



# Abuse in Care

Royal Commission of Inquiry



## Kimberley Centre: Out of sight out of mind



Published: August 2024

# Before you start



This Easy Read document is about a report written by the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care.



Some of the information and pictures used in this document is very upsetting.



This document is about people being badly hurt by people who were meant to look after them.



The people who were hurt were disabled people.

Before you read it you might want to make sure you:



- are in a safe place
- have people who can support you.



If you do not feel safe call the police on **111**.



If you are upset after reading this document you can talk to your:

- whānau / family
- friends.



**NEED TO TALK?**



**free call or text  
any time**



You can also talk to a counsellor at  
Need to Talk by:

- calling 1737
- texting 1737.

It does not cost any money to call /  
text 1737.

You can also find support through the  
**Survivor Experiences Service**  
website.

[https://survivorexperiences.govt.nz/  
support-services/](https://survivorexperiences.govt.nz/support-services/)

[https://survivorexperiences.govt.nz/  
for-survivors/disabled-survivors/](https://survivorexperiences.govt.nz/for-survivors/disabled-survivors/)



You can contact them the Survivor Experiences Service by:



- **phone: 0800 456 090**

- **text: 8328**



- **email:**

**[contact@survivorexperiences.govt.nz](mailto:contact@survivorexperiences.govt.nz)**

# What is in here?

Page number:



About the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care.....6



What is this document about?.....9



What was the Kimberley Centre? .....14



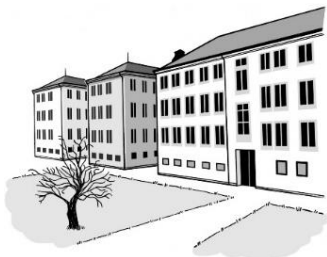
What happened at Kimberley Centre? ..... 18

# About the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care



**Abuse in Care**  
Royal Commission of Inquiry

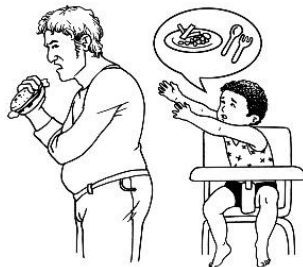
The **Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care** is looking into abuse that happened to people **in care**.



In this document being **in care** means that the Government or a **faith-based institution** was in charge of your care.



**Faith-based institutions** are run by religious groups like churches.

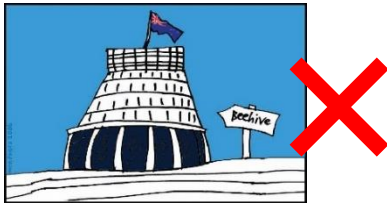


## Abuse can be:

- **physical** – a person kicking or hitting you
- **sexual** – a person doing sexual things to you that you do not want them to such as:
  - touching your body or private parts
  - kissing you
  - making you have sex with them – this is called rape
- **emotional** – a person yelling or saying things to you that are not nice
- **neglect** – a person not giving you the things or care you need.



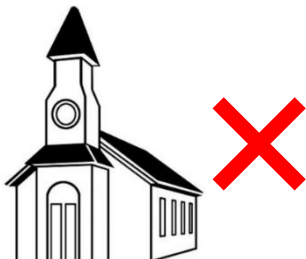
The Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care is also called the **Commission**.



The Commission is **not** part of the Government.



The Government cannot tell the Commission what to do.



The Commission is not part of any faith-based organisations like churches.

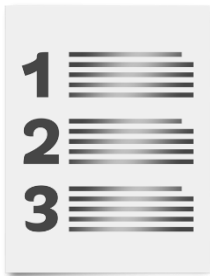


The Commission calls people who have been through abuse in care **survivors**.

# What is this document about?



This Easy Read document is a **summary** of a **case study**.



A **summary** is:

- shorter than the main document
- tells you the main ideas.



A **case study** is research that is done on one:

- person
- group
- place.





The Commission asked for case studies to be done to talk about the abuse in care that happened to different communities of survivors.



This case study is called **Out of Sight Out of Mind – Kimberley Centre: A case study of the Kimberley Centre, a psychopaedic institution for people with a learning disability.**



In this document there are **quotes** from:



- the Commission
- survivors.



### Quotes:

- are words someone has said
- are not in Easy Read
- will be inside a yellow box like this.



The Commission has given a **trigger warning** to go with this document.



A **trigger warning** is a statement that says the information you are about to read has upsetting things in it.



The Commission says:

We honour and uphold the dignity of survivors who have so bravely shared their stories here.



We acknowledge that some content contains **explicit** descriptions of tūkino – abuse, harm and trauma – and may evoke strong negative, emotional responses for readers.



Here **explicit** means things are talked about in detail.



The Commission also says:

Although this response may be unpleasant and difficult to **tolerate**, it is also appropriate to feel upset.



**Tolerate** means to put up with something even though it is bad.



The Commission also says:

Respect other's truths, breathe deeply, take care of your spirit and be gentle with your heart.

## What was the Kimberley Centre?



The Kimberley Centre was a **psychopaedic** institution in Taitoko Levin.



**Psychopaedic** was a word for people with learning disability.

This word was used to show they were different from people with mental illness.



The word is not used anymore.



The government had a policy of making disabled people live in institutions.



This policy included disabled:

- children
- young people
- adults.



Thousands of people with learning disability lived in 4 psychopaedic institutions.

The 4 psychopaedic institutions in Aotearoa New Zealand were:



- Mangere in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland
- Kimberley Centre
- Braemar in Whakatū Nelson
- Templeton in Waitaha Canterbury.





Some **psychiatric hospitals** had psychopaedic **wards** where people with learning disability lived.



**Psychiatric** means medicine to do with:

- mental distress
- your mind.



A **psychiatric hospital** is a place people go to get treatment for mental distress.



A **ward** is part of a hospital where people stay while they are getting treatment.



**1945**



**2006**

The Kimberley Centre ran from 1945 to 2006.



The most people with learning disability the Kimberley Centre had living there was 780 people in 1964.

# What happened at the Kimberley Centre?

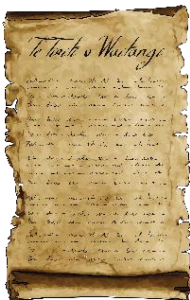


Disabled people were:

- kept away from non-disabled people
- put together in one place like at the Kimberley Centre.



This was because of the way non-disabled people thought about disabled people.



People did not make the effort to know about **te Tiriti of Waitangi / the Treaty of Waitangi**.



**Te Tiriti o Waitangi / the Treaty of Waitangi** is an important agreement between:

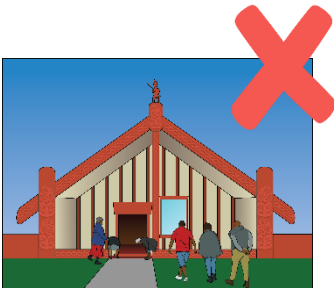
- Māori
- the Crown.

It affects all people in Aotearoa New Zealand.



This meant the Kimberley Centre took away important things from whaikaha Māori / disabled Māori like their:

- **culture**
- history
- language.





**Culture** is a way of:

- thinking that a group shares
- doing things as a group.



People with learning disability were **isolated** at the Kimberley Centre because:

- they were not allowed to be with their whānau / family
- it was far away from other places.



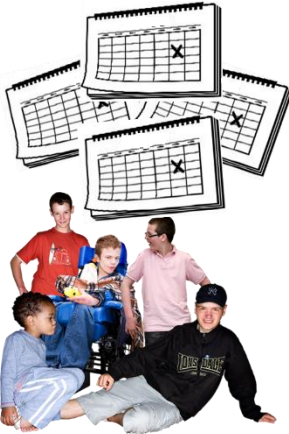
**Isolated** means keeping people away from other people.



People with learning disability were usually sent to the Kimberley Centre by whānau / family when told to by doctors.



People with learning disability were supposed to live their whole lives at the Kimberley Centre.



Many people with learning disability:

- spent a long time there
- were sent there at a very young age.



A study found out that of the people who took part in the study:

- most had lived at the Kimberley Centre for more than 30 years
- almost half were under 6 years old when they were sent to the Kimberley Centre.





People with learning disability were thought to be **out of sight out of mind**.



Here **out of sight out of mind** means if you cannot see someone you do not have to think about them.



Survivors called the Kimberley Centre:  
**a hellhole.**



Here **hellhole** means a place that is terrible to live in.



The things the Commission found out show this is true.



Survivors were treated in a **dehumanising** way.



**Dehumanising** means treating people as if they are not human.



The Kimberley Centre:

- took away their **identity**
- treated them very badly because they were disabled.





**Identity** means the important parts of you that make up what kind of person you are.

This includes things like your:

- culture
- relationships like whānau / family
- memories.



The Kimberley Centre did not **respect** the right to human **dignity** for survivors.



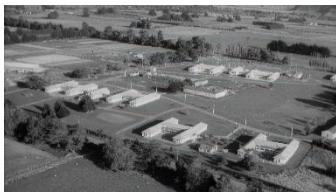
To **respect** someone means to take care of their:

- feelings
- rights.



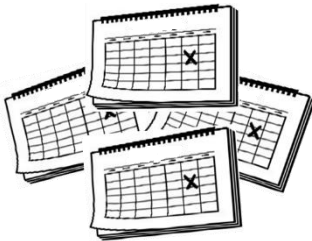
**Dignity** means being:

- valued for who you are
- treated in a good way.



The abuse at the Kimberley Centre:

- happened all the time
- happened for a long time
- was **severe**.



**Severe** means:

- terrible
- cruel.



The Commission heard about terrible abuse that was:

- sexual
- physical.



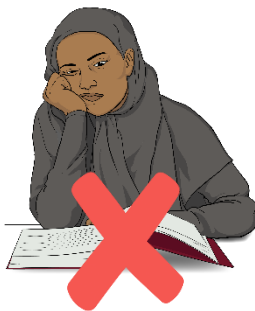
Survivors had their basic needs neglected like not getting:

- fed
- cleaned.



Survivors were neglected across all parts of their lives like they:

- did not get educated like at school
- did not get **stimuli**.





**Stimuli** are things like:

- music / talking
- ideas
- things to do
- things to look at.

Stimuli are important for:

- learning
- getting to know the world around you.



Other needs that were not met were:

- emotional like not being able to talk to people about how they feel
- medical like not being:
  - treated when they were sick
  - looked after when they were hurt.



People knew staff were abusing survivors.

Some of them saw the abuse happening



There was no way for survivors to make **complaints**.



A **complaint** is when you:

- tell someone what is wrong
- say things need to change.



Survivors felt that nothing would be done if they did complain.



There was a lack of **accountability** for:

- staff who committed the abuse
- senior managers.

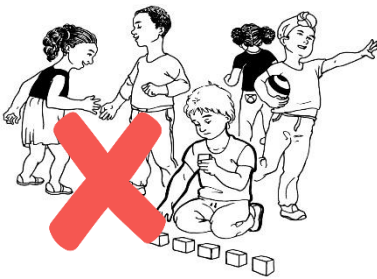


**Accountability** means being made responsible for something that happened.

Survivors suffered serious impacts for a very long time from:



- abuse
- neglect.



Survivors who were children and young people did not get to have a childhood.



All the survivors did not get to:

- live a full life
- find out what they could do with their lives.



Survivors who were given too much medication did not have quality of life.

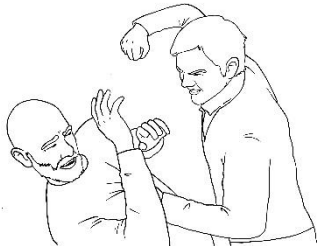


Sometimes the medication changed survivors to be **aggressive**.



**Aggressive** can mean:

- being very angry
- shouting
- hurting other people
- hurting yourself.



Survivors did not get:

- good food to eat
- given food all the time
- their teeth looked after.

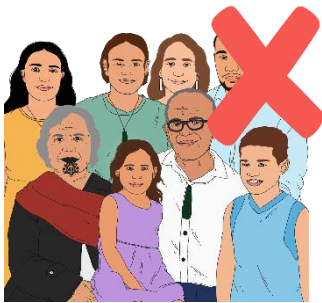






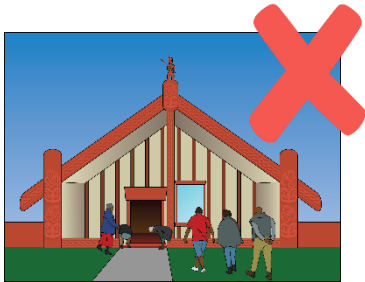
Bad eating meant survivors lost:

- weight
- their enjoyment of food.



Māori survivors lost:

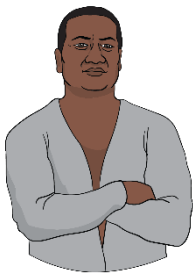
- links to their:
  - whānau / family
  - iwi / tribe
- cultural identity.



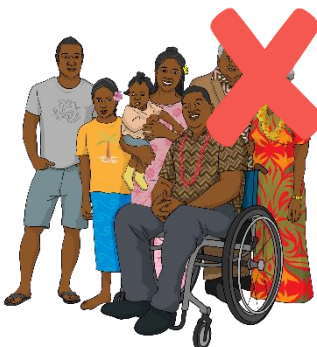


Being away from their  
whānau / family meant Māori  
survivors did not get access to:

- tikanga / Māori ways of doing things
- te reo Māori / Māori language
- mātauranga Māori / Māori knowledge.

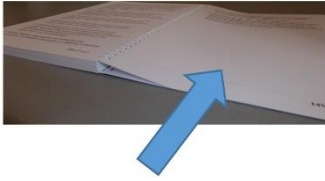


Pacific peoples suffered cultural  
neglect too.



Pacific peoples did not have access  
to their:

- culture
- practices.



There is a quote from a survivor on the next 2 pages.



The quote is about sexual abuse.

It is your choice if you want to read it.



Survivor Mr El said:

I was woken up by the same woman and taken over to this other room.

When we arrived, there were girls and boys there around my age.

There we also several adult men and women.

There was a girl laying on the bed with no clothes on.

Her legs were spread apart, with her feet up on things that looked like crutches or braces.

They looked like restraints.



Survivor Mr El said:

One of the men got up and had sexual intercourse with her, while we watched.



This information has been written by  
The Royal Commission of Inquiry into  
Abuse in Care.



It has been translated into Easy Read  
by the Make it Easy Kia Māmā Mai  
service of People First New Zealand  
Ngā Tāngata Tuatahi.



The ideas in this document are not the  
ideas of People First New Zealand Ngā  
Tāngata Tuatahi.



Make it Easy uses images from:



- [Changepeople.org](http://Changepeople.org)
- [Photosymbols.com](http://Photosymbols.com)
- SGC Image Works
- Huriana Kopeke-Te Aho
- T. Wood.



ESSGEESEE NZ



All images used in this Easy Read  
document are subject to copyright rules  
and cannot be used without  
permission.