



## **The Archbishops and Primates of Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia**

**To: Crown Response Unit, The Royal Commission of Inquiry into Historical Abuse in State Care and in the Care of Faith-based Institutions**

26 February 2026

### **2025 REPORT ON THE RESPONSE OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH IN AOTEAROA, NEW ZEALAND AND POLYNESIA TO RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ROYAL COMMISSION**

#### **1. Background**

In November 2024 we made an initial report as to our response to the recommendations of the Royal Commission. We committed to continue to report as we worked through the steps we undertook to make. This report therefore covers the activities of the Church in relation to its implementation of recommendations during 2025.

We are committed to continuing the transformation of the culture of our Church, wherever necessary adopting new practices and policies that reflect the expectations of survivors of abuse, and ensure that the findings of the Royal Commission are fully addressed across our whole Province.

To this end, we have established and resourced a working group, Te Korowai, tasked with overseeing this transformation. The members of this group are Archbishop Emeritus Philip Richardson, The Venerable Sue Fordyce, both from Tikanga Pakeha, Mr Fe'iloakitau Tevi of Tikanga Polynesia and The Reverend Susan Wallace of Tikanga Māori. This group has done and continues to form further teams for specific reviews and implementation tasks.

Many schools and charitable bodies affiliate with our Church, but their governance lies outside the direct control of our governing bodies. We continue to make every effort to include these organisations in our work and encourage them to adopt any new policies and practices we believe are necessary.

#### **2. Key reporting themes**

We report against the 7 key themes and 2 other specific recommendations within the 138 recommendations made by the Commission we identified to apply to our Church and which call us to action:

1. That all responses to the recommendations of the Royal Commission should be consistent with Te Tiriti o Waitangi

2. That all responses to the recommendations of the Royal Commission should uphold the rights of Māori, Pacific and disabled persons and offer efficacy to affected persons
3. That there should be consistency of policies, principles and strategies for safety developed across the Church with adequate resource supplied to deliver those policies, procedures and strategies and provide for robust accountability and oversight
4. That there should be proper handling of complaints and proper redress processes for survivors of abuse
5. That there should be sound vetting and accreditation for all who work with children and vulnerable adults
6. That there should be comprehensive training for safety at every level of the Church
7. That the Church should adopt best practice in data collection and record-keeping
8. There are also two further specific recommendations which apply to the Church in relation to review of memorials (5) and assistance to police in historical abuse investigations (7).

### **3. Report on our response**

We therefore give our further report as to our response to these recommendations as follows:

#### **1. That all responses to the recommendations of the Royal Commission should be consistent with Te Tiriti o Waitangi**

We are the Church of Te Tiriti o Waitangi—a commitment Anglicans began in the early 1800s and remain dedicated to fulfilling. In 1992, General Synod/Te Hīnota Whānui adopted a revised constitution, *Te Pouhere*, to embed a Te Tiriti framework that reflects the principles of partnership and bicultural development.

The three Tikanga model—Tikanga Māori, Tikanga Pākehā, and Tikanga Polynesia—introduced in 1992 allows each to express their unique Anglican identity and participate equally in decision-making within General Synod. This co-governance approach is a foundational part of the Church's response to the legacy of colonialism.

Despite this foundation, we have not yet fully lived into this potential. There are still inequities between Tikanga, inconsistencies in how Te Tiriti principles are applied, and uneven training has created gaps across Dioceses and Hui Amorangi.

We are currently seeking to address these challenges by inviting the Church to engage in a wide-ranging review of its practices and resources. That process, led by our General Synod Standing Committee, is currently underway.

In relation to specific areas of work in response to the Royal Commission's recommendations we are adopting, wherever possible, specific and measurable objectives as to our consistency with Te Tiriti and our pursuit of equity across all parts of the life of the church. All contracts entered into relating to safety within our Church contain specific requirements in this regard.

## **2. That all responses to the recommendations of the Royal Commission should uphold the rights of Māori, Pacific and disabled persons & offer efficacy to affected persons**

As referred to in the previous paragraph our Three Tikanga streams creates potential for culturally appropriate practices and holistic care for Māori and Polynesians.

We remain committed to working collaboratively with each Tikanga and the Disability Commission to uphold the rights of Māori, Pacific and disabled people in relation to all new processes and new resources we introduce into the life of the Church as we respond to recommendations.

## **3. That there should be consistency of policies, principles and strategies for safety developed across the Church with adequate resource supplied to deliver those policies, procedures and strategies and provide for robust accountability and oversight**

We fully accept the need for robust safeguarding policies that protect against abuse, covering prevention, response mechanisms, and support systems for survivors and include stricter reporting and accountability measures, including regular audits and public reporting on safeguarding practices.

Te Korowai are currently establishing a team to develop a unified set of safety principles and from there high-level policies which both reflect cultural contexts of the respective Tikanga and embed key principles of safe ministry within them. We intend to have those policies adopted by the whole Church at our next General Synod in 2026.

Our approach in relation to the Church's actions in upholding and implementing policies reflects our distributed nature. We are aiming for adoption of Church-wide policies which we all agree set irreducible minimum expectations. The procedures to implement those policies will, necessarily, need to be designed at a Diocesan or Hui Amorangi level taking into account tikanga, culture, local capacities and, in some cases, relevant legal jurisdiction.

Once policies are in place we will address the resourcing needed to assist Diocese and Hui Amorangi to develop robust implementation procedures.

## **4. That there should be proper handling of complaints and proper redress processes for survivors of abuse**

### **a) Complaints**

Te Korowai have contracted and delegated to a completely independent provider, Kooyoora Limited, all reception, investigation and reporting on all complaints. This company also serves a number of Anglican Diocese in Australia alongside other charitable bodies. They also take a lead in arranging pastoral care of complainants and respondents who are engaged in complaint processes. They are accessible by email, post, and a 24-hour free telephone service. Their reports are then received and decision-making on action to be taken to advance complaint matters is made by a Registrar who is also independent of the church.

Te Korowai are actively promoting use of the same independent service by all bodies affiliated to the Church.

All complaints determined by the Registrar to, if proven, comprise misconduct are referred to a Disciplinary Tribunal who conduct a tribunal hearing process. Unless there are very significant extenuating circumstances all Tribunal decisions are published on our Ministry Standards website.

All complaints determined by the Registrar to, if proven, comprise unsatisfactory conduct are referred back to their Bishop or Pihopa for them to implement restorative practices and remedial measures including training, counselling and other measures to address identified failures or weaknesses in conduct.

During the last 12 months up to the end of December 2025, 83 complaints have been received. Of those, 25 are currently still in process, 8 of these at the intake stage, 15 currently being investigated and 2 awaiting the outcome of police investigations.

Of the 58 complaints where complaint processes have been completed during 2025: 42 were closed without further action either because they were withdrawn, found to relate to matters which did not relate to either unsatisfactory conduct or misconduct or the matters raised were resolved by alternative means.

Of the remaining 16:

8 were dismissed as not disclosing either misconduct or unsatisfactory conduct.

3 have been held to meet the standard of credibly alleged misconduct and have been referred to Tribunal processes

5 have been held to meet the standard of credibly alleged unsatisfactory conduct and have been referred back to the applicable Bishop or Pihopa for action.

Te Korowai are currently working with our Registrar and a small team of the Church's legal advisors to identify any amendments to our church legislation needed to provide greater clarity and accountability in respect of conduct.

### **b) Redress**

Te Korowai have established a redress process which can be accessed by all applicants for redress via a dedicated email address advertised on our website.

Kooyoora Limited, our independent contractor, provides a dedicated redress manager for reception of approaches for redress, care of applicants and reporting of redress applications to the relevant Diocese or Hui Amorangi.

The report which is prepared for us by the Kooyoora redress team is also sent on to a further independent contractor who has wide experience in advising a number of different church denominations alongside other charities and schools as to redress offerings. That contractor provides advice to the relevant Bishop or Pihopa as to their assessment of an appropriate quantum of any monetary redress. The Kooyoora redress manager also works with the claimant to identify any other forms of redress such as counselling support or other holistic redress needs they may have.

Once all that information is to hand if a claimant does not already have legal advice we assist them to obtain representation and then all parties work on a negotiated outcome for the claimant and the wording of apology.

If a claimant wishes it they are also encouraged, supported and enabled to have a face to face meeting with the Bishop or Pihopa of the Diocese or Hui Amorangi in which the harm occurred so they may hear that apology being made in person.

All new redress matters arising from contact through the specifically set up Provincial email address are being handled through this process.

Overall during the past 12 months the Church has set in progress 5 redress claims, all of which are at various stages of action. One is a reconsideration of an earlier settlement and is close to completion, 3 are at initial stages where the Kooyoora redress manager is arranging disclosure meetings and assisting claimants to gather information, and in 1 case the final report is currently being completed.

Some Anglican Schools and Anglican affiliated charities are also availing themselves of the services of Kooyoora to receive and address redress claims. However we have no ability to compel them to do so. Some entities, for example Dilworth School, St Peter's School and the Anglican Trust for Women and Children, have established their own processes and advertise those processes clearly on their own websites or dedicated websites.

We are aware that the numbers of redress claims received by some Anglican affiliated schools and charities significantly exceeds those received by the Church in respect of abuse allegations arising within parish settings.

We are currently working with Konae (Citizens Advice Bureau) to improve the information available on that website to assist potential claimants to identify pathways to obtain records and to ensure claimants have consistent points of contact for enquiries.

## **5. That there should be sound vetting and accreditation for all who work with children and vulnerable adults**

The contract with Kooyoora Ltd has also provided us with access to their very comprehensive and independent vetting services. Their vetting process involves not only police checks but also background checks of previous places of employment or appointment and reference checking. We are currently strongly encouraging all Diocese and Hui Amorangi to adopt this level of vetting as a prerequisite to all new ordinations, all clergy appointments to new roles and upon issuance of Bishop's licences to laypeople who are taking up leadership roles.

In terms of existing roles, both in terms of clergy and lay appointments to leadership roles, police checking is a widespread current practice. We are working on the basis that this more stringent level of vetting is being asked to be implemented at times of renewal of clergy licences or on scheduled refreshment of police checks for lay leadership appointments.

Given the significant number of volunteers in our Church, Te Korowai are currently in the process of assessment of vetting needs and expect to introduce a tiered approach with most volunteers needing to complete police checks and provide references which will be followed up locally.

We are aware that our affiliated schools and social care providers have vetting processes for staff which are required to meet government or legislative requirements. We do not intend to cut across those requirements but will review them during 2026 to ensure that there is no lesser standard of vetting being committed to in those organisations than the Church is requiring for its core bodies.

We would welcome any state-run accreditation programme which can provide reliable input into our vetting regime. It is becoming clear that a more stringent and comprehensive approach to seeking police checks by both our Church, other church denominations, and other faith-based entities is creating a strain on current police resources and we ask that some consideration be given by Government to the resources and capacities required to enable timely criminal record checking.

## **6. That there should be comprehensive training for safety at every level of the Church**

At present individual Dioceses and Hui Amorangi remain responsible for training for ministry and in relation to safety. Most of them have training in place, much of it clearly identified, and in some cases their training material is easily available for viewing on their websites, giving a level of transparency as to training expectations and practices.

Within the policy framework we propose to adopt minimum standards for training will be included as a key component of growing a culture of safety across the church.

Te Korowai will then review all the training offered across the Church for consistency with that adopted policy.

## **7. That the Church should adopt best practice in data collection and record-keeping**

Centralisation of our complaints and redress processes has assisted us to achieve best practice standards in relation to collection of that data and storage in relation to those matters and we are now confident as to the robustness, accessibility and storage integrity of all data in regard to complaints and redress.

Currently data and record keeping in relation to personnel, training and vetting remains held within each Diocese and Hui Amorangi across our Church. That is 13 separate bodies. Te Korowai intend during 2026 to conduct a review of all data collection and storage systems in place across the Church. The objective of this review is to identify the degree to which the data systems utilised by each Diocese or Hui Amorangi are capable of importation into a centralised system.

## **8. Other Recommendations**

- a) As promised to the members of the Royal Commission we have commissioned an independent review of a number of historical matters where practices of the Church gave rise to concerns which we fully share.

Te Korowai are currently seeking waivers of privilege in some of those instances so the fullest possible information can be furnished to the reviewer.

Upon completion of the review we intend to conduct a “lessons learned” training exercise for all Bishops, Chancellors and Vicars General of all Diocese and Hui Amorangi to share the conclusions of that review and to create a permanent training resource for all leaders of the Church which provides an insight into past failures and their triggers.

- b) We have circularised churches and schools along with those care institutions still operating which are affiliated to the Anglican Church asking them to review all memorials and other

means of remembrance of names of people associated with their own history or the history of the Church.

## **9. Conclusion**

This report on progress names a number of vital concrete steps we have been able to take during the past twelve months. We nevertheless recognise that we have a number of further commitments we still need to vigorously pursue. We have committed resources in respect of both funds and people to this end.

We will continue to report on our progress, demonstrate our commitment to implementing the recommendations, and work towards a Church that upholds the highest standards of care and accountability.

We remain resolute in our commitment to create a safer, more accountable future for all those in our care.

**Archbishop Don Tamihere**

**Archbishop Sione Ulu'ilakepa**

**Archbishop Justin Duckworth**



**The Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia**

Te Haahi Mihinare ki Aotearoa, ki Niu Tireni, ki Nga Moutere o te Moana Nui a Kiwa

