

An introduction to Te Rōpū Tautoko

and the Royal Commission of Abuse into Care and Faith-based Institutions

What is Te Rōpū Tautoko?

The Aotearoa Catholic *Te Rōpū Tautoko* exists to coordinate and manage engagement between the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care and the Catholic Church in Aotearoa, represented by the Catholic Bishops and Congregational Leaders of Aotearoa New Zealand.

What is the Royal Commission?

The Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care is looking into what happened to children, young people and vulnerable adults in the care of both state and faith-based institutions since 1950. A Royal Commission is the most serious response to an issue available to the New Zealand Government and has unique powers to request information.

Key Principles Guiding the Church's Involvement with the Royal Commission

The work of Te Rōpū Tautoko and the Church's involvement in the Royal Commission process is based on the following principles:

The Bishops and Congregational Leaders believe that every person has an innate human dignity (te tapu o te tangata), therefore:

- ▶ regard all forms of abuse as unacceptable and indefensible
- ▶ accept the responsibility to continue to act to stop abuse in the Church
- ▶ listen to, learn from, and support survivors
- ▶ act swiftly on complaints and follow them through
- ▶ ensure action on accountability is followed through for those who are proven responsible for abuse
- ▶ support the need for the Inquiry and actively cooperate with the Commission
- ▶ commit to ensuring transparency

The Bishops and the Congregational Leaders have stated that the way to learn lessons for today and the future is to examine, understand, acknowledge and address what has occurred. Therefore, office holders of various Church bodies, as well as priests, other religious, staff members and supporters, are likely to attend various Royal Commission hearings in the public seating areas, to listen to the experience of witnesses and learn from the experience of listening. Some will be called as witnesses from time to time.

The challenge to all in the Church is to become more and more survivor-informed. This includes understanding the nature of trauma arising from abuse and the life long, intergenerational, and community-wide impact.

Upcoming Redress Report

The Royal Commission's Redress Report will be publicly available in mid-December. The report is likely to outline their findings regarding redress for survivors and provide recommendations on implementation of redress. The Church has contributed to the process with submissions along with survivors, stakeholders and other institutions. The Commission outlined its current view of the main principles required to make redress for survivors of abuse effective in its interim report. This interim report has given Tautoko some indication of what recommendations are likely to come from the final redress report.

www.abuseincare.org.nz >

The Church's Roadmap

Ahead of the conclusions of the Royal Commission, Tautoko have created a roadmap which outlines all the areas of work that need to be done across all areas of the Church in order to make improvements, based on statements made during the Commission hearings and in anticipation of the final recommendations. By setting this out now the Church is working proactively to do what it can now rather than wait for the Commission's recommendations. By setting it out this way Tautoko makes it clear to everyone what areas are needing work and what the status of the progress of the work is. This provides transparency and accountability to all the changes that are needed.

www.tautoko.catholic.org.nz/roadmap >



Learn, Share, and Discuss

what's taking place with the Catholic Church and the Royal Commission

Messages to share and discuss

- ▶ This process and the changes we will embark on as a Church is at the heart of the life of the Church and who we are as Gospel oriented people. The protection and flourishing of each person with innate human dignity guides every part of Catholic teaching.
- ▶ The survivors have spoken about the lifelong pain and suffering caused by the abuse, and compounded by the failures of Church and authorities to bring their abusers to justice.
- ▶ We are all better off when everyone among us feels safe and welcomed. This is a way that we live out God's commandment to love others as we love God.

What will 2022 and 2023 look like?

In 2022 the Commission has announced a Hearing looking at Māori experiences of abuse in care. This will run in March after the Hearing into the St John of God Brothers (Marylands School).

Other hearings have not been confirmed but may include schools, foster care & adoption, closed faith communities, disabled people's experiences of abuse in care, and others.

Following the series of hearings the work will focus on the Commission's Final Report – due in June 2023.

Next Steps

Read Tautoko's FAQ

Answers to common questions about Te Rōpū Tautoko, the Royal Commission into Abuse in Care, and the Catholic Church's response to abuse are available on our website.

www.tautoko.catholic.org.nz/faq >

View the Church's Roadmap

Tautoko have created a roadmap which outlines all the areas of work that need to be done across all areas of the Church in order to make improvements, based on statements made during the Commission hearings and in anticipation of the final recommendations. Keep an eye on the Tautoko website for their that will link to the Redress Reports coming soon, which will strongly inform our roadmap.

www.tautoko.catholic.org.nz/roadmap >

Read the Apology from Cardinal John Dew

When giving evidence before the Royal Commission in 2021, Cardinal John Dew took the opportunity to deliver an apology on behalf of Church leaders addressed directly to survivors of abuse and their whānau.

www.tautoko.catholic.org.nz/apology >

Newsletter Notice

If you have the opportunity to update your networks through your own channels, such as newsletters, staff briefings or social media you can use the following notice:

- ▶ The Royal Commission into Abuse in Care has been continuing with its work. Te Rōpū Tautoko, the Church's group coordinating Catholic engagement with the Royal Commission, has been contributing to this work and has released a roadmap of the changes the Church needs to make in anticipation of the Commission's final recommendations. You can view Tautoko's Roadmap on their website at www.tautoko.catholic.org.nz/roadmap to see the outline of steps and the progress on of implementation.

“This work will always be part of the life and mission of the Church: to continually ensure that our spaces are safe and welcoming to all who encounter them.”


Prayer

When we feel the road ahead is challenging or uncertain we can always have confidence in our merciful and loving God who is always near to us and to the suffering of those who have been harmed. We invite you to pray the following prayer at any time, whether you are alone or gathered with others:

- ▶ Loving and merciful God, in this season of confronting the failures of the Church, help us as members of the body of Christ to listen actively to the words of those who have suffered, to walk alongside those who seek justice, to hear the cry of those who still suffer the pain of abuse, and to stay the course in this work which is at the heart of our mission as a Church - to be a place of safety and care for all who encounter it.
Lord Hear Us.



Much of the work that has been undertaken over the last three years has occurred behind the scenes. This infographic provides an overview of some of the work that Te Rōpū Tautoko has been involved in since the Commission began.



Over 150,000
pages of documentation
provided to the Royal Commission

9 Public Hearings

for which *Te Rōpū Tautoko* has provided to the Commission:

19 statements



12 briefing papers



3 submissions



24 Notices
to produce

42 Submissions
in response

6 Dioceses

with ~1,250 Diocesan Clergy since 1950

43 Congregations

with ~6,000 Religious in NZ since 1950



100s of witness
statements

provided to *Te Rōpū Tautoko* for review,
response, and natural justice processes



428
Catholic Parishes



393
Catholic Schools



65
Care Institutions

+ Hundreds of other Catholic institutions,
organisations, and groups



Hearing from Survivors

in their own words

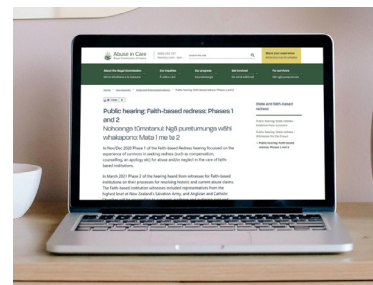
This is an important process of listening to the experiences of survivors, acknowledging failings, supporting the justice process and looking forward to the future with hope.

Pope Francis has recently said words of sorrow had to be converted into concrete action of reform to prevent abuse and listen to victims, saying “these important discussions truly touch the future of the Church.” All in the Church are called to listen to those who have suffered harm. The future of the Church depends on it.

Witness Statements from survivors of abuse in faith settings

Near the end of 2020, the first phase of the Commission’s Faith-Based Redress Hearing focussed on the experience of survivors in seeking redress (such as compensation, counselling, an apology etc) for abuse and/or neglect in the care of faith-based institutions. You can read their statements or view videos on the Commission’s website.

www.abuseincare.org.nz/faith-based-redress-hearings-phases-1-and-3 >



Crisis Podcast episode four: Survivors’ Voices

A series from the USA about the sexual abuse crisis in the Catholic Church: its origins, characters, causes, and reforms. Host Karna Lozoya interviews bishops, survivors, reporters, lawyers, social workers, and many more, to help navigate a systemic problem that has plagued the modern church for at least 70 years. Episode Four focuses on Survivors’ Voices:

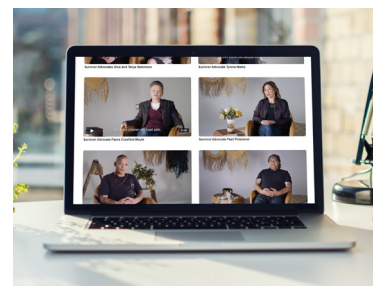
When the crisis of 2018 hit, many men and women were already dealing with trauma from their own experiences of abuse. James Grein and Teresa Pitt Green share their stories, and we hear from researcher Robert Orsi from Northwestern University and social work professor Melissa Grady from Catholic University.

<https://catholicproject.catholic.edu/crisis-episode-4> >

Survivor Stories on the Royal Commission website

These videos were made in response to requests from survivors to be seen and heard. Their views are independent of the Royal Commission. These videos were produced before the Commission’s scope was expanded to include faith-based institutions so mainly talk about state care, but their experiences and advocacy are relevant to all of us.

www.abuseincare.org.nz/survivor-videos >



St John of God brothers (Marylands) Case Study & Public Hearing

A Resource for Catholic School & Parish Leaders
to support their communities during the Royal Commission

What is the *Hospitaller Order of St John of God (Marylands)* Case Study?

As part of the investigation into abuse in the care of the Catholic Church the Inquiry is running a case study on abuse by the St John of God Brothers.

In particular the Commission will focus on events that occurred at Marylands School in Halswell, Christchurch. Marylands was a residential school for boys, many with disabilities. It originally opened in Middleton, Christchurch in the 1950s and then moved to Halswell, until closing in 1984.

Details of the Public Hearing

This Public Hearing is planned to take place from **9 - 17 February 2022** in Auckland.

This Public Hearing is also looking into any abuse by the Hospitaller Order of St John of God brothers at Hebron Trust, an organisation in Christchurch for at-risk youth operated by one of the brothers of St John of God.

The Commission will also hear from some witnesses who were also resident at St Joseph's Orphanage, located in Halswell, who had interaction with Marylands.

What is being investigated

The Royal Commission will investigate the nature and extent of abuse that occurred at Marylands and other institutions, why it happened, and the impacts of abuse that may have occurred at the hands of priests, religious or lay members of the Church.

The process of disclosing abuse and seeking redress is an important and difficult step for survivors on the long journey of healing.



Why it is being used as a case study

The abuse that will be described by survivors in this Hearing highlights a dark and appalling part of the Church's history in New Zealand.

The period of time and events relating to Marylands and the early days of the Hebron Trust have been the subject of many court cases and subsequent settlements and resulted in much media coverage during the 1990s and 2000s. This will also inform the Commissions investigation and whether there are any systemic, structural or other factors which contributed to the abuse occurring and the adequacy of the response by the Catholic Church to allegations of abuse.

These accounts, combined with those of many other victims and survivors of abuse in the care of the Catholic Church, at Marylands or elsewhere, will help the Royal Commission to make findings about what happened and why, and any appropriate recommendations for change.

www.tautoko.catholic.org.nz/marylands >

www.abuseincare.org.nz/marylands-school >

