common back then. On 6 December 2017 they gave me a written apology for not giving  
31 me the support I needed as a young teenager. They had told me at the time that it was  
32 common practice not to provide cover for children and young persons who had been  
33 sexually abused.

34 In 1998 by the age of 15 I was homeless. It come about after my mum said to me



1 one day in front of my cousin something like "Amy, do you remember when you were  
2 abused as a 5 year old?" I had a huge reaction and shouted "How dare you tell everyone  
3 about my abuse." A week later she told me to fuck off and leave. I rung dad and told him  
4 and mum had thrown me out. He said he wouldn't take me in. I ended up flatting and I was  
5 given a youth benefit by the Department of Social Welfare. Being alone in the world and  
6 left to fend for myself at 15 was incredibly traumatic and stressful.

7 About a month later my father rang and told me that there was a letter waiting for  
8 me. The letter is in my document bundle.

9 **MS A THOMAS:** I'll just pause you there Amy, it might be good if you have a bit of a break as  
10 well.

11 **MS BETHUNE:** Thank you.

12 **MS A THOMAS:** Amy and Sharyn do want us to bring the letter up on the screen and I've been  
13 asked to read just a few passages from this letter. So this is from Sharyn to Amy. If we  
14 could go to the second page of the letter please. That was provided at the time.

15 Before I do read these parts of the letter out, I do want to say that Amy and Sharyn,  
16 it's great to see that you have really strengthened your relationship again and for you both  
17 to be sitting here today together is really beautiful. So I will just read these passages. If  
18 you want me to stop just let me know. So this is a letter from Sharyn to Amy, basically  
19 saying that she will be leaving to concentrate on her health. These are some of Sharyn's  
20 words.

21 "I know you will be pretty angry and hurt by now, but I think I'm doing the best for  
22 everyone here. You, I hope, will forgive me one day. The longer I stay in your lives the  
23 more I mess it up. One day I will explain and hope like hell that you will understand why I  
24 am doing this. You have done nothing wrong and you never have. You have been the best  
25 daughter in the world and you are going to make the most wonderful mother. Much better  
26 than me. Don't be like me. I will come back into your lives but it will be a long, long time  
27 away. When I find myself and heal inside and when I am a strong person I might be able to  
28 repair the damage I have caused you kids but please Amy let me go. I need this for me.  
29 I need to find some sort of peace and understanding. I can't have my sanity as well. I am  
30 so mixed up inside, I am hurting you kids. I have to do something now before I destroy  
31 you."

32 And that continues but I think we can leave it there and that's the letter you're  
33 talking about Amy?

34 **MS BETHUNE:** Yes.

1 **MS A THOMAS:** Thank you. If you return to your statement at paragraph 21. Actually, sorry,  
2 we can go to paragraph 22.

3 **MS BETHUNE:** I had also been kicked out of school by 16. I'd been absent so much because I  
4 was looking after my younger brothers at the time. The youngest was only 3 or 4 at the  
5 time. I recall turning up to school one day at Queen Elizabeth High and the teacher asking  
6 me why I was there, saying that they had signed me out a week earlier. No-one asked me  
7 why I was not at school or thought I might be a young person in need. I just left. I stayed  
8 in a flat with my brother's ex-girlfriend for a year and then I tried to do a nanny course for  
9 four months but could not finish it. By 17 I was also very sick with endometriosis and  
10 needed surgery. After that I moved in with a boyfriend.

11 I took an overdose at 17 and was taken to hospital where my stomach was pumped  
12 out. I was sent home a week late with no mental health assessment or support -- assistance  
13 or support.

14 When I was 17 in 2000 I heard a conversation between my flatmate and my --

15 **MS A THOMAS:** Blank.

16 **MS BETHUNE:** -- who had sexually abused me at 11. I told them what he had done to me and  
17 they supported me to make a complaint to the Tauranga Police Station. However, the  
18 Police told me there was nothing they could do.

19 When I got the Police records of my complaint six years ago, I was advised by the  
20 Pahiatua Police that there was no record of me ever having stepped foot into the Pahiatua  
21 Police Station or making that complaint.

22 When I was 19 in 2002 I moved to Palmerston North with a man who become the  
23 father of my four children. I have lived in that area ever since and owned my own home in  
24 Pahiatua for the last 15 years.

25 I have six children who are ages between 2 and 17, three boys and three girls. The  
26 four oldest are to the same father, the two youngest have different fathers. I have recently  
27 separated from the father of my youngest child.

28 In my own parenting I have tried very hard to parent my children in a way that  
29 I wanted to be parented as a child and learn not to repeat the mistakes my mother made. I  
30 am proud of my children and that I have achieved -- and what I have achieved with them.  
31 For example, they have all gone to Pahiatua Primary School and Tararua College. They  
32 have had continuity of education and have been able to develop friendships. They have  
33 lived in the same home for the last 15 years. My oldest, we moved to Pahiatua when my  
34 oldest was 3. They have had a stable home but with their ups and downs from their parents.

1 I have never left my children and I am down -- when I am down (sic) and upset.  
2 I explain to them why I am upset and down. They are very loving and supportive of me.  
3 I do not have any educational qualifications but when my children are older I want to do  
4 something, possibly looking after foster children.

5 As an adult I carried extreme hurt and anger that I had not protected -- that I was not  
6 protected from sexual abuse and that no-one protected my family from family violence.  
7 Also that I did not have a childhood. I felt everyone was against me, my parents, the  
8 Police, ACC, I never had a voice anywhere.

9 I had a near break-down in 2015. I told my mother of the sexual abuse of me as an  
10 11 year old. I then rang my father and told him. That --

11 **MS A THOMAS:** Led to.

12 **MS BETHUNE:** That led me to making an ACC claim and I have been in counselling ever since.  
13 I believe I have come a long way in the last six years. I have come to understand that the  
14 abuser was very likely sexually abused himself when he was in the care of the State before  
15 he abused me. I still hate having any contact with him and do not trust him around my  
16 children.

17 I suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder but also from major depression and  
18 anxiety. On 17 August 2016 I was assessed by Peter Claman for ACC and he concluded  
19 that I had a permanent mental injury. I also had a -- sorry, I can't say that -- PTSD  
20 assessment on 23 January 2018 from Milly Hanlon. I would like to do art therapy now to  
21 help with my mental health issues. I don't know how to spell or read or write using proper  
22 grammar because I have had so little schooling. Even when I was at school I couldn't  
23 concentrate because there was so much stress in my childhood. At that stage I had  
24 undiagnosed PTSD, anxiety and depression stemming from my own abuse. I felt  
25 continually angry about the abuse I suffered and the memories that I have been left with,  
26 which haunt me every single day of my life.

27 I was very annoyed reading an ACC note that suggested my trauma was hereditary  
28 from my mother. It is trauma brought on -- brought about because of having a mother who  
29 was out to lunch her(sic) whole childhood, which allowed awful things to happen to me and  
30 I believe she was out to lunch because of the terrible experiences of drugs, electric shocks  
31 and abuse at Lake Alice.

32 In the last few years I received a backdated lump sum compensation from ACC for  
33 sexual abuse as a child. It took me four years of struggle to get it. I was almost suicidal by  
34 the time I was granted it. It took so long. They made me go through two reviews and only

1 granted it before the District Court hearing. I am currently supported by ACC on the  
2 minimum level of loss of potential earnings. ACC-funded my counselling.

3 Many years ago mum apologised to me for not being a proper mum. When she  
4 heard of the sexual abuse she apologised for not protecting me. Our relationship now is the  
5 best it has ever been. She's moved back in with me -- she moved back in with me since  
6 before Christmas and we are getting on very well. She supports me with the care of my  
7 children.

8 It was only in the last visit --

9 **MS A THOMAS:** You don't have to read that paragraph if you don't want to, Amy, and go  
10 straight to paragraph 37.

11 **MS BETHUNE:** I would like there to be a public apology from the Government. I want the  
12 apology to be filmed and include the names of every person who wants to be acknowledged  
13 for what they had suffered in the care of the State.

14 I would like all children who were in the care of the State to be given parenting or  
15 grandparenting support and any other support they require, for example trauma support and  
16 treatment for mental health issues.

17 By the late 1970s the Government knew something terrible had happened at Lake  
18 Alice. All children born to a parent who had been in Lake Alice should have been  
19 monitored and followed up on. The parents should have been supported and given help to  
20 get over their mental trauma.

21 I was a child bringing up children because my mother could not properly parent.  
22 She had to struggle on the best she could, but it was not good enough. She also could not  
23 get herself out -- there was no-one there to protect or support me or my siblings.

24 What happened to me was that all my trauma my mother went through got  
25 transmitted to me in all the ways that made my childhood a hell. I believe all children of  
26 parents who were in Lake Alice should be offered counselling and trauma support. I  
27 understand from my mother's conversations that a lot of them found it very hard to be  
28 proper mum or dads. These children will have suffered like I did. The children shouldn't  
29 have to prove sexual abuse to get trauma support and ACC counselling.

30 Counselling should be available to children in all primary schools and they should  
31 be able to choose the gender of their counsellor. I have a friend who could not disclose his  
32 sexual abuse at school because the counsellor was a female. I think the same would go for  
33 race. I would like to give this evidence at the Royal Commission in Auckland. I'll just  
34 leave it at that.

- 1 **MS A THOMAS:** Thank you so much Amy.
- 2 **MS BETHUNE:** You're welcome.
- 3 **MS A THOMAS:** I think it was good to hear the statement from you, so thank you very much.
- 4 Commissioners may have some questions for you.
- 5 **COMMISSIONER ALOFIVAE:** No, just a comment thank you, Amy. I was going to ask what
- 6 support you felt children like you and what you'd experienced needed and I think you've
- 7 outlined it beautifully in terms of the supports because you were in so many schools. Was
- 8 there anything else that you wanted to add to that? It's not just about providing the
- 9 counselling, because you also got a benefit from the Department of Social Welfare, was it
- 10 the independent youth allowance.
- 11 **MS BETHUNE:** Sorry, what was that?
- 12 **COMMISSIONER ALOFIVAE:** What other supports apart from the counselling do you think
- 13 would be really helpful to children like yourself whose parents went through Lake Alice?
- 14 **MS BETHUNE:** It's a bit hard to think, because so many people failed myself, so many people
- 15 that should have from teachers to even counsellors back when I was in school. But there
- 16 needs to be more than what there is, a lot more, and the kids need to be listened to. They
- 17 need to be heard and not, well there's not enough evidence or made to feel like they were to
- 18 blame.
- 19 **COMMISSIONER ALOFIVAE:** So actually those who are in positions of making decisions
- 20 about what supports go into schools should be talking a lot more to young people like
- 21 yourself --
- 22 **MS BETHUNE:** Yes.
- 23 **COMMISSIONER ALOFIVAE:** -- who actually experienced to be able to inform better?
- 24 **MS BETHUNE:** They should, yes, yes, definitely because it's also not just me, it's my children as
- 25 well. My kids can go on the internet and read up about their nan now. My kids are pretty
- 26 hard and resilient, but I do know that they're at home watching. And they're going to need
- 27 someone to talk to, seeing all this, and realising what their grandparents or parents have
- 28 gone through. The deeper impact of it, people need to realise the deeper impact of what
- 29 Leeks and everyone else at that hospital done to those children and how it has affected their
- 30 whole lives.
- 31 **COMMISSIONER ALOFIVAE:** Yeah, so that's the intergenerational effect that you're
- 32 describing?
- 33 **MS BETHUNE:** Yeah.
- 34 **COMMISSIONER ALOFIVAE:** Very beautifully there for us. Thank you, Amy, you are an

1           incredible, incredible young lady.

2   **MS BETHUNE:** Thank you.

3   **CHAIR:** I can't add to that, Amy. And I won't ask you anymore questions but I'll just hand you  
4           over again to Commissioner Gibson.

5   **COMMISSIONER GIBSON:** Thanks, Amy, for sharing as well today and again, reiterating the  
6           context you alongside your mother, such a powerful connection, powerful story. We're  
7           looking at redress for people who were abused in care. And one of the questions is about  
8           how to address intergenerational impacts. What you've talked about, redress should cover  
9           the children of people who are in State care. And some important components like how to  
10          be a good parent for people who have gone through State care, that's something else that  
11          you're --

12   **MS BETHUNE:** Parenting course or, you know, there needs to be set parenting courses where --  
13          and counselling and the support to parent.

14   **COMMISSIONER GIBSON:** Not just for people who have been through State care themselves  
15          but also the children of those people as well?

16   **MS BETHUNE:** Yes, the children of those people. My counsellor said I'm one of the lucky  
17          people in the way that I haven't -- I'm still here. They're still here, the children of the  
18          survivors from what I have heard have had a hard life as well and they're still here.

19   **COMMISSIONER GIBSON:** There was a suggestion that there should be part of the redress or  
20          setting up processes so that people who survive these places could connect back together,  
21          some kind of informal networks?

22   **MS BETHUNE:** Yes.

23   **COMMISSIONER GIBSON:** Do you think children of those survivors as well need something  
24          similar?

25   **MS BETHUNE:** Yes, because you -- it's hard -- I can talk to someone else that's been abused  
26          because they know where I'm coming from. I can't have a conversation with someone that  
27          has had an awesome childhood life. I can't connect to those people. So yeah, that would be  
28          great to set up something like that, support groups for the kids and the grandkids to  
29          understand ways to help them process, this has happened to my family. My girls are a bit --  
30          they're coming in that age where one of them, she will need someone to talk to to process  
31          what me and her nan have just done, talked about. So yeah, definitely.

32   **COMMISSIONER GIBSON:** Thanks, I think that's all for me now to thank you. I've heard a lot  
33          of private sessions but, Sharyn, what you have shared particularly I think has impacted on  
34          me, on many of us over the time. I'm not sure how many times you've gone back to try and

1 seek justice for what happened to you?

2 **MS COLLIS:** Too many times, shouldn't have happened that many times.

3 **COMMISSIONER GIBSON:** Hopefully this will be the last time, there there'll be some  
4 resolution out of it.

5 **MS COLLIS:** Hopefully.

6 **COMMISSIONER GIBSON:** It is powerful, is what I've heard is that the letter, that was  
7 amazing, that was something in itself, that the connection, the striving to return to  
8 something, connection with family. You've been courageous over many years to come  
9 forward and seek justice. And again, I hope this is the last time that there will be justice  
10 from this. So really appreciate what you both have given today. We've seen the  
11 intergenerational impacts and we've heard what you've told us, thanks so much for sharing.

12 **CHAIR:** That was going to be the last word but having heard that your children are watching,  
13 Amy, can I just say to them, you've got a wonderful nana and a wonderful mum and they're  
14 very brave. So thank you.

15 **MS COLLIS:** Thank you.

16 **MS BETHUNE:** Thank you.

17 **CHAIR:** Let's take the adjournment thank you.

18 **Adjournment from 11.22 am to 11.51 am**

19 **MS JOYCHILD:** Good morning Commissioners.

20 **CHAIR:** Good morning Ms Joychild.

21 **MS JOYCHILD:** We now have in the seat to give evidence Malcolm Richards who is a survivor  
22 of Lake Alice and Malcolm, if you take the affirmation from the Chair of the Commission  
23 and then we'll start your evidence.

24 **MALCOLM RICHARDS**

25 **CHAIR:** Just before I do that, welcome to the hearing Malcolm, thank you for coming. I've just  
26 been told that you don't want to go anonymous, that you'd like to have your name  
27 mentioned, is that right?

28 A. Yeah, that's fine.

29 **Q.** Excellent. We'll probably hear about that later on. Malcolm, if you could just answer the  
30 following. Do you solemnly, sincerely, truly declare and affirm that the evidence you'll  
31 give today to the Commission will be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

32 A. I do.

33 **Q.** Thank you very much. I'll leave you have with Ms Joychild.

34 **QUESTIONING BY MS JOYCHILD:** Malcolm, would you like to start reading at paragraph 1.

1 A. I live in Hastings with my wife and our three or my three children and a stepdaughter. I  
2 was on a supported living benefit. Though it felt much longer to me, the medical notes  
3 records that I was sent to Lake Alice for two months when I was 15 and a half from  
4 October 19, 1975, to December 1975. I have lifelong hideous effects from my time in Lake  
5 Alice, particularly from the ECT. It turned a 15 year old depressed boy in an unhappy  
6 home with a violent father into someone with life-long debilitating trauma, memory loss  
7 and huge difficulty retaining information.

8 I have tried to bring Selwyn Leeks and those who supported his abuse to justice  
9 and to get an inquiry into Lake Alice whenever I have been well enough to do so. This has  
10 included Police complaints spanning three decades, and at the moment to get a private  
11 prosecution with Dr Leeks, requests of Government to hold an inquiry and finally taking  
12 the complaint to the UN under the Convention on Torture.

13 **Q.** We'll just pause you there, Malcolm, and explain to the Commissioners that because of the  
14 time constraints he's not going to be reading every paragraph. So that was paragraph 4 and  
15 it's now Malcolm if you start again on paragraph 7.

16 **CHAIR:** Just so that you know, in case you haven't been told, we have had your evidence for a  
17 long time and we've read it very carefully, so even if you don't read it out, we're still taking  
18 it into account, is that okay?

19 A. Yes.

20 **MS JOYCHILD:** Also Malcolm has an evidence that doesn't necessarily have those paragraphs  
21 in it, does it, it's in bigger print, so --

22 **CHAIR:** That's fine.

23 **QUESTIONING BY MS JOYCHILD CONTINUED:** Start reading at "when I was a child".

24 A. When I was a child my parents and my teachers tried to stop me from using my left hand.  
25 Around the age of 10 the teacher principal of a small country school I was attending would  
26 tie my left hand behind me and make me use my right hand only to do things. One of the  
27 things he made me do with my right hand was to masturbate him when he told me would  
28 help me use that hand for everything. I didn't know at the time this was wrong. I could not  
29 talk to my parents about it as we children were to be seen and not heard, so we never spoke  
30 to them without them starting the conversation first.

31 **Q.** Paragraph 10.

32 A. I had run away from home to stay with my Nana but she ended up in hospital and I had to  
33 stay with my cousin. There was an incident that is recorded in my admission letters where  
34 it was recorded how on one day I showed my cousin what the teacher had been making me



1 do, and his father walked in and there was a lot of trouble as a result of this. I was taken to  
2 a doctor at Hastings Hospital and sent to Lake Alice that same day. Authority was given  
3 for my admission into a hospital on 19 October '75.

4 In two letters Dr Leeks wrote shortly after I had left Lake Alice he said that he was  
5 in symbiotic attachment phase of schizophrenia and my condition was chronic. The only  
6 condition I have ever been diagnosed with since leaving Lake Alice is clinical depression  
7 and PTSD from my time at Lake Alice. I have had one suicide attempt about 22 years ago.  
8 This was after a traumatic series of events surrounding my marriage break-down.

9 **Q.** I'm just going to pause you there, Malcolm, and you'll see on the screen there's a sign that  
10 I forgot to put up at the beginning. Is that a sign that you have prepared?

11 **A.** That is a sign I borrowed off the internet as it was highly relevant to our time in Lake Alice.

12 **Q.** Thank you.

13 **CHAIR:** Do you want to leave it up there while you give your evidence?

14 **A.** Yes, that would be fine.

15 **MS JOYCHILD:** Does that mean his face won't be shown?

16 **CHAIR:** Yes, we don't want that to happen. We've seen it anyway, thank you.

17 **QUESTIONING BY MS JOYCHILD CONTINUED:** Paragraph 15 Commissioners.

18 **A.** While in Lake Alice I was never told I had a psychiatric condition. My notes record me  
19 admitting that I heard voices. I never heard voices. I may have said that I would think to  
20 myself out loud and talk to myself to sort things out. But I have never had hallucinations or  
21 heard voices, then and now. Possibly I may have said to staff in reply to a question if  
22 I heard voices that I heard a voice telling me to run away. That would have been to justify  
23 why I had been caught running away from Lake Alice. I actually ran away from Lake  
24 Alice because I hated it and was homesick and wanted to get home.

25 On reflection I see myself as a very sensitive oldest child with a violent alcoholic  
26 father and a mother who also engaged in physical violence against her children. Our  
27 lifestyle was unsettled with much moving areas and schools. These matters caused  
28 personal and social issues for me. I was definitely a depressed teenager and the relationship  
29 with my father was getting more difficult as I got older due to his unpredictable and  
30 uncontrolled violence. My mother was worried about us being in a home together and  
31 wanted me away from my father. My showing my cousin how to masturbate was because I  
32 had been sexually abused and didn't know it was wrong. None of what happened in my life  
33 was a reason to send me to a psychiatric hospital. I do not believe I should have ever been  
34 there.

- 1                   Even though I was only in Lake Alice for eight weeks, to me it seemed like ages.  
2                   What I recall about my arrival was that Mum and I went into Dr Leeks' office for about 5  
3                   minutes. He spoke to my mother, not me. He then called a nurse to take me upstairs and  
4                   sent Mum on her way. Upstairs I was told to strip out of my clothes and shower. I was  
5                   then told to pick out some clothes from a big sack. I don't recall ever being assessed by a  
6                   doctor or nurse. It was not explained to me that I would be getting ECT. It was never  
7                   explained to me what I was in for and I was never asked to consent to it. The only time  
8                   I recall seeing Dr Leeks after I arrived was when he was giving me ECT. My mother told  
9                   me later that she never knew I was getting ECT and never agreed to that being done to me.
- 10 **Q.**           We'll just pause there, Malcolm. You've very helpfully drawn a couple of maps to show  
11                   the layout of the villa. Can you say what villa that was? Was it villa 7?
- 12 **A.**           6 or 7 I think.
- 13 **Q.**           So we'll put those up on the board. This is the top floor of your villa, Malcolm?
- 14 **A.**           Yes.
- 15 **Q.**           Can you see it on the screen in front of you?
- 16 **A.**           Yes.
- 17 **Q.**           Can you just take us through this. Let's start at the left-hand side. You've got two words,  
18                   "cell, cell". What do you mean by "cell"?
- 19 **A.**           They were cells, they were heavy doors with quite a big heavy key and they had a very  
20                   narrow window just on one side of the door.
- 21 **Q.**           What was inside them?
- 22 **A.**           When I was first put in the cell it had a steel hospital bed with a mattress and sheets and  
23                   blankets. Yeah, later on it just had a blanket.
- 24 **Q.**           Did it not have the hospital bed later on?
- 25 **A.**           No, that got taken out because I put the hospital bed, the mattress against the door so  
26                   nobody could see in that little window and the bed on its end, I climbed up the bed, I tied  
27                   my sheets around the red sprinkler pipe and hung myself.
- 28 **Q.**           So we'll get to that a bit later. And we'll first just look, so you've been in the cell and you  
29                   know what's exactly in the cell?
- 30 **A.**           Yeah.
- 31 **Q.**           Okay, so then you've got "beds" for 8 or 10 on each side, that's the dormitory is it?
- 32 **A.**           Yeah.
- 33 **Q.**           Were you in that dormitory?
- 34 **A.**           Yes.

- 1 **Q.** And then in the middle you've got the two baths, two showers. Would the toilets have been  
2 in there as well?
- 3 **A.** Yeah, I left them out because I couldn't picture in my mind where they were because --  
4 yeah.
- 5 **Q.** That's all right.
- 6 **A.** Quite some time later I tried to draw it.
- 7 **Q.** And next to them is the treatment room?
- 8 **A.** Yeah.
- 9 **Q.** Is that the room where ECT took place?
- 10 **A.** Yes.
- 11 **Q.** And then lockers, what would be in the lockers?
- 12 **A.** The lockers were where you put your clothes when you arrived.
- 13 **Q.** So they were locked?
- 14 **A.** Yeah, and the key was kept in Dr Leeks' office.
- 15 **Q.** Right, so that only got opened when you left?
- 16 **A.** Yeah.
- 17 **Q.** And then there's more beds, is that another dormitory on the other side?
- 18 **A.** Yeah, it was a -- yeah, same the other end.
- 19 **Q.** So they were kind of exactly parallel?
- 20 **A.** Yeah.
- 21 **Q.** And then there's two lots of staircases going up each side. Is that right?
- 22 **A.** Yes, you could only access those stairs, it was like a concrete tank with a spiral stair on to a  
23 deck, it was meant as a fire escape although you couldn't get out there even if you wanted  
24 to.
- 25 **Q.** Right, so how did you get up to the top floor?
- 26 **A.** Inside there was stairs.
- 27 **Q.** Okay. So now if we can go to the bottom floor. This is the ground floor and so on the left  
28 side there's a kitchen and a dining room.
- 29 **A.** Yes.
- 30 **Q.** Did you ever go into the kitchen?
- 31 **A.** No.
- 32 **Q.** The dining room only to eat?
- 33 **A.** Yes.
- 34 **Q.** And then there's a drug room. Is that where you got Paraldehyde?

- 1 A. Yes.
- 2 **Q.** That's where all the Paraldehyde injections took place?
- 3 A. Yes, sometimes it was just out in the hallway. They'd just come out of the drug room with  
4 Paraldehyde.
- 5 **Q.** Right, and you'd have to take your pants down there and then?
- 6 A. Yeah. The thing with Paraldehyde, it was so toxic it couldn't be -- it had to be used in a  
7 glass syringe because it would melt the plastic.
- 8 **Q.** Okay, and the shop was that open certain times?
- 9 A. Yeah, you got a little bit of pocket money for behaving just, you know, and your parents  
10 were able to leave some money for you to spend and if you'd behaved you were allowed to  
11 get a bag of lollies or something.
- 12 **Q.** Right. And you can't recall what's in those other two rooms, diagonally opposite each  
13 other, there's a hallway and then there's Dr Leeks' office?
- 14 A. Yeah.
- 15 **Q.** And then beside that is the day room?
- 16 A. Yes.
- 17 **Q.** And then next to that is a group therapy room?
- 18 A. Yeah, it was like a sort of sun room on the end where just a big row of chairs.
- 19 **Q.** Okay. Thank you Malcolm. We'll put that down and now we'll move on to group therapy.  
20 Which is paragraph 20 of your brief.
- 21 A. I attended group therapy sessions, if you could call it that. There was a psychiatrist leading  
22 it, I can't remember him, but others tell me it was Victor Soeterik. There would be around  
23 30 of us in the villa, some would be at school, some at the group therapy. He essentially  
24 made us talk about our problems otherwise we would get on the list to get ECT. Because  
25 of this I did speak about what happened to me and that a teacher of mine had made me  
26 masturbate him. After that there were at least two boys who would sit and lean on me  
27 when I was seated in an armchair in the TV room. They followed me and when they had  
28 the chance put a hand down my pants. I had the impression that these two boys had learned  
29 about my vulnerability at the group therapy and took advantage of it and picked on me.
- 30 **Q.** Now we're going to go on to talk about electroconvulsive therapy.
- 31 A. There were lots of children that received ECT in Lake Alice and I was one of them. There  
32 were two types of ECT. One was planned and the other was used as a punishment. I had  
33 both. Hospital records say I had six ECT with two being unplanned. From my memory it  
34 was twice that much at least. I had two weeks of planned ECT on a Monday, Wednesday

1 and Friday. I believe a lot of ECT that was given as punishment was not recorded on the  
2 medical notes, I believe it only got written in when certain staff were on duty. I don't  
3 believe Dr Leeks recorded any of the ECT that he dished out as punishment with no good  
4 or believable reason.

5 **Q.** Now we were going to leave how planned ECT worked and move on to how unplanned  
6 ECT worked.

7 **A.** Unplanned ECT was given for punishment and it could happen at any time. It was the main  
8 punishment. We were threatened with it all the time. We were all in a state of terror about  
9 getting unmodified ECT.

10 There was no anaesthetic or muscle relaxant for unplanned ECT. We children and  
11 young people would all be in the day room living in fear that we would be called up for  
12 ECT. We were afraid 24/7. We could see the children being physically dragged up for it.  
13 We could hear the terrible screaming after their ECT. The children were put on their bed in  
14 the upstairs dormitory near to the ECT room. We could see them being brought down half  
15 dead looking hours later for dinner.

16 I first got unmodified ECT after I tried to run away. I hated being there and was  
17 homesick. My home life was far from perfect, but I knew how to protect myself at home.  
18 I didn't here. After I was caught trying to run away I was brought back by a couple of  
19 nurses and locked in a cell. I don't know for how long but it seemed ages.

20 A couple of hours later Dr Leeks and a nurse came in with a trolley and two boys  
21 aged about 13 or 14. I believe they had asked if they could watch and were told yes. One  
22 was skinny with red hair, I don't get a proper look at the other one. I started kicking and  
23 screaming and two male nurses came to hold me down. I was so afraid. First they shocked  
24 me on my legs, causing me to lose control of my bladder and urinate on Dr Leeks, as he  
25 was kneeling by me holding the headset on my legs. Then I believe in retaliation for  
26 urinating on Dr Leeks he then shocked me on my lower area. He shoved the headset  
27 between my legs. The pain was unbearable. I still have the burn mark on my penis today.  
28 I believe this was caused by the ECT as when I came around my penis was raw

29 Then they put electrodes on my head. The pain was unbearable. My eyes went all  
30 fuzzy like an old black and white TV at the end of reception. The ECT went on for 10 to  
31 15 minutes. It was not just one shock like on the penis. They kept turning the power up  
32 until I would have a seizure. I shook violently. I still feel it now. Then I lost  
33 consciousness. I still wake up in a cold sweat, my body actually physically hurts in the  
34 same places as there, and I accidentally bashed my head on the concrete floor as I thrashed

1 back in pain.

2 During the ECT I soiled myself. I recall being carried out of the cell and through  
3 the dormitory around the corner and dropped into a cold water bath in the bathroom. I felt  
4 a blow to my head and not sure if I hit the end of the bath as I was dropped in or if I had  
5 been given another belt with the ECT machine. I was pretty out to it and could not stay  
6 afloat and sunk. I felt I was drowning until someone eventually pulled my head up. To this  
7 day I have problems with the traumatic memories that come back with cold water, even a  
8 cold water drink will bring on the flashbacks.

9 I also got ECT for trying to hang myself. GRO-C

10 GRO-C

11 GRO-C The notes say I got ECT for barricading myself in my cell, nothing  
12 about the suicide attempt. How I could barricade myself in my cell with a mattress against  
13 a door that opened outwards, as all cell doors did, I have no idea. They took me down and  
14 took me away -- took away all my bedding and clothes and left me naked with a plastic  
15 bucket and one blanket. Dr Leeks then gave me ECT.

16 I don't know how long I was unconscious for after ECT, but I came back in the  
17 cell with a sore sticky rectum and believe I had been raped somewhere and somehow in the  
18 whole episode. I cannot name the person who did this as after getting ECT, even after you  
19 regain consciousness, you are still very groggy. I have flashbacks of this but no clear view  
20 of the person. I was left in the cell after that ECT for two or three days, cold, naked with  
21 one blanket and a bucket for a toilet.

22 Another occasion I recall getting unplanned ECT for fighting off another boy who  
23 made sexual advances. He had pulled me behind the stairwell and tried to touch me. Two  
24 nurses marched me into the treatment room. I was shocked on the head several times  
25 before I lost consciousness from the pain. Like a lot of my memories, these are foggy and  
26 come in nightmares where I wake in a cold sweat to make(sic) notes to try and put together  
27 what had happened to me.

28 To have a wash we were lined up every night naked and handed a towel at the  
29 door when our turn came up. Staff supervised this process. We were not allowed our own  
30 clothing so had to sort through bags of clothes for something to fit us. Even underwear was  
31 second-hand and someone else's. Not much fitted well. It was so demeaning, I hated it.

32 The ultimate threatened punishment was being locked in maximum security with  
33 the paedophiles where they were allowed to do whatever they wanted to do. That never

1 happened to me but the staff threatened it and I lived in fear of it. It was talked about by  
2 many of the children in fear and a couple of them said they had been there. Whether it was  
3 true or not I don't know, but we lived in fear of it.

4 There were scuffles for acting out all the time. There weren't like a pile on where  
5 five boys jump on to one. As I said above, I had to always be on the look-out to protect  
6 myself from being sexually abused by other boys. I had to fight them off physically if they  
7 tried it on, which they did. That got me into trouble a few times. Life was a daily horror in  
8 Lake Alice. There were so many times that I just want --

9 **CHAIR:** Do you want to stop there for a moment?

10 A. There were so many times that I just wanted to die.

11 I got out of Lake Alice for Christmas, two months after admission. But I wasn't  
12 formally discharged until May '76. While at home I heard my mum and dad talking about  
13 what day they would take me back. I was so terrified of being sent back I ran away from  
14 home. I lived under a bridge for about three weeks and then I got a job milking cows in  
15 Pahiatua.

16 I discovered very early on after I left that I had major memory problems and body  
17 aches and numbness and pin-pricking headaches that would sometimes be so painful it  
18 would drop you to the ground, but then be over in less than a minute. I put this down to the  
19 ECT.

20 I had to lie about who I was to get my first job because I knew that if they found  
21 out they would just send me back to Lake Alice. I was there for around 18 months until  
22 I saw someone visit the farm who had known me as a young person. I took off. This was  
23 pretty much my whole life from then until I was about 35, running away like an escaped  
24 prisoner, scared that I would be sent back to Lake Alice.

25 I have been in and out of jobs like dairy farming and manual labour all my life.  
26 These types of jobs suited me because they don't require a lot of thought, but even then  
27 I still struggled in them. I couldn't remember instructions and would forget to do things I  
28 was meant to do. For example, I got written up so many times by OSH because I would  
29 forget to do things such as failing to put up signs or write up hazards. Stuff like this  
30 happened all the time. I would be transferred from one job to another for failing to do  
31 things and I attribute all that to my memory problems from all the ECT I got given.

32 I could have been working at better jobs and done skills training if I hadn't had  
33 ECT-induced memory problems. I note my mother wrote in a letter I was very good with  
34 my hands. I have done all the plumbing for my home. I watch YouTube videos but don't

1 retain the information and have to watch them again next time there is a plumbing problem.  
2 I could have earned a lot more in a trade. There are a lot of us survivors who are not  
3 capable of doing very much but not from lack of intelligence.

4 I ended up walking out of my last job driving heavy machinery because I kept  
5 getting lost. I was meant to drive a truck in one direction and ended up 30 kilometres away  
6 in the other. When they rang me to ask where I was, I pretended I had been delayed and  
7 that I was on my way. Incidents like these happened a lot. I would always try to cover the  
8 memory gaps.

9 Eventually I took a few months off after having another heart attack but stopped  
10 paid work completely not long after. I was always getting yelled at for making small  
11 mistakes, of being bullied because I couldn't remember what to do at work. While working  
12 I have wanted to take my own life many times because I was sick of everything.  
13 Everything was a stress. It was when I went to Confidential Listening Service, I had to  
14 fight to be heard by the Confidential Listening Service. They said Lake Alice was a closed  
15 case and there was nothing more they could do for me, but my counsellor got them to see  
16 me, and told them about the stress of working with my memory problems that they told me  
17 I shouldn't have to put up with. They supported me get put on to an invalid's benefit.  
18 I haven't worked for about 10 years now.

19 In 1999 I was admitted to the Connolly Unit for ten weeks after trying to commit  
20 suicide after a traumatic series of events around my marriage break-up.

21 It wasn't until I was 35 that I learned Lake Alice had been closed down. I told the  
22 social worker at the hospital of my fears of being taken back and she told me it had been  
23 closed. It felt like a huge weight lifted from me as it was such a relief. Finding this out,  
24 I no longer wanted to take my own life. That news reversed my downward trend and I  
25 believe it changed my life, not the ECT I had been given there. Before hearing this I never  
26 had hope for the future as I always thought I might be taken back there at any time. My  
27 relief was profound, huge that I cried. The social worker who told me this was very kind  
28 and empathetic. She was also one who put me on to Grant Cameron's class action claim  
29 which I joined.

30 I am married again now and have been in a stable relationship for 19 years. I was  
31 married twice before then. In all I have five children. The oldest, she's the second oldest,  
32 of whom died of cancer.

33 Unfortunately my whole family suffers because of my time in Lake Alice. I --

34 **QUESTIONING BY MS JOYCHILD CONTINUED:** Shall we take a break Malcolm?



1 A. Just a minute, there's not long to go. I frequently have nightmares and can  
2 intentionally(sic) push my wife out of bed. I have anger fits sometimes and yell at the kids  
3 because I can't concentrate and need dead quiet to function. Sometimes I could react and  
4 say horrible things to the kids, would think that I don't love them, but I do very much, but  
5 I just can't deal with stressful situations. The family have learned to just leave me alone  
6 when I'm stressed. Sometimes the kids just stay in their bedrooms. I ask them to all go out  
7 a few hours several times so I could have quiet to work on this statement. They did this as  
8 they knew how important it was to me and we have talked through how noise affects me. I  
9 can't even drive with the radio on.

10 I have spent much of my life acting like a prisoner always on the run. I am still  
11 like that even today. I don't speed in case Police pull me over and they send me back to  
12 Lake Alice. I know that's silly because Lake Alice has been shut down and has been for  
13 many years. But that is still the way I think. I can't deal with anyone in authority, doctors,  
14 fire fighters, etc, all of it freaks me out. How do you ask the people for help when they are  
15 the same people that hurt you?

16 I have struggled with the fact the Police have not taken me seriously or treated me  
17 with respect in relation to my complaint against Dr Leeks. For a long time, I was fobbed  
18 off by them. They did not want to know my story. As recently as 2018 they told me they  
19 were not going to reopen the investigation. They only did when Mike Wesley-Smith talked  
20 to the Police Commissioner to make him see the injustice of it. When they took my  
21 statement then they were further galvanised into action when the UN's ruling was made a  
22 short time later.

23 I had a heart attack at 32, even though there is no family history of heart problems.  
24 I believe this was caused by the stress I was still living with after I left Lake Alice. Today I  
25 am also in a lot of physical nerve pain. My body aches all the time. I attribute this to the  
26 ECT at Lake Alice. It started after being there.

27 As I said, I cannot handle stress, have huge memory problems and live daily with  
28 the horrible memories of Lake Alice flooding in. I have nightmares related to my time  
29 there. Before I started speaking up about Lake Alice in the early 2000s, I had deliberately  
30 worked very long hours to keep ahead of my thoughts, not be dragged into them and to help  
31 me sleep.

32 I have been in counselling on and off. For my latest one it took me a year or two  
33 just to build trust to open up and she said to me to write a book, so I did. I'm still writing it.  
34 Then I got online and let rip at the world using another name to protect myself. The more

1 I talked, the more I remembered, and it has given me some hope that one day I may be able  
2 to have a life. It has been hard telling my story for decades and only now is anyone  
3 listening. It's good to be listened to, but for me there has to be proper change. It's very  
4 hard to put things behind you when your abusers are enjoying life, a life you have never  
5 had.

6 My memory is a nightmare. I lose my train of thought a lot and it is hard to keep a  
7 conversation or to concentrate on what I'm doing. I struggle every day. To be clear, I did  
8 not just suffer for the two months in Lake Alice and then it was over. I have suffered  
9 throughout my life.

10 I have a claim with ACC for brain damage due to ECT and finding a supportive  
11 doctor, ACC say there is no visible evidence of brain damage. They won't accept the burn  
12 on my penis as visible evidence as they say it could have been caused by almost anything at  
13 any time. There are tests that could identify brain damage from ECT but ACC won't  
14 approve the tests because of their cost. I have an appeal to the District Court pending on  
15 this issue and I'm waiting for a hearing date.

16 I joined the class action brought by Grant Cameron in 2001. Eventually I was told  
17 that a settlement offer of 60,000 had been made to me. At that time I had a small bag of  
18 clothes, and my car which was where I lived. I was flat bloke and wasn't working.  
19 I understood that Grant Cameron was saying he had mortgaged his home to pay for the case  
20 and was then about to go bankrupt. It was a take it or leave it offer. If you don't take the  
21 settlement there would be nothing as he was not going to be taking the case on our behalf.  
22 We would have to go to someone else. Also, I understood that I would have to pay his fees,  
23 even if I didn't accept the offer. It didn't feel like I had a lawyer to properly advise me.

24 When the money came through it was much less than the original amount that was  
25 offered to me. From memory, Grant Cameron was taking around \$25,000 in legal fees.  
26 But I feel angry that the Government's response was also only about the money to make us  
27 go away. There was no offer of rehabilitation to help our recovery.

28 **Q.** Malcolm, can I just pause you there and ask you about your dealings with Grant Cameron  
29 claim. Who interviewed you for it?

30 **A.** I don't know the lady's name, it was -- I never spoke from memory to Grant Cameron at all.

31 **Q.** And did you meet her in person?

32 **A.** No, it was always over the phone.

33 **Q.** So you didn't really feel like you were having proper legal advice as to whether to accept it  
34 or not?

1 A. No, and I was in no place to make decisions because I had just had another six rounds of  
2 ECT in the Connolly Unit, which they went straight to ECT where normally you'd try drugs  
3 for a period of time before you resort to ECT. But I believe they got my records from Lake  
4 Alice seeing I had ECT and made a decision I must be drug resistant and went straight to  
5 ECT.

6 Q. You told me about an incident when you first had your heart attack and you were lying in  
7 the ward tied up to tubes and wires. The issue of Lake Alice came up, can you explain that  
8 to the Commissioners?

9 A. I'm not sure -- the man that came running down the hallway towards my bed where I was  
10 being monitored came down screaming and yelling at me that why had I left the fact I'd  
11 been in Lake Alice off my admittance form, what was I hiding, and he was really going to  
12 town at me like I was some sort of threat. I assumed later that he probably thought I was an  
13 adult in Lake Alice in the maximum security unit. But two nurses had to settle him down  
14 and drag him away because the monitors were all going mental. They had to give me some  
15 more morphine for the pain I was in from my heart not working properly.

16 Q. He would have been someone from the hospital admissions area would he?

17 A. Yeah, well, he wasn't in a nurse's uniform, yeah.

18 Q. And you hadn't put Lake Alice on your admission form?

19 A. No, well, I didn't believe or think it was a hospital, so they just said what other hospitals  
20 had you been in, I thought they meant like Greenlane where I was. So I left it off.

21 Q. Now we're on to the Police.

22 A. Which one's that?

23 Q. Rachel can help you.

24 A. Something that is very wrong about the settlement allocation is that I understand part was  
25 based on how many days you were in Lake Alice. I know people who were in there much  
26 longer than me but who seemed to have suffered less long lasting impacts. For example,  
27 they've been able to hold down good jobs and are still working now.

28 Later I learned the second round of Grant Cameron's claimants had not had legal  
29 fees taken off them. That felt unfair and unjust. I believe more compensation is owed to us  
30 since our time in Lake Alice for the massive impacts on our lives, and also our legal fees  
31 should be paid back.

32 I am very disappointed after hearing Leoni McInroe's testimony at the redress  
33 hearing. I believe that when the case was too taxing on his finances, Grant Cameron should  
34 have offered us to go with Leoni's lawyers or other lawyers where we could have rejected

1 the claim and continued with Legal Aid.

2 On 31 October 2001 I received an apology from Prime Minister Helen Clark and  
3 Minister of Health Annette King. The apology felt more so she could move on from it and  
4 put Lake Alice behind her. It was not something we survivors could do. We couldn't move  
5 on with no accountability of anyone for what happened to us and living with the  
6 consequences all the time.

7 When a part of the class action claim, Grant Cameron had advised that we should  
8 make complaints to the Police about Dr Leeks so that they could charge him. People did  
9 that. I was bitterly disappointed when the Police never charged Dr Leeks after the  
10 settlement of our claims.

11 More pressure came on the Police in 2009 to prosecute Leeks. By then I had made  
12 connection with some other survivors through Facebook. We lobbied to get the matter  
13 reopened and we were very hopeful. It was bitterly disappointing that the Police were not  
14 going to charge Dr Leeks for cruelty to a child because there was insufficient evidence.  
15 That was a huge let down to the survivors. By then I knew this was a deliberate fob off as  
16 there was plenty of evidence. I decided I was not going to give up seeking justice.

17 In 2012 I e-mailed my local MP Craig Foss asking him if the Police were going to  
18 reopen the Lake Alice case. I made a Police complaint and was interviewed again but they  
19 said they were not going to reopen the investigation. The Minister of Police, Anne Tolley,  
20 told me she could not intervene as it was solely a matter for Police.

21 I received an e-mail from Detective Sergeant Grant Atkin on 16 February 2017  
22 saying they would not be reinvestigating complaints against Dr Leeks. The Police  
23 interviewed me on 7 March 2019 about my experiences in Lake Alice, however nothing  
24 happened in response to this.

25 I wrote to the Prime Minister John Key in March 2009 complaining at the lack of  
26 inquiry of accountability of Selwyn Leeks and the inconsistent payments. He gave my  
27 request to Dr Johnathan Coleman who replied saying the Government was not going to  
28 intervene or revisit the matter.

29 In 2009 I also wrote to the Attorney-General asking for an inquiry into the events  
30 at Lake Alice in the Child and Adolescent Unit that had been operated by Dr Leeks. He  
31 replied on 12 August 2009 saying the Government was not intending to have an inquiry and  
32 that it had settled the claims and apologised to the patients in full and final settlement of  
33 their claims.

34 I was determined to get to the truth of what happened to us in Lake Alice out there

1 and get justice for us. When in 2016 [GRO-B] asked for help I stepped up.  
2 [GRO-B] was a survivor of abuse who was living in Australia. He toured  
3 New Zealand seeking signatures to get a Royal Commission. I collected signatures for him  
4 around Hawke's Bay. We took them to parliament and handed them over to Kris Faafoi.  
5 We were told it was going through the select committee and I recall Marama Fox who was  
6 on the select committee said it was looking like we might get a Royal Commission. When  
7 Labour won the election it finally set one up.

8 When neither the Police nor the Government were prepared to take action against  
9 Dr Leeks and inquire into what actually happened to us in Lake Alice, I then tried to  
10 prosecute Dr Leeks myself. The UN had told me the Attorney-General had to assist me if  
11 I wanted to take a class of torture. I wrote to the Attorney-General on 22 March 2017 and  
12 applied for dispensation to take a private prosecution against Dr Leeks.

13 I received a letter on 6 April 2017 from the Crown Law Office telling me I had to  
14 provide a draft charging document and evidence to allow them to consider if I had enough  
15 to prosecute Dr Leeks. I did not have the skills to do what Crown Law was asking me, so  
16 I wrote to every QC lawyer in New Zealand I could find asking if they would take my case.  
17 No-one would do it. I e-mailed the Attorney-General in November 2018 telling him I could  
18 not get a lawyer and asking him to assist me in every way possible as that is what the UN  
19 says. I was not assisted.

20 I took a claim to the United Nations Committee Against Torture in 2019 following  
21 the Citizens Commission on Human Rights complaint filed on behalf of Paul Zentveld.  
22 They accepted I had grounds for a case as they had with Paul's complaint a year before.  
23 My first hope for this Commission is --

24 **Q.** I'll just pause you there, Malcolm. What is the current status of your complaint with the  
25 United Nations?

26 **A.** They're holding on progressing it, I believe, until they get a response from the New Zealand  
27 Police as to what they're going to do.

28 **Q.** Right. Thank you.

29 **A.** What I'd like from this Royal Commission is, my first hope is that we are listened to and  
30 taken seriously, unlike past treatment and inquiries. I know the Government settled with  
31 us, but they did not find out what really happened to us. Our voices were not heard and  
32 no-one was held to account. They gave us money and tried to bury it.

33 I would like to be supported by the Royal Commission in my fight against ACC to  
34 have my claim covered for brain damage from ECT accepted by ACC.

1 I want compensation to cover the every day things I need to function, such as a  
2 smartphone, dictation equipment and a GPS.

3 I would like ECT banned in New Zealand. I have now collected over 500  
4 peer-reviewed studies proving ECT can and has caused brain damage.

5 Lastly, I want Dr Leeks and all those who helped him to abuse us to be held  
6 accountable. These people include all those who would put us on the list for punishment,  
7 the nurses who would drag you up for ECT and hold you down while you got ECT, all  
8 those who gave us the painful drugs, the management of the hospital and people who knew  
9 and turned a blind eye.

10 **Q.** Thank you, Malcolm, if you just sit there and wait, Commissioners may have some  
11 questions for you.

12 **CHAIR:** Do you want to take a deep breath before -- do you mind if we ask you some questions  
13 Malcolm?

14 **A.** The more the better.

15 **Q.** The more the better?

16 **A.** Yeah.

17 **Q.** That's an invitation, isn't it. Commissioner Gibson's going to ask you first.

18 **COMMISSIONER GIBSON:** Thanks, Malcolm, and thanks for your ongoing quest for justice. I  
19 think it might have been 1982 when the first time you went to the Police seeking some  
20 justice, some prosecution and they gave you -- it was dismissed as this kind of thing doesn't  
21 happen in New Zealand. Has the reasons for non-prosecution been consistent over the  
22 years or what's been the feedback about why things haven't resulted in prosecution from the  
23 Police?

24 **A.** Yeah, well, yeah, the first time I went to Police they threatened me with arrest. They've  
25 done all they can to discourage us from making complaints and never taken it seriously. It  
26 wasn't until Mike Wesley-Smith talked to the Police Commissioner that they were even  
27 considering taking my complaint at all. My first complaint I tried to explain to them was  
28 very incomplete because when I made that complaint I wasn't long out of hospital from  
29 having ECT again, and didn't include all the facts and I didn't include the sexual abuse or  
30 the electric shocks to the genitals because I didn't know, understand the relevance of it and  
31 the seriousness of it. And once I told Mike Wesley-Smith in his interview of me about that  
32 he went to the Police Commissioner and that set the ball rolling again.

33 **Q.** So the reasons for no prosecution have changed or evolved over the years, would you say?

34 **A.** No, they've always said there's not enough evidence, and they still haven't said there's

1 enough evidence to the best of my knowledge.

2 **Q.** Thanks Malcolm.

3 **CHAIR:** I'm sorry to raise this again, but I think it's important, but feel free to say no, if you don't  
4 want to go there again. In your brief of evidence, or you spoke to us about the unmodified  
5 ECT you got at Lake Alice and we heard all that and know well, the effects. But you also  
6 received modified ECT didn't you?

7 A. Yes.

8 **Q.** Do you mind if I ask you a couple of questions about that?

9 A. No, I don't mind.

10 **Q.** It's back in paragraph 22 I think. I'm asking you these questions because I want to know --  
11 modified ECT's been presented as perhaps the good ECT, the good ECT you're having. So  
12 I want to find out from you what your experience was of the modified ECT and whether  
13 you think it was good ECT or not. And you have said in your brief first of all the way it  
14 was administered was that the trolley would come around in public, wasn't it, they wheeled  
15 the public around and selected people for it?

16 A. **[Shows paper].**

17 **Q.** Oh my goodness another picture. There you will be lying on your beds waiting for a  
18 trolley, is that right?

19 A. Yeah, it was done in a ward where geriatric patients through to young children were lined  
20 up and they'd start with the geriatric patients, so you would hear the trolley coming closer  
21 and closer to scare you and every so often a nurse would cover a person up and say "Oh  
22 well, they didn't make it, too bad."

23 **Q.** What, they didn't make it?

24 A. No.

25 **Q.** What do you think that meant?

26 A. They'd died having ECT.

27 **Q.** Did you hear that?

28 A. Yeah, I was told if you -- if the ECT goes wrong, there have been children die and they just  
29 bury them out in the vege patch. This was just bare --

30 **Q.** So what happened was all the patients who were going to be getting ECT, the modified  
31 ECT, were put in the beds, geriatric patients, other patients and the young people and you  
32 waited for your turn, is that right?

33 A. **[Nods].**

34 **Q.** And I think you said that that -- you had to lie there waiting for your turn. Can you tell us

- 1 what that was like?
- 2 A. Frightening, indescribably frightening.
- 3 Q. Because you knew what was going to come?
- 4 A. Yeah. You were put to sleep for that, and there was no care afterwards, you'd wake up  
5 back in the day room dumped in a lounge chair. There was no recovery area, there was  
6 no -- I had it in the Connolly Unit, when I woke up, I woke up like after an operation in a  
7 recovery area where nurses monitored you. There was no such recovery area, you were  
8 dumped in a chair in the day room. How you got back to that villa I have no idea.
- 9 Q. Before we get to that point, though, when was the anaesthetic administered, so you're lying  
10 on the bed waiting, were you all given anaesthetic at the same time?
- 11 A. No, as the trolley came to you, you -- someone was a few beds ahead with the relaxant from  
12 memory and then you were given the anaesthetic when the trolley got to you.
- 13 Q. And you've said here in your evidence it never had time to work, so we were still awake  
14 when we had the ECT?
- 15 A. No, the electrodes were going on your head and you were still awake, and whether it's just  
16 when you wake up you think oh well, you know, I was awake, I think I felt that because  
17 you were in -- your head was throbbing for hours afterwards.
- 18 Q. Right, and that's -- so you've had the anaesthetic but you wake up, your head's throbbing,  
19 how long did that effect last from ECT?
- 20 A. It's hard to say because I remember vaguely some cleaners cleaning around me and I was  
21 trying to ask them for a drink of water, and when I finally come to there were no cleaners,  
22 so, yeah, it's hard to say.
- 23 Q. And you don't know how you got from the bed where you received the treatment to the  
24 chair where you were sitting?
- 25 A. No, because it wasn't even in the same villa, you were taken to another villa for the planned  
26 ECT.
- 27 Q. Oh really, so somehow you were transported while you were still unconscious?
- 28 A. Yeah, back. You went there in a car to get ECT, but we must have got back in the same  
29 car, chucked in the car then drop you in an armchair. There was no care involved.
- 30 Q. I think it's important, so later in life you had ECT under controlled and modified  
31 conditions?
- 32 A. Against my will, yes.
- 33 Q. But in terms of the recovery, you've made a contrast between the recovery in the later  
34 sessions and to the ones you had when you were a kid, is that right?



1 A. Yeah, when I came to my head wasn't pounding like it was in Lake Alice, you just woke up  
2 as if you'd had an operation, you wouldn't know you'd had ECT.

3 Q. And you were being monitored?

4 A. Yeah.

5 Q. I'm sorry to have taken you back to that detail, but I think it's important that we know  
6 exactly what happened for modified as well as the unmodified so thank you very much for  
7 that. Just one last thing. You talked about the group therapy sessions. Was the nurse who  
8 held the group therapy sessions also involved in the ECT treatment? Do you know that or  
9 not?

10 A. So much is so fuzzy.

11 Q. It's such a long time ago too.

12 A. I believe he put you on the list just like when you had to go to the classroom you got marks  
13 against you and if you weren't good enough then that was grounds for ECT as well, but  
14 yeah, I can't -- I couldn't tell -- I couldn't swear to the guy's name, I only -- I know we had  
15 group therapy, I know where in the building it was, I can't tell you anyone's name other  
16 than I was told who it was that did the group therapy.

17 Q. We don't need to push you any further on that if you don't --

18 A. I can't even remember the children in there that were kind to me, names, the only name  
19 that's burned me my brain is Dr Leeks. I know there were good nurses and bad, but I can't  
20 even name them.

21 Q. I said it was the last, but I have got one more quick question. A witness before you has  
22 talked about how she would like to see a survivor group of Lake Alice survivors. Have you  
23 got any -- I think you've almost gathered one around you yourself. Do you want to  
24 comment on whether that would be helpful?

25 A. We're too spread out over the whole of the country to actually -- for anything like to work,  
26 to physically get together and -- yeah, unless that was facilitated like this, it just wouldn't  
27 work off our own bat.

28 Q. Sure, but if it were facilitated, if you were able to get help to happen, do you think it would  
29 be a good thing if you could get together?

30 A. I think it would help a lot of us work through a lot of the trauma that we still suffer right  
31 from this day. Others it would bring up stuff that they would rather not.

32 Q. That's right. So it depends on the individual, doesn't it?

33 A. Yeah.

34 Q. Thank you for that. Thanks for your evidence. I'm just going to hand you back to

1 Commissioner Alofivae.

2 **COMMISSIONER ALOFIVAE:** Thank you, Malcolm, for answering those few questions. I've  
3 just got a couple as well, if that's okay?

4 A. That's fine.

5 **Q.** Thank you. I just want to take you back to paragraph 10. It was actually how you came to  
6 be in Lake Alice. So you were not in State care, were you, it was --

7 A. I was taken by my mother to a psychiatrist in Hastings Hospital, but I was then put under  
8 the care of -- oh goodness, the State, but --

9 **Q.** The doctor, mental health?

10 A. No, no, Public Trust. So I was -- yeah, the Public Trust had guardianship over me. It was  
11 sometime after I was, well, I was meant to go back to Lake Alice but I took off for the hills,  
12 so I wouldn't be put back in.

13 **Q.** So that was where the angst came when you were discharged two months after, you were so  
14 worried because someone still had authority over you, it was the Public Trust?

15 A. Yeah.

16 **Q.** Could I just ask you a question please, it was around paragraph 33, where you were left in  
17 the cell after ECT for two days, cold and naked with only a blanket and a bucket --

18 A. Yeah.

19 **Q.** -- for a toilet. Do you recall if anyone was making checks on you?

20 A. Well, anyone could have, I wouldn't have been aware, I mostly had the blanket up around  
21 me shivering and cold and wouldn't have noticed if someone -- because it was quite a  
22 narrow, about that high and about that wide the window in the door.

23 **Q.** Did anyone physically come into the room?

24 A. No.

25 **Q.** You may not -- nobody came?

26 A. No, I don't ever remember the door being open.

27 **Q.** Thank you. Food?

28 A. It may not have been two days, it might have only been a day, it seemed like two, it was  
29 quite a long time and it was very cold.

30 **Q.** Thank you for that. Malcolm, it's now fallen to me to be able to thank you, just for your  
31 courage and your bravery and the way that you've actually been able to share your  
32 testimony with us this morning. Can I just echo the comments that have been made earlier  
33 by Commissioner Gibson around your valiant efforts over the last 30 years to keep seeking  
34 justice, bringing light to the abuse that you went through. It's not easy, the difficult and the

1 intimate details that you've shared with us today.

2 Can I just reassure you that we have heard you, we have heard you, we have heard  
3 all of the other survivors that have come before this Commission and we believe you. We  
4 just want to make sure that you understand that we are receiving your information fully and  
5 it's certainly our intention to be able to use it. Thank you for filling out lots of detail for us  
6 and understanding the landscape of what actually went on at Lake Alice during that period.

7 Can I also just thank your children who I understand might be watching.

8 A. Yes.

9 **Q.** Can I please thank you for the enormous love that you have for your father for being able to  
10 understand where he was at and forgiving him those hours that he needed to be able to put  
11 this statement together for us. This is a moment in history for your father, he's contributed  
12 richly to our investigation, and we just want to let your children know and to you know that  
13 we are truly grateful and indebted for what you've been able to bring to us today.

14 A. Thank you.

15 **Q.** Thank you.

16 **CHAIR:** We will take a break now for lunch and come back at who's going to help me here,  
17 2 o'clock or --

18 **MS JOYCHILD:** 2 o'clock.

19 **CHAIR:** Thank you all.

20 **Lunch adjournment from 1.02 pm to 2.15 pm**

21 **CHAIR:** We have Mr JJ.

22 **MR MOLLOY:** I think Ms Joychild is in the room with Mr JJ.

23 **MR JJ**

24 **CHAIR:** So what we need is a screen so we can see them. Commissioners can't see them. Here  
25 we can. Hello JJ.

26 A. Afternoon.

27 **Q.** How are you?

28 A. Oh not too bad.

29 **Q.** Not too bad but a bit difficult. I'm Coral Shaw, I'm the Chair of the Commission. I just  
30 want to welcome you and I understand you've had a few problems getting here?

31 A. I have, very, very stressing yesterday.

32 **Q.** Yes, I'm really sorry to hear that.

33 A. Thank you.

34 **Q.** Are you okay now, more or less?

- 1 A. Yeah, yeah, kind of I think.
- 2 **Q.** Can I say I love your glasses.
- 3 A. Thank you very much.
- 4 **Q.** Very smart. All right, you've got Ms Joychild beside you and she's going to ask you some  
5 questions. But before she does that, can I just ask you to listen and agree with the  
6 following. JJ, do you solemnly, sincerely and truly declare and affirm that the evidence  
7 you will give before this Commission will be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the  
8 truth?
- 9 A. I absolutely do.
- 10 **Q.** Thank you very much and I'll leave it now with Frances to talk to you.
- 11 **MS JOYCHILD:** Thank you. Good afternoon Commissioners. Mr JJ, would like to be called  
12 John for the purposes of this evidence. So --
- 13 **CHAIR:** How do we spell that?
- 14 **MS JOYCHILD:** John.
- 15 **CHAIR:** Oh John, John it will be then, okay John.
- 16 **QUESTIONING BY MS JOYCHILD:** John, we're not going to talk about your early childhood,  
17 but apart from to say it was difficult.
- 18 A. That's right.
- 19 **Q.** So we're now going to look at your schooling and I'm going to read paragraph 7, then I  
20 want you to comment on it. So one of your main problems as a child was that "I had some  
21 sort of learning disability. I just could not learn how to read and write and spell. This was  
22 made worse by the stress I was under at home and the fact that the primary teacher,  
23 Mr Dillaway, would hit a cane on my desk and shout at me because I couldn't do the work."  
24 And then you go on to say you were aware you were behind the other children but you  
25 didn't know how to stop it?
- 26 A. That's correct.
- 27 **Q.** And then you talk about being teased. Do you want to tell the Commissioners about that?
- 28 A. Yes, I do. As I could remember, a child not being up at that level and not knowing how to  
29 read or write, they called me dumbbell or, you know, kids can be cruel, and then you get all  
30 frustrated and you start lashing out, not to hurt them but you just -- you just want to scream.  
31 It's very difficult.
- 32 **Q.** So you got a lot of teasing being called dumbbell, backward and slow?
- 33 A. Yes.
- 34 **Q.** And that was by the kids in the playground?

- 1 A. That's right.
- 2 Q. And even your siblings used to tease you?
- 3 A. Yes, they did.
- 4 Q. So because of that, you got a reputation of being quite aggressive, is that right?
- 5 A. Yes, that's right.
- 6 Q. Okay. And then what would you -- you'd come home from school and tell your  
7 grandmother, how did that go?
- 8 A. Well, not very good because my grandmother, she didn't like my mother and she didn't like  
9 us at all, that's why she's a cruel, horrible woman and she didn't listen to a word that we  
10 said or believed what we said, because of the hate that she had for her own daughter. And  
11 that's true.
- 12 Q. Your grandmother was your mother's mother?
- 13 A. That's right.
- 14 Q. And she was given you and the children were taken off your mum, is that right?
- 15 A. Yes, we were given to our grandmother to look after. She took us, but she didn't like us at  
16 all.
- 17 Q. Okay. Now we're just going to go on now to sexual abuse.
- 18 A. Yes.
- 19 Q. So you were still living at home with your mother and your stepfather, is that right?
- 20 A. No, not my stepfather. The man that married my mother.
- 21 Q. Right. You wouldn't call him your stepfather?
- 22 A. No.
- 23 Q. Tell me about him a bit.
- 24 A. As far as I know, he was a cruel, very aggressive man, he used to beat my mother to a pulp,  
25 blood nose, black eyes and I can remember being a child, I managed to hit him with a  
26 broom and I ran down to the GRO-B, which is not far away from the house, from one of  
27 the pastors there for my mother -- should I go on to say what happened.
- 28 Q. Yeah, yeah.
- 29 A. Then instead of getting helped he helped himself to me and sexually abused me. Horribly,  
30 and he had alcohol on his breath.
- 31 Q. So you went -- your father -- this man who your mother married was beating up your  
32 mother?
- 33 A. Yes.
- 34 Q. In front of you children and you ran to get help for your mother?

- 1 A. That's correct.
- 2 Q. But the pastor you called him at the GRO-B, would that be a priest?
- 3 A. Yes, he wore a white collar and black outfit.
- 4 Q. Right. He sexually abused you?
- 5 A. Yes, he did.
- 6 Q. Okay. That was the first time you were sexually abused. Did that happen once or more  
7 than once?
- 8 A. No, it happened more than once because at that time I was younger than -- I was still quite  
9 young and, you know, I don't really know, but when I told someone about it, which was my  
10 grandmother. She never believed me but I told my mother when I could, she believed  
11 every word that I said, but there's nothing that she could do. And I often wondered why.
- 12 Q. So when you were 6 or 7 you were moved to your grandmother's by the court, weren't you?
- 13 A. Yes, that's true.
- 14 Q. Your mum had had a break-down?
- 15 A. My mother had a break-down because of the marriage, my first father and her separated, I  
16 don't know what reason. And so she had a break-down, as some women do, but she's not  
17 mentally ill, she wasn't mentally ill at all, sorry.
- 18 Q. So then you were staying with your grandmother and there was an adult cousin there as  
19 well?
- 20 A. Yes, I remember him well.
- 21 Q. Tell the Commission about him.
- 22 A. Yes, well, he was my cousin. Like Māoridom, most of us Māori sleep with our own  
23 whānau for comfort and warmth, not for sexual abuse, but he used to sexually abuse me  
24 whenever he wanted to. You know, I used to be torn and whatever as a child, horribly. Go  
25 crying and screaming to my grandmother but she'd said "Get out of here I don't want -- it's  
26 nonsense he wouldn't do that", but evidence was there.
- 27 Q. When you say the evidence was there --
- 28 A. Yeah.
- 29 Q. -- you had anal tears?
- 30 A. Yeah.
- 31 Q. And you showed your grandmother them?
- 32 A. Yes, I did. And she did not believe that.
- 33 Q. What was her explanation?
- 34 A. "He'd have to be a puaka (inaudible) you know, a mad pig.

- 1 **Q.** Right, okay. She told you that you'd hit your butt on your bed end?
- 2 **A.** That's right, "Oh you did it yourself, you did your own injuries, you hit your bottom on the  
3 end of the bed." (Inaudible) but it wasn't true, I didn't do that at all.
- 4 **Q.** So with you having been sexually abused twice and then you're being teased of being slow,  
5 you got more aggressive as a child, is that right?
- 6 **A.** Well, yes, I did, but not to hurt anybody, I wasn't the type of person to get -- go out there  
7 and punch somebody, or rip somebody's head off, it's just the screaming and the yelling,  
8 just "Why are you doing this to me, why are you calling me this?" I couldn't understand  
9 why.
- 10 **Q.** Right, so you were screaming and yelling back?
- 11 **A.** Yes.
- 12 **Q.** So then on the 9 June 1970 when you were 12 years old you were made a ward of the State,  
13 formally made, and you were sent to Campbell Park in Dunedin?
- 14 **A.** That's right.
- 15 **Q.** How did you find Campbell Park?
- 16 **A.** Not good, it was -- Campbell Park was a school for boys, it was called a boarding school  
17 and kind of a health camp as well. And they called themselves "housemasters" where they  
18 should be looking after children with love and care, but they weren't, they were doing  
19 sexual abusing children with, you know, everything that you could possibly dream of, but  
20 we couldn't go to anybody because there was no-one there that would believe us. "The  
21 housemasters, oh no, none of them do that to you, no they wouldn't do that, they wouldn't  
22 touch you, that's not what they're trained for." I said, you know, often wondered in my  
23 mind what are they trained for, just to do sexual abusing children?
- 24 **Q.** So you saw sexual abuse at Campbell Park?
- 25 **A.** Yes, I saw other children getting the same treatment maybe worse than what I was getting.
- 26 **Q.** Right, so you were being abused at Campbell Park as well?
- 27 **A.** That's right. Why me, I say.
- 28 **Q.** A month later you were sent to Lake Alice?
- 29 **A.** Yes, I was.
- 30 **Q.** And I just want to read out a psychiatric report that Dr Pugmire wrote. I'm not going to  
31 read --
- 32 **A.** The late Dr Pugmire.
- 33 **Q.** The late Dr Pugmire. I'm not going to read out all of the quote because it's so upsetting to  
34 John he doesn't want it read out, but if Commissioners could read it.

- 1 **CHAIR:** Yes, John, just to let you know that --
- 2 **MS JOYCHILD:** I'm sorry, John.
- 3 **CHAIR:** John, just to let you know we have read everything that's in there, so if you don't want it
- 4 read out we have still seen it, okay?
- 5 A. You're most welcome to, that's what I wanted you to see.
- 6 **Q.** Good we've got it the here.
- 7 A. That's okay.
- 8 **CHAIR:** I just want to say to Ms Joychild just be a bit slower please, when John has finished
- 9 something just take a break so that it can be typed down before you ask the next question.
- 10 **MS JOYCHILD:** Yes.
- 11 **CHAIR:** Thank you.
- 12 **QUESTIONING BY MS JOYCHILD CONTINUED:** John, there is one sentence in that letter
- 13 from Dr Pugmire that I wanted -- we decided you would make a comment on. That's the
- 14 sentence where Dr Pugmire says, "Although John's mother has had the good fortune to
- 15 marry a very fine Māori gentleman, who's well able to train normal children, John has
- 16 proved quite unresponsive."
- 17 A. No, that's not true. He wasn't a good man. Like I said in the beginning, he was very
- 18 abusive. He abused my -- he hurt my mother, gave her bleeding noses and black eyes. No
- 19 woman who loves -- no man who loves her woman would ever do that. You should never
- 20 ever touch the ones that you love. No, he was never my father, he was just a person, a
- 21 person that I did not want to know but I had to because he was my mother's husband.
- 22 Sorry.
- 23 **Q.** So we'd talked about how you were in -- how you came to be in Lake Alice.
- 24 A. This is what I want, this is what I want, yeah, to be read, thank you.
- 25 **Q.** Yeah. Okay. So you were in Cherry Farm for two years?
- 26 A. I was.
- 27 **Q.** And you say that it was a horrendous place and was actually worse than Lake Alice?
- 28 A. Well, in the sense of the word when you're a 12 year old and you're put into a ward like
- 29 villa H and villa D, with the grown men, men, that are fairly mentally insane -- sorry to say
- 30 that word -- and we weren't, we were just put in there because we had learning disabilities
- 31 and couldn't read and write and I had a bit of anger at them because I felt like I was rejected
- 32 everywhere I go.
- 33 **Q.** Right.
- 34 A. And I didn't think it was right.



- 1 **Q.** Right. So you say that you and the other children were sexually violated?
- 2 **A.** There was -- yes, there was more children. I don't know the ages, but we were very young.
- 3 I was 12, maybe they may be younger or a bit older than what I was, but yes, there was a lot
- 4 of children there. They used to get the same treatment.
- 5 **Q.** And it was the male nurses who --
- 6 **A.** It was the male nurses as far as I knew.
- 7 **Q.** Who would violate the children?
- 8 **A.** That's right.
- 9 **Q.** You --
- 10 **A.** Very violate -- sorry for interrupting.
- 11 **Q.** No problem, it's very important for you to talk and say it exactly as it is.
- 12 **A.** Thank you.
- 13 **Q.** So you also said that you were hosed down with high pressure hoses, laughed at and
- 14 taunted for no apparent reason?
- 15 **A.** That's correct. Yeah, they hosed us down, you know, those big fire hoses that can knock
- 16 you off your feet. As a child, knocked me off my feet, I can tell you that, and then poked
- 17 out and prodded at, laughed at and said, you know, "You're just a so and so", swore -- I
- 18 can't swear on camera -- and we had no-one to turn to, nobody, nobody could help us.
- 19 **Q.** So there was no-one you could complain to at Lake Alice?
- 20 **A.** No.
- 21 **Q.** That's at Cherry Farm. So then --
- 22 **CHAIR:** Just take a break.
- 23 **A.** Sorry.
- 24 **Q.** Don't be sorry, just take as much time as you need, John.
- 25 **A.** I'm just very emotional at the moment. Excuse me for a moment. Okay, I'll be fine. Thank
- 26 you.
- 27 **QUESTIONING BY MS JOYCHILD CONTINUED:** So you were at Cherry Farm with all
- 28 this horrid treatment for two years and then they said they were going to send you to Lake
- 29 Alice because it was closer to your family home?
- 30 **A.** That's right.
- 31 **Q.** You don't believe that, do you?
- 32 **A.** No, I don't believe that. You know, being a child I through oh well. It was closer to my
- 33 family but I didn't know they were lying to me. When you're 12 you don't know, you just
- 34 do as you're told I suppose. That's where they take you.

- 1 **Q.** And so then you -- we're looking at paragraph 18, you say you don't believe you had a  
2 mental illness and should not have been admitted to either Lake Alice or Cherry Farm?
- 3 **A.** No, no, not at all.
- 4 **Q.** And we've got a quote there from one of your files in Lake Alice and I'm going to read this  
5 to the Commissioners now.
- 6 **A.** Yes, please do.
- 7 **Q.** So it was signed by a social worker and it was 5 June 1973 and it says:  
8 "An early report suggests that John was diagnosed as schizophrenic but this is not  
9 correct. This was a tentative diagnosis and has not been confirmed by Lake Alice. John  
10 was readmitted largely because of a lack of suitable alternatives. As far as the hospital is  
11 concerned there is nothing psychiatrically wrong with him at least that needs further  
12 hospital treatment. He is currently being held but not treated."
- 13 **A.** [Nods].
- 14 **Q.** But you were treated as Lake Alice, weren't you?
- 15 **A.** Yes, very badly.
- 16 **Q.** Okay. So we'll just start off when you arrived. You did meet Dr Leeks, didn't you?
- 17 **A.** I did meet Dr Leeks, yes.
- 18 **Q.** How long did you talk with him for?
- 19 **A.** I wouldn't say that long, he just said "I'm Dr Leeks, I'll be taking care of you. We take  
20 good care of children in here, we won't hurt them in any way." That's as far as -- mind you,  
21 I would have been like 13 by then.
- 22 **Q.** Yeah, by then you were 14.
- 23 **A.** 14, sorry, and I said -- what could I say, I just shook my head, okay, so that was it.
- 24 **Q.** Did he tell you you would be getting ECT?
- 25 **A.** No, he didn't tell me I was getting ECT, oh that was I was getting Largactil, illegal drugs or  
26 anything, he said just there for care and learning. That's what the unit was called, child and  
27 adolescent unit, which was untrue.
- 28 **Q.** When you first went to Lake Alice, you say that you were put in a ward with crazy men, it  
29 was an adult ward, you were terrified of them, "they looked like they had come out of a  
30 horror movie and I felt I was living with monsters."
- 31 **A.** That's right. Well, as being a 14 year old child and you're just dumped, that's how I felt,  
32 dumped in this room full of people, you know, like zombies and spaced out and you just  
33 feel like yes, they look like out of a horror movie.
- 34 **Q.** So there were other boys there, weren't there?

- 1 A. There were.
- 2 Q. How old would the youngest have been?
- 3 A. As far as I'm concerned there would have been a 9 year old, probably would have been a  
4 6 year old as far as I know.
- 5 Q. And there were more Māori boys than Pākehā?
- 6 A. There were lots of Māori boys, yes. I'm not racist either.
- 7 Q. So did you sleep in the dormitory?
- 8 A. We had rooms upstairs as they called dormitories. They put us in there and then they took  
9 us downstairs and put us in a cage, all individual cages, that's what I call them now, with  
10 spring beds.
- 11 Q. So this a different villa, this is the adult villa that you're in?
- 12 A. Yeah.
- 13 Q. It's not the child and adolescent villa?
- 14 A. No, this is another villa, they're all top storey.
- 15 Q. So you would be locked in there for one to three days?
- 16 A. Mmm-hmm.
- 17 Q. You had a potty and some water and something to eat?
- 18 A. Not all the time, when they feel like it. If I may phrase that.
- 19 Q. So you didn't always get things to eat?
- 20 A. No.
- 21 Q. When did you get out of that villa and into child and adolescent unit?
- 22 A. Goodness, such a long time ago. I can't remember.
- 23 Q. Don't worry.
- 24 A. Could be weeks, could be weeks later. I can't remember.
- 25 Q. Let's talk about the electroconvulsive therapy?
- 26 A. Yes.
- 27 Q. You had both modified and unmodified, didn't you?
- 28 A. I sure did.
- 29 Q. You think you had far more unmodified?
- 30 A. Yeah, it certainly felt like it.
- 31 Q. So can you explain to the Commissioners what it was like? First of all start with modified  
32 therapy. Can you tell them what happened to you when you got it?
- 33 A. Well, sometimes when they modify you they give you an injection of some kind of  
34 Largactil, it's a liquid, it's got a very bitter taste, it's an off brown. Sometimes they'll give

1 you a big white pill to make you all dozy. That's it, they'll put these things, electrodes,  
2 sometimes they put them on parts of your body, maybe your genitals or whatever, and then  
3 they just put the voltage up and that's it -- that's not it, but when you come out all you're in a  
4 big room watching a TV and rocking backwards and forwards, not even knowing whether  
5 you're coming or going. Very sore, very, very sore.

6 **Q.** Very sore in the head?

7 **A.** Yeah, all parts of the body.

8 **Q.** So when you got this modified ECT, were you in a room with other people on beds also  
9 getting it?

10 **A.** What I can remember I know Selwyn, Dr Selwyn Leeks, I will not forget that face. There  
11 is also a nurse, there was a charge nurse, her name was Leonard, Nurse Leonard, she was a  
12 charge nurse and I think Pugmire might have been there as well, yeah, I think there were  
13 about three or four of them there.

14 **Q.** And when you had it, did you have it with other patients as well in other beds?

15 **A.** I can't remember them, but I assumed they were waiting for their turn because, you know,  
16 we were strapped down with straps and held down. Some with medication, sometimes we  
17 had medication, sometimes we wouldn't have anything at all. And the feeling of that is  
18 very, very, very hard to describe, it's like, I suppose (inaudible), I suppose it feels like your  
19 head has just exploded. You feel like little things just grabbing at your head, like blades or  
20 something like that.

21 **Q.** Okay, so --

22 **A.** And -- sorry.

23 **Q.** No, keep going.

24 **A.** Even though I was young at that time I can still remember at my age that I am today it's one  
25 thing that I -- horrible thing I'll never ever forget. Sorry.

26 **Q.** No.

27 **A.** Sorry for interrupting you.

28 **Q.** No, you're the one that's talking, you can hold the floor the whole time, John. So when you  
29 were talking about that, was that the unmodified, like one lot you were put to sleep?

30 **A.** Mmm.

31 **Q.** Was that with the Largactil that put you to sleep?

32 **A.** The Largactil and something else, I don't know what they in your bottom, it was in a needle  
33 anyway and sometimes we'd get the liquid Largactil or the big white pill. They're not even  
34 on the market today, they're totally illegal.

- 1 **Q.** And they used to put you into a groggy state and then --
- 2 **A.** Yes.
- 3 **Q.** -- you had ECT?
- 4 **A.** Yes, strap you.
- 5 **Q.** Strapped down?
- 6 **A.** Strap you to a bed, either hold you there, and put it on any part of your body, whether it's
- 7 genitals, sorry, your head, then they put the volts through me. I don't know why they did
- 8 that.
- 9 **Q.** Then you had ECT when you had no sedatives, nothing. How different was that?
- 10 **A.** Very. Very different. It's just that words cannot describe the pain. Even after all those
- 11 years I still can have a tear in my eye.
- 12 **Q.** You said it was really, really, really terrifying and often you would pass out. As far as --
- 13 **A.** It was, it was terrible.
- 14 **Q.** As far as you understood, it was punishment?
- 15 **A.** Yeah.
- 16 **Q.** You say you thought the doctors and nurses got a kick -- you're going to have a break?
- 17 **A.** Yeah, can we have a break?
- 18 **CHAIR:** We'll take a break.
- 19 **A.** No, I'll carry on.
- 20 **Q.** John, it's entirely up to you.
- 21 **A.** I want to get this done.
- 22 **Q.** You want to get it over and done with?
- 23 **A.** Where were we? Sorry.
- 24 **QUESTIONING BY MS JOYCHILD CONTINUED:** It's all right I'll keep talking. I'm just
- 25 going to read a bit out now and you can just sit there and deep breathe. Okay, "If it was
- 26 unmodified you first heard buzzing and then feel the shock as it went through your head
- 27 which would be throbbing, you'd be screaming and shaking. It was incredibly painful like
- 28 punching in the head. When it finished you didn't know anything. It was horrible and sore.
- 29 It was really, really, really terrifying and I would often pass out."
- 30 **A.** That's right.
- 31 **Q.** "I still get headaches today from it."
- 32 **A.** Still.
- 33 **Q.** "When the boys were in the lounge watching TV they knew when ECT was happening
- 34 because the stripes would run across the TV screen." And you saw those stripes running

1 across the TV screen?

2 A. Yes, they were only black and white those days but we still see them, it would go across the  
3 screen that was sitting on the shelf.

4 Q. You say you "think the doctors and nurses got a kick out of giving it to us"?

5 A. They did. They laughed and pointed at us. "It's your turn now. I bet you enjoyed that."  
6 Not so nice as I said it, but horribly. "I bet you enjoyed that", you know, poking us and  
7 whatever. Not only me, to a lot of children, innocent children. Should never have been  
8 done.

9 Q. And you say one day there was an incident between you and a nurse?

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. You accidentally broke a pot and he threw a hammer at your head?

12 A. That's correct, I've still got the bump right at the back of my head here. I have it there.

13 Q. And then he took you over to the villa and gave you ECT 12 times?

14 A. Yeah. Because how they worked it out, if you misbehaved, that was only an accident, you  
15 know, it was one of these ones that was made out of sand and put in sets, but it just dropped  
16 accidental. He was -- I don't know why he did that, you know, the hammer at my head.  
17 And then I went for ECT because he said that I was playing up because I purposely did that  
18 myself, I knocked it off the shelf. No, that's not true what he said, and it is true that, yes,  
19 that's what happened to me. The bump on the back of my head with that hammer, I was  
20 lucky to be alive, I suppose.

21 **CHAIR:** Ms Joychild, can I just ask John a question about that, do you mind if I ask you a  
22 question John?

23 A. Certainly.

24 Q. So this is the nurse who threw the hammer at your head and then took you to get ECT and  
25 you said 12 times and you said "He gave me ECT." So who was it, was it the nurse or was  
26 it Dr Leeks?

27 A. I meant to say Dr Leeks always gave it. Maybe I said, you know.

28 Q. When you said "he" you meant Dr Leeks?

29 A. Yeah, I mean Dr Leeks.

30 Q. Okay, thank you.

31 A. That's what I meant because no-one could actually give it unless Dr Leeks -- yeah, he was  
32 the main.

33 Q. Okay, thank you.

34 A. Pugmire of course. You're welcome, thank you.

- 1 **QUESTIONING BY MS JOYCHILD CONTINUED:** Did Dr Pugmire give you ECT  
2 sometimes?
- 3 A. I think he did, but I think -- I think it was -- Pugmire was the big boss, you know, he'll give  
4 the orders to his flunky Leeks to go and give this child or this child or that many children  
5 shock treatment and he'll go and do it. You know, like he would be his run around doctor,  
6 and Pugmire was the boss of that unit as far as I was concerned.
- 7 **Q.** Did you ever see Dr Pugmire giving anyone ECT personally?
- 8 A. I can't -- I do remember Selwyn Leeks, I can't remember Mr Pugmire doing that.
- 9 **Q.** So then you'd say that --
- 10 A. Maybe he did.
- 11 **Q.** You didn't see. So while you were waiting to find out if you were chosen, you'd hear the  
12 children's screams, they were horrible and eerie.
- 13 A. Mmm.
- 14 **Q.** "The nurse would then come and point to you and say 'you'. He would then drag you  
15 upstairs. It was all about punishment."
- 16 A. Yeah.
- 17 **Q.** Did you sometimes know why you were getting it, what you'd done wrong?
- 18 A. No, well, you know, as children, children, you know, they have play fights and they go like  
19 this when -- like fist fight, but they don't mean to hurt one another. Well, I suppose because  
20 of the unit it was and the nurses and doctors, I don't know who trained them, but they'd  
21 think we were fighting, we were deliberately hurting one another, so they said "He needs a  
22 dose, he needs a pill, he needs a drink of this or a drink of that", Largactil I'm talking about,  
23 or some other drug.
- 24 **Q.** So you say that a whole lot of nurses would hold you down?
- 25 A. Yeah.
- 26 **Q.** When it was modified you didn't have to be held down, did you?
- 27 A. Well, because, you know, you had --
- 28 **Q.** You had straps?
- 29 A. -- drugs in your body to -- and they strapped you down and they put them on you because  
30 your body will jolt and --
- 31 **Q.** Right.
- 32 A. I assume.
- 33 **Q.** So you would go unconscious and wake up in another room on a bed?
- 34 A. Mmm.

- 1 **Q.** Or under a sheet. Sometimes you woke in the bath.
- 2 **A.** That's right.
- 3 **Q.** Why would you be in the bath?
- 4 **A.** Because sometimes I think, because I'd been watching some movies and that, I think, I  
5 think because when people get shocked like that, you do, you know, the other end and the  
6 front goes as well because your body's going through trauma and everything works.
- 7 **Q.** So you wet and soiled, you always wet and soiled yourselves?
- 8 **A.** Yeah, that's right. Not as nice as I'm saying now, it was horrible. Excuse me, sorry.
- 9 **Q.** You say you got -- you estimate you had ECT about 20 times?
- 10 **A.** Yeah. Could have been more, but you know.
- 11 **Q.** Okay. Now what about, can we turn -- is there anymore you want to say about ECT?
- 12 **A.** What can I say? It was done in the 70s. Pugmire's gone, Dr Leeks is 92 years of age and,  
13 you know, I certainly hope that they don't do that anymore. And I also say this, I'm a  
14 Labour supporter, but at that time in the 70s it was under the Labour Government, Norman  
15 Kirk, but he passed on, and he allowed this because the Government was funding, funding  
16 all of those things. So I held responsibility the Labour Government. They could have  
17 looked into this years ago and found out. I'm not as silly as people think I am and I'm not  
18 as dumb as people think I am either. And I just think that, you know, the Government  
19 should be accounted for this, they really should be.
- 20 **Q.** Thanks . John We're now going to go on to talk about drugs. Now you say you got  
21 Largactil every day and it was a brown liquid that tasted very bitter, drowsy and you felt  
22 like a zombie and you put on heaps of weight?
- 23 **A.** Mmm.
- 24 **Q.** Hated it and had no idea while you were being given it?
- 25 **A.** No, I had no idea what it was. I didn't even know it was called Largactil until --
- 26 **Q.** You saw your notes?
- 27 **A.** Until I grew up a bit and then other people had -- I said "Yeah, that's the same stuff I was  
28 on." Not nicely, like not being proud of drinking it, just "Oh that was the horrible stuff they  
29 used to feed me."
- 30 **Q.** So explain -- you said you got about 10 Paraldehyde injections?
- 31 **A.** Mmm. Is that the injections in the backside?
- 32 **Q.** Yeah. Explain how you'd get an injection of Paraldehyde?
- 33 **A.** I was only a child.



- 1 **Q.** You said you were thrown on to the bed?
- 2 **A.** Yeah, well on the bed, you know, bottom up, jab in the backside, you know.
- 3 **Q.** How did that affect your backside?
- 4 **A.** Yes -- not very nice, numb, very numbing, very numbing feeling, sore of course, very sore,  
5 bruising, because, you know, I'm only a child, I'm only a minor, you know.
- 6 **Q.** How did it affect your walking?
- 7 **A.** Not very good, very -- couldn't, you know, you're very like, you know, no good. Very  
8 numb.
- 9 **Q.** After the Paraldehyde, you said that you would sometimes be get put into a lock-up after  
10 you got the injection; explain that.
- 11 **A.** Yes, I can remember that, it's still there. They were little cages on the floor and they had  
12 locks on the outside. You could put an animal inside it like a little dog or a cat, (inaudible)  
13 with a little potty, maybe some (inaudible), give us water and something to eat when they  
14 feel it, they go "You know why you're in here" and of course, you know, we're back in the  
15 corner, we don't know, we're slivering and they locked us up in there. There were several  
16 of them.
- 17 **CHAIR:** John, another question from me if you don't mind. How big were these cages? Just in  
18 proportion to the room you're sitting in at the moment, is it as big as the room you're in  
19 now?
- 20 **A.** Oh no, no, this room's huge. It was just as you would go through the doors there was a  
21 passageway and they were just against the walls. They were, what can I say.
- 22 **Q.** Was it big enough for a bed, could you fit a bed into the room?
- 23 **A.** No, no, you couldn't even fit a bed in it. You could fit a dog into it, couple of dogs into it,  
24 but no.
- 25 **Q.** Could you stand?
- 26 **QUESTIONING BY MS JOYCHILD CONTINUED:** Could you stand up in it?
- 27 **A.** No.
- 28 **Q.** Could you lie down in it?
- 29 **A.** No, no. It was just a square, it was a square like a kennel, they had wires all around it and  
30 on the front it had a padlock on the door. They used to lock us in there, not only me, there  
31 were several other children.
- 32 **Q.** Was that in the adult ward?
- 33 **A.** No, that was in the child and adolescent unit.
- 34 **CHAIR:** How many of these dog boxes were there, do you know?

1 A. Well, I'm sure there was about six of them against that wall. And I didn't even know that --  
2 I didn't even know they were used for us children until I experienced it myself. Horrible.

3 **QUESTIONING BY MS JOYCHILD CONTINUED:** You went back in 2020 with the film  
4 crew.

5 A. Yes.

6 **Q.** You say they were still there.

7 A. Actually when Mr Paul Holmes was still alive I rang TV One as if they would like to take  
8 me back through to -- they got permission and they took me through to the units and they  
9 were still there after all that time, and I think they're still there now. But the buildings were  
10 falling down, crumbling or whatever around the place, and I showed one of the -- Miriama  
11 Rogers and she cried. I said "Look at those pyjama pants", they were tiny pyjama pants  
12 thrown on the floor. They were black, white and blue. I said "That would have been some  
13 little child's pyjamas. This is what they used to lock us in." She said "No", I said "Yes".  
14 She was just shocked.

15 **Q.** Were they inside the building or outside the building? The cages?

16 A. No, they were inside the building.

17 **Q.** Upstairs or downstairs?

18 A. Downstairs.

19 **Q.** Downstairs?

20 A. Mmm, you go through the door, there's a nurses chaos there, just little side (inaudible)  
21 there's little boxes like dog kennels, yeah.

22 **Q.** So I might get  to draw a picture of that.

23 A. I can. You don't mind waiting one moment?

24 **Q.** We need a piece of paper unfortunately.

25 **CHAIR:** We'll get John a piece of paper shortly.

26 **QUESTIONING BY MS JOYCHILD CONTINUED:**

27 **Q.** Thank you.

28 A. You called me .

29 **Q.** Oh sorry.

30 A. Anyway, carry on, sorry.

31 **Q.** Don't worry, they will take your name off.

32 A. This is the wires. These are all the wires. There's the padlock there. You'd be shoved in  
33 there. I would be shoved in there. There's the door. I'm not a very good drawer, but that's  
34 how it was. The wall's there and nurses chaos there, it was around them on the corner.

- 1 **Q.** The nurses chaos?
- 2 **A.** That's where she dishes out drugs and Largactil and stuff like that, there's a hallway there.
- 3 **Q.** There's a what?
- 4 **A.** A hallway, that's what we called it.
- 5 **Q.** I'll just the write the name there?
- 6 **A.** There was another one next to it (inaudible) all along here, same design.
- 7 **Q.** Commissioners, John has drawn this saying that there's a hallway along here.
- 8 **CHAIR:** We can't actually make it out. I think the best thing to do is somebody will come in and
- 9 take a photocopy of it and we'll leave you with it and you can bring a copy in for the
- 10 Commissioners to look at. So why don't we just leave this point for a moment, get
- 11 someone to come and take a picture of it and then we can come back to it once we've got
- 12 the copy, all right?
- 13 **A.** Okay, thank you. Oh God.
- 14 **Q.** Are you all right there John?
- 15 **A.** I'm all right thank you.
- 16 **Q.** It's hard work isn't it.
- 17 **A.** It is.
- 18 **Q.** We really appreciate you doing this for us, very much appreciate it.
- 19 **A.** Appreciate you too very much.
- 20 **QUESTIONING BY MS JOYCHILD CONTINUED:**
- 21 **A.** Sorry.
- 22 **Q.** No, so we've talked about drugs and we've talked about seclusion. So the seclusion that
- 23 you were thrown in was --
- 24 **A.** Isolation I'd call it.
- 25 **Q.** Isolation. So when you were put into isolation, was this a different room to the dog box,
- 26 the cages?
- 27 **A.** That was what I call isolation in those little cages.
- 28 **Q.** So when you talk about seclusion it was always in those places?
- 29 **A.** Yes, it was in there, I don't know why, they just threw us in there.
- 30 **Q.** You couldn't --
- 31 **A.** We're lucky to have a pair of pyjamas on, just.
- 32 **Q.** Were there other children there at the same time?
- 33 **A.** Yes, they were next door, altogether.
- 34 **Q.** So you say sometimes you got food?

1 A. Sometimes we got food, sometimes we got water, but sometimes we didn't get nothing. We  
2 were screaming, "Let us out, let us out", not like this, but as children's voices, as you can  
3 imagine, just scared and terrified. No-one to help us.

4 **Q.** Okay. Just moving on to another point you'd say boys would be physical with each other  
5 and they'd misbehave, but not because they didn't like each other but just because they had  
6 too much pent up energy and stress?

7 A. Mmm, yeah.

8 **Q.** And if anyone saw you hitting or slapping or pushing another boy then you got ECT?

9 A. Yes, boys got ECT. Why on earth, I don't know why they give that to children. Why did  
10 they give that to adults even. It's either that, I think that's a way of them punishing us, they  
11 think that we're fighting one another trying to hurt each other, I think, I don't know that's  
12 just my mind saying, you know, it's like -- did they get it okay?

13 **CHAIR:** Yes, it's just arriving. Are you talking about your picture?

14 A. Sorry about (inaudible).

15 **QUESTIONING BY MS JOYCHILD CONTINUED:** You say you slept in lock-up rooms too,  
16 but they weren't the same lock-up rooms were they?

17 A. No.

18 **Q.** No.

19 A. No.

20 **Q.** So where were these lock-up rooms?

21 A. They were past the dog boxes, well that's what I called them, down the hallway, past the  
22 ablution blocks, ablution blocks where you have a wash and go to the toilet and whatever,  
23 and they had these little individual --

24 **Q.** Cells.

25 A. Mmm. They were all wired and you had a wire door, a wire -- I don't know if anybody's  
26 seen a wired bed with little springs in the bottom with very old-fashioned and a feather  
27 down kapok mattress that was ripped and we were just thrown in there like little dolls.

28 **Q.** That's when you were put into lock-up?

29 A. Yeah, just nothing. And then the big -- I know, and the male man will come in and have  
30 their way with us, sexual abuse, do anything with us and then they'll move on to the next  
31 one and you can hear them crying. They can hear us yelling and screaming but they could  
32 never able to help each other. These men were sometimes huge people. Imagine a 14 or 13  
33 year old looking up at this big man in a white coat, white pants doing what he likes with  
34 you, and there's no-one you can -- you can't call out to mum, you can't call out to dad, you

1 can't even reach out to anybody. It's horrible.

2 **Q.** Just going to read paragraph 33 and 34, you describe it in detail. "I was regularly sexually  
3 abused at Lake Alice by different male nurses. There were two male nurses that  
4 I specifically remember abusing me sexually. Mostly it was full sexual intercourse, full  
5 rape. One was a Māori nurse who was big and ugly and one a European. I was often  
6 abused while I was in lock-up. There were other nurses who abused me but I can't recall  
7 their names.

8 I also remember hearing other boys screaming in pain when they were being raped  
9 at night. Sometimes it was before the nurse would get to me and rape me also. I was so  
10 ashamed and embarrassed about what was happening to me sexually and this  
11 embarrassment and shame has stayed with me my whole life. These are horrific memories  
12 to live with?"

13 **A.** That's so true and so horrible.

14 **Q.** And now we'll talk about the staff. You say a lot of the male staff were horrible, but Nurse  
15 Leonard was lovely and kind and like a mother to you?

16 **A.** As far as I knew she was.

17 **Q.** As far as you knew her?

18 **A.** She still had to give us those horrible pills.

19 **Q.** "Mrs Duncan, the cook, was also lovely and would mother us children. Some of the female  
20 staff were lovely, they would give us lollies, kisses and awhi. Some male staff found any  
21 opportunity to laugh at us and make fun of us. For example, I saw a news item on TV,  
22 there were these towers in the pictures that were actually water towers. As children we  
23 were told by the male nurses there were men with guns in the towers and if we ran away we  
24 would be shot."

25 **A.** That's right.

26 **Q.** You believed that?

27 **A.** That's what I believe when I was a child.

28 **Q.** You never went to school there, did you?

29 **A.** No, I never went to school once.

30 **Q.** Right. And your mum visited you once that you can recall?

31 **A.** Yes, that's all they would allow her, they wouldn't allow her to visit me, so she told me in  
32 later years.

33 **Q.** She wanted to see you but she wasn't allowed?

34 **A.** She did, but she loved us. She loved me, she loved us, she loved all of her children, not just

- 1 me specifically.
- 2 **Q.** And to your observations, John, Māori children got more ECT?
- 3 A. Well, that's all I seen, it was the, you know, the -- yeah, our type, our type, maybe there was  
4 Europeans, but maybe they got it, but I seen a lot of experience.
- 5 **Q.** Young Māori boys getting it?
- 6 A. And I'm not proud of the fact to say that, but I want this to be heard, I want them to listen,  
7 I want justice. I think that's what we all want.
- 8 **Q.** Do you want to tell the Commissioners how you complained to Nurse Leonard about sexual  
9 abuse and what happened?
- 10 A. I'll try. Yeah. Well, it was the same old thing, is when I was in my right mind, you know,  
11 not have my course of drug and whatever, they put the helmet on your head, ECT they  
12 called it. But I used to find some time to talk to, because I thought I could trust her. As a  
13 child when you're 13 or 14 you learn to trust somebody like a mother and I told her what  
14 the male nurses -- that's what they called them, male nurses -- done to me. And I even  
15 showed her on the bottom and the marks of their hands, the bruising on a little boy's body.  
16 She just shook her head in shame. She tried to talk to Selwyn Leeks but he just shook it  
17 off, he wouldn't hear a word, he couldn't listen to what she said.
- 18 **Q.** Were you there when he spoke to Selwyn Leeks?
- 19 A. No, I wasn't allowed thereby there. It was a nurse to doctor kind of thing. You know, he  
20 could have said anything to her, because "No, he could have done that on the bed, he could  
21 have done them on that little raggedy old bed, he could have injured himself just for  
22 someone to feel sorry for them." He had no love, he had no passion, he was a horrible,  
23 cruel, ugly man. He shouldn't even be alive on earth.
- 24 **Q.** You felt that Nurse Leonard believed you?
- 25 A. Yes, I did.
- 26 **Q.** And she told you she'd been to see Dr Leeks?
- 27 A. She did, and I believe that.
- 28 **Q.** And that Dr Leeks wouldn't believe it?
- 29 A. No.
- 30 **Q.** Did she tell you that?
- 31 A. Yes.
- 32 **Q.** Did she tell you he must have self-inflicted it?
- 33 A. Yes, that's right, she did.
- 34 **Q.** He'd say "None of my staff would do that"?

1 A. No, he said, "Oh no, no, he would have done that himself." I assume that's what he would  
2 have said, you know, this is what Ms Leonard is bringing back to me. I can still remember  
3 at my age, it's a thing that you never, ever forget for the rest of your life, for my life. That's  
4 absolutely true, everything you've read out and was said on that paper, yes.

5 **Q.** Okay. Now I'm just going to read out the ACC experience. At paragraph 44, "I went to  
6 ACC about the sexual abuse and was given counselling but I only had about four sessions.  
7 I couldn't bear it, because the counsellor kept going over and over the same incidents and  
8 asking questions such as 'How many times?' I would complain to her that she'd already  
9 asked me those questions in the sessions before. I thought there was no point in me going  
10 as it was just making me very upset. I'd like to go back again, however, and have some  
11 proper counselling. I've never claimed earnings-related compensation."

12 Would you like to --

13 A. Read that last bit out, compensation.

14 **Q.** John, would you like to talk about the compensation?

15 A. Yes.

16 **Q.** Would you like to tell the Commissioners what you think about compensation?

17 A. Yes. Commissioner, I think that each and every one of us that have been through this  
18 experience at LA, Lake Alice, are entitled to compensation from the Government, because  
19 it's put a whole toll on my life, it's ruined my life, it's destroyed me. I tried to get married,  
20 tried to have, you know, I've got children, but they rejected me because the way I speak, the  
21 way I write, "Oh no, that's not our dad, he's too -- he's not clever enough, he can't write",  
22 you know, and nobody's listened to me, listened to us once. And I think the Government  
23 should have a good look at this, not just say oh, "Dear Mr John, I'm sorry for your  
24 experience at Lake Alice." That's not good enough. I've had one of those letters from  
25 before and all I did was, oh just go in one ear and out the other.

26 I think that we are all entitled to compensation because of the trauma that is put --  
27 how can I mend my life, how can I go back to my childhood and rebuild it up to where I am  
28 now? At least it can help me, try and live my life the best I can. And I just -- why on earth,  
29 why on earth have they got Lake Alice still standing. Why haven't they pulled it down? It  
30 belongs to Good Health Whanganui and it's still standing in ruins. It's still there.

31 **CHAIR:** John, can I ask you about compensation.

32 A. Yes.

33 **Q.** What does that look like to you? What would be adequate compensation in your mind?

34 A. What do you mean by "adequate" sorry?

- 1 **Q.** That's what I'm asking you, what would be enough, what would --
- 2 **A.** Compensation is when people are going through stress like I do every day, and depression  
3 and weakness, can't find a job that's suitable because of my background. I'm glad that I've  
4 got my supporter with me, he's also my carer and my friend. If it wasn't for him I'd be  
5 falling to bits right now. If I had compensation for the Government I could have something  
6 to look forward to the future, my retirement. You know, I'll be turning the ripe old age of  
7 65 soon, and, you know, I just want something to compensate all the pain and suffering that  
8 I've been through. I know Dr Leeks can't do that because he's 92. Has he got millions  
9 and millions of dollars to give us? No, he hasn't even got the common courtesy to say sorry  
10 or anything like that. That's not even good enough for us to accept. That's what it would  
11 do for me, it would be a great, great help.
- 12 **Q.** So it would give you a quality of life that you don't have at the moment?
- 13 **A.** No, I don't have.
- 14 **Q.** And some security?
- 15 **A.** Pardon?
- 16 **Q.** And some security?
- 17 **A.** Lots of security. My carer also, my whangai'd brother -- that means my adopted brother,  
18 I adopted him as my brother -- he's been my strong leg. But he can't be with me all the  
19 time, he's got to go out and find a girlfriend and get married and settle down. What about,  
20 you know, me, I'm going to be in this house alone and all these memories flashback in my  
21 mind about LA and all these horrible things and, you know, that I'm in a mess again. That's  
22 what I think -- that's what I think compensation would do for me.
- 23 **Q.** Yes, thank you for that, appreciate it.
- 24 **A.** Thank you very much. Sorry.
- 25 **QUESTIONING BY MS JOYCHILD CONTINUED:** No, you're the one, you need to talk.  
26 Okay. Can I ask what you'd use the compensation for, anything --
- 27 **A.** Do you have to know? Sorry.
- 28 **Q.** No, you don't have to say.
- 29 **A.** Build me a mansion -- no, no, I'm only -- that's only --
- 30 **Q.** Yeah.
- 31 **A.** Sorry, I didn't mean to be rude that way.
- 32 **Q.** That is absolutely fine.
- 33 **A.** I would use that, out of that compensation, to have a good life. To build myself a good life  
34 so I said hey look, I can do this, I can do that. You know, and for everything that's said in



1 this statement, even more, nothing can ever replace that. Nothing can replace the hurt, the  
2 pain, the sorrow, the suffering, the depression, the anxieties, everything that all of us  
3 children have gone through in that horrible place, and it still stands today. I wish if that  
4 place was just nothing. Sorry, am I able to add? Go on, you can speak, you're allowed to.

5 **SUPPORT PERSON:**

6 A. Judge, I can't see her name, Shaw?

7 **MS JOYCHILD:** Judge Shaw.

8 A. Judge Shaw.

9 **CHAIR:** So who's in the room with you?

10 A. My --

11 **Q.** Your carer?

12 A. Yeah, my carer and my support.

13 **Q.** So he's just made a comment to you, which we couldn't hear very well, would you like to  
14 tell us, if you want to?

15 **MS JOYCHILD:** Why don't you come and sit in my seat.

16 **CHAIR:** No I think -- he hasn't been affirmed, so let's just see if John would like to say anything  
17 as a result of what your carer has said to you.

18 A. I will.

19 **Q.** Okay.

20 A. Judge. What he has said through this trauma of ECT and no-one listening to them, they  
21 think that they're nobody and they think nobody cares, so what's the use of living, GRO-D  
22 , a lot of them, through ECT, got brain damage, a lot of them can't walk properly, a lot of  
23 them can't think for themselves, a lot of them haven't got the courage to speak like I have,  
24 I suppose, and, you know, poor things, what have they lost their lives to? Two stupid  
25 doctors.

26 You know, and I can't understand. I'm sure a lot of us who are in this situation,  
27 why on earth did the Government let it happen? Years and years and years and years and  
28 years and why on earth did children like us get it for no reason at all. We had no mental  
29 problems and no -- we were not schizophrenics, some of them might have been but I know  
30 I wasn't. But because we had schooling, the learning, the writing and I used to lash out at  
31 people and I thought there's something wrong with your mind, ward of the State and they  
32 dump you anywhere and everywhere they can, as long as they don't have the responsibility  
33 of looking after you and that was horrible. And that's what I've got to say.

34 **SUPPORT PERSON:** I just wanted to say that was legal in those days.

- 1 A. Illegal.
- 2 **SUPPORT PERSON:** But the Government legalised it. That's what I call --
- 3 A. She knows.
- 4 **SUPPORT PERSON:** That's what I call hypocritical.
- 5 **MS JOYCHILD:** Thank you, yes.
- 6 **SUPPORT PERSON:** They legal -- they made -- they actually signed it off.
- 7 **QUESTIONING BY MS JOYCHILD CONTINUED:** Thanks John, (inaudible) your
- 8 carer.
- 9 A. Right, now.
- 10 **Q.** So we're now going to get back on to the --
- 11 A. Thank you.
- 12 **Q.** -- on to the life after Lake Alice. I want to first of all ask you about employment. So how
- 13 did you go when you left Lake Alice in terms of getting a job?
- 14 A. Well, when I left Lake Alice I was fat -- I've got nothing against fat people, don't get me
- 15 wrong, I'm big now, look at me. But it wasn't me, it was the drugs that they were giving
- 16 me, I assume. And my eyes used to roll back, my head used to -- they made me into a
- 17 funny person. But I wasn't that person.
- 18 **Q.** Couldn't get work?
- 19 A. I couldn't get work, nobody would take me. Nobody would say oh no -- "Oh yeah we'll get
- 20 back to you." I know in my heart, no, they won't and I didn't -- they rejected you, rejected
- 21 me wherever I went to. I couldn't get work.
- 22 **Q.** You went to Watties for a while?
- 23 A. I went to Watties for a few seasons, but, you know, I couldn't handle it, all the noise it used
- 24 to remind me of the zzzzzzz in my brain, because you know --
- 25 **Q.** The factory noise?
- 26 A. Yeah, factory noise, even though we had little plugs, but I could hear it, it was driving me
- 27 crazy.
- 28 **Q.** Right.
- 29 A. In the sense of the word.
- 30 **Q.** So basically you did a few jobs, short periods fruit picking at Watties?
- 31 A. Yeah.
- 32 **Q.** But other than that you couldn't really get any employment?
- 33 A. No, I couldn't find employment at all.
- 34 **Q.** And that's been the same most of your life?

1 A. Yes, because I couldn't fill out the forms or write or read, I had nobody with me to help me,  
2 you know, I put my name and my address, but it would be just like a child's writing and  
3 I couldn't spell or answer the questions, so what does this say?

4 **SUPPORT PERSON:** The shock treatment destroyed your brain.

5 A. Yeah, and the shock treatment that I had while I was in that horrible place called Lake  
6 Alice, you know, it destroyed me too. I just couldn't -- I tried. Yeah, I got the odd job,  
7 picking fruit, going into Watties, but I was just -- just all that noise was just -- oh.

8 **QUESTIONING BY MS JOYCHILD CONTINUED:** Let's move on from there into your  
9 marriage. So you got married?

10 A. I did.

11 **Q.** You met a wife at a party?

12 A. Yes.

13 **Q.** And her mother organised the wedding?

14 A. Mmm-hmm.

15 **Q.** You had five children together?

16 A. Five beautiful children, yes, that's right.

17 **Q.** But you found it hard to be in the marriage because of what had happened to you. But you  
18 never wanted to physically discipline them, you just wanted to hold them and love them?

19 A. And love them.

20 **Q.** Give them everything you had not had?

21 A. That's right. Which was love.

22 **Q.** Then you told her something which changed everything. What was that?

23 A. I told her the horrible experience at Lake Alice Hospital. Sorry.

24 **CHAIR:** No, carry on.

25 A. Yeah, we had five children together, beautiful children. I love them, put them on that -- the  
26 love that I missed out on, getting hugged by my father and my mother. And then I got her  
27 trust because I was married to the woman, so I opened up about LA. Oh, that was it. That  
28 was it.

29 **QUESTIONING BY MS JOYCHILD CONTINUED:** She got suspicious of you?

30 A. She got suspicious of me thinking, "Oh no, you know, you must be like that, inclined."  
31 I said "Don't be stupid, they're our children", I said "I love my -- love our children." And  
32 I never ever was violent, I never ever hit our children once. I loved them. But she couldn't  
33 understand. Yeah, sorry.

34 **Q.** No, it's you that's doing the talking. Have you finished what you want to say?

- 1 A. Yeah.
- 2 **Q.** But her family also started to get suspicious of you?
- 3 A. Here we go with the whānau. Her whānau. Always butted their nose in, always came  
4 around, "Oh who is he, look at the way he's holding your child." I said "Hello, that's my  
5 child too, what am I doing? Aren't I allowed to cuddle a son or daughter, (inaudible)  
6 change their nappy, isn't that what a father and a mother does, change the nappies and  
7 clothes and bathed them?" That's what I was doing. "Oh, you know, isn't he a bit, you  
8 know, funny in that way?" You know, at her all the time to try and get rid of me.
- 9 **Q.** Because you told her you'd been sexually abused in Lake Alice?
- 10 A. That's exactly right. When I told her I was sexually abused her mind changed, "I better  
11 watch out for my children, he might be do the same to them." But that was totally wrong, I  
12 was very, very upset because she did that, I thought she would have been more loving  
13 towards me.
- 14 **Q.** In the end she left you, didn't she?
- 15 A. Then she left me, yes.
- 16 **Q.** And took the children with her?
- 17 A. That's right. I had nobody, again.
- 18 **Q.** You felt that she'd poisoned your children's minds?
- 19 A. Yes. Poisoned my children's mind with "Your father's been in here, you know what they --  
20 what that place is called, that's where they send the people that are loose in the head." This  
21 is her telling our children, the woman that I married. For goodness sake. You know, she  
22 used to say all these horrible things and as our children grew up they believed what their  
23 mother said. Dad was pushed aside, like a bit of paper. "Who you are, what are you  
24 ringing me up for? I don't know you anymore." "Did your mother tell you what  
25 happened?" I said "It's true what happened to me, but hey, you know, I wouldn't do that to  
26 you and hurt you in any way." They said "I know that dad", I said "So you believe your  
27 mother?" Well, that was me in a nutshell.
- 28 **Q.** Then you had a car accident after that when you were on your own?
- 29 A. Yeah, tell me about it.
- 30 **Q.** It was a very bad car accident just after the marriage broke up, you were so distressed you  
31 just walked out into the road?
- 32 A. That's right, I was, I was going through stress and depression because she took my children  
33 off me, told them lies and the children hated me and I thought oh well, you know, what is  
34 there to live for? Here we go, all these flashbacks came back, oh yeah, go on, walk across

1 that road, no, no. I was sober, no alcohol in my body whatsoever. I said to my friend on  
2 the other side, I said "Look I'm going to help that man", he said "There's no car there",  
3 I said "Yes, there is there's a car on the side of the road", he said "No", so I walked, one two  
4 three, bang, because my mind was -- no drugs, no alcohol, my mind was so distraught  
5 thinking I'll never ever see my children again.

6 **Q.** So you had to learn to walk again?

7 **A.** Yes.

8 **Q.** It took you three months?

9 **A.** Mmm.

10 **Q.** Now you walk with a stick?

11 **A.** Yeah, I walk with two sticks.

12 **Q.** Two sticks and you have a carer who lives with you?

13 **A.** That's right. I've also got a mobility scooter at home which gets me around because I can't  
14 walk far. And that sort of took a toll on my life as well. But in a way I didn't blame my  
15 wife because I loved her. I said well -- and I rang the children up as they got older and I  
16 said "Look it's your choice, but you've got a father, you know where your father is, I will  
17 always, always love you because you're mine. If you turn around, come to where I am, I'll  
18 never ever turn you away, even though what you've heard, what you say about me, I still  
19 love you."

20 **Q.** So we're now just going to move on, John, to the effects of Lake Alice, I'm going to read a  
21 paragraph.

22 **A.** Please do that.

23 **Q.** "My main problems now are PTSD, depression, anxiety and socialising with other people."

24 **A.** That's absolutely correct.

25 **Q.** I don't share what has happened to me when I was ward of the State and at Cherry Farm  
26 and Lake Alice because I fear I'll not be believed. I wasn't believed when my cousin was  
27 abusing me, no-one listened to my complaints and I still hate my grandmother for how  
28 cruel she was to me. I carry a lot of pain and hurt about my grandmother and Lake Alice.  
29 She could have helped so much by not putting me into Lake Alice in the first place."

30 **A.** Mmm.

31 **Q.** "I'm very upset I never got to learn to read and write properly, never got any schooling at  
32 Lake Alice or Cherry Farm. It never made sense to me why I was taken away just to be  
33 assaulted and sexually abuse and to get ECT, all just because I could not learn. I've never  
34 been an alcoholic or a drug addict. I do like beer but I don't overdrink. I was on

1           antidepressants for a short time but the doctor said he didn't think it was a good idea  
2           because I might get addicted. I felt I had to stop taking it because I didn't want the doctor  
3           to think that I was a drug addict, even though they helped."

4                       And then you've said what you want from the Commission. You've had a  
5           one-on-one session with Commissioner Gibson and you loved it.

6   A.     Thank you very much Mr Gibson.

7   **COMMISSIONER GIBSON:** Kia ora, thank you John for that.

8   **QUESTIONING BY MS JOYCHILD CONTINUED:** And Commissioner heard everything  
9           you said and you were so impressed with him.

10   A.    I sure was and I still am.

11   **Q.**   Now you want the Government to be accountable for what happened to you while you were  
12           in the care of Cherry Farm and Lake Alice?

13   A.    Mmm.

14   **Q.**   "Helen Clark's apology is just words on paper because no-one was held accountable."

15   A.    That's right.

16   **Q.**   "Dr Leeks and the staff were never made to answer for the hellish lives they gave us."

17   A.    **[Nods].**

18   **Q.**   And you say the last settlement with Grant Cameron your voice was not heard. "It's very  
19           important to me that people hear what we went through and believe my story. I want  
20           people to listen carefully to me." And you said you'd like a public apology not a private  
21           one. "I think we should be able to go to the Beehive and have a publicly filmed apology  
22           from the Prime Minister so the whole country knows what we have been through.  
23           Everyone needs to know we are telling the truth. We did go through what we say we did  
24           and it is not a laughing matter or a joke."

25   A.    That's right. I do, even more, even more, more than words can say. Each and every one of  
26           us, I think it was about 300 in all I think, might be, if I'm correct.

27   **Q.**   Yeah. You've talked about the compensation.

28   A.    That's right.

29   **Q.**   You don't consider what you got from Grant Cameron as adequate.

30   A.    No.

31   **Q.**   Your entire life has been ruined by what happened to you at Cherry Farm and Lake Alice.

32   A.    Absolutely.

33   **Q.**   You'd like to learn to read and write and you think the Government should be helping all of  
34           the children with learning disabilities to read and write and support those with health

1 disabilities. Never been treated for the hurt and suffering and pain that you feel all the  
2 time. Some counselling for the sexual abuse but you do not want to go to a psychiatrist  
3 because after what you've been through you'd never trust one.

4 A. That's right.

5 **Q.** And you'd like your life to be made better than it is if that is at all possible.  
6 Commissioners, that's the -- that's your evidence isn't it. Is there anything else you want to  
7 say?

8 A. That is my evidence.

9 **CHAIR:** John, do you mind if the other Commissioners, or even me, ask some more questions, is  
10 that all right by you?

11 A. You're most welcome, it is perfectly all right.

12 **Q.** Thank you very much, I'm going to turn you to Commissioner Alofivae to see if she wants  
13 to ask you any questions.

14 **COMMISSIONER ALOFIVAE:** Good afternoon John, talofa lava. Thank you very, very much  
15 for the very honest and clear way in which you've given your evidence this afternoon.  
16 I just have one question and it's actually -- it's in your paragraph 20 and you recall that a lot  
17 of the boys there were Māori, more than Pākehā, but you also refer to a young boy, maybe  
18 as young as 6.

19 A. Mmm, I do.

20 **Q.** Yeah.

21 A. And, you know, 9, there was a 9 year old, but I think, yeah, and 6 year old, that just -- oh  
22 God, yeah. Yes, that's right. I don't know what happened to him.

23 **Q.** Can you recall -- one of the things we're trying to get an understanding of, a better picture  
24 on is a really -- is the ages of the young boys, how young they were. So we've heard  
25 evidence that they were as young as 5, 6. Were there a few of them in there around that  
26 age? We've heard the average age about 10, 12, 15, but some of these younger ones that  
27 I'm really interested in at this point?

28 A. Yes, yes, there was. I've seen some, whether they were old, whether they were about 14,  
29 but they sure lacked like 6 year olds to me because they were only little, they were only  
30 little, you know, little children. You know, yeah, that's true.

31 **Q.** And were they in the same villa as you?

32 A. Yes, what they called it at Lake Alice was a child where all young children like myself and  
33 younger were put, they were supposed to educate us and teach us, instead they did all that  
34 ugly stuff to us is wrong.

- 1 **Q.** Thank you. Just one last question if I can, John, can I thank you for the picture of the cage  
2 that you drew. We've heard other evidence too about the cage, we're very grateful for the  
3 drawing now. Can I just ask you, and only if you're able to and you want to respond, how  
4 did you sit in the cage? Because the way you've described it you could fit two dogs in  
5 there. Were you on your hands and knees, were you --
- 6 **A.** Sort of like back on my ankles and like crouched, you know, you can hardly, barely blinken  
7 stand up in it. There was little bits of, oh I don't know, whatever was in there, yeah, no, it  
8 was, it was like a dog kennel.
- 9 **Q.** All right, so you'd have to crouch to get in and then crouch to get back out?
- 10 **A.** That's correct, and the way they pushed us about we were hurt badly, but they didn't fix us  
11 up, they just left us like that.
- 12 **Q.** And you've drawn the wires and the springs, so you could actually see the boys in the other  
13 cages beside you, is that right?
- 14 **A.** Yes, it was all 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 but they were all wired, thick wiring like you put on a fence,  
15 they were all like little diamond shapes and they had a door in it and a lock on each  
16 individual.
- 17 **Q.** Thank you very much for that, John, really appreciate your evidence this afternoon.
- 18 **SUPPORT PERSON:** They gave you a little pot to do your business in.
- 19 **A.** Yeah, that's the potty.
- 20 **SUPPORT PERSON:** A little bucket, a little pot.
- 21 **A.** Hold on. Yes.
- 22 **COMMISSIONER ALOFIVAE:** The little bucket was to do your business, right?
- 23 **A.** To do the -- yeah.
- 24 **Q.** Thank you.
- 25 **A.** Thank you.
- 26 **CHAIR:** John, I've asked you all the questions I want to ask, so I'm going to hand you over now  
27 to Commissioner Gibson who you know.
- 28 **A.** Sure.
- 29 **COMMISSIONER GIBSON:** Thanks John, it's a privilege to hear you again. I've got a few  
30 questions then I'll --
- 31 **A.** Sure.
- 32 **Q.** When you're in Cherry Farm you're about 12 roughly, is that right?
- 33 **A.** Yeah, about that, 1960, I don't know, 6.
- 34 **MS JOYCHILD:** You were 12.



- 1 **COMMISSIONER GIBSON:** You received ECT there.
- 2 A. Yes, I can remember that.
- 3 **Q.** How was that delivered, it was modified, unmodified? You know what's meant.
- 4 A. They were pushing something down my throat, whether it was tubes or whether it was pills,  
5 you know.
- 6 **Q.** And were you conscious when you received it do you remember?
- 7 A. Yes.
- 8 **Q.** So that was really painful as well?
- 9 A. Being so small at that age you'll be strapped hard to the bed and they'd be holding, but your  
10 body would be like, you know, like rubber bands -- excuse my voice.
- 11 **Q.** And at Cherry Farm was it similar to the unmodified at Lake Alice and the same reasons  
12 was used for punishment or anything like that?
- 13 A. You're absolutely correct. I think they got a big laugh out of it, I think they just did that to  
14 laugh and point out us and try and make us go, you know, crazy, I think, myself, now that  
15 I've gone up to adult, I'm thinking back, I think that's what they did that to us.
- 16 **Q.** At Cherry Farm as well?
- 17 A. Cherry Farm Hospital.
- 18 **Q.** Just looking through some of your notes, would you say some of the comments in the  
19 written notes were blatantly racist?
- 20 A. Yes, especially the one by Dr Pugmire. I didn't like Dr Pugmire.
- 21 **Q.** And so you experienced real racism at Lake Alice yourself?
- 22 A. I would think so, mmm.
- 23 **Q.** I suppose just the opportunity for me to thank you again, it was a privilege to listen to you  
24 in a private session and I know you haven't been listened to or believed often throughout  
25 your life, but now many, many people are listening to you and believing you and you are  
26 teaching them, learning them, educating them.
- 27 A. Thank you.
- 28 **Q.** I hope it's part of a redress system, like you say, that people like you, who didn't have the  
29 opportunity to learn to read or write, they can be part of it. I'm assuming that's what you're  
30 recommending as well, isn't it?
- 31 A. That's right. That's correct.
- 32 **Q.** And thanks to your support people as well through this, and recognising how much you  
33 went through as a young person, and the cost of you telling the truth at times. We hope  
34 today that because of what you shared that there will be positive benefits for all of Aotearoa

1 New Zealand. What you have given is a great contribution, is a koha to us all, so thank you  
2 John so much, thank you.

3 A. Thank you, kia ora.

4 **CHAIR:** Kia ora. We will now take the adjournment. Thank you again. I hope you get a  
5 peaceful afternoon after this.

6 A. Thank you, you too.

7 **Q.** Thank you, bye-bye.

8 **Adjournment from 3.37 pm to 3.59 pm**

9 **CHAIR:** Last witness of the day Ms Thomas.

10 **DEBORAH DICKSON**

11 **MS A THOMAS:** Āe, kua tae tātou ki te kaikōrero whakamutunga mo tēnei ra nei ka mutu mo  
12 tēnei wiki. And it is my privilege and honour to introduce the Commissioners to Deborah  
13 or Debbie Dickson and her support person here today, Wendy. Nau mai haere mai both of  
14 you and thank you for taking the time to come to the hearings today.

15 A. Thank you.

16 **Q.** So like I talked to you about, we'll pass it over to the Chair of our Commission for your  
17 affirmation and then we'll start with your statement.

18 A. Yes.

19 **CHAIR:** Hello and welcome. And hello to you Wendy, thank you so much for coming and being  
20 here in support. Are you Deb, Deborah or Debbie?

21 A. Just Debbie.

22 **Q.** Debbie?

23 A. Yes.

24 **Q.** That's what you feel comfortable, do you mind if I call you that?

25 A. Yes.

26 **Q.** Don't be so frightened, it's all right. All right, I'm just going to give you the affirmation and  
27 I ask you to agree. Do you solemnly, sincerely, truly declare and affirm that the evidence  
28 you give to the Commission today will be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the  
29 truth?

30 A. Yes.

31 **Q.** Thank you.

32 **QUESTIONING BY MS A THOMAS:** Debbie, I know this is stuff that you've only just started  
33 talking about recently, so please take your time to go through the statement. Pause any  
34 time you need to and just let us know if you need a break, okay?

1 A. [Nods].

2 Q. So if I could take you to paragraph 1, start reading and if there's any mistakes that I may  
3 have made, please just correct those while we go. Also I'll just give you options too so you  
4 can have a bit of a breath. If you would like Wendy to read some of the sections or if you'd  
5 like me to we can do that as well, you just let us know. Wendy? No problem.

6 **SUPPORT PERSON:** "My name is Deborah Dickson, I was born on 29 September 1969. I'm  
7 51 year old. I currently live in Palmerston North. I have four daughters and five  
8 grandchildren. I am a survivor of Lake Alice. My early life I was born in Marton, I was  
9 brought up with my brother who is 16 months older than me. My parents were hard on us.  
10 I remember being worked all the time. I'd go to my grandparents' place by the beach in the  
11 holidays, that was my get-away.

12 There was never much love from my parents when I was growing up. I don't  
13 remember getting hugs or being showed much affection.

14 With my schooling I started off at Marton Primary School and then I went to  
15 boarding school when I was 11. In fourth form I was expelled from boarding school and  
16 went to Rangitikei College until I was able to get a job. As soon as I had enough money  
17 and the means to get out, I left Marton."

18 Q. Before we go on to the next paragraph I just wanted to say at any time you feel you want to  
19 take over again, let us know, okay Debbie?

20 A. [Nods].

21 Q. Paragraph 5.

22 **SUPPORT PERSON:** "When I was two and a half years old I was admitted to Palmerston North  
23 Hospital with meningitis. My parents were told that I had only hours to live. They were  
24 given a choice, I could be given antibiotics that could potentially result in me having a  
25 feeble mind later in life. If I didn't get the treatment I would die. They chose to give me  
26 the treatment and I made a full recovery.

27 However, for the rest of my childhood they treated me like I had brain damage or  
28 some sort of mental disorder. This was despite the doctors telling them that I hadn't  
29 suffered any effects and that any behavioural issues were from my home environment.

30 Two weeks before I went away to Lake Alice, my parents sent me to a health camp  
31 for my behavioural issues, such as tantrums. I was 9. I stayed there for two weeks before I  
32 was admitted to Lake Alice.

33 I believe my parents had already made up their minds to send me to Lake Alice  
34 because they just wanted me out of the house. They never told me why I was going there.

1 I was only 9 and believed I was just being a young kid. Yes, I was naughty sometimes but I  
2 was just acting out. I didn't have mental health issues that required me to be locked up.

3 I was admitted to Lake Alice on 12 September 1978. My psych report says it was  
4 because of unmanageable behaviour at home and behavioural disorder. My parents signed  
5 a form agreeing for me to go there and receive treatment including ECT and whatever  
6 drugs they chose to give me. I was put in villa 6. I was placed on a pre-discharge trial leave  
7 on 10 November 1978 after spending two months there. I was pretty much a good girl the  
8 whole time.

9 When I was at primary school, I was a good kid and got along well with my  
10 classmates and the teaching staff. My teachers were surprised when they heard that I had  
11 been admitted to Lake Alice."

12 A. What I remember about Lake Alice. I was only 9 years old when I went to Lake Alice so I  
13 don't remember a lot of the detail but the things I do remember are very clear in my head  
14 and will never be forgotten.

15 The understanding my parents had with Lake Alice was that I would go there  
16 Monday to Friday as an inpatient and then return to my parents in the weekends. We lived  
17 so close to Lake Alice that I would sometimes go back home for dinner on Wednesday  
18 night. I put up a fight every time my parents sent me back there. I just didn't know why I  
19 was being put in that place.

20 My mum would tell me that I hadn't changed, that I was still being naughty. Then  
21 I would go back and they would up my dosage of medications.

22 When I first went to Lake Alice, I did not see any doctors and there were no  
23 assessments or tests done on me.

24 I remember the bedroom that I stayed in. I was all by myself. As you walked  
25 down the corridor it was a room on the left, it just had one bed, no toilet. As an adult  
26 looking back it reminds me of a prison cell. They would lock me in at night. I remember  
27 feeling so scared when the lights went off and the doors were closed for the evening.

28 I remember the main common area where we would play. I was in the teen  
29 adolescent unit so most of the kids were much older than me. I was the youngest there.  
30 I actually don't remember any of the staff because I couldn't distinguish the adults from the  
31 teenagers, I was too young to really know.

32 We had a school that we would go to but I don't remember any of the schoolwork  
33 that we did, if we did any. Everyone just kept to themselves and I don't even know what  
34 we did all day, I was just trying get through the day until I could leave Lake Alice for good.

1           One of my most vivid memories was movie nights. We would have them in the  
2 big gym where all the patients would watch the movie. This was everyone, kids and adults  
3 mixed altogether. I was so terrified on those nights because some of the adults that they  
4 brought to hang out with us were pretty scary. They would scream and scream the whole  
5 time. As an adult now, I know that a lot of them were mentally insane.

6           The bathroom was horrible. There was just one bathtub we all had to wash in. It  
7 was raised above the ground and I remember it being very open and feeling like anyone  
8 could come and see me having a wash any time they wanted. The actual bath time was  
9 horrible too. The staff would just dunk you in very forcefully like I was a prisoner and  
10 wash my hair like I had lice, but I didn't. I felt like we were in a concentration camp. The  
11 actual water stank, stunk, ponged. I don't know what they put in the water. They didn't tell  
12 us, and you certainly didn't ask.

13           I remember thinking I was brought up to respect adults so surely, they were doing  
14 what was good for me, and so I didn't resist them. But at the same time, they were treating  
15 us like we were dogs or something. I couldn't do anything. I was only 9, so I just did what  
16 I was told.

17           I remember lining up and going past a hole in the wall and you were given a little  
18 cup, and one night I fought against it, and I was taken to my room and the door was locked  
19 and I was left alone. It felt like ages. I don't think I ate anything that whole night.

20           No-one came and saw me while I was in Lake Alice. I know it was because of the  
21 shame that the Lake Alice name had. Our whole community knew about Lake Alice and if  
22 you went there you were crazy. So even though my parents put me in there, they were  
23 embarrassed that I was there. They didn't tell my grandparents or my cousins. They told  
24 no-one that I was in Lake Alice and so no-one came to see me. Once I got out of Lake  
25 Alice, I didn't tell anyone either because of the stigma. I was ashamed. As soon as people  
26 found out that I went there, they behaved as though I was mentally ill, so I just kept it a  
27 secret.

28           Can Wendy read 23 please?

29 **SUPPORT PERSON:** "My nurse's notes say I suffered from sexual manipulation/interference by  
30 one of the other lady inmates. I don't remember this happening to me. I think I have  
31 blocked it out. Reading the reports from the doctors and the nurses makes me sick. How  
32 could they do nothing about it? Simply sending me to the doctor for a check and noting  
33 there was no physical harm is not enough. There was no follow-up to see if I was okay  
34 after being sexually abused and as far as the notes are concerned, nothing happened to her.

1 Like I said, I've clearly blocked it out and I guess that's for the better."

2 A. Even though it says throughout my notes that I was a good behaved girl and easy to look  
3 after, and recommended that I be discharged as soon as possible, they still pumped me with  
4 drugs. My notes say I was given Largactil --

5 **Q.** You don't have to name all those names if you don't want to Debbie, that's okay.

6 A. Thank you -- all while I was at Lake Alice.

7 **CHAIR:** Just for the record, there were four pretty powerful drugs that you were given during that  
8 time.

9 A. Yeah, each outpatient appointment it just -- the doses just got up and up and up each  
10 outpatient appointment. So yeah, start little and just keep giving you more and more.

11 **Q.** They started small and got larger and larger as time went on?

12 A. Yeah, yeah.

13 After Lake Alice. When I was discharged in November 1978 I was an outpatient  
14 for about 15 months. I would go back to Lake Alice with my mother now and then to be  
15 checked and to be kept on my medication. So I don't remember finally leaving Lake Alice,  
16 I just stopped going back there one day.

17 I remember going to boarding school in about 1980, 81 and not going back to  
18 Lake Alice. I remember running away a lot at boarding school too.

19 I had a shitty adulthood following Lake Alice. I am a loner and I hate socialising.  
20 My confidence is so low if I get into trouble I can't manage it and break down. I can't  
21 manage the criticism. So it has really affected the relationships I have made and it has  
22 ruined my life.

23 This is the first I have felt strong enough to even address that I went to Lake Alice.  
24 I had heard about the Grant Cameron proceedings but I wasn't ready then to talk about  
25 anything, and I remember thinking that Dr Leeks wasn't there when I went so they wouldn't  
26 want to talk to me, so I just didn't brother.

27 I decided to tell my girls what happened to me when I decided to take part in the  
28 Royal Commission. That was a huge step for me and has affected my children in many  
29 different ways.

30 The effects of Lake Alice and State care on my life. My eldest grandchild is 15  
31 now and I have another four grandchildren. So I've got five granddaughters all in total.  
32 When I turn up on my motorbike they run out and give me cuddles and want me to love  
33 them. We show each other love as much as we can and are able to. I made a promise to  
34 myself that I would make the choice to change and break the cycle of the environment that

1 I was exposed to as a young child.

2 We need to shower love on our children so that the abuse cycle doesn't continue.  
3 This is something that did not happen when I was little and it only continued at Lake Alice.

4 Like I said above, I have struggled a lot with relationships I have had since Lake  
5 Alice. I do not have any trust in authority. I just want to keep to myself and not expose  
6 myself to any hurt. This lack of trust in anybody has led to many relationship breakdowns.  
7 I was married for nearly three years but it didn't work out as I was looking for acceptance  
8 and love everywhere but I couldn't open up to believe in myself or the relationship I was in.

9 Not only in my marriage but any relationship I have with family or with friends.  
10 I generally feel that if I don't get too close then I won't have to be accountable or  
11 answerable to anyone and they won't get to know who I really am. I don't want anyone to  
12 support me or believe in me in case I let them down. I feel more comfortable just keeping  
13 to myself.

14 The stigma over the years that came from being in Lake Alice has been a continual  
15 burden. Everyone in the area I grew up in knew that Lake Alice was a place you went if  
16 you were crazy. This is what I had to fight every day trying to prove that I wasn't crazy and  
17 sometimes it would make me feel crazy. One of my employers would find out -- once my  
18 employers would find out that I had been to Lake Alice, they would start to treat me  
19 differently. As an example, I was working in a rest home when an incident happened  
20 between myself and another staff member. Without even trying to understand the issue my  
21 boss just blamed me and told me I needed to get counselling. I didn't do anything wrong,  
22 but they didn't even want to hear me out.

23 I don't talk about feelings, I bottle up and don't express anything at all. If I'd  
24 expressed my feelings in Lake Alice they would have thought I was actually crazy so  
25 I learned not to show my feelings.

26 I tried to kill myself a few times when I was younger. These were serious  
27 attempts. Even to the this day I have very down days and battle depression and the feeling  
28 of wanting to end my life. The only thing that keeps me from actually doing it are my  
29 children and grandchildren and I could never do that to my girls. They see me as strong  
30 and independent and I need to be that person for them. I try every day.

31 I feel extremely out of place in social situations. I always feel like I'm always  
32 intruding in situations that I'm not supposed to be in. I avoid work functions and  
33 socialising. I think this stems from Lake Alice and being forced to isolate to keep safe. I  
34 don't know where I belong.

1           What I want from the Royal Commission. I am past counselling. I have just  
2 gotten over it myself so I don't think I want that, but you never know after the hearings.  
3 I might need someone to talk to.

4           What I would like to see. An apology. I'd like to see the doctors and psychiatrists  
5 held accountable. I want people to know what happened and I want people to learn from  
6 what happened to us at Lake Alice so it never happens again.

7           I want our voice to be heard. We need to be finally given the voice to speak up.  
8 This didn't happen when we were 9 or 12, 16 or 21, but it needs to happen now.

9           I want compensation for the suffering we have been put through as children who  
10 went through Lake Alice.

11           I wish to present my evidence to the Royal Commission so my voice can be heard.

12 **QUESTIONING BY MS A THOMAS CONTINUED:** Thank you Debbie. I just want to say  
13 that I know you stayed silent for a long time and the decision you made to actually present  
14 evidence in the Royal Commission was a huge step for you, so thank you and furthermore,  
15 that you chose at the last minute not to be anonymous so that people could hear your story  
16 and they have heard that. So did you have one last something that you wanted to close  
17 with?

18 A. Yes, I do, if I may. I feel sad, heart broken and angry for everybody, including myself.  
19 I feel like I always have to prove myself and I'm not worthy and always looking for  
20 acceptance. I feel like a fraud after hearing what others went through. I feel sorry for them  
21 as what I went through was by no means as horrific as what these people have gone  
22 through.

23           I guess some could say I was lucky that I did come from the normal two parent,  
24 two children family home life, and even though at the time I did not think I had a voice, we  
25 all now have a voice that needs to be heard. Whether we were wards of the State or from  
26 the normal Kiwi family.

27           It has been 42 years, it is now my time. I am so pleased that the children of  
28 the 90s, the present era and the future have a voice and they know that they will be able to  
29 use it and will be heard.

30 **Q.** Thank you Debbie. The Commissioners might have some questions for you.

31 **COMMISSIONER GIBSON:** No questions, but thank you so much for how clearly you  
32 articulate the need to use your voice and it is your time. Thank you.

33 A. Thank you.

34 **COMMISSIONER ALOFIVAE:** No questions, Debbie, just wanted to thank you for your



- 1 enormous courage, thank you.
- 2 A. Thank you.
- 3 **CHAIR:** I've just got one little question, and that's where you stayed when you were in Lake  
4 Alice. You referred to it as a small bedroom or you said cell.
- 5 A. Yeah.
- 6 **Q.** Did you sleep in that room all the time?
- 7 A. Yeah.
- 8 **Q.** So you weren't in a dormitory?
- 9 A. No, no.
- 10 **Q.** Were other children in these small rooms as well or were others in dormitories?
- 11 A. I don't believe there were dormitories there, it was the corridor and there's rooms either side  
12 going down.
- 13 **Q.** So everybody had a room of their own?
- 14 A. Of their own, yeah.
- 15 **Q.** Okay. All right.
- 16 A. I would assume, so the door was locked at night, so --
- 17 **Q.** So you're locked into that room at night?
- 18 A. Yes.
- 19 **Q.** And what time were you let out in the morning?
- 20 A. I don't know, I've got a lot of notes from my stay.
- 21 **Q.** Yes, it doesn't really matter. But if you wanted to go to the toilet at night, what would you  
22 do?
- 23 A. You wouldn't go, you waited until you got unlocked in the morning and I do remember,  
24 because bed wetting was quite bad for a lot of people.
- 25 **Q.** Very common for the poor children who were there?
- 26 A. Yeah, yeah, yeah.
- 27 **Q.** It's tough isn't it.
- 28 A. Yes, yes.
- 29 **Q.** And coming here today I know has been very tough for you and it's remarkable to me that  
30 you have had the courage to do it, it really is extraordinary. I mean I can see you're shy, I  
31 can see you've told us yourself you don't like to socialise, and yet you've taken the  
32 extraordinary step of speaking out in front of the whole country who's wanting to watch and  
33 speaking your truth.
- 34 A. Yes.

1 **Q.** So I want to say one thing, please don't think you're a fraud. We know you are not a fraud.  
2 You are speaking about a dreadful time for you and for all the other children who were  
3 there, whether they got ECT or not, you were heavily medicated without any medical  
4 reason whatsoever. That's a shocking state of affairs that we have heard very carefully.

5 **A.** Yes.

6 **Q.** So don't think you're a fraud, please.

7 **A.** Thank you.

8 **Q.** And the only other thing I want to say is I know you don't -- you're a bit suspicious about  
9 counselling, but you know, and sitting right there beside you, is a very capable and willing  
10 people to support you, because this is going to have an impact on you coming today I'm  
11 sure.

12 **A.** Yes.

13 **Q.** So take advantage of all the support you can lay your hands on, all right?

14 **A.** Yes, thank you, thank you very much.

15 **Q.** Many thanks indeed and Wendy, thank you very much, you've played a very important role  
16 in helping Debbie tell her story. Thank you.

17 **SUPPORT PERSON:** Thank you.

18 **CHAIR:** So kua mutu aku mahi i tēnei wiki.

19 **MS A THOMAS:** Ma'am, sorry, if I could have one very boring housekeeping before the karakia.  
20 Mo taku hē Temepara. Just so the Commissioners are aware, I have another hearing next  
21 week down in Ponēke, so seeking leave from the Commissioners not to be here on Monday  
22 and Tuesday but will be back on Wednesday.

23 **CHAIR:** You'll be sadly missed, Ms Thomas, but of course, you hardly need to seek leave, thank  
24 you for the courtesy.

25 **Hearing closes with waiata and karakia mutunga by Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei**

26 **Hearing adjourned at 4.25 pm to Monday, 21 June 2021 at 10 am**

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