

# Embargo until 17/06/2021

**Witness Name:** Donald Kiu

**Statement No.:** WITN0324001

**Exhibits:** WITN0324002 – WITN0324012

**Dated:** 8 April 2021

## ROYAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO ABUSE IN CARE

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### WITNESS STATEMENT OF DONALD KIU

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I, Donald Kiu, will say as follows: –

1. My full name is Donald Daniel Kiu. I was born on GRO-C 1963 in Raetihi. I am 58 years old. I am Māori; my iwi on my mum's side is Ngāti Maniapoto and my iwi on my dad's side is Tuwharetoa. I am currently a residential patient at Te Awhina Unit at Whanganui Hospital. I am a survivor of Lake Alice.
2. I had two admissions to Lake Alice: one was when I was aged nine and the other when I was 15. On the first admission, I was there from 3 October 1972 to 1 November 1972. In the second admission, I was there from 27 July 1978 to 18 August 1978. In total, I spent almost two months in Lake Alice.
3. I was one of the claimants in the Grant Cameron proceedings. I made a statement for that case. (Statement of Donald Kiu dated 19 November 2001 **[WITN0324002]**). I endorse what I said in that statement, and it is to be read as part of this statement.

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## Early life

4. My family is from Ohakune. My mum's name is **GRO-B** and my dad's name is **GRO-B**. My mum was only 16 when she had me and my twin brother; my dad was 18. By the time my mum was 18, she had five kids. So my parents were very young when they had us and often struggled to care for us.
5. We stayed with my grandmother when we were first born. It was my grandmother who initially looked after me and my brothers **GRO-B** (my twin), **GRO-B** and **GRO-B** and my sister **GRO-B**. My grandmother's name is **GRO-B**. I have good memories of those early years with my grandmother. She started teaching me a lot about living off the land and looking after our home. When we moved away from her, I think my mum struggled being away from her mother and the home environment and culture she grew up with.
6. After we left my grandmother's, our whānau had a lot of engagement with Social Welfare. Mum would contact the police and social workers to help her look after us.

## Going into foster care

7. When I was about seven, I was taken off my parents and put into foster care. This was the start of my life within the system and the start of my suffering in so many different institutions.
8. I was in this particular foster home for about six months. I can remember being held down on a table. There was a towel and a jug of water, and as I was being held down, the jug of water was poured down my throat. I went back home at some stage, but on 6 July 1972, a complaint had been made by the Department of Social Welfare against my mother saying that me and my brother were in need of care and protection. (Notice of Complaint, Department of Social Welfare, dated 6 July 1972 **[WITN0324003]**).

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9. My mum ended up appearing in the Children's Court in August 1972 when I was nine. My parents were told they were too young to look after me and my brother and that they would get a good education and be better off if they gave us to the government to look after. They believed they were giving us a better life and agreed for them to take us. It was agreed we would go to Maryland Hospital to treat severe ear infections. (Social Worker Report to Court, dated 17 August 1972 [WITN0324004]).
10. Our family was split up by Social Welfare, and I only ever saw my brother GRO-B after that. I have made a statement to the Royal Commission about my time in care in other institutions.

## Admissions to Lake Alice

11. I was admitted to Lake Alice on 3 October 1972. (Lake Alice Admission Form, dated 3 October 1972 [WITN0324005]). I was nine years old. I was never sent to school there. In my notes, it says that I had "aggressive and destructive outbursts", that I was "intensely over-active", and I "showed marked retardation". (Lake Alice Examination Notes, M. L. Benson, dated 4 October 1972 [WITN0324006]). I hate reading that and seeing that in my notes. I don't think I was retarded at all; I was just a young boy struggling with being brought up in a hard environment. My parents were struggling too, but instead of helping, they just say that I am retarded and got me locked me up.
12. Its interesting to me that just 2 weeks later, Dr Leeks wrote a report on me saying I showed no signs of explosive or uncontrolled behaviour. (Dr Leeks letter re Donald at Lake Alice dated 19 October 1978 [WITN0324007]).
13. My records show that I was put in Villa 16 and I was also in Villa 7, Villa 8, Villa 11, and Villa 14. (Lake Alice Examination and Admission Notes, dated October 1972 and July/August 1978 [WITN0324008]).
14. On 25 October 1972, I was discharged from Lake Alice and sent to Levin hospital where I received medical treatment for my ears. (Lake Alice Discharge Note, dated 25 October 1972 [WITN0324009]). I stayed there until I was admitted to Palmerston North Hospital on 2 January 1973. (Palmerston North

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Hospital Admission Note, dated 2 January 1973 [WITN03240010]). I was then admitted to Marylands on 13 February 1973 (Marylands Admission Note, dated 13 February 1973 [WITN0324011]). I stayed there until August 1977 when I was discharged into the care of my aunty and uncle. ([WITN0324008]).

15. In July 1978, when I was 15 years old, I appeared in front of the court for motor vehicle charges, and on 27 July 1978, I was admitted, on remand, to Lake Alice for the second time. (Psychiatrist Report while on Remand at Lake Alice, dated 15 August 1978 [WITN0324012]). I spent just over three weeks there. I was finally discharged on 18 August 1978 (Lake Alice Discharge Notes dated 18 August 1978 [WITN0324013]).

## Accommodation

16. I was one of the youngest of the children at Lake Alice. There were about eight to ten children in the ward I was first put in, but there were also adult patients around us all the time, who could have been between 20 to 80 years old. It was very unsafe for us children. I don't remember how long I was kept in each villa or why they would swap me around.

## Staff

17. I never saw or heard the name Dr Leeks while I was at Lake Alice. There were two nurses that I remember clearly. They had confusing names. One was called either Howard Lawrence or Lawrence Howard. He had a German accent. He was the charge nurse. I will refer to him as Nurse Howard.
18. The nurse in charge of him was called either Howard Dempsey or Dempsey Howard. He wore glasses and was kind to me. I don't know how much he actually knew about how the other nurses treated us, but I could tell he felt sorry for me and did not think I should be at Lake Alice.
19. A number of nurses, and especially Nurse Howard, would walk past me and kick me and slap me just because they wanted to and just because they could. Nurse Howard would do this to all the Māori boys, and I think it was because

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he was racist. We weren't doing anything wrong, but he would always pick on us. He definitely treated the Māori boys worse than the Pākehā boys.

20. He would grab the Māori boys by the neck and shake them. This happened until the other nurses, like Sandra Puke, would come and stop him. He wasn't a big man, but he was much bigger than us boys, and the authority he had made him think he was a big man.

## **Electro-convulsive Therapy**

21. I got shock treatment about three or four times. It was Nurse Howard who would give it to me, and it happened after he had put me into the maximum-security unit. Nurse Howard had pretty much taken over control of maximum at the time when I was at Lake Alice. Maximum was the place where all the bad people went and got punished. We were all scared of maximum and the nurses would threaten us all the time that we would go there if we didn't behave.
22. The first time I got shock treatment, I had been taken by Nurse Howard, and he forced me to lie down on a bed. There were about four or five other nurses there just to hold me down. He put these pad things and wires onto my head. I was crying and screaming the whole time. I don't know how long he actually shocked me for, but it felt like ages. I was frothing at the mouth and was in so much pain. Afterwards, I got taken back into maximum, and that's where I remember waking up. I don't know if I actually passed out or if I was just out of it. I only remember being in maximum after it happened.
23. I remember getting shock treatment three more times, and then I started behaving. I didn't want to get shocked any more.

## **Sexual abuse**

24. Nurse Howard sexually abused me. He would take kids around the woods for walks. On one of those "walks" he told me to hold his penis while he pissed. I refused to do that, and he threw me on the ground and pissed on me. When we got back to the villas, he told people I had wet myself, and when I denied it, he

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got angry and dragged me down the stairs. He gave me to some security men who put me into maximum security. I stayed there for two days.

25. While I was in there, Nurse Howard would come and see me and threaten me all the time. One time, he pushed me to the floor. I was held down by security guards, and he jabbed me with a huge needle. It was very painful. I passed out.
26. When I woke up, I felt very different. And frightened. I didn't want that to happen again. However, it did. At least one more time, even though I promised I would be a good boy.
27. Another time, he grabbed me and held me up against the wall. It looked like he was going to take his pants down and rape me. Nurse Mana and Nurse Tane came in and stopped him.
28. After that, I did whatever Nurse Howard told me to do. He would make regular sexual advances towards me and made me stimulate his penis by hand or by mouth. This happened a few times. There wasn't ever penetration.

## Drugs

29. Before I had been sent to the maximum-security unit, I was not on medication. I was a normal active boy. And then they started giving me all these drugs.
30. Every morning, we would get this orange liquid that we had to drink. I would say, "this gives me headaches", but they would say, "no, this is good for your body". I would tell them I didn't want to take it, but they forced it on me.
31. I never knew the names of anything they were giving me or why I was being made to take these drugs. They never told us any of that. I asked them about my medication a few times, and they just replied, "this is better for you Donald". I didn't want to take the drugs; I didn't like how they made me feel. I felt sluggish and drugged up.
32. I know now that some of the medication they gave us was Largactil. It was supposed to make us calm. It had different effects on me – sometimes it made me feel dumb and still, and other times, it would make me hyper and throw

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tantrums. When this happened, they would hold me down and stand on me to stop me. What was interesting about this was that they would say I was having a tantrum, but if a Pākehā boy did the same thing, he was just playing around and wasn't treated the same way.

33. I didn't know how to control my anger, and they didn't give me tools to help me to settle down. They would just pump me with drugs and make it worse. And perhaps the worst thing was that the anger was actually coming from being in Lake Alice and trapped within the system.
34. The only thing that made me abnormal was the drugs that they fed me. They would say I'm mauiui, but I'm not.

## Schooling

35. We never had any schooling at Lake Alice, but us children would play housie.

## Bullying

36. There wasn't any bullying from the other children in my unit. It was the opposite. We tried to help each other out as much as we could. There were a few Māori boys, and we tried to stick together. It was our way of trying to stay alive. When I was with the boys, we would just try to have fun. That was until the nurses would come around and stop us from gathering together – they would break us up.
37. I remember one time I dived under the table to get away from them, and one of the nurses started jabbing me with a broom to get me out.
38. Another time, one of the nurses, GRO-B, punched one of the boys in the stomach. He was only about seven. We wanted to protect him so about four or five of us boys attacked the nurse. We hit him, kicked him, and bit him until we were taken away and put into rooms to keep us apart.
39. The other patients were always nice to me. They gave me lollies and protected me from the nurses who pushed me around.

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## **Te ao Māori**

40. Lake Alice totally disregarded my Māori culture. I did not have access to any Māori cultural learning as a patient there. Cultural values and beliefs are very important to me, and having none of that when I was growing up had a detrimental effect on my wellbeing. I felt like I didn't belong anywhere.
41. Lake Alice was supposed to look after tamariki. If we look at that word, "tama" means boy and "ariki" means chief, so they should have been looking after us boys like ariki, but they weren't. They didn't care about us at all.
42. The longer I stayed in Lake Alice and in the Social Welfare system, the more disconnected I became from my Māori culture and more disconnected from my identity. I had a feeling that I didn't belong anywhere. Where I really belonged was with my mum and dad – with my whānau. When I was removed from that environment, they took me away from my Māori culture. I wish they had given me to my grandmother. I think my life would have been very different if they had.

## **Racial discrimination**

43. I have said in paras 18 and 19 that I believe Māori boys were treated worse by some of the staff. I felt this even as a child of nine and then again when I was 15.

## **Support at Lake Alice**

44. At Lake Alice, there was no social worker contact and no counselling. My aunty (my mum's sister) and uncle came to see me once.

## **After Lake Alice**

45. When I was discharged from Lake Alice, I went to Kimberly in Levin. They told me it was for my schooling. My horrible experience of being in state care continued at Kimberley. I was treated cruelly and abused by the nurses and staff there. I have previously asked for my files from when I was at Kimberly, but all government departments seem to have nothing on my stay there.



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46. From September 1978, I was appearing regularly in Children's Court for a number of vehicle and assault offences. I was 15 or 16 years old. I eventually ended up going to prison. In prison, I did get some education. I learnt how to read and write. Until then, I had not received any real education.
47. Prison led to me joining the Black Power gang. By the age of 25, I was a patched member. It gave me a sense of belonging and power, with the support of the gang behind me. But after a while, I started to disagree with some of the things Black Power did.

## **Marriage and family**

48. At 41 years old, I got married, and my marriage lasted seven years. The relationship I had with my wife wasn't great – she had an ugly temper and so did I. We would often get into fights with each other. We had a violent relationship.
49. We had a son named GRO-B. When he was a baby, we were so close. I wanted to change and for him to be with me and to know who he was as Māori. I didn't want him to go into the system like I did. Unfortunately, he was taken away from me. I was told that I did not have the parenting skills to look after him properly, and he was taken into the Child, Youth, and Family system. We don't really have a relationship now. He is 17 years old.
50. After he was taken away, I left his mother and tried really hard to prove to the Social Welfare system that I could be a good dad. I would follow their process and everything they told me to do. I did three parenting programmes and courses, but it was like they were out to get me from the beginning. They said I failed every course and that they would not give my son back. The whole process traumatised me. How could they stop me from seeing my son? I just wanted to show him love.
51. He ended up being in 33 different social worker homes while he was young. And for that whole time, I was there wanting to be with him and asking to have him back. A few times, I found out where he was and tried and see him. They

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would trespass me and ring the police. It got to a point when my boy didn't want to be with me either.

52. I have a daughter as well, who lives in Australia. Her name is [GRO-B]. My sister-in-law took her to Australia after the judge gave her custody when she was only two. I had just got out of jail and wanted her back. I tried very hard, but once again, the Social Welfare system got involved, and that was that. She is 16 now, and I hardly talk to her at all.

## Complaints and compensation

53. When I was about 22 or 23, I went to the police and tried to tell them what happened to me in Lake Alice. I went in with my cousin for support. But because of my association with Black Power, I found it hard to have these discussions with the police who, at the time, I considered to be the enemy. It didn't help that they were giving me attitude and treating me like shit because of my gang association, so I just left. I ended up giving up entirely.
54. I was involved in the Grant Cameron proceedings and received some money. I can't remember how much. There was a first payment where they took lots of the money to pay legal fees. Then I got another payment after that (Ex-Gratia Payment Letter to Donald, dated 8 November 2017 [WITN0324014]). To be honest, I didn't really understand the process or what was happening. All I thought was, "oh choice, I will have some money". But I didn't realise we wouldn't really get to have our say or tell our story. That is very important to me now.

## Effects of Lake Alice and state care on my life

### Separation from children

55. There have been so many bad effects that have come from my time in Lake Alice and from the state care system. The biggest effects, which hurt me every day, are that my children were taken away from me. Because of my past, which they themselves created, and their ideas that I wouldn't be a good father, they decided to take my children away from me, their dad, and put them into a white

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system that was designed to tame them and take them away from me and from their Māori culture. Their childhood is something we will never be able to get back, and the Social Welfare system did that to us.

## **Trauma**

56. My whole life has been demeaned and destroyed by the anger and sorrow I feel from childhood experiences. I am traumatised every day from the terrible memories of how I was mistreated at Lake Alice. People see me now and think I am crazy. I get tooted at when I'm walking along the streets and treated like crap by people in the community because they all think I'm crazy. This is the stigma that has come from being in those places.

## **Lack of trust in authority**

57. I do not trust people in authority and struggle every time I have to form some sort of relationship with other people. I have never been taught about normal physical and emotional relationships with people I love.

## **Loss of my Māori culture and connection**

58. I was separated totally from my Māori culture. This was the source of all my sense of identity and belonging. This land is our land, and I know I belong to it; I know I am supposed to live a healthy life on my land, but this is being stopped by the institutions that are not designed to understand and care for Māori children. I have suffered, and my kids have suffered because of this racist system. It is sad to say that the only sense of belonging and support I ever felt was being part of a criminal gang.

## **Memory loss**

59. I struggle with my memory a lot and have to really concentrate sometimes so I can explain what I am thinking. Talking about what happened to me is never easy, but I need to tell everyone what happened to us in Lake Alice and in all the state care institutions, so that finally, the government will wake up and see what is happening to our Māori children.

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## What I want from the Royal Commission

60. My greatest anger is directed at the Department of Social Welfare at the time. They took me from my family, who could have given me love and looked after me and protected me from what happened at Lake Alice. I want them held accountable and someone to take responsibility for their actions.
61. What else do I want from the Commission:
- a. Compensation;
  - b. Comfort for the rest of my life without having to struggle every day just to live;
  - c. Recognition of our Māori culture within all systems that are supposed to look after Māori children;
  - d. Change in the institutions and how they look after children. We need constant meaningful relationships and communications with our people who are in these institutions;
  - e. Our stories to be told and understood;
  - f. In terms of an apology, I don't really want that – I just want change. It is our children who carry the future. We need to fix the past so our children don't carry that into the future.

## Statement of Truth

62. 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: 8 April 2021

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