

22 October 2024

Tena koutou katoa

Greetings to you all in the name of Jesus Christ, who came to bring healing, light, life and hope.

I write to you concerning a forthcoming update you will receive this afternoon from our Council of Assembly regarding our Church's response to the findings in the Royal Commission on Abuse in Care report that was released in late July. After our Church's response is sent to you, it will be on the Church website [here](#) and made public.

As communicated earlier, the Council of Assembly set up a task group to assist the Church in our initial responses to the report, to address the various recommendations, and to help us navigate our way forward in ensuring our Church is a safe place with good processes and reporting. We are immensely grateful to those on the task group who brought their gifts, time and commitment to this substantial piece of work. We value their guidance and help.

Guided by the task group, the Council of Assembly has worked on the Church's response together, seeking to bring an authentic voice, and one which will lead to positive change.

We know that the Commission's report [\*Whanaketia – Through pain and trauma, from darkness to light. Whakairihia ki te tihi o Maungārongo\*](#) contains harrowing reports of abuse to many individuals, including some in our Church. They are confronting and heart-breaking, undeniable, hard to face, yet we must. Jesus called us to love and care for all people, and we want to walk in his ways.

We lament what has happened and especially our Church's part in it. We cannot begin to grasp how devastating the effects of such abuse is, and how it continues to impact individuals as well as causing intergenerational trauma, yet we must try. We must listen, acknowledge, and show our deep compassion.

I appreciate that this is difficult to face and take on board as a Church. Our first concern and focus at this time needs to be for those who have suffered and whose lives has been forever changed by what has occurred.

As our Church's response to the Abuse in Care report is shared, I ask you to remember that in our brokenness as human beings and as a Church, we are called to care for others, to repent for wrongdoing, to seek justice, and to be people of resurrection hope in the face of it all.

Our sorrow is deep, and we are committed to working to build safe spaces and places for everyone.

As Council wrote to you in July, one of the Commission's recommendations calls for our Church to make a public apology in acknowledgement for historic abuse to survivors, their whanau and support networks. I will make this apology on behalf of our Church. As Council wrote, we welcome the opportunity to give a meaningful apology that will be developed and agreed with a representative



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group of survivors. Our Church's apology will be made in mid-November 2024. I encourage you to pray for survivors of abuse at this time and I share a short prayer:

*Gracious God - we pray for some glimmer of hope for those in despair, for love to be known by those who have suffered, for a soft light to be seen in the darkness, for some soothing for those in pain and your grace to be known in abundance. We pray in the name of your suffering servant, Jesus Christ.*

*Amen.*

In Christ

Rose

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