



# Catholic Church Response to Abuse in Aotearoa–New Zealand

This document outlines the major initiatives, structures, and documents from Catholic leaders in Aotearoa–New Zealand in response to abuse. It also includes events and documents that affect the worldwide Catholic Church.

For more information on the Church's safeguarding work, visit [www.safeguarding.catholic.org.nz](http://www.safeguarding.catholic.org.nz).

For information on the Church's response to the Royal Commission, visit [www.tautoko.catholic.org.nz](http://www.tautoko.catholic.org.nz).

## 1962–1965

- ▶ Second Vatican Council was held, drawing together over 2,000 bishops from around the world to address matters in relation to the Catholic Church. Several documents and statements were issued that range from general guidance to specific instructions. Although none were specific to complaints of abuse, the documents and statements are foundational to how the Church will organise and operate going forward.

## 1968

- ▶ New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference ("NZCBC") established following the Second Vatican Council.

## 1981

- ▶ *National Conference of Major Religious Superiors of New Zealand* established. Renamed in 1990 as the *Congregational Leaders Conference of Aotearoa New Zealand* ("CLCANZ").
- ▶ CLCANZ and NZCBC work together as the "Mixed Commission" to develop national policies and practices for the Church in New Zealand.

## 1983

- ▶ The Catholic Church's *Code of Canon Law* was revised and promulgated in January 1983. This Code is the second codification of the laws of the Catholic Church, replacing a code that had been promulgated in 1917. It gives specific instructions regarding changes to the organisation of the Catholic Church.

## Prior to 1990

- ▶ Complaints made to dioceses and congregations of abuse by clergy and religious were handled independently by the respective leaders of each diocese and congregation utilising a variety of practices and procedures.

## 1990–1998

- ▶ Bishops and congregational leaders utilise various 'protocol' documents on an interim basis, until national protocols ("*A Path to Healing*") were developed in 1998. These protocol documents are for leaders to utilise when responding to complaints of sexual misconduct against clergy and religious.

## 1993

- ▶ NZCBC published the document *Catholic Church Guidelines on Sexual Misconduct by Clerics, Religious, and Church Employees*, as a provisional protocol for their dioceses to use while they await a national document.
- ▶ Each of New Zealand's six diocesan bishops set up Advisory Committees to assist them in dealing with allegations. The committees are known as 'Sexual Abuse Protocol Committees', 'Protocol Committees' or 'Professional Standards Committees'.
- ▶ Larger congregations also established protocol committees as complaints arose against members of congregations.

## 1994

- ▶ CLCANZ published the document *Suggested Procedure in Cases of Allegation of Sexual Abuse by a Religious*, to help provide consistent and clear responses. This document was updated in 1996.

## 1998

- ▶ Mixed Commission published the national protocol document *Te Houhanga Rongo – A Path to Healing* ("APTH"). APTH gives principles and procedures for responding to complaints of sexual abuse by clergy and religious of the Catholic Church in New Zealand. APTH is revised and updated in 2001, 2007, 2010, and 2020.





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## 2000

- ▶ NZCBC published the document *Integrity in Ministry*, which outlines principles for public life and ministry in the Church, and some of the behavioural standards that flow from them. It is addressed to all New Zealand Catholic but particularly intended for clergy and religious.

## 2001

- ▶ Pope John Paul II published the document *Sacramentorum Sanctitatis Tutela* (“SST”). This required that, after a preliminary investigation has found a semblance of truth, all cases of alleged abuse of a minor by an ordained deacon, priest, or bishop is to be reported to the Vatican. SST is revised in 2010 by Pope Benedict XVI.

## 2002

- ▶ NZCBC published a pastoral letter on abuse and the document *The Protection of Children*, in response to the increasing numbers of complainants coming forward.

## 2003

- ▶ NZCBC published the document *Code of Ethics for Church Volunteers*, to help keep volunteers and those whom they work with safe.

## 2004

- ▶ *National Office for Professional Standards* (“NOPS”) established to assist diocesan and congregational Protocol Committees respond to complaints of abuse and establish processes to prevent sexual abuse.
- ▶ *National Professional Standards Committee* (“NPSC”) established to provide oversight to NOPS and manage the process of complaints. NPSC includes three lay people, a congregational representative, and a bishop representative, supported by NOPS staff.
- ▶ *National Council for Young Catholics* (an NZCBC council) published the document *Hikoi Tahi – Standards for Youth and Young Adult Ministry in Aotearoa New Zealand* (“Hikoi Tahi”), providing standards specific to the unique situations of ministry with young people.

## 2007

- ▶ NZCBC published the documents *Children are Precious Gifts* and *Standards for Volunteers and Employees in Ministry* (which is then updated in 2011).

## 2009

- ▶ Mixed Commission expanded the role of NOPS, including NOPS providing oversight of all complaints of sexual abuse against clergy and religious.

## 2014

- ▶ The six diocesan Protocol Committees were consolidated into two: North – covering the dioceses of Auckland and Hamilton; and South – covering the dioceses of Palmerston North, Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin. Bishops appoint a delegate for each Protocol Committee.
- ▶ Pope Francis instituted the *Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors* (“Pontifical Commission”). This Commission has a wide ranging remit including “guidelines for the protection of children, educational programmes for children, parents and all those who work with minors, guidelines for catechists, and for the formation of seminarians, the ongoing formation of clergy, protocols for environmental safety, codes of professional conduct, screening and checking of previous offences...”.

## 2016

- ▶ Pope Francis published the document *As a Loving Mother*. This Apostolic Letter provides for the removal of bishops from their offices in cases where they have “through negligence, committed or omitted acts that have caused grave harm...”.
- ▶ Pope Francis wrote a public letter to bishops seeking forgiveness for the actions of those who have abused and committing to measures “to protect in every way the lives of our children, so that such crimes may never be repeated.”

## 2017

- ▶ NPSC renamed as *National Safeguarding & Professional Standards Committee* (“NSPSC”).





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## 2017 *continued*

- ▶ The two regional Protocol Committees were replaced by a single Complaints Assessment Committee, to help ensure a consistent response and process. This reviews all complaints received by or passed to NOPS (but does not include complaints related to members of the Society of Mary, which are managed by the Society of Mary's Sexual Abuse Protocol Committee).
- ▶ Mixed Commission published the document *Guidelines for the Prevention of and Response to Sexual Abuse in the Catholic Church in Aotearoa New Zealand*, also known as the Safeguarding Guidelines, to ensure policies and practices are consistently in place across the country.
- ▶ New Zealand Government announced the *Royal Commission of Inquiry into Historical Abuse in State Care* ("Royal Commission").

## 2018

- ▶ Catholic bishops and congregational leaders of Aotearoa requested inclusion in the Royal Commission. After a consultation period, it was expanded in to include faith-based institutions.
- ▶ *Te Rōpū Tautoko* ("Tautoko") formed to coordinate Catholic engagement with the Royal Commission.
- ▶ Pope Francis wrote *Letter to the People of God* regarding abuse, asking for repentance, prayer, and penance.
- ▶ NOPS set up a public website and 0800 number, so as to increase awareness and make it easier for complainants to reach out.
- ▶ NOPS published a number of safeguarding documents, made available on their website.

## 2019

- ▶ Pope Francis hosted meeting on "The Protection of Minors in the Church" in Rome. Attended by religious superiors and all the presidents of the world's bishops' conferences including Cardinal John Dew, the vice-president of the NZCBC.
- ▶ Pope Francis published the document *You are the Light of the World*. This establishes new procedural norms to "prevent and combat" sexual abuse, and to ensure that bishops and religious superiors are held accountable for their actions.

## 2019 *continued*

- ▶ NOPS developed safeguarding training workshops for use in dioceses and a Self-review Document for use by church entities.
- ▶ Tautoko sought and was granted "core participant" status in the Royal Commission on behalf of the NZCBC and CLCANZ.
- ▶ The Royal Commission began its public hearings with a Preliminary Hearing in June, Procedural Hearing in August, and Contextual Hearing in October.
- ▶ Pope Francis published the document *Instruction on the Confidentiality of Legal Proceedings*, outlining that the rule of the "pontifical secret" no longer applies in cases of the sexual abuse of minors. "Pontifical secret" is more literally translated as 'papal confidentiality' and is the highest level of confidentiality in the Church, similar to classified documents in legal proceedings or governments.

## 2020

- ▶ NOPS published additional safeguarding documents and resources, made available on their website.
- ▶ NOPS developed template for Safety Plans for use when person identified as risk.
- ▶ The Vatican's *Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith* published a document outlining certain points of procedure in treating cases of sexual abuse of minors committed by clergy. It is currently being reviewed by NOPS.
- ▶ The Royal Commission announced a number of specific investigations and hearings. Those directly involving the Catholic Church include:
  - Redress - State and Faith
  - Abuse in the care of the Catholic Church
  - Case study examining abuse of children at Marylands School (which was governed and managed by the St John of God brothers)
- ▶ The Royal Commission held Phase One of its Faith-based Redress Hearing from 30 November - 11 December. Phase Two will take place March 2021.





# Catholic Church Response to Abuse in Aotearoa–New Zealand

## Reporting Abuse or Concerns

The Church takes all complaints of abuse seriously.

Complaints of sexual abuse against clergy and religious in New Zealand are referred to the National Office for Professional Standards. Increased publicity can be the catalyst for people to come forward. We encourage anyone who has been abused by clergy or religious to contact them, for your story to be heard and your complaint to be investigated.

You have the right to report your complaint to the NZ Police at any stage, and the Church will support anyone who requires assistance to do this.

**Email:** [prof.standards@nzcbc.org.nz](mailto:prof.standards@nzcbc.org.nz)

**Online:** [www.safeguarding.catholic.org.nz/report](http://www.safeguarding.catholic.org.nz/report)

**Phone:** 0800 114 622

## Resources & More Information

### National Office for Professional Standards

[www.safeguarding.catholic.org.nz](http://www.safeguarding.catholic.org.nz)

### Te Rōpū Tautoko

[www.tautoko.catholic.org.nz](http://www.tautoko.catholic.org.nz)

### New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference

[www.catholic.org.nz](http://www.catholic.org.nz)

### Royal Commission into Abuse in Care

[www.abuseincare.org.nz](http://www.abuseincare.org.nz)

### The Holy See (Vatican)

[www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va)

### Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors

<http://www.protectionofminors.va/>

## Glossary

*Below is a list of terms, groups, and documents that are regularly mentioned in the chronology or require a more in-depth explanation.*

### APTH - Te Houhanga Rongo - A Path to Healing

Provides principles and procedure for responding to complaints of sexual abuse and sexual misconduct against clergy or religious in the Catholic Church in Aotearoa New Zealand. Originally published in 1998, and regularly updated since then.

### Canon Law

A system of laws set by the Catholic Church authorities to coordinate, regulate, and order its organisation and practices. The 1983 Code of Canon Law is currently in effect, along with some amendments made since.

### CLCANZ - Congregational Leaders Conference of Aotearoa New Zealand

A national conference made up of the leaders from major religious congregations that operate in New Zealand.

### Complaints Assessment Committee

The Complaints Assessment Committee reviews complaints received by or passed to NOPS, apart from complaints related to members of the Society of Mary, which are managed by the Society of Mary's Sexual Abuse Protocol Committee.

*Glossary continues on next page.*





# Catholic Church Response to Abuse in Aotearoa–New Zealand

## Glossary

### **Integrity in Ministry**

Integrity in Ministry was compiled as a document of principles and standards approved by the NZCBC as official guidelines on professional standards for clergy and members of institutes of consecrated life in the dioceses of New Zealand.

### **Mixed Commission**

The body through which the New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference (NZCBC) and Congregation Leaders Conference of Aotearoa New Zealand (CLCANZ) work together. Their model of cooperation is guided by *Mutuae Relationes*, a document approved by the Pope dealing with the cooperation of diocesan bishops with religious congregations.

### **NOPS - National Office for Professional Standards**

Initially envisaged to have defined lifespan to assist diocesan and congregational Protocol Committees respond to complaints of abuse and assist dioceses and congregations establish processes to prevent sexual abuse. A specific task for NOPS was to be the lead agency in independently reviewing complaints handled by diocesan and congregational sexual abuse protocol committees where the outcome was disputed in some way. NOPS also given role in encouraging research and in reviewing APTH, and in running training days for congregational or diocesan protocol committees. From 1 September 2009, the NOPS role includes oversight of all complaints of sexual abuse against clergy and religious.

### **NPSC - National Professional Standards Committee**

NPSC includes three lay people, a congregational representative, and a bishop representative, supported by NOPS staff. NPSC originally ensured complaints are referred to the correct protocol committee, with a focus on consistency. NPSC also covers requests from complaints for reviews of complaint processes run by local protocol committees. Renamed in 2017 as National Safeguarding & Professional Standards Committee ("NSPSC") when the regional committees were merged into the Complaints Assessment Committee.

### **NZCBC - New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference**

A national body made up of the bishops from each of New Zealand's six dioceses, as required by the Catholic Church's Code of Canon Law.

## Glossary

### **Protocol Committee / Sexual Abuse Protocol Committee / Professional Standards Committee**

Advisory Committees set up to assist bishops or congregational leaders in dealing with allegations.

### **Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors**

Announced by the Vatican in 2013 and established by Pope Francis in 2014. This Commission has a wide ranging remit including "guidelines for the protection of children, educational programmes for children, parents and all those who work with minors, guidelines for catechists, and for the formation of seminarians, the ongoing formation of clergy, protocols for environmental safety, codes of professional conduct, screening and checking of previous offences...".

### **Pontifical Secret**

A rule of confidentiality more literally translated as 'papal confidentiality', which restricts publication or sharing of information. Similar to classified documents in governments or legal proceedings.

### **SST - Sacramentarium Sanctitatis Tutela**

A document issued by Pope John Paul II. Amongst other measures, this gave the Vatican department *Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith* ("CDF") the competence, or jurisdiction, under canon law to deal with all cases of sexual abuse of a minor, a person under 18, by a deacon, priest, or bishop. It required all such cases to be referred to the CDF where, after a preliminary investigation, it was determined that there was a semblance of truth in the accusation. In Aotearoa, APTH since viewed as the preliminary investigation that complies with SST.

An updated version was issued by Pope Benedict XVI in 2010, in which he added to the list of crimes requiring referral to CDF.

### **Te Rōpū Tautoko**

The Aotearoa Catholic Te Rōpū Tautoko exists to coordinate and manage cooperation between the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care and the Catholic Church in Aotearoa. It is chaired by Catherine Fyfe, a lay person, and made up of representative members from the NZCBC and CLCANZ.

Te Rōpū Tautoko is independent from the Royal Commission. It coordinates the response of the Catholic Church to the Royal Commission, and is not a support group for survivors.

