

**ABUSE IN CARE ROYAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY  
FAITH-BASED INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE 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)  
Dr Anaru Erueti  
Ali'imuamua Sandra Alofivae  
Paul Gibson

**Counsel:** Mr Simon Mount KC, Ms Kerryn Beaton KC, Ms Katherine Anderson, Ms Tania Sharkey, Mr Michael Thomas, Ms Kathy Basire and Ms Alisha Castle for the Royal Commission

Ms Rachael Schmidt-McCleave and Ms Julia White for the Crown

Ms Sally McKechnie and Ms Brooke Clifford for Te Rōpū Tautoko, the Catholic Bishops and Congregational Leaders

Mrs Fiona Guy-Kidd and Ms India Shores for the Anglican Church

Ms Maria Dew KC, Ms Kiri Harkess and Mr Lourenzo Fernandez for the Methodist Church and Wesley Faith

Mr Brian Henry, Mr Chris Shannon and Ms Sykes for Gloriavale

Ms Sarah Kuper and Mr Matthew Hague for the Presbyterian Church

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

**Date:** 18 October 2022

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**TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS**

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26 **MS DEW:** So now I'm going to invite Reverend Tautari to deal with her opening statement. It is  
27 not new material, but it is a condensing of all of the statements and evidence that you've  
28 received and some reflections and acknowledgments on behalf of the Church. So Reverend  
29 Tautari -- does the witness need to be sworn in?

30 **CHAIR:** Yes, I'll ask Reverend to take the affirmation.

31 **REVEREND TARA TAUTARI (Affirmed)**

32 **MS DEW:** Just before we begin, I have hard copies of it for some of the Commission, we've also  
33 sent through a Word version for the Commissioner.

34 **CHAIR:** Is this evidence other than what has already been provided?

1 **MS DEW:** As I say it's a summary of the evidence that's already been provided.

2 **CHAIR:** So the three also different documents?

3 **MS DEW:** Yes, it's created as an opening statement, but obviously she's just sworn in to give this  
4 evidence. But it is considered to be a summary of all her evidence just to try and --

5 **CHAIR:** Thank you, it's good to have it all in one place.

6 **MS DEW:** Yes. So Reverend Tautari, have you got that opening statement in front of you?

7 **REV TAUTARI:** Yes, I do.

8 **MS DEW:** Thank you. If you could commence, I understand you're going to do a short mihi and  
9 then commence reading your evidence thank you.

10 **CHAIR:** Are you going to read the entire?

11 **REV TAUTARI:** No, I'm not, I will read just the first couple of pages, including the  
12 acknowledgment and apology and that will be it.

13 **CHAIR:** Thank you so much, because we do have all your previous statements and we've read  
14 those, but again, I think the interests of everybody is we get into our discussion which  
15 would be great, so thank you so much for that.

16 **REV TAUTARI:** Tēnā koutou katoa. Kua tae tātou i runga i te reo karanga o tēnei rā. Ka tika me  
17 mihi ki ngā purapura ora, me wā koutou kaha ki te whai oranga, ahakoa te aha. Ka mihi  
18 hoki ki te Kōmihana a te Karauna, he kaupapa hōhonu tēnei. Nā reira, ka poto taku mihi kia  
19 tīmata ai tātou te kōrero.

20 **COMMISSIONER ERUETI:** Tena koe.

21 **REV TAUTARI:** My name is Tara Tautari. I am a Māori woman in my early 50s. I have curly  
22 hair, I wear glasses and I am wearing a black dress.

23 On behalf of the Methodist Church of New Zealand, Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa,  
24 I acknowledge the pain and suffering of all those who were abused while in the care of the  
25 Methodist Church. The Church carries the primary responsibility for ensuring the  
26 protection and well-being of those in its care. We failed in this sacred duty and are  
27 determined to make amends.

28 On behalf of the Methodist Church of Aotearoa New Zealand, we apologise to  
29 every person who has been abused while in the care of the Church and its related  
30 institutions. The Church did not have safeguarding policies and processes in place and this  
31 led to unimaginable suffering of some children, young people and vulnerable adults. In  
32 some cases, the abusers were employees of Church related institutions; in others, the  
33 abusers were Clergy members. In some cases the abusers were students at our Methodist  
34 College.

1 In each case, there is no excuse for the abusive behaviour, nor for the harm inflicted  
 2 on innocent people. Such abuse has no place in our faith and we apologise unequivocally  
 3 to all those survivors. We thank all survivors who came forward to the Commission to  
 4 share their experiences and acknowledge their courage in speaking the truth. And here  
 5 I just want to give a mihi to William Wilson and to Ms M, I have not had the privilege of  
 6 meeting William, but I greeted Ms M this morning. Thank you for your truth telling here.

7 In particular, we acknowledge the additional harm caused to survivors when the  
 8 Church initially refused to believe them, sought to contest their concerns or looked to refer  
 9 the complaint elsewhere and failed to recognise that the Church also needed to address the  
 10 complaint. We apologise with sorrow and shame for the callousness of such treatment. It  
 11 was wrong and should not have happened.

12 We acknowledge that the trauma experienced as a result of abuse has had long-term  
 13 impacts on the lives of survivors and not only on survivors, but also on their whānau and  
 14 their loved ones. We apologise unreservedly to all those who have witnessed and lived  
 15 with the consequences of the trauma experienced by survivors. The Methodist Church of  
 16 Aotearoa New Zealand commits itself to ensure that safeguarding policies and processes  
 17 are in place in the Church and its related institutions.

18 In our Methodist way, our leadership, both Clergy and laity, will gather in  
 19 Conference in November this year to share the stories and lessons learned from all  
 20 survivors to further shape the processes and safeguards we put in place to ensure all people  
 21 in our care are safe.

22 We are committed to hearing from all those who suffered abuse in our care and we  
 23 encourage you to make contact. Information on our redress process can be found on our  
 24 website. Kua takoto te mānuka i ngā purapura ora, mā mātou o te Hāhi e tauawhi te wero  
 25 kua whārikihia. Tēnā tātou katoa.

26 **CHAIR:** Tēnā koe Reverend Tautari.

27 **MS DEW:** Thank you. Look at this point I don't have any questions for Reverend. I know that  
 28 the Commission and Counsel Assisting and also the Church and College are keen to get  
 29 into the talanoa, and to have questions asked of them. So the Church and College are ready  
 30 to call forward the other witnesses for the first panel today, the looking back panel. So I'm  
 31 going to invite Etuini Talakai --

32 **CHAIR:** Not just yet. I think the plan is, and I'll let Ms Sharkey do this. She'd like to ask --

33 **MS DEW:** Sorry, I appreciate sorry, I may have jumped ahead.

34 **CHAIR:** But we're grateful for the enthusiasm.

1 **MS DEW:** Very keen to get on with the talanoa but perhaps just a moment too soon, I'll leave it to  
2 my friend.

3 **CHAIR:** This is the beginning, so I'm going to invite Ms Sharkey to speak to,-- could I just ask  
4 you, what would you like us to call you?

5 **REV TAUTARI:** Tara.

6 **CHAIR:** Good, we'll call you Tara, that makes it a lot easier, thank you so much.

7 **MS SHARKEY:** It can be quite difficult for a Pacific person to address Clergy by their first name  
8 but I'll do my best.

9 **CHAIR:** It's hard for all of us, we're all brought up to be respectful, but if that's what you'd like to  
10 be called we'll honour that.

11 **MS SHARKEY:** Tara, mōrena, thank you. Look we did hear in opening from your counsel  
12 reference to the year 1743, the renewal movement and the Church's stated desire. The  
13 reason why I start there is because we heard reference to that in Dr Longhurst's comments  
14 at the opening ceremony of this faith-based hearing, and he noted that assurances from  
15 Church leaders to do no harm and to do good are nothing new and they are asking for  
16 faith-based organisations to be open, honest and transparent.

17 And in light of your opening statements, I'm just wondering, Tara, whether that is  
18 the spirit in which we are going to meet today in openness, honesty and transparency?

19 **REV TAUTARI:** Kia ora for your question, Ms Sharkey. I do listen to Dr Longhurst and heard  
20 the challenge that he presented to us and have spoken with others since then and reflected  
21 on the need for the Church to move beyond platitudes to demonstrable action, and so we  
22 come here in the spirit of honesty, openness and transparency to share and to learn together,  
23 but most importantly to hold ourselves accountable to survivors.

24 **MS SHARKEY:** Kia ora. So just confirming some comments, Reverend Tautari, in your  
25 statement that the Methodist Church of New Zealand is completely autonomous, so no  
26 external Methodist Church or any structure has any control or governance over any aspect  
27 of the Methodist Church of New Zealand.

28 **REV TAUTARI:** That is correct.

29 **MS SHARKEY:** I just want to bring up on Trial Director a document. It talks about a 1983  
30 power sharing workshop, and we're talking about Te Tiriti here, you'll see something  
31 magically appear on the screen in front of you -- well, it should. Power sharing workshop  
32 in Conference that results in the Methodist Church --

33 **CHAIR:** It's not up yet, Ms Sharkey, just give us a little moment.

1 **MS SHARKEY:** So the Methodist Church became a bicultural Church and it was to honour and  
2 apply Te Tiriti with an awareness that a number of Wesleyan missionaries were significant,  
3 you say in your statement amongst those who urged Māori to sign Te Tiriti.

4 This is a different structure to many other organisations we've seen and I just  
5 wanted to ask you if you could tell us or summarise what a bicultural Church looks like in  
6 operation. How do you see that expressed and demonstrated in your governance structures?

7 **REV TAUTARI:** For the Methodist Church of Aotearoa New Zealand, it is expressed in the way  
8 in which we take decisions together at every single level of governance, where you have  
9 taha Māori and tauwiwi taking decisions by consensus in the first instance. So nothing can  
10 be done or decided upon without the agreement of the two partners. And that is from rohe  
11 to synod to our highest governance levels which include, as was mentioned by Ms Dew, the  
12 Conference which is our ultimate governing body, number one.

13 Secondly, it takes expression through our own Trinity Theological College which  
14 has developed a theological curriculum for ministerial formation and lay formation that is  
15 embedded in the whenua here in Aotearoa, and takes cognisance of tikanga and Pasifika.  
16 And you will see that when you look at the curriculum and you have recourse to see that we  
17 have, for example, a full Moana Studies strand which is one of its only kind in Aotearoa  
18 today. Those are just two examples.

19 **MS SHARKEY:** Right, so this happens in 1983. Why do you think it took that period of time for  
20 the Church to make that, to take that step of becoming bicultural?

21 **REV TAUTARI:** Why did it take from the beginning to 1983?

22 **MS SHARKEY:** Was it leadership in earlier years? What really made the Methodist Church of  
23 New Zealand take that very, I guess in today's term, progressive, very strong step forward  
24 to make it a partnership with Māori?

25 **REV TAUTARI:** It took a long time because the Church did not understand what it meant to be  
26 partners, to share power, to share power in very real and tangible ways; for example,  
27 resource sharing, decision-making. These in former times were held by a small group of  
28 leadership that was largely patriarchal. And so our journey is just that, a journey of  
29 becoming more than that so we can live out a faith that is real here.

30 **MS SHARKEY:** Thank you, Reverend Tautari, we're just moving on now to the different care  
31 settings, as we heard before, three children's homes which we are looking at this morning  
32 and later Wesley College. There is an acknowledgment in one of your statements that  
33 while there were complex and interrelated societal attitudes in play and State support based

1           impediments, the Church acknowledges that it carried the primary responsibility.

2           Remember that statement? We can bring it up if you'd like to.

3   **REV TAUTARI:** I remember it.

4   **MS SHARKEY:** I just wanted to ask about that first part, "complex and interrelated societal  
5           attitudes". What were those?

6   **REV TAUTARI:** In terms of the children's homes?

7   **MS SHARKEY:** Yes.

8   **REV TAUTARI:** I think we, in those times, were charged with the responsibility of care for  
9           children who themselves were coming from dysfunctional families, and this  
10          dysfunctionality has different reasons. And so when in our care we were dealing with very  
11          complex situations, and I don't think the Church understood that, the complexity of that. It  
12          had a one size fits all approach that did not allow it to look at children and care for them in  
13          a way that they should have been cared for.

14   **MS SHARKEY:** And you also reference "State support based impediments". Could I ask what  
15          those-,- what do you mean by that, "State support- -based impediments"?

16   **REV TAUTARI:** I think the State itself was unhelpful.

17   **MS SHARKEY:** In what ways?

18   **REV TAUTARI:** In its structure, in the way that it had itself deemed or designed a structure that  
19          did not allow for the complexity of children coming into their care, and once again they had  
20          a "one size fits all" approach. There was, from what I can see, very little monitoring and  
21          oversight and this contributed to the abuse and the impunity of people's actions.

22   **MS SHARKEY:** Okay, so from the documents we see that there wasn't much involvement from  
23          the State once a child was placed.

24   **REV TAUTARI:** Exactly.

25   **MS SHARKEY:** And then there's also reference to the funding, the funding that was primarily  
26          responsible by the Methodist Church of New Zealand. So was there inadequacy in the  
27          funding from the State?

28   **REV TAUTARI:** There was, it was -- very much so.

29   **CHAIR:** Can I just ask about that. It struck me when I was reading some of the documents that  
30          there seemed to be almost -- that the State was almost invisible in the earlier days of the  
31          care. Is that a right impression that I've got?

32   **REV TAUTARI:** Yes, I think that's a fair assessment. I think the State was -- and this is just my  
33          opinion -- the State was very clear about the need to move people along.

34   **CHAIR:** Through the process?

- 1 **REV TAUTARI:** Through the process, and to tick a box and then that was that.
- 2 **CHAIR:** So did that mean that the Church was largely cut adrift to manage the way that it dealt  
3 with these children etc, is that right? I appreciate you're talking from an historic point of  
4 view when you weren't there, so only comment if you can.
- 5 **REV TAUTARI:** Yes, I believe the Church was cut adrift, to a certain degree. Yes, I think that's  
6 a fair assessment.
- 7 **COMMISSIONER ERUETI:** It's the children who are adrift, aren't they, it's not just the Church,  
8 it's that the children are there without the tamariki that are cut adrift essentially without the  
9 oversight of the State.
- 10 **REV TAUTARI:** Yes, I think you're exactly right, Commissioner, because the price that is paid is  
11 always the children, they pay the price of these decisions and this type of structure and the  
12 lack of rigour when it came to monitoring and oversight, from both the Church and from  
13 State.
- 14 **MS SHARKEY:** And in some of the documents there were attempts by the Church to contact the  
15 State and let them know about the issues that you were facing, or the struggles and that you  
16 needed that assistance.
- 17 **REV TAUTARI:** Yes, this was identified as well. I mean there are, as you say, there were  
18 attempts made to reach out to get the support that was needed, and unfortunately that didn't  
19 always work in the way that would have been most helpful.
- 20 **MS SHARKEY:** Thank you. We're just going to now move along, unless the Commissioners had  
21 any further questions. I see Commissioner Erueti is thinking about anything?  
22 Commissioner, no?
- 23 **COMMISSIONER ALOFIVAE:** Just while he's thinking, malo le soifua ma le lagi mamā  
24 Fa'atalofa atu i lau susuga i le fa'afeagaiga. Reverend Tautari. (Greetings to your good  
25 health and wellbeing. A warm welcome to the reverend).
- 26 **REV TAUTARI:** Tēnā koe.
- 27 **COMMISSIONER ALOFIVAE:** Even back in the early days in terms of the Church, was there a  
28 deliberate planning by the Church around how you would care and nurture for these  
29 children that were coming into your --
- 30 **REV TAUTARI:** Not centrally, each of the homes had its own governance structure, and even  
31 though there were requirements to Conference, there wouldn't have been the intention to  
32 really drill down and have a comprehensive consolidated oversight right across the board.
- 33 **COMMISSIONER ALOFIVAE:** Would it be fair to say then that perhaps the Church also saw  
34 this as a form of revenue?

1 **REV TAUTARI:** Yes, I believe you can say that. I think there were other variable -- I mean there  
2 are other things to be included in that, but that would definitely be one.

3 **COMMISSIONER ERUETI:** I haven't had an opportunity to think about the question. Tēnā koe  
4 whaea, e mihi ana ki a koe me tō kōrero mai i takoha mai ki mua i te aroaro o te Kōmihana,  
5 nau mai, nau mai. We'll probably come back to this later, but it's on the question of  
6 governance, to see in '83 that strong commitment to biculturalism.

7 But the question that we always have is to what extent is that reflected in the  
8 governance itself in terms of representation by Māori, by Tongan, Samoan, given the large  
9 numbers within the kura and that are impacted by the other services that are provided by the  
10 faith. You said that it was very patriarchal and small. Has that changed over time?

11 **REV TAUTARI:** Yes, it has. It has changed because primarily the Church put a stake in the sand  
12 and said we want to shift now and we want to be seen to demonstrate what that means  
13 representationally. So for example, we refer to our Council of Conference which is one of  
14 our supreme visioning bodies, and there you have equal numbers of both Māori and tauwiwi.  
15 And this sees itself throughout the way in which we take decisions, the way we make  
16 connectional appointments, it's the same thing. We have Māori and tauwiwi represented  
17 equally.

18 So saying, though, it's important to know that I am the first Māori General Secretary  
19 in the history of the Church and we -- this year we celebrate 200 years of Methodism in  
20 Aotearoa and I think that's significant.

21 However, I would say that women in the Church and Māori women and tauwiwi  
22 women are very well represented in our decision-making bodies.

23 **COMMISSIONER ERUETI:** So if we start with -- it seems that the Conference is the governing  
24 body. To what extent are Māori and Pasifika reflected on that governing body?

25 **REV TAUTARI:** In the same way, is that there are no decisions taken at Conference without the  
26 agreement of te taha Māori and with tauwiwi. So they --

27 **COMMISSIONER ERUETI:** Sorry, I don't mean to interrupt, I'm just trying to get to the nub of  
28 it. Are there 10 members on that ward or more?

29 **REV TAUTARI:** For example, our Conference is made up of representatives from all over the  
30 country, from the parishes, synods, Clergy, laity. And we will gather in November, there  
31 will be approximately 300 of us, but for us it's the not necessarily the numbers, it's about  
32 the power sharing around decision-making. So if you have, for example -- I just pull this  
33 out of the air -- 20 tauwiwi people and three taha Māori, the decision-making is still the

1 same. Nothing will be decided until you have the agreement of both. It is not numerical  
2 like that.

3 **COMMISSIONER ERUETI:** Okay, I appreciate that. And so is there no governance body in  
4 addition to the Conference for making decisions?

5 **REV TAUTARI:** Yes, Council of Conference.

6 **COMMISSIONER ERUETI:** Okay, so Council of Conference, how many members?

7 **REV TAUTARI:** 10 Māori and 10 tauwiwi.

8 **COMMISSIONER ERUETI:** So 20 in total.

9 **REV TAUTARI:** Yes.

10 **COMMISSIONER ERUETI:** 10 Māori and 10 tauwiwi. So for tauwiwi Pasifika, what are the  
11 numbers of the Pasifika represented within that governing body?

12 **REV TAUTARI:** It fluctuates depending on who is nominated from the tauwiwi group. So it can  
13 be anywhere between half Pasifika, but it really changes according to who is nominated and  
14 the group is nominated every year.

15 **COMMISSIONER ERUETI:** So currently what's the composition of tauwiwi?

16 **CHAIR:** Do you want to get back to us on that?

17 **REV TAUTARI:** Okay, I will come back with a hard and fast answer.

18 **COMMISSIONER ERUETI:** If we could come to the kura itself just briefly. Again, the  
19 composition there in the Board of Trustees or the School Board I think they're called now,  
20 in terms of Māori and Pasifika, do you know the numbers there?

21 **REV TAUTARI:** No, I mean I will get that detail for you. But I would say that taha Māori is  
22 represented as are Pasifika on the board, but I will need to get you the specific numbers.

23 **COMMISSIONER ERUETI:** Tēnā koe, thank you.

24 **COMMISSIONER GIBSON:** Can I go back to the children as revenue, a potential source of  
25 revenue. We've heard from survivors who allege that money changed hands for them to  
26 leave the children's homes to go to people who were otherwise not vetted or had already  
27 been flagged for being potential abusers. Are you aware of that?

28 **REV TAUTARI:** I have heard those survivor statements and their experiences. I'm not aware of  
29 that in the way you are describing it in the Methodist Church.

30 **COMMISSIONER GIBSON:** I think it would be useful to know the downstream effects of some  
31 of these decisions was amongst the most horrific we've heard across the Inquiry.

32 **REV TAUTARI:** I agree with you. We, without naming names because -- we had come to a  
33 resolution of a redress claim and part of that was acknowledging that the money we had  
34 received in the years this survivor had been in the care of the Church had to be paid back.

1 And while we couldn't calculate that to the nth degree, we were careful to acknowledge that  
2 with a payment, and accepted the principle around that.

3 **COMMISSIONER GIBSON:** Thank you. I think the impacts of some of these decisions really  
4 impacted on more families than those of the children that were just taken into care and left  
5 care, thanks.

6 **MS SHARKEY:** Reverend Tautari, I'm just moving along to survivor voice. You had  
7 acknowledged Ms M earlier. I just had a few questions around that. We've received some  
8 documents this morning from your counsel that I would like to discuss. I'm not sure  
9 whether you have those documents in front of you because they won't be in our Trial  
10 Director, we just received them this morning.

11 **REV TAUTARI:** Ka pai, it's okay.

12 **CHAIR:** Just looking at the top one, I note that there are lots of names of people in here that we  
13 haven't had a chance to redact or to get permission to use, so if everybody could take  
14 extreme caution in not -- and I'm sure you will Tara -- not to name names here.

15 The other thing is we need a Word version copy for Commissioner Gibson. Is that  
16 available to be sent to him?

17 **MS HARKESS:** They're quite old documents from the 1980s so we can see what we can do to get  
18 an alternative, but we don't have one at the moment.

19 **CHAIR:** All right, if you can see to that that would be helpful thank you. And so that  
20 means -- and it's important for the public as well, that anything that is referred to is read out  
21 as far as it can be safeguarding the identity, so if either of you are referring to parts of it, if  
22 you could read out the whole sentence or the whole paragraph that you're referring to.

23 **MS SHARKEY:** Reverend Tautari, I just have some questions around the documents we've  
24 received and really where I start is the attitude by a Reverend towards what happened to  
25 Ms M and her experience, and I'm looking at the page that has number 3 at the top. And  
26 some of the comments that -- it seems to be an extract from a letter to the Reverend  
27 Superintendent of that district from another Reverend. On the second paragraph it says:

28 "Now the vexed question of whether or not -- this Reverend has relieved his  
29 sexual frustration through incest with the adopted daughter."

30 And Reverend Tautari, just looking at that comment and how this Reverend has  
31 described that experience of Ms M, who was sexually abused by this minister, yet it being  
32 referred to by this particular Reverend as something quite flippant. Can I just get your  
33 response in relation to that?

1 **REV TAUTARI:** I think it's disgusting. I think it's abhorrent. I think that this could even be put  
2 in a letter shows you the degree of freedom people felt to write like this and to have it  
3 distributed throughout the Church, to key connectional leaders.

4 **MS SHARKEY:** Then there's another comment towards the end of the page and it says:

5 "Thinking over the possible legal ramifications of the Church knowing and not  
6 telling, I doubt whether there would be any. If this girl is having counselling for whatever  
7 reason, then I think they will work out whether there is anything to tell and I don't think for  
8 one moment that the Church bears any responsibility to do this."

9 Reverend Tautari, it looks to be a complete disregard, as you said before, of this  
10 survivor's experience and a desire to, would you say, protect the reputation of the Church?

11 **REV TAUTARI:** Yes, completely. It was all about protecting the reputation of the Church and  
12 also of powerful people in the Church, powerful people being Clergy.

13 **MS SHARKEY:** And in this particular situation -- this was 1989 -- and that Reverend continues  
14 to foster care for children, it's the survivor's experience. What are your comments in  
15 response to that when the Church knew in 1989?

16 **REV TAUTARI:** My comments are that the Church was complicit in enabling this abuse to  
17 continue, that it sent a message that Clergy could behave in this way and get away with it.  
18 And that it sent a message to women that they were not safe, even in our most sacred  
19 spaces.

20 **MS SHARKEY:** Were the Methodist Church aware that there were Ministers, Reverends who  
21 were fostering children in this situation?

22 **REV TAUTARI:** Can I just check, Ms Sharkey, when you say was the Church aware, do you  
23 mean --

24 **MS SHARKEY:** Were Conference aware, were senior leadership aware that some of the  
25 Reverends were also looking after children, foster children?

26 **REV TAUTARI:** No, Conference wasn't aware, Conference wasn't aware.

27 **MS SHARKEY:** Is that something they should have been aware of, what their Reverends were up  
28 to?

29 **REV TAUTARI:** Yes, Conference should have been aware of what its Reverends were up to.

30 **MS SHARKEY:** And in that given Conference wasn't aware, there would have been no  
31 monitoring or oversight of those Ministers, those Reverends who were providing foster care  
32 for children?

33 **REV TAUTARI:** No.

34 **MS SHARKEY:** And whose responsibility is that? Where does the fault lie in that?

1 **REV TAUTARI:** I've thought about this. I've thought about it because, especially in reflecting on  
2 our own bicultural journey that we came from and have come from since 1983. What is  
3 apparent to me in my reading of the situation is that you had a very small group of key  
4 Church leaders taking decisions, sometimes disclosing, or a lot of times, how do you say,  
5 covering up, covering up the behaviour of Clergy and not sharing, not being transparent so  
6 that the whole Church could understand and know what was happening and therefore have  
7 a say in the protection of people.

8 **MS SHARKEY:** Right, yes. So in terms of Ms M and the failure to keep her safe, it is both  
9 acknowledged that not only did the Reverend bear that responsibility, but the Church, in not  
10 knowing what the Reverend was up to, not knowing that he was caring for children at the  
11 time.

12 **REV TAUTARI:** No.

13 **MS SHARKEY:** Sorry, were you going to carry on? No, that's it? Okay.

14 So just coming along to another theme we've got, Reverend Tautari, which is in  
15 relation to records and record-keeping.

16 **COMMISSIONER ALOFIVAE:** Ms Sharkey, can I just ask a question before you move on  
17 from that.

18 **MS SHARKEY:** Yes, you may.

19 **COMMISSIONER ALOFIVAE:** Reverend Tautari, so at that time in 1989 the Church did not  
20 have any safeguarding policies at that point?

21 **REV TAUTARI:** Not nationally, no.

22 **COMMISSIONER ALOFIVAE:** But at the regional level, or I think you said the synod level,  
23 would there have been an expectation that behaviour like this would not have been  
24 tolerated?

25 **REV TAUTARI:** Yes, very much so. And this is why I reflected on when a very small group of  
26 people are holding the power around decision-making in such a way as to exclude others  
27 from that and from the common reflection around that, then people can act with impunity.

28 **COMMISSIONER ALOFIVAE:** Thank you.

29 **MS SHARKEY:** Coming along to records and record-keeping, we can bring up the documents.  
30 I'll describe it as best I can, but we're looking at a situation where for a survivor, upon  
31 referral of a complaint from the Confidential Listening and Assistance Service, the  
32 Executive Director for the Church responded confirming that their records from the 1960s  
33 and 1970s were sparse. Do you know why that was?

1 **REV TAUTARI:** No, not in its totality I don't. I do know that from the document I'm seeing  
2 there that some of the records were lost during the earthquakes, but that doesn't actually  
3 address the question of why they were sparse in the first place.

4 From what I have seen as I've had to access the records from our churches and send  
5 them to survivors who come forward to us, there aren't very many documents. Sometimes  
6 a person can have two pieces of paper that constitutes a time in care. And many survivors  
7 who I've spoken with, this is a particular grievance with them, because their lives, of  
8 course, were so much more than two bits of paper. But that's all I could say looking back.

9 **MS SHARKEY:** And we too have seen the information that in the Christchurch earthquakes a lot  
10 of documents were destroyed. That was in 2011, so it doesn't explain why, I guess why  
11 weren't those records digitised or put on to some kind of electronic disk or something to  
12 save. Was it that it wasn't seen as that much of a priority?

13 **REV TAUTARI:** Yes, that would be correct.

14 **MS SHARKEY:** And so in terms of the records that you do have now, is the Church beginning to  
15 future-proof records, so natural events?

16 **REV TAUTARI:** By digitising them?

17 **MS SHARKEY:** By ensuring that the records will be safe from natural events.

18 **REV TAUTARI:** Yes.

19 **MS SHARKEY:** In what way, what's being done now?

20 **REV TAUTARI:** So one of the things that we have recently been in discussion with is about  
21 digitising, as a result of the earthquake which very clearly showed our vulnerability in this  
22 area. We are engaged in developing a project for digitisation around that.

23 **MS SHARKEY:** And is that work starting now, or has started or where are things at with that?

24 **REV TAUTARI:** We have just recently employed new archivists and we are in discussion. Like  
25 they've just started a couple of weeks ago, so it is very new.

26 **CHAIR:** Before we leave that, just the question of survivors' reactions to the, sparse seems to be  
27 an inadequate word, but the real lack of records, just from their perspective you recognise  
28 that they have particular grievances about that, and I think we should name it. What, in  
29 your view, is the pain and hurt that-- what causes the pain and hurt of survivors when they  
30 know that these records weren't kept, what is it about that that is so painful?

31 **REV TAUTARI:** I'm not sure, because -- I mean I think each survivor is different. But I think at  
32 its heart there is a question about identity.

33 **CHAIR:** And value?

1 **REV TAUTARI:** And value, and believing that your experience means more than what you are  
2 seeing on a paper, and that that needs or should have been reflected in these things.

3 **CHAIR:** I think you're right, if I might say so from our experience, I think it's important to name  
4 those particular hurts, that mamae that is felt and why a piece of paper, or the lack of a  
5 piece of paper, is so important, so thank you for that.

6 **MS SHARKEY:** Because we have that statement from Cooper Legal that mentions all -- quite a  
7 number of survivors. And in respect of MA, there were no records and MF, no records  
8 found at all. And we've heard from survivors that this is how they piece together as well  
9 parts of their life, and to know where they were at which particular times and what their life  
10 might have been like. So for those survivors, having no records, detrimental impact. And  
11 you'd agree with that?

12 **REV TAUTARI:** Yes.

13 **MS SHARKEY:** In respect of the survivor that we were just briefly discussing before, there was  
14 an e-mail in the documents, and we can bring it up if you need to, but there was a question  
15 about whether there were staff records, and the e-mail says the comment, and I quote:

16 "Unfortunately no staff records were kept and it is difficult to find out the names of  
17 the individuals who worked at the home."

18 Why would no staff records be kept?

19 **REV TAUTARI:** I don't know, Ms Sharkey. I can only imagine and speculate that at that time it  
20 wasn't considered a necessary practice.

21 **MS SHARKEY:** Thank you, Reverend, and I think that acknowledgment does actually assist. In  
22 your statement there is the comment with reference to the Methodist children's homes, "we  
23 do not hold information about disability status."

24 And I just wanted to ask if you know why that was the case. Is that the same?

25 **REV TAUTARI:** Yeah, I think it is the same. I think it wasn't considered necessary knowledge.  
26 I think it wasn't considered a priority to help understand how you might be able to better  
27 deliver care to people who had disabilities.

28 **MS SHARKEY:** Yeah, because you can't identify what support would have been needed and  
29 what was available to these children.

30 **REV TAUTARI:** Exactly, yes.

31 **MS SHARKEY:** And you mentioned in your statement that the Church doesn't hold that  
32 information on disability figures or stats for the Church, but that entities do; so ECE and  
33 missions hold that information, but the Church doesn't. And you said you remain open to a

1 discussion about whether -- would you like me to bring up to the document that refers to  
2 that?

3 **REV TAUTARI:** No, that's fine, I remember.

4 **MS SHARKEY:** You remain open to a discussion about that. What do you mean by that?

5 **REV TAUTARI:** Well, we are learning in this space and so we take our direction from -- a lot of  
6 what we are doing now has come as a result of the work of the Commission. But also  
7 because of the nature of who we are, you know, we are a very small Church and we have  
8 little parishes, often times small membership. And so, you know, when you're trying to roll  
9 out a new policy in our Church, because of the nature of who we are, our very first thing is  
10 to always kōrero about it and do some sharing around that. And that's why I have answered  
11 in that way. So I'm not rushing to say yes we will fix it and that's it. But it's to say yes, we  
12 are open and in our way we will learn from this and move accordingly.

13 **MS SHARKEY:** Thank you Reverend. I don't have any further questions on that topic, I'm  
14 moving along to another one. And I'm just wanting to look at the reporting of abuse and  
15 survivors not being believed, and you had referenced this in your opening comments. MA,  
16 these survivors are in reference to the Cooper Legal statement. Would you like that  
17 brought up?

18 **REV TAUTARI:** Yes please, just the letters sometimes --

19 **MS SHARKEY:** Yes. So MA was beaten and kicked by the house father at Papanui when he  
20 attempted to report he was being sexually abused. MG was sexually abused by an older  
21 boy at Papanui. A female staff member walked in and MG was subsequently strapped by  
22 the house father for the behaviour. She was blamed for the abuse perpetrated on her and  
23 nothing further was done. There is another survivor who was sexually abused and when he  
24 disclosed the abuse to the house parents and a member of Clergy who they had invited to  
25 come and hear the disclosure, he was accused of just doing it for attention and making it up  
26 and nothing further was done about it.

27 And these are just a few of the examples. And here are children trying to get help,  
28 they did report their abuse but they weren't listened to, there was victim-blaming, and  
29 Reverend Tautari, what I'm wanting to do is just to unpack the ways in which these  
30 survivors were failed and invite a discussion about the inadequate supervision, amongst  
31 other things, and the failures of the Church to keep them safe. I can ask you questions, or if  
32 you'd like to reply that's fine.

33 **REV TAUTARI:** I think it's better you are ask me questions.

34 **CHAIR:** There were several aspects of that.

1 **MS SHARKEY:** I'll take you through that. So, as I said, there were survivors that were trying to  
2 get help, they were telling the people who were charged with their care what was happening  
3 to them.

4 So firstly, there was not adequate supervision by the Church, would you agree?

5 **REV TAUTARI:** Yes, I agree.

6 **MS SHARKEY:** The level of monitoring and oversight, there was none?

7 **REV TAUTARI:** Yes, I agree.

8 **MS SHARKEY:** And in terms of some of these staff, or the staff, there was no training in terms  
9 of trauma, especially for children from the backgrounds that they were coming from.  
10 Would you agree with that?

11 **REV TAUTARI:** Yes, I agree there was no training in trauma-informed approaches, for sure.

12 **MS SHARKEY:** And if there had been oversight and safeguarding, if there had been supervision,  
13 some of this abuse could have been prevented.

14 **REV TAUTARI:** I believe so.

15 **MS SHARKEY:** You say in one of your acknowledgments that the Church didn't recognise the  
16 need to have protection policies or procedures in place for children, young people and  
17 vulnerable adults across all its Church-related organisations and/or entities. So there  
18 weren't any mandatory or policies in place back then, right?

19 **REV TAUTARI:** No.

20 **MS SHARKEY:** And just what work is being done on that now?

21 **REV TAUTARI:** I think what I want to say are two things about that. I think the Church had  
22 wanted to -- I mean the Church believed that people should be cared for. What the Church  
23 did not do was ensure they had mechanisms implemented in order to achieve that.

24 And so where we are now is that we are,-- we have some safeguarding in place, but  
25 we are going to Conference in November to talk about, as I say, a national set of policies  
26 and processes that will provide a comprehensive coverage for the Church and its related  
27 institutions when it comes to the issue of safeguarding.

28 **MS SHARKEY:** Okay.

29 **CHAIR:** If I can ask about that, and I don't have the document in front of me unfortunately, but in  
30 one of the briefing papers I notice that the Church did have,-- when I say the Church  
31 I mean -- I'm not sure which bit because I can't recall, but the Church did have very good  
32 policies about, for example, from memory doing all it could to ensure that children stayed  
33 with the family in the first place, that was one of the policies. I don't know, Ms Sharkey, if

1           you can recall which one that was, but there's a series of them in one of the responses to  
2           Notice to Produce.

3   **MS SHARKEY:** Yes.

4   **CHAIR:** There were good policies, they were ones that seemed to me to say that's good.

5   **REV TAUTARI:** I agree with you completely. And I think it goes back to what I heard in  
6           survivor statements. You can have all the policies you want, but unless they are  
7           implemented in such a way that you can then monitor them and ensure the outcomes you  
8           are expecting, then they become rather empty words.

9   **CHAIR:** Thank you, and that's the point, isn't it, yeah, that you can have whatever, develop  
10          whatever policies you like, but it's the turning them into action, I think you said that right at  
11          the beginning really, implementing them well. So thank you for acknowledging that.

12   **REV TAUTARI:** I just wanted to share one thing because I think it points to also our Treaty  
13          partnership, our bicultural partnership. We had hoped to take to Conference a whole suite  
14          of safeguarding policies and processes and to announce it as a done deal. And then our  
15          partner came to us and said this is not good enough, we actually need something that takes  
16          cognisance of this whenua, an understanding of tikanga and who we are. And so therefore  
17          we had to say okay, we now need to go back and kōrero more together.

18                 And I think this shows two things: Number one, where the Church wants to move  
19          very quickly, is that it can't always do that. Being in partnership takes time and it means  
20          that you have to proceed with a measured consideration of what you are trying to do.

21                 So we look forward to really having safeguarding then that really has the essence  
22          within it of Māori, Pasifika, and that they can see themselves in it and understand that they  
23          are part of what we are trying to achieve.

24   **COMMISSIONER ALOFIVAE:** Thank you, Reverend, that was actually going to be my  
25          question around the difference in the world views and you've just answered that beautifully,  
26          thank you.

27                 But can I just go back to the looking back. Even in the absence of the policies in  
28          terms of your own theology, both social and doctrinal, there would have been an  
29          expectation at least around what love looked like in terms of caring for the children.

30   **REV TAUTARI:** Yes, because we hold to do no harm, we hold to reflecting love and the  
31          integrity of the people, and especially our young children and people throughout the  
32          Church. This is what we hold to, this is true. So theologically, doctrinally it is there. What  
33          we have failed in is matching that belief with the practical lived reality of how that then is  
34          experienced and nurtured in a very real and careful way.

1 **COMMISSIONER ALOFIVAE:** Fa'afetai.

2 **MS SHARKEY:** Reverend Tautari, just to segue us into the next part of this discussion, because  
3 we've got 15 minutes, I just want to bring in the survivor voice. It's not up on my screen  
4 yet but it's coming. He says:

5 "We need to learn the lesson that you can't just think that people are fundamentally  
6 good. For example, just because a person has a belief in a God that makes them somehow  
7 better and clever enough or smart enough to be put in a position of responsibility. You  
8 can't put children in the care of someone just because you think they're good. You can't  
9 take a damaged child, even if it's parents being split up, and throw them into this ball pit  
10 and they're just mashing altogether and hope it's the going to be okay. The damage that's  
11 been caused to some of these kids, they're going to then inflict this damage on other kids in  
12 the same way. We're not caring for them. We can't rely on faith being the thing that makes  
13 you a good or clever person. We've got to change this thinking when allowing people to  
14 care for young children. There has to be better training and vetting."

15 I just had to read that into evidence. So this particular survivor is talking about the  
16 training and the vetting, but also that because someone is a Reverend or a Minister or a  
17 member of Clergy you can't just assume that they're good.

18 What measures then do the Church take to ensure that someone has the character,  
19 the good character, how do you make sure that children are going to be safe? Firstly,  
20 would you agree with the survivor and what they're saying?

21 **REV TAUTARI:** Yes, I agree. I agree wholeheartedly. It was interesting at the beginning of the  
22 conversation when you brought up "I feel we should use your title because" -- and my name  
23 is Tara. So I think this is something that is here in this space right now.

24 But the measures we take to ensure that there's a good character, apart from Police  
25 vetting, is that we have a year of discernment to really look at how people who are wanting  
26 to enter into Ministry and to look at their suitability around this. I do recall we had,  
27 listening to one of the survivors earlier on, who had said or recommended, I think,  
28 psychometric testing. I don't know what that is, but it seemed like it might be something to  
29 explore.

30 The thing is that, you know, when we're dealing with Māori and Pasifika people,  
31 and we talk about character, what that means might be different from Pākehā. So we can't  
32 just have this broad stroke or this one understanding.

33 But what it does mean, I believe for the Church, is that they need to engage in the  
34 discussion around safeguarding and around what this means in terms of our Ministers and

1 lay people who will be engaged in that space, and ascertaining what character means then  
2 and how that is married alongside our theological and doctrinal beliefs, as have been  
3 referred to. And this is a process. I'm not too sure if that's what -

4 **MS SHARKEY:** Yes, we will continue because I just want to bring in -- we're not naming this  
5 particular survivor, but in this situation this Reverend had fostered a survivor but no-one is  
6 able to locate the Reverend's application to be a foster carer, which should have come with  
7 references. There is a presumption by the archivist that it was because this Reverend was  
8 known personally to the mission and to the sister who was also the resident social worker.

9 So this Reverend didn't have to go through any of the vetting or the checks before  
10 becoming a foster parent, had no role in the homes, didn't live there, but given access to  
11 children and able to become a foster carer. I just wanted to ask, Reverend Tautari, your  
12 response to that in respect of the failings.

13 **REV TAUTARI:** I agree with the survivor statement that you had just read before. This is a  
14 prime example of where we took it for granted that this person was good because the  
15 person was known. And so therefore due diligence is put to the side because of so-called  
16 personal knowledge and also a deference to their standing and status. This is clear from  
17 this reading here.

18 **MS SHARKEY:** I think also the social worker who was a sister and the blurred, very blurred  
19 lines there in terms of that relationship, her knowledge of this Reverend and that  
20 assumption that he's a minister, he's a good person and then letting the children go.

21 **REV TAUTARI:** Exactly.

22 **CHAIR:** Could I just explore this notion of standing and status. I think you referred to it before,  
23 we talk about the deference to hierarchies and the like. One of the big lessons that we have  
24 been learning in the course of this Inquiry is the misuse of power. So starting with the  
25 assumption of power, which is done, and I'm not just talking here about faith-based  
26 organisations, I'm talking about right across society in relation to children and vulnerable  
27 people.

28 So first, I think we're building a picture here through your very frank answers, that  
29 we've got an assumption, first of all, that because somebody is a person of faith that they  
30 are somehow assumed to be good, and then also an assumption that because they are of  
31 Clergy or have a role in the Church, they have a certain power to which deference is given.  
32 Are you with me so far?

33 **REV TAUTARI:** Yes, I'm with you.

1 **CHAIR:** So again naming it, putting it out there and saying what it clearly is. Do you agree that  
2 people in power run the very real risk of being in a position where they can abuse that  
3 power because of the power they hold?

4 **REV TAUTARI:** Yes, I agree with it totally. I remember I was in my 20s before I ever chose to  
5 question a doctor.

6 **CHAIR:** Yes.

7 **REV TAUTARI:** Because I just deferred to a doctor's -- I would never ask any questions. Even  
8 now with our lawyers, and they're wonderful people, I defer to them because they have this  
9 expertise. And yet I will still question now because I have a great understanding of my  
10 own agency, and I can only imagine -- I can't imagine what it must have been like to have  
11 no agency and to be totally at the power, or at the --

12 **CHAIR:** At the mercy.

13 **REV TAUTARI:** At the mercy of this type of power that was given simply because of some  
14 letters in front of your name.

15 **CHAIR:** Thank you.

16 **MS SHARKEY:** Reverend Tautari, we heard mention about the Commission, 1959, the  
17 Methodist Conference appointed a Commission to examine the Church's practice of care of  
18 children. And the Commission reported to the Methodist Conference in 1961, and there  
19 were some recommendations made, including ensuring that those providing care for  
20 children were adequately trained and resourced. And the resolution adopted by Conference  
21 accepted the recommendations in principle. And as we heard, those changes weren't  
22 implemented and there wasn't an all of Church approach, as we heard. Why was that?

23 **REV TAUTARI:** I'm not entirely sure. I did see that there was a reflection on there not being  
24 resources to do that. But at the end of the day, it is primarily down to the willingness to  
25 make something happen. Conference had spoken. Conference was clear. Conference  
26 believed that something should be done. And yet it didn't happen. And I can only assume  
27 that there was a blockage somewhere, an obstacle at some level of decision-making that  
28 prevented that from happening.

29 **MS SHARKEY:** Okay, I just want to understand the role of the Church and the State in this.  
30 Because I think I had read consultation proposed in Wellington with government  
31 departments but that didn't happen, and at the time the Church was almost fully funding its  
32 care services with limited input from the State. So was that part of the reason why you  
33 couldn't implement those recommendations?

1 **REV TAUTARI:** Yes, it's part of the reason, but I mean is that a reason? Is that a reason  
2 actually? If you make it your priority you make it happen.

3 **MS SHARKEY:** So you're taking responsibility --

4 **REV TAUTARI:** Yes, yes.

5 **MS SHARKEY:** -- for what the Church failed to do?

6 **REV TAUTARI:** Very much so, that was a failure on our part. We had a window of opportunity  
7 to make a difference and that did not happen and that was our failure.

8 **MS SHARKEY:** Right, and then I guess separate to that is the State sending you children to care  
9 for you about not providing adequate funding and resourcing to do that?

10 **REV TAUTARI:** Exactly. This is clear. The State were happy to pass on the responsibility  
11 without the necessary supports in place.

12 **MS SHARKEY:** Madam Chair, my next part actually goes into part of the redress which I can  
13 save for this afternoon, and if there are no further questions we might stop there.

14 **CHAIR:** I'll just check with Commissioners.

15 **COMMISSIONER ERUETI:** Tēnā koe Ms Sharkey, I did want to ask about the Wellington  
16 community action, the services provided there. I'm not sure, will there be an opportunity to  
17 talk about that later today or is now a good time to ask?

18 **MS SHARKEY:** Now is a good time.

19 **COMMISSIONER ERUETI:** Whaea, I did find the data about the foster care services that were  
20 provided by this entity, and I just wonder if you could -- it does seem that it's quite  
21 extensive, the type of foster care services that are currently being provided by the Wesley  
22 Community Action Group based in Wellington. Is that a fair assessment?

23 **REV TAUTARI:** Yes, that's a fair assessment.

24 **COMMISSIONER ERUETI:** I wondered about, because we're hearing this testimony about the  
25 homes that have since closed, but of course the Church is still quite closely involved  
26 through this entity and the provision of foster care, and we know from the hearings that  
27 we've had, from the testimony of survivors, about how this remains a site of great  
28 vulnerability for tamariki and rangatahi. So I just wonder if you talk about the checks, we  
29 don't have much time, but I suppose to cut to the chase, in this proposal that is going  
30 to your governance body in November.

31 **REV TAUTARI:** Conference.

32 **COMMISSIONER ERUETI:** Conference, thank you very much, are there checks and balances  
33 there for protecting these -- ensuring that these tamariki are safe in terms of vetting, in

1 terms of monitoring of people, the very kaupapa we've just been talking about for the last  
2 hour and a bit?

3 **REV TAUTARI:** Yes, there are. But what I would say in this particular case, there is already in  
4 place very rigorous safeguards and this is a mission that works closely with community,  
5 with hapū and whānau, that has a co-governance model itself, which means that it is  
6 required an accountability that goes right to the people with whom they work with on the  
7 ground, and are very close in the relationship with the State and with what they do together  
8 in that space.

9 This is a Mission that has built up a history of care in this space and because of that  
10 they have, I believe, a very good record in working with children, which is not to say that  
11 the Conference then leaves them, but they will be part of the safeguarding, but in many  
12 ways we learn from them now because they are already out there working.

13 **COMMISSIONER ERUETI:** Whaea, are they large numbers of Māori and Pasifika tamariki  
14 affected by the service delivery?

15 **REV TAUTARI:** Yes.

16 **COMMISSIONER ERUETI:** Do you have a rough idea of the numbers?

17 **REV TAUTARI:** I will get you the numbers.

18 **COMMISSIONER ERUETI:** When you say co-governance, is it governance with local tāngata  
19 whenua or other providers?

20 **REV TAUTARI:** Yes, with local tāngata whenua.

21 **COMMISSIONER ERUETI:** Ngāti Toa and Te Atiawa, okay, thank you for that. More might  
22 spill out this afternoon, but I appreciate the time, kia ora, thank you.

23 **CHAIR:** Kia ora, I think it's time we all had a cup of tea, so let's take 15 minutes and we'll come  
24 back after that, thank you.

25 **Adjournment from 11.01 am to 11.22 am**