

# Te Rōpū Tautoko

## *Catholic Support Group for the Royal Commission into Abuse in Care*

28 June 2019

### **Message of Support for the Royal Commission into Abuse in Care from Te Rōpū Tautoko on behalf of the Catholic Bishops and Religious Congregational Leaders**

#### **Background**

The Royal Commission of Inquiry into Historical Abuse in State Care and in the Care of Faith-based Institutions held a preliminary hearing on Tuesday 25 June 2019.

The Catholic Bishops and Religious Congregational Leaders of the Catholic Church in Aotearoa New Zealand offer their full support to the principles and aims of the Commission outlined in the Hearing. The Church's leaders will actively cooperate with the Commission having supported the need for the Inquiry and advocated for the inclusion of faith-based institutions.

The Inquiry is a chance for the Church's leadership to accept that there have been failures to put victims first. It is a chance to recommit to care, to apologise, and to do better.

#### **What is Te Rōpū Tautoko?**

Te Rōpū Tautoko (*Support Group*), referred to as 'Tautoko', has been established to coordinate and manage cooperation between the Commission and the Catholic Church in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Through Tautoko, the Bishops and Congregational Leaders of the Catholic Church in Aotearoa New Zealand will participate in the processes of the Inquiry.

#### **Survivor participation**

As part of the ongoing Inquiry process, the Commissioners strongly encouraged survivors of abuse, who feel that they are able, to come forward and engage with the Royal Commission. Survivors can engage with the Inquiry by registering on the website: [www.abuseinstatecare.royalcommission.govt.nz](http://www.abuseinstatecare.royalcommission.govt.nz). Tautoko fully supports and encourages survivors to engage with the Commissioners.

We acknowledge that the Inquiry process may be difficult or may be impossible for some. For those who don't feel that they are able to participate in the Inquiry, there are other ways to share and get support:

- There are several survivor support groups around the country that can be located online.
- The New Zealand Police publish advice for victims of crime on their website: [www.police.govt.nz/advice/victims](http://www.police.govt.nz/advice/victims)
- The Church has a specialist team to support those making complaints about abuse in the Church and to investigate instances of abuse or safeguarding concerns. The National Office for Professional Standards can be contacted on 0800 114 622.
- People can contact any bishop or religious congregation directly to discuss issues, make complaints, and/or share their experiences.

Te Rōpū Tautoko recognises that the way to learn lessons for today and the future is to examine, understand and address what has occurred. The Church will take the opportunity to listen to the survivor voice of the Inquiry process, to learn, and grow from the process. We must all, collectively, work towards healing and transformation.

Catherine Fyfe  
Chair  
Te Rōpū Tautoko

