

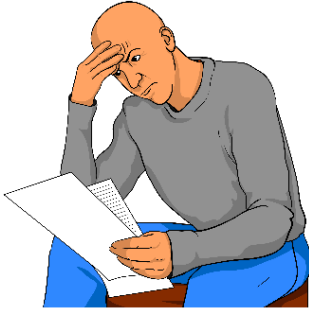


**Abuse in care public apology:  
Survivor statement by  
Keith Wiffin**



**Published: December 2024**

## Before you start



This Easy Read document talks about abuse.



This information may upset some people when they are reading it.

This information is not meant to scare anyone.



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

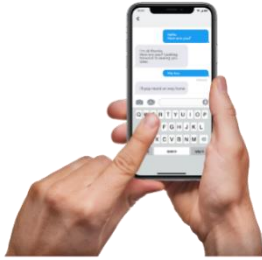


- whānau / family
- friends.



For more support you can contact a helpline called **Safe to talk**.

You can contact Safe to talk by:



**Phone: 0800 044 334**

**Text: 4334**

**Email: [support@safetotalk.nz](mailto:support@safetotalk.nz)**



**Website: [www.safetotalk.nz](http://www.safetotalk.nz)**

Safe to talk is open **24 / 7**.



**24 / 7** means you can call these helplines any time:

- 24 hours a day which means at any time in the day or night
- 7 days a week.



You can also contact **the Survivor Experiences Service** to share your experiences of abuse in:

- State care
- faith-based care
- other forms of care.



In New Zealand you can:

**Phone: 0800 456 090**

**Text: 8328**

**Email:**

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



It does not cost any money to call / text the Survivor Experiences Service.



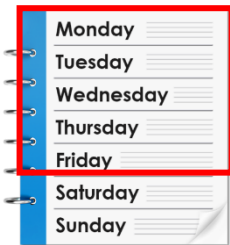
If you are calling from Australia you can **phone**:

**1 800 456 032**



You can call this number:

- between **8:30 am** and **4:30 pm**
- from **Monday** to **Friday**.



These times are for the New Zealand time zones.



You can also send a **text** to the Survivor Experiences Service on:

**+61 438 384 957**



It does not cost any money to call / text the Survivor Experiences Service.

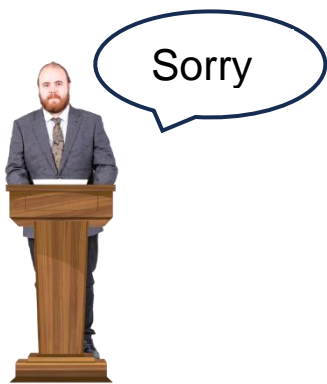
# About this document



On 12 November 2024 different parts of the Government made a **public apology** to people who had been abused while in:



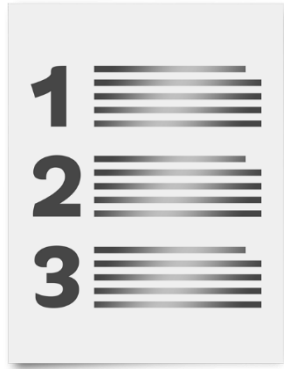
- state / government care
- faith-based care.



A **public apology** is when someone says sorry to a group of people in a way that means everyone can be a part of what is said.



This Easy Read is a **summary** of the statement Keith Wiffin made in parliament before the public apology.



### A **summary**:

- is shorter than the original message
- tells you what you need to know.



Keith Wiffin is a **survivor**.

**Survivors** are people who have been through abuse in care.

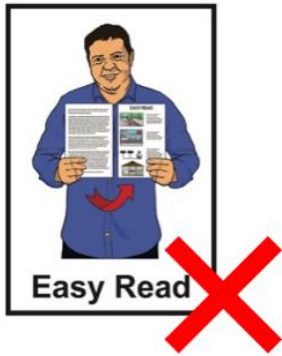


This document includes some **quotes** from Keith Wiffin.



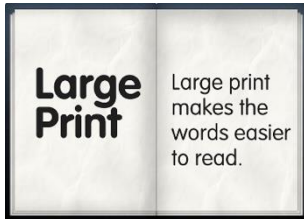
A **quote** is an exact copy in writing of what someone has said.

The quotes are in yellow boxes like this.

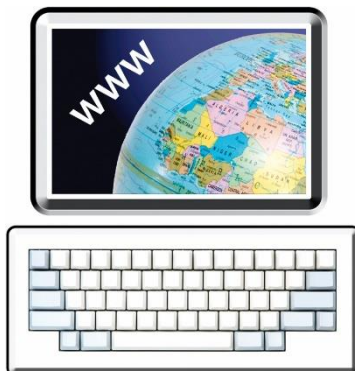


The quotes are **not** in Easy Read.

The full speech by Keith Wiffin is in other formats including:



- Braille
- Large Print.



You can find these versions of the full speech at this **website**:

**[abuseinquiryresponse.govt.nz/  
for-survivors/public-apology-to-  
survivors-of/](http://abuseinquiryresponse.govt.nz/for-survivors/public-apology-to-survivors-of/)**



You can watch a **video** of the speech by Keith Wiffin at:

**<https://tinyurl.com/bp7we7u6>**



## The statement by Keith Wiffin



Keith Wiffin said:



“We’ve heard those words from the state before, and they are meaningless because they have not resulted in change or progress.”



“We are called survivors, but firstly I would like to **acknowledge** and honour the very many who have not survived – their families and whānau – many taking their own lives, many having their lives shortened by the serious health issues related to being abused in care, many not surviving the ill-treatment. “

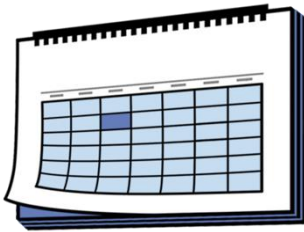


Their spirits are with us today.



**Acknowledge** means you:

- know about something
- understand that something is important.



“Today is a **monumental** and **milestone** day for the thousands of survivors, their families and whānau who have suffered abuse and neglect in care.”



**Monumental** means something:

- is very important
- will be remembered for a very long time.



A **milestone** is an important moment in time.



“It has taken far too long to come about, primarily because up to this point, the focus of both the state and faith-based authorities and institutions has been to **invest** in avoiding taking responsibility, **denial** and determined efforts to see that survivors do not get meaningful **redress.**”



Here **invest** means to try really hard at something.



Here **denial** means to say something did not happen.



**Redress** means someone:

- agrees that something bad has happened
- does something to try to:
  - put things right
  - make up for any harm that has been done.

Redress can be things like:

- saying sorry
- giving money as a way of saying sorry
- giving other kinds of support like counselling.



“Today is also a hugely important day in our country’s history, as it continues to come to grips with the **atrocities** and scale of the **tragedy**, outlined by the Royal Commission, which has so impacted our nation – the **enormity** of the impact not yet fully understood.”

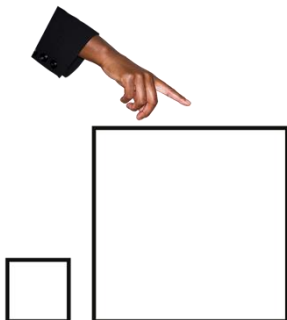


**Atrocities** are very cruel acts.



A **tragedy** is something that causes a lot of:

- harm
- sadness.



**Enormity** means very big size.



“It has ripped families and communities apart, trapping many into a life of prison **incarceration**, leaving many uneducated and **ill-equipped** to cope in the outside world.



**Incarceration** means being locked up.



**Ill-equipped** means not having all the things / skills you need.



It has tarnished our international reputation as an upholder of human rights, something our country likes to dine out on.”



Aotearoa New Zealand wants other countries to think we are very good at giving people their **human rights**.



**Human rights** are things everyone should:

- have
- be able to do.



Human rights are things like:

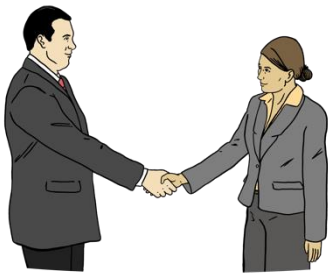
- speaking your own language
- going to school
- being safe from abuse.



Abuse in care has shown the world that Aotearoa New Zealand is not so good at giving people their human rights.



Today's speech by the Prime Minister is an opportunity to bring about some healing, relief, and comfort.



To achieve this, he must connect with survivors as being **genuine** and **sincere**, by committing to timelines to deliver redress for all those who have suffered.



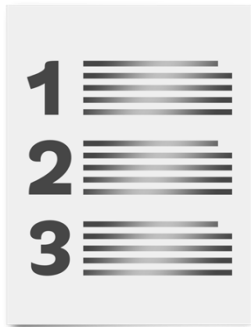
Here **genuine** means being your real self.

Here **sincere** means being truthful.





Survivors have **witnessed** a Royal Commission of Inquiry play out for six years.



It's three years since the state was given **recommendations** for a redress scheme, but still, we have nothing.



Here **witnessed** means seen.



A **recommendation** says what could be done to make things better.



“The public of this country have invested heavily in this inquiry and like us they expect outcomes.”



A lot of people in Aotearoa New Zealand:

- care a lot about the inquiry into abuse in care
- think the Government needs to put things right.



“Prime Minister: Your speech at the tabling of the Royal Commission’s final report was **applauded**, and in my opinion, rightly so.”



Here **applauded** means praised.



“You gave hope and raised **expectation** that redress would soon be delivered.”

Here **expectation** means belief that something will happen.



“It is time to deliver.



For the words to have meaning you and your Government must act.”



“Do the right thing.”



“Today I’m hoping to hear a **vision** for the future, one that recognises that what has gone before has utterly failed, and, as a result, we still have terrible rates of abuse today.”



“**Rangatahi** are just as affected as survivors of my generation.”



**Vision** means:

- the things we want to happen in the time / years to come
- what we will do to make those things happen.



**Rangatahi** means young people.



“We need to do things **fundamentally** different to have better outcomes and we need to address the root causes as to why our young go into care in the first place.”

Here **fundamentally** means totally.



“A new way forward cannot be developed by officials alone.”



“There needs to be **direct involvement** by survivors to lead the way.”



Here **direct involvement** means fully taking part in something.



There will always be a need for **safe haven** for our most **vulnerable**.



**Safe haven** means somewhere people can go to get away from danger.

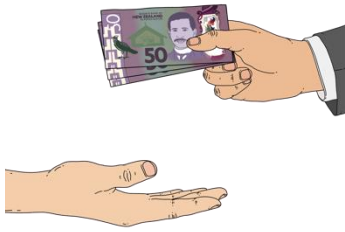


**Vulnerable** means someone has a bigger chance of being harmed than other people.

“But **ultimately**, it is the system itself that has failed us, and is the problem.”



**Ultimately** means in the end.



“It is far more beneficial and cost effective to invest in alternatives, such as resourcing families, whānau, hapū and communities to look after their own, poverty being a major determinant to so many going into care.”



There are a lot of things the Government can do to stop people needing to go into care.



A big reason why people land up in care is that their whānau / family does not have enough money to look after them,



It is better to give money to whānau / family than to spend money on keeping people in care.



“All survivors need to feel **included** in today’s apology.”

“That means all those who have been in faith-based care and state. “



Here **included** means being a part of something.



“You must hold churches and faith-based organisations **to account**, and **compel** them to do what’s right, as the state has an obligation to all children under its roof.”





Here to hold someone to **account** means to make sure they:

- own up to what they have done
- do something to make up for what they have done.



**Compel** means to make someone do something.



“The **reckless, negligent** manner in which the institutions were **misadministered** has led to the scale of the tragedy that we now face.”



Here **reckless** means not caring about who gets harmed by the things you do.



**Negligent** means not doing the things you are meant to do.



**Misadministered** means ran something badly.



“Hopefully today is a day for survivors to **cherish** and **savour**.”

“Kia kaha, noho ora mai.”



Here **cherish** means to think something is valuable.

**Savour** means to fully enjoy something.



**Make it Easy**  
Kia Māmā Mai



This information has been written by  
Keith Wiffin.

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

**People First NZ**  
Ngā Tāngata Tuatahi



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