

# Community Update

## Conclusion of the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care

### Update on Royal Commission of Inquiry Activities

Te Rōpū Tautoko has prepared this information to support Catholic leadership and faith communities. It gives general advice on how to prepare for the release of the final report of the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care.

Additional material has been sent directly to church leaders in March, to prepare for the Final report release. This material has been updated and can be accessed via <https://tautoko.catholic.org.nz/2024leaderresource>.

The Royal Commission and its Inquiry concludes when the Commissioners deliver their final report.

The dates for Inquiry Final Report publication are:

- **Presentation to Governor General:**  
25 June 2024
- **Public release including tabling in parliament:**  
4pm 24 July 2024

### Key Principles Guiding Catholic Involvement with the Royal Commission

*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*

### In This Update

Te Rōpū Tautoko offer responses to frequently asked questions, suggestions for prayers of the faithful for weekends around the time of the report release, website/newsletter notices, links to some further reading on the Church's response and roadmap, key messages for your consideration and use, a timeline looking back at the Inquiry, and a reminder on key contacts.



## Frequently Asked Questions

### When is the Royal Commission finishing?

The Royal Commission and its Inquiry concludes when the Commissioners deliver their final report. The dates for Inquiry Final Report publication (subject to change) are:

- **Presentation to Governor General:**  
*25 June 2024*
- **Public release including tabling in parliament:**  
*4pm 24 July 2024*

### Does the Catholic Church support the Royal Commission?

Yes. We recognise that complaints were sometimes handled poorly by those in leadership or even ignored. Victims of abuse, their families, and the Catholic community have experienced pain and shame by revelations that Church leaders failed to act or failed to act suitably.

The Church also acknowledges that where complaints and cases were handled badly or there was inaction, it contributed additional trauma and suffering to victims and their families.

The Church is committed to listening to the victims and survivors of sexual abuse, acknowledging past failings, and ensuring that our present structures and practices are safe.

### What is Te Rōpū Tautoko?

Te Rōpū Tautoko is a small organisation formed to co-ordinate and manage cooperation between the Royal Commission and the Catholic Church, as represented by the Catholic Bishops and the Congregational Leaders of Aotearoa New Zealand.

### What happens after the Inquiry is finished?

The Church is ready to review the Commission's Final Report and consider the recommendations that arise from it. Church leaders are already implementing several initiatives and made public their position in response to themes that have arisen during the Inquiry –

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

Church leaders continue to acknowledge the Church's history and the ongoing trauma of those who have been harmed. Over the past 30 years, the church in Aotearoa has made significant progress in responding to reports of abuse and safeguarding. Our focus on safeguarding and care is informed by the past and aims to ensure that people are safe in care today.



## Prayers of the Faithful

### Sunday 21 July

For the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care, and all those who contribute to its work.

We pray at this time as they conclude their work looking at the abuse and failures that occurred in Catholic Church institutions.

May their insights contribute to meaningful change in the Church.

### Sunday after report released

#### Sunday 28 July

For victims and survivors of abuse in Church institutions and for all those who will work to effect change.

May the information outlined in the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care bring about robust and lasting change to the way church organisations protect those they minister to.

### Sunday following

#### Sunday 4 August

For victims and survivors of abuse by members of the church.

We pray for peace and justice. We also pray in gratitude for those who shared their experiences in the Royal Commission's processes.

May the sharing of painful experiences bring about meaningful change in the Church.

## Tautoko Roadmap

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

Ahead of the final work and conclusion of the Royal Commission, Tautoko have created a roadmap which is regularly updated to reflect the status of work and outlines all the areas of work that need to be done across all areas of the church to make meaningful improvements.

The work is based on themes arising from the Commission hearings and in anticipation of the final

recommendations. By setting this out now, church leaders are working proactively to do what can be done now rather than wait for the Commission's conclusion. By outlining it this way, Tautoko brings clarity and commitment to the areas that require work and the status of the work's progress. This provides transparency and accountability to all the meaningful changes required.



## Website / Newsletter Notices

### Prior to Report Being Released

#### Sunday 21 July

In the coming days the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care will conclude its work. The Inquiry is currently preparing to publish its final report. It will deliver this report to the Governor General by 26 June and the public will be able to read it soon afterwards, probably in late June or early July.

The Commission has heard from witnesses who have described abuse in the care of many institutions. The experience of people, and the abuse that occurred in situations where we all had an expectation of people being safe, is heartbreaking. Anyone who hears of the experiences of abuse from victims and survivors – in person or through the Inquiry – knows the long-term impacts it has.

The response of the Catholic bishops and congregational leaders has been coordinated by Te Rōpū Tautoko. Visit their website - <https://tautoko.catholic.org.nz/>

Church leaders have been supportive of the Inquiry and the need for it. The Church is ready to review the Commission's Final Report and consider the recommendations that arise from it. Church leaders are already implementing several initiatives and made public their position in response to themes that have arisen during the Inquiry – see [tautoko.catholic.org.nz/roadmap](https://tautoko.catholic.org.nz/roadmap).

### After Report Has Been Released

#### Sunday 28 July

On 25 June the Royal Commission into Abuse in Care presented its final report. Church leaders have publicly thanked the Inquiry for the work they have done in preparing this report.

The Catholic bishops and congregational leaders acknowledge the Church's history and the ongoing trauma of those who have been harmed. Over the past 30 years, the Catholic Church in Aotearoa has made significant progress in responding to reports of abuse and safeguarding. Our focus on safeguarding and care is informed by the past and aims to ensure that people are safe in care today.

All are encouraged to engage with the work of the Royal Commission via their website - <https://www.abuseincare.org.nz/>

The Church's response has been coordinated by Te Rōpū Tautoko – Visit their website - <https://tautoko.catholic.org.nz/>

The Church takes all complaints of abuse seriously. Complaints of sexual abuse against church personnel in New Zealand are referred to the Church's National Office for Professional Standards (NOPS). Increased public discussion, such as with the Inquiry, can be the catalyst for people to come forward. We encourage anyone who has been abused by a priest or religious to contact NOPS, for your story to be heard and your complaint to be investigated. Alternately you may choose to go directly to the Police, and the Church will support anyone who requires assistance to do this.

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

Phone: 0800 114 622

Web: <https://safeguarding.catholic.org.nz/>



## Key Messages for Sharing with Your Community

The Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care began in 2018 to inquire into historical abuse in state care and in the care of Faith-based Institutions. The work of the Inquiry is coming to an end.

The Inquiry is currently preparing to publish its final report. It will deliver this report to the Governor General by 25 June and the public will be able to read it soon afterwards, probably in late June or early July.

The Commission has heard from witnesses who have described abuse in the care of many institutions. The experience of people, and the abuse that occurred in situations where we all had an expectation of people being safe, is heartbreaking. Anyone who hears of the experiences of abuse from victims and survivors – in person or through the Inquiry – knows the long-term impacts it has.

The final report will highlight the horrific abuse and the failures of individuals to ensure safety of people in their care and manage redress adequately for those people who were harmed. The report will make findings and provide context for the wider investigations of the inquiry. Confronting these realities is a significant and necessary step. All of those involved in providing care continue to transform the way we ensure the safety of all.

The Catholic Church in Aotearoa New Zealand is a core Participant in the Inquiry. Te Rōpū Tautoko is the organisation formed to coordinate and manage cooperation between the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care and the Catholic Church in Aotearoa New Zealand, as represented by the Catholic Bishops and the Congregational Leaders of Aotearoa New Zealand.

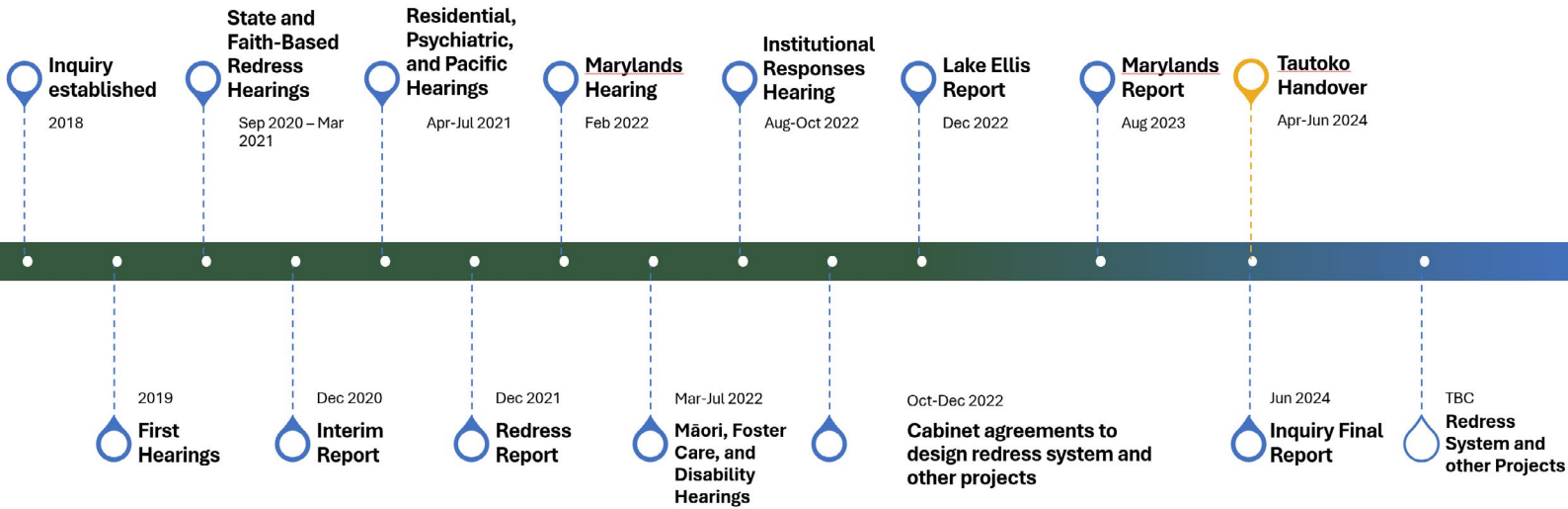
Church leaders have been supportive of the Inquiry and the need for it. Hearing survivors share their experiences and having their voices heard is a crucial element of the work of the Royal Commission. In 2018 when the Inquiry was established, the terms of reference only included state care. Many people, including bishops and congregational leaders, asked the Inquiry to broaden the Terms of Reference to include faith-based institutions.

The Church is ready to review the Commission's Final Report and consider the recommendations that arise from it. Church leaders are already implementing several initiatives and made public their position in response to themes that have arisen during the Inquiry – see [www.tautoko.catholic.org.nz/roadmap](http://www.tautoko.catholic.org.nz/roadmap).

Church leaders continue to acknowledge the Church's history and the ongoing trauma of those who have been harmed. Over the past 30 years, the church in Aotearoa has made significant progress in responding to reports of abuse and safeguarding. Our focus on safeguarding and care is informed by the past and aims to ensure that people are safe in care today.



## Timeline of Inquiry



## Important Contacts

### National Office for Professional Standards (NOPS)

0800 114 622 | [prof.standards@nzcbc.org.nz](mailto:prof.standards@nzcbc.org.nz)

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

### NZCBC Communications Advisor

David McLoughlin

021 611 052 | [dmcloughlin@nzcbc.org.nz](mailto:dmcloughlin@nzcbc.org.nz)

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



# WHAT TO DO IF YOU RECEIVE A CALL OR VISIT ABOUT ABUSE OR HARM

National Office for Professional Standards: 0800 114 622

## CALLER/VISITOR

"I have been abused."

"I think someone is being abused/harmed."

"I am a journalist calling about abuse."

## YOU

The Church has a specialist team to help you. I can give you their contact details so you can call them yourself, or I can take your details and get them to call you.

Or at any time you can tell the Police about what happened.

Which one of those would you like to do now?

Thank you very much for your call.

The Church has a specialist team to investigate and take action straight away.

I can give you their contact details so you can call them yourself, or I can take your details and get them to call you.

Or at any time you can tell the Police about this. Which one of those would you like to do now?

Thank you for calling.

Can you please give me your name and phone number and who you work for, and I will make sure someone gets back to you.

## ACTION

1. Thank them for their call
2. Provide them with number and email details of NOPS or provide NOPS with their contact details to make contact.  
**0800 114 622**  
**prof.standards@nzcbc.org.nz**
3. Email details of the call to:  
**prof.standards@nzcbc.org.nz**

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1. Say "Thank you, I will pass that on." and end the call without further discussion.
2. Email the details of the caller to the Bishops' Communications Advisor.  
**communications@nzcbc.org.nz**  
or phone **021 611 052**

## IF THE CALLER IS DISTRESSED

Responding to abuse is sensitive and specialist work. You should not try to provide advice or counselling.

Your role is simply to make sure the information gets to the right people quickly.

Always listen carefully and respectfully. Take notes of what they are saying.

Continue to offer them referral options.

If the caller becomes verbally abusive or threatening, tell them that you will have to end the call if it continues.

If it continues, end the call.

Then find or call a colleague, and tell them about what happened. Have a hot drink, take deep breaths or a short walk.