



30 November 2020

Catholic Church will listen to learn from abuse survivors

The Catholic Church is determined to listen, learn, and reflect on the evidence of survivors who will speak at the first faith-based redress hearings of the Royal Commission into Abuse in Care, starting today in Auckland.

“The Catholic bishops and congregational leaders are committed to upholding their responsibilities to act to stop abuse in the Catholic Church and to learn the lessons of how to respond to what has happened,” says Catherine Fyfe, chair of Te Rōpū Tautoko, the Church agency formed to co-ordinate and manage cooperation between the Royal Commission and the Catholic Church, as represented by the NZ Catholic Bishops Conference and the Congregational Leaders Conference (CLCANZ).

Te Rōpū Tautoko has provided thousands of pages of requested historical documents to the Commission.

Cardinal John Dew, representing the bishops and their six dioceses on Te Rōpū Tautoko, says: “The bishops and congregational leaders asked to be included in the work of the Royal Commission. They are committed to working with it, for events of the past to be examined transparently and openly, and to implement the Commission’s eventual recommendations. We acknowledge the harm caused to many and express our profound sorrow.”

Sister Margaret Anne Mills, president of CLCANZ, which represents 43 Catholic religious entities on Te Rōpū Tautoko, praised the courage of survivors who have come forward to share their experiences: “We will be listening very carefully to what survivors have to say, reflecting on their evidence and learning from their experiences.”

This first part of the Royal Commission’s faith-based redress hearings will hear evidence from survivors of abuse in the Catholic Church, Anglican Church and Salvation Army.

The Royal Commission says these hearings “will investigate the adequacy of the redress processes of the Catholic Church, Anglican Church and the Salvation Army and what needs to be done to support people who have been abused or neglected in faith-based institutions.” These hearings “will not examine the merits of any individual claims, nor resolve disputed factual issues relating to those claims.”