

## The Archbishops Statement

E te whānau a Te Karaiti, tēnā tātau.

The Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in State and Faith-Based Care has released its report, which highlights abuse that occurred in Anglican communities in Aotearoa New Zealand between 1950-1999.

Please hold the survivors of abuse in your hearts and prayers – some of whom participated in the Inquiry, courageously sharing traumatic experiences for justice and change.

Archbishops Don Tamihere, Justin Duckworth and Sione Ulu'ilakepa have asked for the following statement to be shared with our Anglican communities across Aotearoa New Zealand.

“We acknowledge and take full responsibility for our failures to provide the safe, caring and nurturing environment those who have been in our care had a right to expect and to receive.”

“Our apology at the Royal Commission to survivors of abuse was heartfelt and genuine and we can only stand in awe of their courage and endurance. We owe it to survivors to ensure that this Report is a catalyst for great change.

It is crucial that the whole Church takes direction and advice on this. We know that we still have a long way to go.

We call on all who identify as Anglican; whether churches, schools or agencies to study this Report's recommendations and to commit themselves to the principles and practices that ensure the highest standards of care.”

The Archbishops have reminded us of the safeguards we have in place to help make our church a safe space for everyone.

Survivors of historical abuse in the Anglican Church are encouraged to email: [contact@anglicanredress.nz](mailto:contact@anglicanredress.nz)

Anyone wishing to make a current complaint can contact the Ministry Standards Commission registrar by email on: [registrar@ministrystandards.org](mailto:registrar@ministrystandards.org)

The Archbishops have also shared the following prayers in response to the Royal Commission report released today.

Merciful God, we come to you in sorrow.  
We would not hear, we did not believe,  
Our silence condemned the innocent and the  
powerless.  
Lord, strengthen and empower the survivors  
now,  
and align our hearts with your justice.  
God, hear our prayer.

**Amen**

E te Atua Atawhai, tēnei mātau e koropiko  
ana  
ki mua i tōu aroaro i runga i te ngākau pōuri.  
Nā te mea, tē taea mātau i rongo, i kite,  
Nā te waha ngū ka whakakino mātau i te ngā  
harakore me ngā ngoikore.  
E te Ariki, whakakahangia rātou ko te hunga  
mōrehu,  
Arahina mātou ki te tika.  
E te Ariki, whakarongo mai ki tā mātau inoi.

**Āmine**

**Reprint of “Marge Writes” in the June 23, 2024  
Newsletter of the Anglican Parish of Greymouth & Kumara  
In preparation for the release of  
The Report of the Royal Commission Inquiry into Abuse in State and Faith-Based Care**

The Anglican Church of Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia, along with many other denominations, asked to be included in this report. We did this because we wanted to be transparent about any instances of past abuse.

Our aim is to repent, ask for forgiveness, make reparations and put policies and processes in place that will at the very least reduce and at the very best prevent the chances of it occurring again.

Your friends, family members, work or sport mates may take the opportunity, in light of the report, to challenge you about church and your connection with it.

Here are four attitudes to foster and a possible response to give when challenged (with thanks to Dave Mann of Shining Lights Trust):

- The Royal Commission on Abuse in Care is a good thing. It is about a stand for what is right.
- This investigation was needed because wrong is wrong and it brought to light past wrongs.
- Even if it feels like the ‘Church’ is being attacked, it is wise to remain humble and not become defensive—agreeing with the legitimacy of the anger at wrong actions.
- Be supportive of building a stronger culture of awareness so that our churches become some of the safest places in our communities.

**So what might a wise response look like? Here is an example—**

*“I’m a Christian, and I totally agree with you. What was done was so wrong – and I know everyone in our church is angry and heartbroken about it also. This has to be brought to the light and dealt with!”*

This response embraces the attitudes listed above:

- We AGREE - because wrong is wrong. This will lessen tension.
- We RE-POSITION - noting we are Christians and go to church **and** that we are also all upset at these past wrongs.
- We AGAIN WHOLEHEARTEDLY AGREE - This Royal Commission was needed to address wrongs, enable healing, and ensure any 'cycle' gets broken into the future.

**Simple humility will be the best pathway – with no defensiveness.**