

Witness Name: GRO-A Mr X

Statement No: WITN0157001

Exhibits: WITN0157002- WITN0157022

Dated: 15/03/2021

## ROYAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO ABUSE IN CARE

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WITNESS STATEMENT OF GRO-A Mr X

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

### Introduction

1. My legal name is GRO-A Mr X but I prefer to go by GRO-A Mr X. I grew up believing my name was GRO-A Mr X. I have since found out from a note dated 6 November 1972 on my file that Social Welfare knew my legal name was GRO-A Mr X and recommended telling me my legally registered name and my correct date of birth, but they didn't tell me. [WITN0157002]. This has caused me multiple issues, even recently, in obtaining my birth certificate, passport and licences.
2. I was born on GRO-B 1958. I currently live in Christchurch.
3. My evidence is about the abuse I experienced while growing up and how this has impacted my life.

### Early life

4. My grandparents were my guardians growing up. I lived with them in Auckland. My parents had split up and never wanted us. They were called GRO-B-1 and GRO-B-2. GRO-B-2 is in a dementia home now. Neither of them will give answers to anything. When my parents got divorced, Dad gave custody to my grandparents.
5. My grandparents made sure our house was nicely furnished, so it looked like we had a good family life and everything. There were four of us kids living there, my two sisters and another brother. There was also three of my grandparents' daughters and their son GRO-B who was a handicap. But there were always more than that there – usually about eight to 10 people in the house.
6. Back then as an Island family, things were very violent. At home my grandmother slept with a knife underneath her pillow because of my grandfather, who I called Papa. The violence was quite bad, it was punches and what not. I used to get punched to the floor, kicked in the guts, everything. It was by my grandfather, uncle, father, grandmother.
7. My grandfather was strong. There was one time he had me held up by my throat in the room and someone had to grab me before he choked me to death.
8. My grandfather chased me up the road with a machete once. My aunties called the police because they were afraid, but they didn't say anything. That was the Samoan way, not wanting to damage the Samoan name. My brothers and sisters wouldn't say anything because they didn't know what would happen if they opened their mouth.
9. The police never asked what was going on at home. After the machete incident I was kept in a watch-house with police for a bit. They didn't check if I felt safe at home. No one asked me. Back in those days it was 'Once Were Warriors' anyway. It was normal.
10. Once my father said to me 'if you ever get into trouble again, I'm going to tie you up and run you over'. My father used to visit at my grandfathers and give me a hiding.
11. The worst hidings were from my uncle GRO-B-3 and my grandfather. For me and my brother GRO-B-4 we were confused because it was only us that this was all happening to. Why was it only us? Nobody wanted us. The trouble is we couldn't understand why nobody wanted us as two boys. We're never going to get answers to that.

12. GRO-B-4 and I still remember the days where we had to go to Lion Tavern up the road until we could find someone to buy beers for Papa to bring home, or we had to go and get someone to put bets on the TAB for him. He was too drunk to go himself.
13. It was a horrendous life there. Amongst the violence there was also the sexual abuse from my aunty. She made us do things. I didn't want to be there. I was scared of my grandfather and my uncle GRO-B-3
14. My stepmother GRO-B-5 hated me. I never got along with her. She didn't like us and was nasty. When I wanted to join the army or navy later on, I needed my parental consent. I rang my Dad for this and GRO-B-5 answered and said, 'don't ever ring here again or ask your father to do anything'. So I missed that chance. It might have straightened me up.
15. I was going to school. I went to GRO-B Intermediate. There was an asshole principal there, Mr GRO-B-6. He was racist to the bone. He had a strap or cane for the whites, and another for the Māoris and another one for the Islanders. The one he used for the Māoris and Islanders hurt more. I was expelled from GRO-B Intermediate and sent to GRO-B College in Auckland. I think this may have been Form 2.
16. One time, Uncle GRO-B-3 gave me a good hiding at home and then took me to school. The hiding was because I was supposed to be the head of a gang, but I wasn't and never have been. I turned up to school bandaged. My uncle told GRO-B-6 I was head of the gang and smashed me up on the floor in front of GRO-B-6. GRO-B-6 didn't do anything. It was right in front of him. I couldn't believe it – I had just had the bashing of my life at home and then there was that. I can't understand why GRO-B-6 didn't ring social welfare.
17. I got sick of having no friends because I wasn't allowed friends. We weren't allowed to be children, that is the old Samoan way. When children get old enough, that's it, you work. You don't have a childhood or friends.

#### *Experience of Samoan culture*

18. I didn't speak Samoan at home when I was growing up. Back then at school you weren't allowed to talk your language. If you did, you would get sent to the headmaster and get the cane or some other punishment.

19. At home, you had to respect your elders, and do what the elders said. That was the culture. When you get old enough as a Samoan kid, you do the work. You don't go out and play. You don't go to functions; you clean up afterwards.
20. There was Samoan choir at the local church and things like that. My family was very religious, we were altar boys.
21. As altar boys GRO-B  
4 and I used to think to each other that we would watch our family drink and smoke during the week, then at church suddenly everyone was behaving like angels. The only time I go to church is for a funeral, I don't go to church. I have my faith but church has been a bad experience for me.
22. Father GRO-B was a bad experience – he was a Samoan priest. He did the normal thing Catholic priests do – sexual abuse, he'd pull your ears and slap you around. It was a whole vicious cycle.
23. There was family violence and violence against women. I look at how long it's taken to get to where we are now. Back then it was just 'shush shush'. People can shush all they like but the reality of it is we were being hurt by it. That's part of the Samoan thing, they're very religious and very strict. They do all these church things like choirs - Papa was head of the choir.
24. When other families came around, they would speak Samoan. We were the running boys, anything they needed we would get.

### *Kidnapping*

25. I was kidnapped when I was 11 or 12. It was on TV, the police looking for me and everything.
26. I can't remember who it was who kidnapped me. I didn't know him that well. I had a run I did around the neighbourhood to collect money for work. He offered me money to help him lift something. When I went to help he got in behind me and just about choked me to death. He gagged me and tied me up.
27. I was sexually abused by the kidnapper. As a kid I was scared because the kidnapper said they'd come and kill my brothers and sisters. I was found when the neighbour saw me in the window and called the police. I was tied up. I had moved to the window because I wanted to jump out of it.

28. The kidnapping was never noted in my MSD file. It was a nationwide search, with pictures of me on TV.
29. I brought shame to the family because of what happened with the kidnapping. Nothing was said to me after it. The guy never got charged because I didn't say anything – I was too scared.

### *Running away*

30. I started running away from home. The first time was when I was nine or ten. I just got sick of the bashings and the sexual abuse by my aunty. All the broken bones. The kidnapping also made me want to run away.
31. Nobody ever asked me why I was running away or why I was in trouble. The reason I got into trouble was I had to survive on the street and have food. After I ran away, I got involved with a group of fellas and that was it. I started selling the Star newspaper in Auckland on the corner of Queen Street. I was one of those boys.
32. I can remember after running away one time I had been charged with something. They wanted my father to come to court and he wouldn't. He said no one could control me.
33. I ended up in care because of the running away. They said I was uncontrollable and my parents wouldn't have me because I was a violent person. If you look at my adult record from years ago, you will find there are no assault charges. Nothing like that.
34. My file said I was violent and loud-mouthed. I am not – I have been a bouncer and everything in adult life. I've got no assault record.

### **Ōwairaka Boys' Home**

35. I went to Ōwairaka a number of times. The first time was after a court appearance, I think I was 11 or 12. I was there for six months the third time I went in, which was my longest stay. All up I think I was at Ōwairaka for a year.
36. I think I was made a ward of the state when I was around 12 or 13. I'm not too sure. I had hopes it might be better than being at home. My records show I was admitted to Ōwairaka Boys' Home on 8 December 1971 and committed on 20 January 1972

**[WITN0157003]**

*Arrival / secure*

37. No one asked me officially what ethnicity I was when I arrived. But they knew who was a Māori and who was a Pacific Islander. They never acknowledged our culture or ethnicity in a positive sense.
38. They took me straight to secure when I first got there. It was a jail. You can't get out, there are locked steel doors. The walls were concrete and you had a toilet and sink in your cell. There was a steel bed and a little window. That was it.
39. I think I was in secure for a few days when I first got there. I got taken through the doors and then the police pissed off.
40. The first thing that happened was they stripped me, and I had to put on their clothes. Then, this little black Hitler who I thought was called Wakefield but now see on my file his name is Waetford. He took to me with the strap. That was to teach me a lesson for if I got in trouble by running away or anything. They did that a lot to children arriving in there.
41. They would put you in a cell and tell you the rules – you were not allowed near the windows, there was no yelling and no talking. Once a day you were allowed out of the cell to do physical training (PT). You were never allowed out of the cell otherwise and could only run out to get dinner and breakfast. You might not have a shower for two or three days.
42. At PT you would have two or three housemasters standing there and laughing. We had to run around the asphalt for an hour. They used to run us ragged. Once me and one fella, picked up another fella because we knew what would happen to him for not running. We got dealt to by the staff for helping him.
43. You could hear the beatings from the shower block each time they took someone there.
44. There was no education in secure. We had no books. We weren't allowed anything. We were not told what was going on. The staff would just make sure you were sitting there. There was nothing to do and all you had was yourself. And your brain in your head. Sometimes I used to think I was going crazy. It wasn't just that though, they would drag you out sometimes and give you a hiding.

45. I remember they used to make you clean the toilet in secure with your own toothbrush, and then make you use that toothbrush to clean your teeth.

46. I spent a lot of time in secure, especially when I ran away.

#### *Staff*

47. I can remember some of the staff from Ōwairaka [GRO-B] is one of them [GRO-B] and Wakefield are the staff members I remember the most. They were part of the sexual abuse I experienced. [GRO-B] is also a name to remember. He was a bit of both that fella – physical and sexual abuse. There was a pommy fella at Ōwairaka, I can't remember his name.

48. If you did something wrong or talked back, a group of them would line you up, and the pommy fella and another guy used to kick soccer balls at you. They seemed to do it because it was fun. You weren't allowed to move.

#### *Sexual abuse*

49. For me and so many others I know of, it was the sexual abuse that was the worst. A lot of things happened down in the secure unit. I can still hear the screams and cries from other boys when they'd get taken into the shower block. That's where the abuse happened – in the secure shower unit.

50. Mr [GRO-B-8] was one of the ones who raped me. I can't remember the names of the others.

51. I remember one time it was so painful because they thought it was funny to stick a bottle up my arse and watch me walk around. This was the staff. I can't remember their names. I've shut it away for such a long time. That time was in secure but sexual abuse also happened out of secure.

52. There were two or three staff there when the bottle incident happened. I think [GRO-B-8] was one of them. I can't remember the other two. Wakefield was there for some of the times I was abused.

53. My last time in secure at Ōwairaka, they kept me there for three weeks. The most important impact in my life from this was that I contracted a sexual disease at this time. Staff never got me to see the doctor because questions would have had to be asked about how it happened.

54. They kept me down in secure until I started to get better. They knew I was in pain. Back then though they didn't really give a shit. They saw me as belonging on the floor, I was a coconut. I'm not too sure what sort of disease I got, but I was swollen and it was hard to go to wee and things like that. After two weeks it got better. However as a result of this disease I have never been able to father children.

### *Racism*

55. The racism was another thing. You had the white boys who were treated not too bad. Then you had the Māori who were treated like shit. But then if you were an Islander you were dog shit. They would step all over you. Staff used to tell me nobody wanted me and other things like 'you're useless, you should go and kill yourself'.
56. Don't get me wrong, the Māori were treated like shit. But if you were underneath that, you were absolutely nothing. All we were in their eyes was Pacific Islanders. There were a few of us Islanders there and lots of Māori.
57. At school in the classroom, the white boys would sit at the front, the Māori boys in the middle and the Islanders at the back. They made us sit like that, it was how it was. School was a waste of time because you couldn't hear anything from the back. I learnt never to ask the teacher to repeat anything, because if you did he would come up to you and whack your knuckles with a ruler. Then say, you should be listening and he wasn't going to repeat.
58. We used to have boxing on the weekends. They used to put the big white boys against the weak coloured boys. We had to go into the ring and beat this other person and if we didn't we would get a hiding from the staff. Even if we did it they'd just give us a hiding anyway for fun. I must have been 12 or 13. I wasn't a violent, fighting person. I never have been.
59. Staff would tell you to go and beat other boys up at other times too. I stopped giving other boys a hiding because I could see how scared they were. So I took the hits, I didn't want to do it anymore. I ended up in secure a lot of the time because of all of it. There was no winning for you as a child.



60. Reports in my file say I was bullying other boys – well the reason for that was because we were told to do it. Even to this day I feel sorry for those boys. If I could meet those boys again, I would apologise. Because back then you were made to do it. The things staff would say to you, like 'you're a low life, you should kill yourself, you don't belong to anyone'. It was every day. And you felt like that.
61. After talking to Juliet, my counsellor, she has explained the only reason I was called a bully was because the staff told us to do those things. We had to do it because you damn well knew what would happen to you if you didn't.

*Other punishments and running away*

62. Staff would make you stand on a wooden bucket for punishment. You'd have to stand there for hours and watch out if you fell.
63. That's an example of the kind of punishments staff would do to you as a kid. Let alone being locked up in a cell by yourself and not being able to talk to anyone, with nothing to read or do. You had to put up with all that abuse as well. It does things to a person.
64. There were times when I used to get hidings, I'd say to them just kill me now. I'd had enough.
65. I kept running away from Ōwairaka. I would get caught, get locked up, the same shit. It was easy enough to get out. A group of us always used to run away. We would go anywhere. The first time I ran away, there were two of us. I don't know how but I made it back to my grandparents and had this fella with me. My sister hid us underneath the house, she put blankets down there, fed us and everything.
66. One night someone must have said something. There was drama, the cops and police dogs came around. They didn't catch us that night, I think they got us a week after that. We were down Queen Street selling papers to try to get money for food.
67. Those were the chances you took to run away and hope you don't get caught. But you knew what was going to happen when got taken back. They used to make us pull our pants down and strap you until you wilted, almost to the point of bleeding.
68. Wakefield did it to me every time. He must have lived nearby because when he wasn't on shift, they called him in so he could do the strapping. The cops would

bring you in at 10pm at night and they would call Wakefield and he'd come over there to give the strapping.

69. Sometimes he used a big paddle. When I think about it today I just think Wakefield enjoyed giving pain to boys. Why else would they call him to do it? I know he was one of the major ones in charge.

#### *School*

70. I had a couple of teachers at Ōwairaka. One was a decrepit old fool who didn't give a shit. He'd go outside smoking all the time.

71. I think there were two classrooms. It didn't really matter what age or stage of schooling you were. It wasn't teaching there. I didn't learn anything.

72. I have mentioned the racism I experienced at school in paragraph 54 above.

#### *Social workers*

73. Social workers would say they come and see you, but they didn't. I went from one place to another, and none of us had social workers.

74. Records say we did but the social workers never came to see us. I never met a social worker. They didn't do anything. They came to see other people but not me. This is why I can't understand; how can people like social workers write things like they did in my file when they didn't even see me? They tore a child's life apart.

75. Even when you went to Children's Court, social workers didn't have much to say. I can remember a social worker spoke when I was there. I think I talked to one or two social workers in court, that's when I got sent to Ōwairaka. One told me I was going to be locked up in a boys' home and that I had been made a ward of the state.

76. They couldn't find a placement for me, they only came to see people if they had a foster placement. My brother was locked up at Ōwairaka for months and months. He was in secure for 6 weeks I think. But then all of a sudden, a case manager came and took him out and put him in a foster home. He didn't even know he had a case manager. We were in the system and that was it. The government owned you.

77. There is a report on my file dated 11 April 1972 from T Waetford, saying I was a "sly and cunning individual and could be for some time yet". There was a recommendation that I be given another trial in the community in a foster or family home. [WITN0157004]. I remember Mr Waetford. He was abusive and sadistic. He used to strap you or whack you with the paddle until you would bleed. If you ran away, they would call him in from home to come and physically punish you. He was almost what we would call in those days a "plastic" darker skinned person (we had another name which we won't repeat here), by which I mean he wasn't sympathetic to dark skinned people, even though he had dark skin. I believe he was Māori.

#### *Hospital*

78. I went to hospital when I was in Ōwairaka. My file reflects this was on 1 August 1972. [WITN0157005]. My hip was sore. It got better but I played on it a bit because I felt safe in hospital. A lot of boys tried to get to hospital. No one was hitting me, no one was sexually abusing me. You had nurses who cared about you as a kid. It was the same thing in Hokio when I went to hospital there which I mention below.

79. I didn't feel like I could tell anyone what was happening to me at Ōwairaka while I was in hospital. You knew you'd go straight into the lock up if they heard you told.

#### *Missing boys*

80. There were two boys who went missing at different times at Ōwairaka while I was there. The times it happened, when we woke up and noticed they were no longer there in the morning, we would ask the housemasters where they were.

81. One time I asked the housemaster where the boy had gone, the other time a mate asked and we were both told the same story. We were told a social worker picked them up. When they strip the bed and everything, you know that boy is gone, so you just believe what they say.

82. A few of us started talking and thought it was unusual to pull someone out of bed so early in the morning and have a social worker take them away. We found it a bit strange and confusing because the boys hadn't done anything. We got up at seven in the morning, so when we thought about it, it meant the social worker either came in the night and took them or it was in early hours of morning.

83. I can't say anything more but it didn't make sense to us that the social worker came at that time of day. But that was what we were told and we left it at that. Although we were suspicious because of the timeframes. What social worker is going to come at that time of night or morning?

84. You would usually see police or social workers come and take boys away. But the two who were there when I was, we didn't see anything. They were just gone. Or either locked up down in secure.

#### *Transfer*

85. When I was transferred to Hokio they came in at night time and took me out of my room. They put me in secure that night. They didn't say why. In the morning, they put me in handcuffs and I was transferred to Hokio in the night. I never got told before I was getting transferred. I think I was 13. Some strangers took me on a plane.

86. I don't know why I was shipped out. However I have seen a document dated 18 August 1972 on my file, in which it says that "I am bent on leading an anti-social life" and that I would "benefit from a period of training at Hokio Beach School". There is a handwritten note from the Director-General saying that I had leadership ability and I was a bad influence in the institution. He recommended my admission to Hokio merited priority over those already approved. [WITN0157006] From what it says in my files, I think they couldn't find a placement for me in a foster home. They contemplated sending me to farm school in Feilding, and that I would be suited to it. But nothing like that ever happened.

#### **Hokio Beach School**

87. Hokio used to say the same thing about me, that I was a bully. It was made as a general comment in my files.

#### *Staff*

88. The staff all lived in a village outside the gate to Hokio. I think Mike Doolan was the headmaster when I was there. I think GRO-B-9 and Gardiner lived in town, Ansell was in the village.

89. There was a lot of physical abuse by the staff at Hokio. [GRO-B-9] used to smack me round the head and what not. He liked being a big man. There was also Zygadlo, another staff member. He was violent towards me and sexually abused me. Once when I was locked up in the cell at Hokio, he came in and sat on the mattress on the floor next to me. He talked to me as if he was my friend. It started by rubbing my leg and progressed from there. It wasn't just me getting that treatment, you could hear the other boys screaming.

90. What amazed me is you had the Māori wardens there like [GRO-B-9] but they still treated you like shit, like you were a disgrace to your race. He was a Māori, why would you treat your own people like that? It's shocking.

#### *Secure*

91. I think it should be noted that it was called Hokio Beach *School*. It was called a school. There were two cells at that school and if they took you in there it was really bad.

92. The secure cell had a wall that was two or so metres high. There was a mattress on the floor and a small window. There was no toilet in the cell, they had to let you out for that.

#### *Education and work*

93. At Hokio they had schools, I think there were supposed to be four classrooms. They did things right but the teachers weren't really interested. They didn't split us up based on race and make us sit at the back. There were majority Māori and Islanders at Hokio.

94. School was a privilege. Everything was a privilege. If you misbehaved or ran away, you would have to mop, clean, vacuum and wash windows instead of school. You would get work rather than school.

95. A report from 5 March 1973 records that I was "probably the best in the class" at oral and written expression, and that I was "articulate and well conversant with language". [WITN0157007] I remember that one of the teachers took an interest in educating us. It was good, and I would have liked the opportunity to continue my schooling.

96. There is also a file note from 3 April 1973, recording that I had a good attitude to school work and that I had made "amazing progress" at school. [WITN0157008]
97. However I think what happened was that the abuse got to me, and it became hard to focus on school work.
98. A progress report on my file indicates that I had "moods of moresness [sic] and cheekiness" and "frequent sulks". Mr Doolan noted that I might be persuaded to complete two years of secondary schooling at Hokio. [WITN0157009]
99. At Hokio Beach, they applied for a school exemption for me. I have seen a letter from [GRO-C] dated 9 July 1973 in which he said that I was aspiring to labouring work. [WITN0157010] This was not the case. My school report dated 9 July 1973 also confirmed I was achieving well at school. [WITN0157011]
100. No one asked me whether I wanted to continue, and I never had any aspirations to labouring work. I never spoke to [GRO-C] about this. The only time anyone ever spoke to him was when you were in trouble. There was no talking about what your future would look like, with anyone, at any time that I was in State care.
101. I was given an exemption to school when I was 14. [WITN0157012]

### *Sexual abuse*

102. The cook was sexually abusing a lot of people at Hokio. I was there in 1973. I can't remember the cook's name. The name Ansell sounds so familiar but it might have been a different person. Sexual abuse was frequent, especially by the cook. They would force you to do things.
103. The cook would play with your privates and then bend over and have sex with you all the way. I cry all the time because of the pain. They made you do things to them – play with their private parts and put them in your mouth.
104. The cook was white, he was taller than me and I was around five foot six at the time. He was a queer. I remember one time he took his pants down, knelt down and gave me a strap to hit him over his arse while he was playing with himself. How sick is that? The trouble is after that he wasn't satisfied and wanted to have sex.

They would gag you with their hand over your mouth and tie your hands behind your back so no one could hear you.

105. A couple of times we were taken away, but separately because it was more private. I wasn't the only one it was happening to, that was the thing. I was taken to the cook's house.

106

GRO-C

107. With the cook if you got called into his kitchen, we'd look at each other because we all knew what was going to happen. We'd watch out, we knew the signs, we'd walk away and know there was nothing we could do for the poor bugger.

108. One important thing which happened in both Ōwairaka and Hokio was they would force you to do things and do things to you, and then they would drag you outside and give you cigarettes. You had to smoke them as a reward, as if you agreed to the abuse and were being a good little boy.

109. We were never smokers us kids. That was how they rewarded you. If we weren't smokers when we went in, we were damn well big smokers when we went out. We might never have been smokers if we were looked after right. But we were because they forced us to do it as a reward. What the hell.

110. As a child you just don't understand what is happening. Back at Ōwairaka and Hokio all I wanted to do was run away. Nobody cared and you weren't safe.

### *Racism*

111. The thing is, no matter where you went if you had brown skin, you were going to get abused. Physically or sexually or both. Occasionally one of the white boys would, but he would have to be a real bad bugger. If you were brown you were going to get done no matter what.

112. When I was being raped, both at Ōwairaka and Hokio, I was told "this is all you're good for, you're a coconut, you are the lowest of the low, you are just a piece of

shit". Coconut or "bunga" or "fresh off the boat" was how Pacific Islanders were referred to in those years.

113. The reason staff would give for the treatment, it's not a reason really. They used to say, 'I'm going to teach you a lesson'. Then you would get a hiding, or sexually abused or be made to do things to them.

### *Hospital*

114. When I got to Hokio, my hip problem restarted when I got kicked in the hip. I think it was **GRO-B** who did it, he meant to kick me up the ass but got my hip. They decided to take me in to hospital, I think I was struggling walking.
115. I was in hospital for six to eight weeks in Palmerston North at one point. My file reflects this was between 13 September 1972 and 30 October 1972. **[WITN0157015]** My hip injury was initially from hidings got at Ōwairaka. They found nothing wrong with it though. There was no physical damage to my hip – like no chipped bone or anything. That was the problem.
116. I played on my hip injury because the hospital was the only place I felt safe. The nurses were good to you and for a short time I wasn't scared. For that time I didn't have the feeling of wanting to run. It says in my file I was seeking medical attention, if only they knew it was safety I was seeking.
117. I remember being seen by a doctor at my stay in Palmerston North hospital. My file reflects I was seen by Dr Leeks while in the hospital. I recall him coming to see me. They were saying at the time that the injury was all in my head, and I understood him to be a psychiatrist. I remember the staff at Hokio later saying I might be transferred to Lake Alice hospital, but I didn't know what that was at the time. My file includes a letter from Dr Leeks reflecting that he thought my type of illness was "a response to discomfort and anxiety". Dr Leeks noted that my "elderly indulging grandparents" had not been an ideal background for me. There was absolutely nothing indulging about my grandparents. **[WITN0157014]**
118. I met a nurse at Palmerston North Hospital called Sister Sales. She was a really lovely woman. I adopted her like a mother. She would come and visit me on her days off in the hospital. We used to talk outside. I used to ask her not to send me back to Hokio because I felt safe in hospital. She asked what I meant, I said "keep



me here, I feel safe here. I don't feel safe at Hokio'. But she couldn't do anything because I didn't elaborate.

119. She spent a lot of time with me, she was like a mother I never had. She was the only person that really sat down and talked with me and showed a bit of interest. I was safe with her. I knew I was not going to be harmed. She might have been in her thirties at least then, maybe her forties.

120. I also met a man called David in the wards. He knew a girl who was in the hospital and was visiting her every day. He was a kind man. I did not know until now that he had written to the principal of Hokio trying to see me, on 5 December 1972 [WITN0157016] and 17 April 1973 [WITN0157017]. I believe he may have taken me out once from the home. I would have dearly loved to have seen him more, as he was one person who was kind to me.

121. I didn't say anything at hospital about what had happened to me at Hokio or Ōwairaka. Back then you didn't say anything. You learnt to go with the flow. When you had what they saw as a bad boy accusing housemasters, who are they going to listen to? They would say you're a loudmouth and a liar – that's what is on my records. I've talked to others about it, even my brother agrees at the end of the day you went with it because you had no choice.

*Trying to complain*

122. On my file there is a letter dated 15 March 1973 from me when I was in Hokio to Miss Jenkins, where I was trying to find my social worker and to reach out [WITN0157018]. I believe I was trying to talk to someone about the fact I had had enough in Hokio, and I was trying to leave there. However, it was known within the Home that the staff read your letters before they were sent.

123. Mr Abolins responded to me, and invited me to go and see him in Auckland when I was due to stay in the holidays with my grandparents. [WITN0157019]. However, my leave was cancelled because we stole a truck, as I describe below. I never got to see Mr Abolins to tell him what was happening within the home. I was at the stage when I wanted to tell someone. But I couldn't write it in my letters because the staff who were abusing me would have seen the complaint.

124.

### *Running away*

125. When I got back out of hospital it was all still the same at Hokio, the beatings and the sexual abuse. What got me was even at Hokio they'd take you round the back and give you a smoke like it was a reward.
126. I ran away twice from Hokio. We made it quite far, through the forest and places like that. I think we were out a week the first time – there were three of us. We were at the forest in Waitarere, getting desperate because we were hungry and cold. One of the boys spotted a truck on the farm, so we went and pinched it and I drove it. I had never driven a truck in my life. I smashed through the gate and the farmer saw us and called the cops.
127. The next minute the cops were out there. The cops didn't ask why we had run away, they just charged us with truck conversion. I was probably 13 and a half or 14. My file reflects that I appeared in Court on 31 May 1973 when I was charged with unlawful taking of a motor vehicle. [WITN0157020]
128. As soon as we got back to Hokio, we got locked up in the cells and were sent to Kohitere. I ran away a second time and got sent to secure at Kohitere again. I describe my time at Kohitere in the next section.
129. When we got caught, [GRO-B-9] came into my bedroom and smashed the living daylights out of me. They caught the three boys when they got outside, but in my file, it says I talked to a housemaster about the plan to escape. If you're going to run away, why would you talk to a housemaster about it?
130. We got locked up again. When you came back to Hokio the abuse carried on anyway.
131. When I was released from Hokio, the social worker or whoever was there said I wasn't a ward of the state anymore. I was sent back from Hokio to Auckland on a train. My family didn't want me back, nobody wanted us. So I had nowhere to go, no money and I ended up living on streets. I slept in Myers Park and stole to survive for quite a while until [GRO-B] took us in.

### **Kohitere**

132. I think I was in secure at Hokio for three or four days before I got transferred to Kohitere. This was all because of taking the truck when we ran away. I was taken

to the pound at Kohitere, which was the name for the secure block. I was in secure the whole time I was at Kohitere.

133. The pound was all single cells. It was the same thing there, we had to run for food, do PT, we got the smack around the head. I wasn't there long enough for them to do their stuff. I think I was there for about three weeks before I got sent back to Hokio.

134. The second time I had to go to Kohitere I was in the pound again for a couple of weeks I think. I was in a Hokio Beach cell for about a week before space became available at Kohitere.

### **General comments on residences**

135. I can remember some people were kind while I was in the boys' homes, but I thought they were as bad as everyone. They knew what was going on and they weren't telling anyone, they weren't doing anything about it. It wasn't rocket science to know what was going on.

136. There were the good staff members who would come and sit on your bed and talk to you, but my brain was going 'piss off, you're not doing anything about it'. They would have known about the sexual abuse, the hidings, the lock ups. The sexual abuse was rampant at Hokio. They could see the PT and what other staff used to do. We were out there doing exercises for hours until you dropped. And then if you dropped they'd give you a hiding.

137. They took me back home once. That's the only time I remember going back to my grandparents, legally. It says in my file I went to holidays from Hokio with my father or grandfather. That wasn't true, my father wanted nothing to do with me. He told the court that. My grandparents wouldn't do it either because they were scared I was a violent person.

138. I'd say [GRO-C] knew what was going on at Hokio. There was very little that got past him. [GRO-C]'s house was near the cook's house, in a street just outside Hokio, where I was taken to be abused. But as a kid you don't know who knows what. I'm just assuming this. I have no proof. To me the abuse was so rampant in those places, you had to have people who knew.

139. I did not feel like I could tell anyone about the abuse. It gets to the point where you know what happens if you talk GRO-B-4 my brother, went through same thing. We thought, who the hell is going to believe us?
140. If I went to the headmaster at Ōwairaka and told him about the abuse, it was me against the four or five fellas who abused me. Who's he going to believe? I thought about going to police at one stage, I've had a lot of thoughts to hunt them down and kill them.
141. Social workers should have known about all the abuse. They must have known. In my mind, when I wonder why didn't they ask the questions, it's because they already knew the answers. This makes me feel better. Whether it's right or wrong. I didn't say anything about the abuse, but they didn't ask the questions. They knew about it which is why they didn't ask.
142. My brother laughed when I told him it said in my file that the social worker said I used to rob my brothers and sisters. My brother is curious to see what has been said about him.
143. It's another form of abuse what is in my file. Some of it is true, but not all of it. Reading that I was a bully, when it was them telling me to beat up other boys – I couldn't believe it. But it made sense after talking to Juliet, my psychologist. What they've done there is covered themselves. This is the problem.
144. My brother and I talk most days and we share stories. The things he told me happened to him, they also happened to me. I feel sorry for my brother because even at Hokio, we knew what Kohitere was like. It was lucky if you were fed properly at Kohitere.
145. What I can't understand with Kohitere is they were allowed to smoke when they were 15. GRO-B-4 had a shocking time in there. I've seen pictures of Kohitere, I know there was a group of fellas who went back and started smashing the place up after it closed. I know there was physical abuse there and it was rampant. We would hear stories about it because it was just down the road.

### **Police**

146. Before I went to the borstals there was a time when my grandparents said I ran away. I hadn't, I just never went home to them.

147. We went to Nelson. Social Welfare put me up as a missing person. The cops picked me up for being drunk and disorderly. Apparently, I was pushing chairs into a pond.
148. I went to Court and it was said I was to be sent to Auckland to be put back in a boys' home. The judge gave permission for the police to take custody of me, as a young person.
149. I was locked up in the Nelson police station. They used to keep me separated from people during the day. Once the day room was left empty they would take me there for a couple of hours.
150. The police used to pick on us. I had enough. I could be walking down the street and police would just pick on me. I would be with two white fellas and if there were two of us darkies, the cops would pull us up and leave the white guys alone. That's what it was like.
151. There is also my criminal record. They used to blame me for stuff I'd never done. That's how they cleared their back logs. It didn't matter if you were in the area or not. It's just what your records show.
152. It got to the stage where I think because I was being picked up so many times by the police and labelled as a criminal, it became normal. They would see you on the street and ask you if you had any money. Then you would be under arrest for vagabond or something.
153. If I was young enough in Court, I'd end up back in the boys' home. There was no winning for us, there was nothing.

### **Ōwairaka – final stay**

154. I went back to Ōwairaka briefly before borstal. My file reflects that I left my job to go to the South Island, that I was located in Nelson and arrested on 8 November 1973. I was transferred back to Auckland and placed in Ōwairaka. **[WITN0157021]**. My file reflects I had all sorts of jobs, such as carpentry, café assistant and cabinet maker apprentice. I never had any of those jobs. On this occasion, I had become frustrated with the Police continuously arresting me, and with some others, we went to Nelson, where we were once again arrested. I hadn't left a job.

155. While there, I was in secure the whole time. They wouldn't let me out because I was a flight risk.
156. I got the bash at Ōwairaka in those weeks I was there, but there was no sexual abuse. I was a bit older and a bit bigger then. I distrusted the warden and I had a go at him. It was GRO  
-B-8. I knocked him over, him and the little Hitler, Wakefield. Both of them had abused me.
157. I got taken to shower block and got a beating. I don't think at that stage in my life I could have taken any more sexual abuse. I think by that stage I would have tried to hang myself. You accept the beatings, you have no choice. But sexual abuse, I wasn't going to let that happen to me again.
158. It's a bit confusing to remember, but I think I was put on probation then or someone told me they were discharging me from being a ward of the state.
159. My file reflects I was discharged as a state ward on about 31 May 1974 when I was 15. **[WITN0157022]**. I remember this because they dropped me off at the railway station and said "see you later". There was no plan for accommodation, jobs or my safety. That's how I ended up on the streets.
160. To me the times and dates of everything is confusing. There's a lot of faces and names I would like to remember, but it's not there. All I know is 1970-74 was really sorry times. Really sorry times.

### **Invercargill Borstal**

161. One time, after I was out of the homes, I stupidly followed two fellas and hopped in a stolen car. In my file it says we broke into a petrol station and stole smokes. We didn't do that. We had a crash where I went through the windscreen. I was in the passenger seat. My family was told I was dead. I got over a hundred stitches through my head.
162. I got charged because of my record but I was still a ward of the state at the time. I can't understand why I was sent to Invercargill Borstal when I was still a ward of the state. I shouldn't have been sent there but that's what MSD decided for me. I was 15 or 16 when I went there.

163. At Invercargill Borstal, they had sexual abuse going on but I never got sexually abused there. But physical and emotional abuse - there was a lot of that going on. They put you in two-bedroom cells if you misbehaved, sometimes you would be lucky to get a cell to yourself.
164. If they thought you were being a smart-ass, they would open the door to the cell and two of the staff would come in and deal to you. They would kick the shit out of you. One time they did it to me and I told them to kill me just to get it over with. They never did it out in the open.
165. The physical abuse was rampant. If you stepped out of line, if you were locked up and heard a cell door open, you knew what was going to happen. There were no cameras in there. Staff would come in and deal to you. Two of them every time.
166. It got to a stage with me, where I just said, 'come on just do it'. I never used to fight back, I just took the hiding. I wasn't going to get anywhere to fight back.
167. I never had any schooling in Invercargill Borstal. It was a lot of working, they would stick you out in the yard. You would do nothing in the yard, you were lucky to even have a ball. Boys would sit around in the yard. There was no schooling.

### **Waipiata Borstal**

168. I got transferred from Invercargill Borstal to Waipiata Borstal at some point. When I arrived, the head man there addressed me as Mr GRO-A-Mr X. I thought they must want something from me.
169. It was the first time I felt I was being treated like a human being at Waipiata. At first, I was suspicious with the way I was treated. We were allowed to have unlocked bedrooms, I was on the fire brigade – it was totally different to anything I had experienced before that.
170. Another big difference was they actually schooled you there. We had proper teachers. If more places were run like Waipiata you would have a far different success story percentage for people in care.
171. The borstal is closed now but it should not have been because they showed you respect and you respected them. It was run how all the other places should have

been run. Why would you shut down a place that treats kids with love, honesty and respect and tries to get them on the right road?

172. I was not at Waipiata for long because I appealed my sentence and got out. Once again, I was dropped at an airport with nothing. I think I was just over 16 years old then. I had jumped out of a good place and was put on probation.

173. After Waipiata, I was sent to a place in Auckland that was for people on probation, on Ponsonby Road. I think it was run by the City Mission. There were two or three of us there who were about 16, the rest were men. We were getting beaten up and were stealing. The three of us who were 16 ran away because we had enough.

### **Impact**

174. My time in care has affected my life. The things that happened in those places, I don't really know how us survivors can let go of it. You can't, it's there for life until you go to your grave.

175. If I had been treated properly in care with no abuse, I would feel no need to run. I would not need to give this statement. Who knows what my life could be now. I could be a billionaire, I could have been an MP, who knows.

176. We would not be here if social workers did their due diligence and what they were meant to do.

177. By the end of my time in care, I had experienced so much abuse and things in life. I cannot answer truthfully if it would have been different for me after I left if I had been given money or somewhere to be.

### *Criminal record*

178. I learnt how to be a good criminal while I was in care, that's all those places have ever done for anyone. We had to learn to do things for ourselves because of the way we were treated.

179. I have done three stints in prison. I was on that road because that's all I knew. I knew how to be a criminal, how to survive - but illegally.

180. My last stint was in Dunedin Prison, 30 years ago. I woke up one morning and thought I have had enough of this. So when I got out, it was trial and error going



straight, but a lot of the time I just stayed off the roads. I knew if the cops saw me they'd pull me over for something I hadn't done. I kept off the radar.

181. When I go to do a job I have to put in the application that I have a criminal record. Even though it was over 30 years ago. When I get told by people they found someone else I know it's bullshit, it's because of my criminal record.

#### *Self-reliance and achievements*

182. I'm quite an intelligent person, but that is because of me and no one else. Anything I've done in life I've worked for very hard. That's why I always argue with authorities whenever they try to take something away from me.
183. I am a painter by trade and I have also done a building course. I am a health and safety officer. I am an MPI transfer facility officer. I've got my first aid and my forklift licence. I have everything. But I have worked for it off my own back. No one has given me money to help me.
184. Us survivors, we have no one to fall back onto. The only way we can get up and go is to do it ourselves. We can't rely on anyone. That's the way it's been for a long time and why we feel the way we feel.
185. It is part of why I got pissed off with Jacinda Ardern going public with young OT people getting awards recently. That's an insult to me. I have achieved a lot but by myself, without help.
186. I went to an anger management course myself because I was violent with women. When I think about it, it's because I am frustrated. Everything from when I was younger is still there for me. I didn't want to go down the road my father and grandparents went down. So I went to anger management.
187. I saw a hospital psychiatrist back in the day because I thought I was crazy. But I've done that off my own back to keep me on the straight and narrow.
188. I've had a good rugby league career and I've got good mates. People know me as a hard worker. I work 14-16 hour days. I've got a family who loves me and cares about me. But I've done that. No one has come and helped me with that.

#### *PTSD and depression*

189. The only reason all of this has come up is I had a near death experience at work. I have PTSD and depression, which opened the flood doors. It opened everything up from the past to come back.

190. I ended up in Sunnyside once because I tried to commit suicide. It was a few years ago. I just wanted it to end because there was nothing there for me and nobody wanted to help. That's why I say I got to where I am today because I worked for it. I made it without the government, without social workers, without anybody.

#### *Samoan culture*

191. I understood Samoan when I was younger. Now I don't understand it. I understand a little bit.

192. In my social welfare file it says they had to carry on religion and culture. There was never any of that. No one asked if I wanted it. I find it funny that it was stated there because there was none. They never made sure those things happened. If they had made it available I don't think it would have been well received by me.

193. When I was on the streets later on in life, because of what happened to me in boys' homes I denied to a lot of people that I was an Islander. I lost my identity because I thought nobody likes Islanders. Everyone thought I was a Māori, and that was alright. I wouldn't admit I was an Islander.

194. It's not until the last four or five years I've started saying it. I hid that fact because I learnt in the boys' homes to keep my mouth shut about what race you were. They pounded that into me, that we were no good, we were dog shit. You lose your identity.

195. I would think 'no I'm not Samoan because this is what happens, Islanders are no good'. As a child that's how you think, and that it must be right. Bad things happen to Islanders. Bad things happen to Māori.

196. Sometimes back then out on the streets I used to cry sometimes and wish I was white. That's how bad it was for me. I lost everything. I had no identity, I had no belonging, I had no respect. I was sleeping in a park and thieving. Everyone was telling me I'm no good. I didn't really have anything positive to think about. That was my life back then.

197. When you go into a home, you lose your culture and you lose your identity. You don't think of yourself as an Islander or a Māori, because you start to believe what they are saying about you. I recall that staff told me that I should go and kill myself because no one wanted me. While it wasn't great for Māori, the staff made it clear that Islanders didn't belong to this world.

198. That's why I wandered up and down New Zealand quite a bit, because there was no sense of belonging or family or culture. They lose your culture for you. You lose everything in those places, and it doesn't come back. You just wonder in what part of the world you fit in or you belong. A lot of survivors turn to gangs, because gangs have treated them like family. They lost their history and mana and identity, just as I have. It didn't matter which institution you went to, it's lost. You weren't allowed to speak your own language, you would get into trouble.

#### *Education*

199. Everything I ever learnt was from other boys, off the street and off my own back. Up to now even, it's all been me. Everything I went through, like going to anger management courses, that was me. No one helped me get that.

#### *Sense of shame*

200. I felt like everything was all my fault, that I was the one to blame. I felt shame and embarrassment. As a child, what goes through your mind is devastating really. I was never given the chance to be a normal healthy kid. You were made to believe you deserved to be smashed and bashed in.

201. When they sexually abused you, they'd say this is all you're good for. I have been with my psychologist since 2017. In the last six or seven months I've realised it wasn't my fault, it's not my shame. It's not for me to carry on my shoulders anymore.

#### *Trust and sense of belonging*

202. Trust has been an issue in my life. I have never trusted women or men. If it wasn't for my ex-wife sometimes I think I wouldn't be here. We are still friends and I am a father figure to her children and grandchildren.

203. Now I have a family who loves me. I have found sisters I never knew I had who love my brother and I, and they want us. I have family now, and I feel belonging.
204. In the boys' homes you don't have a feeling of belonging. I wandered around the countryside in New Zealand when I was younger. I had nowhere I belonged. My brother it turns out was in Ōwairaka the year after me and he ended up in Kohitere as well.
205. Survivors don't feel we belong because it's been punched into your head that society doesn't want you. We got told it time and again. So you get out and you wander. I've been through this whole country. I have lived in Invercargill, Dunedin, up north – all over.
206. I'm settled now and I'm happy where I am because of my kids and my family. That is the biggest achievement for any survivor. For many years I had the feeling of not belonging and I was running all the time.
207. When I met my sisters, that feeling of not belonging, it started to go. I'd always wanted a family. I remember standing in the pub and everyone would be talking about their family. I used to make up stories about my family because I had nothing to tell them. I had a hypothetical family.
208. Hearing that conversation, it makes a person feel empty. You start thinking to yourself what do I have to give back to society? Who do I belong to? It's always in our minds. Those feelings start subsiding when you belong, when you can say you're somebody's brother or uncle and so on. I finally have all that now.
209. It's a big thing for me to have my sister supporting me on my journey. It's a big thing for me and for GRO-B  
-4 my brother. Having the support helps me open up and to see this through. Without family I wouldn't be here.
210. As far as social workers and other social welfare people go, don't ask me to trust them. That will never happen. I don't even trust the historic claims process.

*Inability to have children*

211. My fatherhood was taken away from me after the sexual abuse at Ōwairaka. I couldn't have children after I contracted that disease. I went to get tested after trying for a family with my partner. I believe that's why I can't have children. I am the only

one in my family who can't have kids. If you look through my medical history, I've never had a disease or anything since then.

212. I have lost a lot of relationships because of my inability to father children. I also have been unable to adopt children, which I looked into, because of my criminal history.

213. The family I have now, I love them dearly and they love me like a father, grandfather and great grandad. But they aren't my true blood. I hear people talk about their kids and I used to get embarrassed and walk away. They took a lot from my life. To this day no one has ever given it back to me.

## **Redress**

### *Historic claims*

214. When I first found out about the historic claims process, I gave them a call. They asked me when I was in care and that kind of thing. I said 'you don't need to ask me that, you have my records'.

215. They want times and dates of all the assaults, but it was over 40 years ago. The abuse carries on through this process. They say they understand it has been a long time when they ask – but then why are they asking? Of course I don't have a diary with all the times and dates of when all the abuse happened. I was a kid.

216. What gets me, is a person like me makes this claim and then the government say they have to do their due diligence. But where was their due diligence when I was a kid? No one gave a shit. I was made a state ward and that was it. Wherever they put you no one gave a shit – society didn't, the government didn't, social welfare didn't.

217. You cannot tell me, in the time I spent in care for four years, that people didn't know what was going on in those places.

218. What amazes me with MSD is they don't want to know how the time in care affected your life, they just want the facts of what happened at the time. They have got it totally wrong as far as I am concerned. How can you not take the consequences of life as part of it?

219. All of the government needs to change, there is so much that needs to be changed to make it an easier and level ground for a survivor to go through. The waiting time is four to six years at the moment. I'm not going to take as long because of my medical condition. That waiting time is ridiculous.

220. When you hear talk about all these unemployed people, there are so many people who could do the historic claims job. Why aren't they hiring more people to get the backlog out faster. All MSD is doing is waiting for us to die off.

221. My brother and I had a mate who died about 2 months ago. He was going through the MSD process. Now you can have an advocate to carry on the claim. But if you put down to have an advocate, they can't argue for you because they don't know the full story.

#### *Looking forward*

222. What I would like to see is less children taken out from their families. Children must have some good family they can go and live with instead of being locked up. In my file it says social welfare asked my Dad if there was other family I could go to, which there was in Samoa. They didn't do anything with that information.

223. If children end up in care, the government and social welfare need to do their due diligence. They need to check up on these housemasters and mistresses and do it properly. They need to do a proper vetting and maybe do it every three months.

224. They have to visit the children, and if they do talk they need to be taken to somewhere safe so they feel safe and will keep talking. There's no way I would have talked in there if I had been asked, it wasn't safe.

225. It doesn't matter which government it is, what happened to us is not today's government's fault. Today's government need to put their hands up and give a proper apology for what happened.

226. I'd like to see changes in MSD. People are waiting far too long for redress and they are dying. They have nowhere else to go now except for an apology and compensation. They cannot take us back to the past and redo it.

227. If you put an innocent man in prison, he comes out and the government pays him millions, with the Waitangi Tribunal it is the same. A kid in care – what do you get? \$12,000 and they fight it.
228. I was shocked when I saw that of the 80 million dollars the government were given for the historic claims process, 60% was spent on the government and 40% was paid out to survivors. That's 56 million going back to the government while 34 million gets paid out. MSD and Crown lawyers are already getting paid. This is the kind of information I want out there because it has got to stop. The abuse has to stop.
229. I am 62 years old and as an adult it is time for them to start listening. I am not a little boy anymore. It is time they wake up and this country finds out the reality of what happened to survivors. Sexual abuse and other things – it's still happening. You would have thought after all these years they would have got something right. They've got nothing right.
230. Why should I have to spend \$700 an hour on a lawyer? I am not eligible for legal aid. It's another bridge I've got to cross. I have told my lawyers that part of my compensation agreement should be for their fees. The point being for me is the government puts bridges up every time and we need to break them up to keep going. It's another form of abuse. It's not right.
231. I'd like to be able to make my historic claim against MSD, the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Corrections all in one. I should not have to go through each department separately. I'm doing MSD now, then Education, then Corrections. That's crazy. Everything we are talking about; the proof is there to show you have been abused and that the schooling was shit in boys' homes. Never mind who was paying for it, they're all linked. Why do they keep wanting to put us through this?
232. There's so much that happens to a person like me. A person like me, you have doors that are closed all the time. I'm here to make the government accountable. To make those people who were housemasters and involved in the care system accountable. I want to scream it out now.
233. For me, I would like Helen Clark to stand up and take responsibility for what happened when she was Prime Minister. I would like an apology, from the current

Prime Minister, without reservation, for what happened to me and to all survivors. Until this changes from the top down, nothing is going to change in New Zealand.

234. I want to make it quite plain and clear that in no way did I agree to be physically, emotionally and sexually abused. Make no mistake that this was sexual and physical and emotional abuse to its worst. It was torture. The way it has affected my life has taken all my chances away in life of what I may have been able to become. Abuse in care shouldn't be downplayed. This was abuse in its worst form. Institutions, their staff and governments must be accountable to children and what they have done to their lives.

*Restorative justice*

235. I would like the opportunity to have a facilitated process to meet with my abusers, those of them that are still alive. I want to ask them why. And for survivors to do something like that, this will help the healing process to carry on.

ACC

236. I did make a sensitive claim to ACC in relation to the sexual abuse I suffered in Ōwairaka and Hokio in about 2018.

237. I had been seeing my own psychologist as a referral from ACC in 2017 for a workplace accident when I was nearly killed. I had PTSD and depression diagnosed from that. Through this process I started to confront the abuse. The psychologist said because it was a near death experience, it opened up the floodgates for me.

238. After that, she helped me make the claim to ACC. However ACC wouldn't let her assess me. They required me to see their psychiatrist or psychologist to tell them everything about what had happened to me to assess the claim. This was very problematic for me. I didn't trust their person. I met with them, but I wasn't willing to tell them the full story. I disclosed very little of what happened to me. It is daunting to sit in front of someone new, and it's an assessment.

239. ACC assessed the claim on the basis of what I disclosed, not on the basis of my full story. Even the psychologist doesn't know the full story – perhaps three quarters of it. The full story is in this statement. If it wasn't for my sister and my family, I wouldn't have been able to make this statement.



240. ACC ended up paying me about \$387 quarterly. I think I got a 6 on the scale.

There was no lump sum payment. They decided I wasn't entitled to it. I am tired of fighting.

241. I would be prepared to revisit this with ACC if my own psychologist was able to do the assessment. I think that's a process within ACC they need to look at. Through my experience it's no use fighting with these government departments because you end up getting angry, but you get nowhere.

**Statement of Truth**

This statement is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and was made by me knowing that it may be used as evidence by the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care.

Signed: GRO-C

Dated: 15.03.2021