



BISHOP'S CHARGE TO THE FIRST ORDINARY SESSION OF THE FIFTY EIGHTH SYNOD OF THE DIOCESE OF AUCKLAND

Ngā mihi aroha kia koutou ki tēnei huihuinga

Warm greetings as we gather for the First Session of a new Diocesan Synod. We always informally refer to “the Synod” in an annual way, but in fact it is a three year long event, marked off by three “ordinary” Sessions. That’s the reason why you are chosen by your parishes and other member bodies to serve for a three year term. That means that at the outset of a new Synod there will a good number of people for whom this is the first time they have joined this event. If you are one of those people, please will you stand so that we can acknowledge and welcome you.

IN MEMORIAM

It is our custom to also offer thankful remembrance to God for those who have gone before us and who have served as part of the Synod in years gone by. I ask you all to now stand as we remember those who have died.

House of Clergy

The Reverend John Zimmerman
The Reverend Peter Coughlan
The Reverend Stephen Brooker
The Reverend Chris Honoré
The Reverend Neville Cooper
The Reverend Anne Scott
Father Don Cowan
The Reverend Betty Fyfe
The Reverend Dennis Mellsop
The Reverend Mary Thompson

House of Laity

John Anderson, Parish of Ellerslie
Jonathan Henderson, Parish of Whangaparaoa

Rest eternal grant unto them, O God, and let light perpetual shine upon them
May they rest in peace and rise in glory.

WHANAUNGATANGA IN THE WIDER CHURCH

Bishop Kito Pikaahu sends us his greetings and assures us of his prayers. He is overseas at present and so is not able to be with us. I will join the Hui Amorangi of Te Tai Tokerau for their opening later in the month.

Bishops from a number of other Dioceses in Tikanga Pākehā have written to us to assure us of their prayers. Auckland and Christchurch are always first cabs off the rank in the Synod season, with Christchurch also opening their Synod tonight. Bishop Peter Carrell's father, Brian who is a retired Wellington assistant bishop, died this past week. So I am particularly conscious of Bishop Peter as he still plays his part in presiding at the Christchurch Synod.

The Pākehā Bishops meet for a video call each Thursday morning to maintain good contact, to pray together, and to discuss matters of common interest and concern. This was a practice that began during Covid and which has continued these past 5 years. It has contributed greatly to our sense of community and of healthy working relationships. During the past year there has been one change among those bishops, with Anne van Gen becoming Bishop of Dunedin. I had the joy and privilege of being Archbishops' Commissary to the Diocese and overseeing their electoral process.

Within the Amorangi there are currently two vacancies with appointments to be made in Te Waipounamu following Bishop Richard Wallace's death, and in Te Manawa o te Wheke following Bishop Ngarahu Katene's retirement.

In the wider Communion, work to appoint a new Archbishop of Canterbury continues. There are four Instruments of Communion (which are the mechanisms to help us maintain Communion life) and the Archbishop of Canterbury is one of them. My observation is that over the past couple of decades the work of the Archbishop of Canterbury has developed to be more and more important in the maintaining of Communion relationships.

I personally wonder whether that has occurred to too great an extent, that is I think the Communion has placed too many hopes and expectations in an individual to find solutions to our problems. At heart we are a synodical Church. We face our challenges and find our solutions as laity, clergy and bishops together. I think there is more future in allowing the Anglican Consultative Council to establish a greater place and voice in leading the Communion and allowing Canterbury to attend to their core role of being Primate of All England.

Nevertheless, international representation is part of the Crown Nominations Committee for the process of working towards a new Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Oceania region is represented by The Reverend Canon Isaac Beach from Te Tai Rawhiti.

LIFE IN THE DIOCESE OF AUCKLAND

Last weekend I had the huge joy of consecrating the new church of St Paul's in the Park in Flat Bush. It was a project first imagined in the early 2000s as plans began to emerge for urban development in the area, with the old Manukau City Council having purchased 290 hectares of land for that purpose. The urban development was delayed through the GFC years but there is now a small city in that area with some 12,000 dwellings and over 50,000 people living there.

The church development of the new St Paul's in the Park was also delayed for a variety of reasons, including the raising of the necessary financial resources to achieve it. I want to acknowledge the efforts of successive clergy and parishioners over the years who worked to keep this project alive, the generosity of the Diocesan Development Fund, the Somerville Foundation, and philanthropic donors who have finally enabled it to be completed debt free. A special acknowledgement to Vicar Warner Wilder who has worked tirelessly these past years to bring it all together. The building stands as a sign of Christian hope in the community, and as a facility ready to provide for the worship of God and the service of the Flat Bush area.

One of the best parts of my work is the opportunity I have to visit the chaplaincies and parishes of the Diocese, the many places where the work of mission and ministry is occurring. I am constantly encountering the amazing work that Anglican Christian people are doing in their church and community. It is enormously encouraging and humbling to see what a commitment to following Jesus Christ means for people in different places and situations.

I also get to work with amazing people at Neligan House: the Admin Services Team led by Sonia Maugham, the Ministry Formation Team led by Sarah Moss, and the Episcopal Team as whole. Thanks so much for your commitment to the people of the Diocese and the ministry we share.

Alongside those high moments, it's fair to say we have been doing it tough over the last year or so. The Covid years have certainly had a long tail with impacts on both attendance and levels of engagement. We are in an increasingly "non-joining" generation, meaning people are less likely to make commitments to being regularly involved, committing to rosters or positions of responsibility, or taking up ongoing tasks. It's interesting that in a number of cases where parishes have closed in recent years, the main issue has not been a lack of money so much as a lack of people to maintain the parish infrastructure.

This is not something we cope with alone as the Church. Societally we sit within the charitable/not for profit/service organisation/activity club kind of sector. Every organisation that depends on volunteers to be able to function is struggling to find them. It was recently reported that due to the demands of new compliance and of dropping volunteer numbers, 1100 sports clubs have wound up since 2022. So we are not alone.

Which is not to say that we therefore conclude that this is just how things are and drift towards some kind of organisational inevitability. We know that we are more than a club which gathers together a group of people with a shared interest who can encourage one another in our common endeavours. We are a band of followers of Jesus Christ, the image of the invisible God, who has gathered us together within the kingdom of God to be instruments of that kingdom and

bearers of God's love and saving grace to others. The Holy Spirit of God unites us and empowers in that work. We have much that gives us hope and which enlivens us far beyond common interest and human effort.

The future of our Church has been much in our minds in recent years and last year we worked through a number of motions about that. The relatively low-demand nature of ordinary business this year is providing us with the opportunity to further those discussions together through a number of conference sessions that are about change and priorities. They also reflect some of the feedback the review group has been receiving about how synod works, which tells us that people like the opportunity for smaller group discussions.

The plan is to conclude this Session of Synod at lunchtime on Saturday. So confident are we that we can do so, we have not ordered lunch on Saturday to save cost and possible waste. However, I am also aware of the temptation not to come back for just a last few hours on a Saturday morning. Given that resisting temptation is something we constantly practice as Christian believers, I encourage you to do just that on Saturday, resist temptation and return, especially as we will have our final conference session that morning which is about future direction and priorities.

THE ANGLICAN CHURCH'S RESPONSE TO THE ROYAL COMMISSION

Last year I spoke about the conclusion of the work of The Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care in State and Faith-based Institutions and the publication of its final report, Whanaketia.

The Anglican Church was among the institutions that gave evidence to the Commission and which has been called to respond to the recommendations is the Report, both general and specific. It has been important to make a whole of Church response to this, rather than a more piecemeal one through different episcopal units and agencies.

Our Church has responded in the first instance by accepting the Recommendations, and then by publishing a particular response as to actions planned to be taken. That plan is published on the General Synod website, and I am appending it to the published version of this Charge so that Synod members are informed about it.

Seven main themes have been identified with workstreams related to them for action. Those themes are:

- That all responses to the recommendations of the Royal Commission should be consistent with te Tiriti o Waitangi
- 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

- 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
- That there should be proper handling of complaints and proper redress processes for survivors of abuse
- That there should be sound vetting and accreditation for all who work with children and vulnerable adults
- That there should be comprehensive training for safety at every level of the Church
- That the Church should adopt best practice in data collection and record-keeping

Part of our response to these matters in this diocese is our work on processes of discernment for those entering training towards ordained ministry, and ongoing ministerial accountability to provide for safe practice among all licensed ministers. The processes by which people are discerned and selected for training are robust and are constantly reviewed as to effectiveness. The requirements for continuing ministerial development, professional boundaries training and professional supervision have also been strengthened in recent years.

I thank clergy and licensed ministers who in the majority of cases have worked collaboratively with these changes to be part of building a safe church environment. We will continue to develop better practices in this respect as well as to respond appropriately when matters of complaint or concern are brought to the Church's attention.

WAR AND PEACE

I was in a Year 13 religious studies class in one of our schools recently, and the question was asked of the students as to what the first thing they would do if they were God for a day. When it came to my turn, I answered that it would be to put an end to war.

Two main conflicts hold the world's attention at present – Gaza/Israel and Ukraine/Russia. Both seem near to impossible in brokering any solution that might bring about a lasting peace. In the case of Gaza and Israel we know that there are complexities that extend beyond the 80 years since partition, and go back thousands of years through the claim various people groups have on the region we know as the Holy Land.

A long history of antisemitism, seen at its worst through the horrors of the Holocaust, and of which there has been a resurgence in recent years, has made commenting on this conflict a very sensitive matter. It has been important to distinguish that a critique of the actions of the State of Israel is not an attack on Jewish people whether in Israel or elsewhere in the world. That can be a hard distinction for people to make.

The increasingly desperate situation for those in Gaza has led to further statements by governments, aid agencies, Churches and other faith groups, calling for a ceasefire and the effective distribution of aid. Our Archbishops issued such a statement this week, and I commend that to you for your prayers and for careful consideration as we determine what to say and how to act in response to this.

These are not the only conflicts in our world. There are some 110 armed conflicts on various scales in the regions of the world, with almost 20 of those resulting in the deaths of 1000 or more people in the past year. Too many of these become forgotten as the media focus shifts over time.

CLOSER TO HOME

I am very grateful to Paul Gilberd for being the preacher at our opening Eucharist. Paul brings strong Anglican whakapapa to us, but he is also immersed in the housing needs of our country both through his work on the City Mission Board and also as CEO of Community Housing Aotearoa.

As we have heard from Paul, housing is an increasingly urgent issue for people, especially, but not only, in our biggest city. A few weeks ago an Auckland Council report indicated that over an 8 month period there has been a doubling of the rough sleeper population to 809 people. The hidden nature of this population means that is likely to be higher.

The City Mission is a leader in the community's response to this issue in Auckland, working with other agencies like CHA along with the Government to establish long-term solutions to this crisis. In spite of the rhetoric sometimes applied to this issue, most rough sleepers do not want or choose to live on the street, but a complex set of circumstances have led to that situation.

OUR MISSION

To close then, I return to our mission as a Church, which is to be part of the Mission of God, bearers of the Good News of Jesus Christ and of the love and compassion of God towards all people. There are so many opportunities before us to be part of that work in communities and a world where people are searching for genuine belonging and for a spirituality that quenches a thirst within to know God. The mahi we undertake, the kōrero we share in this Synod is part of that whole as we respond to God's call and commit ourselves anew to the work of ministry.

Nō reira

Ehara taku toa I te toa takitahi, engari he toa takitini

(Our strength is not alone, but together)

Bishop Ross Bay

4th September 2025



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

RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ROYAL COMMISSION

1. Introduction

The Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia asked to be included within the scope of the Royal Commission's Inquiry, recognising that the Church would have much to learn from the work of the Inquiry and that our own failures would be revealed.

As we make this initial response to the recommendations of the Royal Commission we again acknowledge and take full responsibility on behalf of the Church for our failures, failures that those who have been in our care had a right to expect never to have occurred. Our apology before the Royal Commission to survivors of abuse was heartfelt and genuine. We fully acknowledge the expectation of survivors that our words of apology will be backed by meaningful action.

We come to this response as a church which is called by God to treasure and protect the incomparable value and worth of every person. We believe that all our responses to the Royal Commission recommendations must be viewed through this lens and those who are most vulnerable must remain at the forefront of our vision.

We are committed to continuing the transformation of the culture of our Church, wherever necessary to adopt 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, namely Aotearoa New Zealand and the Pacific. While some policies and programs already exist, we are undertaking a comprehensive and renewed approach to safeguarding, informed by the recommendations of the Commission.

To this end, we have established a working group tasked with overseeing this transformation. This group is forming 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 will make every effort to include these organisations in our work and encourage them to adopt the new policies and practices we believe are necessary.

2. Identification of recommendations

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

The Anglican Church

in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia

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

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

Recommendations 39(d),90,91,118,126,127

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

Recommendations 39(a)(b)(c)(d)(f),89,90,91,118 & 126,127

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

Recommendations

39(e)(k)(l),89,90,91,50,51,53,54,55,56,75,78,80,82,89,92,95,96,102,109,127,133

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

Recommendations 1,15,1639(i),89,90,91,65,66,67,94,97,101,103,104,105,106,107,108 and the 95 recommendations of the Puretumu Whānui Report

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

Recommendations 39(g),89,90,91,57,59,60,62,64,90

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

Recommendations 39(g)(h),89,90,91,63,64,93,98,99,100,128

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

Recommendations 52,81,83,110

8. Other

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 initial 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 accept and agree that the Church's responses align with Te Tiriti o Waitangi principles.

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.

This revision created the Three Tikanga model—Tikanga Māori, Tikanga Pākehā, and Tikanga Polynesia—allowing each to express their unique Anglican identity and participate equally in decision-making within General Synod. This co-governance approach is a forward-thinking response to the legacy of colonialism.

For Māori Anglicans, decision-making is led by Tikanga Māori under Te Pīhopatanga o Aotearoa. This iwi construct works closely with hapū, iwi, and Māori organisations, upholding tikanga and tino rangatiratanga, enabling Māori Anglicans to thrive within their culture and heritage.

Our theology schools continue to prepare a new generation of theologians with a strong understanding of Te Tiriti and Te Pouhere.

Despite these foundations, we acknowledge that 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.

To address these challenges, we will standardise Te Tiriti o Waitangi and safeguarding training across dioceses, Hui Amorangi, and theology schools. We will also integrate Te Tiriti principles into leadership, decision-making, and complaints processes through the Ministry Standards Commission. Additionally, we will advocate for adopting international frameworks like the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples to General Synod.

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

We fully accept and agree that all responses to the recommendations of the Royal Commission must uphold the rights of Māori, Pacific, and disabled persons.

Our Disability Commission works to create a more inclusive and accessible community for disabled people, guided by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and the New Zealand Disability Strategy.

In 2018, General Synod/Te Hīnota Whānui reinforced this commitment by encouraging churches to create accessible and inclusive environments. It supported the Disability Small Working Group within the Social Justice Commission, funded resources to help parishes improve accessibility, and promoted theological reflection on disability. The church has also backed training, conferences, and initiatives like Social Justice Week to build understanding and inclusion.

Our Three Tikanga streams allow for culturally appropriate practices and holistic care for Māori and Polynesians. As discussed above, we will advocate for General Synod to adopt the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

We will continue to work with each Tikanga and the Disability Commission to uphold the rights of Maori, Pacific and disabled people.

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 accept and agree with the emphasis in the recommendations upon the need for robust safeguarding policies that protect against abuse. We agree that these policies should cover prevention, response mechanisms, and support systems for survivors and include stricter reporting and accountability measures, including regular audits and public reporting on safeguarding practices.

Up until now, the individual Dioceses and Hui Amorangi which together make up our Province have been responsible for their own policies. With 13 separate bodies involved we recognise the risks of both inconsistency and also variability in capacity for oversight inherent in that system.

During 2025 we will undertake a thorough review of all safety policies across the Church. We believe a province-wide approach is needed. We are working initially to develop a unified set of safety principles and from there ensure policies reflect cultural contexts of the respective Tikanga. Clear communication of these policies will be a priority.

We believe that achieving consistency across the 13 entities in the Core Church will set a standard for all the schools and Social Service agencies which, although independent of the Core Church, seek to use the name of the Anglican Church. We will take advice on the degree to which we can impose requirements on those bodies, many of which are independent charitable trusts.

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

We accept and agree with the recommendations in that they urge the establishment of independent committees or partnerships with external agencies to ensure accessibility, transparency and accountability in handling complaints, especially abuse allegations, and applications for redress.

We have made changes to our complaints processes over recent years but we have recognised that the most effective response to both complaints and claims for redress will be provided by a body that is independent of the power structures of the church. Accordingly further change is needed. We also recognise that at present there is not a consistent approach across the church to applications for redress.

Improving our response to complaints and claims for redress by survivors of abuse is a high priority for the Church.

We are currently identifying and contracting with such an independent service which will be accessible by email, post, and a 24-hour free telephone service. That independent service will be operational by the first quarter of 2025.

We are awaiting a Government decision whether a state run redress scheme will be introduced and whether that scheme will be compulsory. Pending the Government's decisions in that regard that independent service will receive both complaints and redress claims, provide pastoral care for those approaching the Church and provide assessment and investigation of both complaints and redress claims.

In relation to our response to redress claims following independent assessment we will develop a consistent process for negotiation of restorative outcomes with survivors (including monetary redress payments). Our objective in these situations is to ensure justice within a context which is trauma informed and which prioritises the voice of the survivor.

We will undertake review and amendment of church legislation if needed to embed a more independent disciplinary tribunal process for complaints which relate to misconduct and provide more clarity and accountability in respect of outcomes for occurrences of unsatisfactory conduct.

Data in relation to numbers and types of complaints and redress requests received and outcomes will be regularly reported to our governance body, General Synod, enabling oversight and informed decision-making to improve safeguarding practices.

We will actively promote use of the same independent service by all bodies affiliated to the Church

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

We accept and agree with the recommendations which are emphasising the need for thorough and regular vetting of all people who are responsible for ministry to and care of children and vulnerable people and for vetting systems which enable both audit and access to vetting data as people move from place to place.

At present we do not have a consistent and auditable approach to vetting across the whole church.

Given the nature of Christian ministry and our commitment as a church to always be ready to serve all people, including the most vulnerable, we believe that a comprehensive and consistent vetting regime will need to include not only all clergy, paid or unpaid, but also all in lay ministry positions of any kind who minister directly to any age group from children to adults and all volunteers who by reason of their role appear in any way to be clothed with authority or placed in position by the church.

We are currently investigating contracting an independent provider to implement this process. We are conducting trials with the intention that a single background screening and vetting service will be in place by mid-2025.

Given the significant number of volunteers in our Church, we will take a phased approach, prioritizing those in higher-risk roles.

We will strongly encourage our affiliated schools and social care providers to review and strengthen their vetting processes, in line with government requirements and relevant recommendations.

We will also welcome any state run accreditation programme which can provide reliable input into our vetting regime.

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

We accept and agree with all the recommendations which represent best practice in training.

Up until now, individual Dioceses and Hui Amorangi have been responsible for training for ministry and in relation to safety. There has been no provincial oversight of the content or depth of delivery of training.

We recognise in a disaggregated church organisation like the Anglican Church the need for and challenge of achieving consistency in both development of content and delivery of training.

We are committed to review the development of all the training offered across the church to implement these recommendations and will report regularly and specifically as to our progress in this regard.

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

We accept and agree with the recommendations which promote the creation of full, accurate and accessible data systems which are properly maintained.

Currently our data and record keeping in relation to personnel, disciplinary issues, complaints and matters of concern is held within each Diocese and Hui Amorangi across our Church and is often in poorly indexed forms, meaning that access to data and records can both difficult and unreliable.

We are therefore committed to centralising collection and analysis of data on abuse and misconduct. Centralised record keeping will support the identification and management of risks posed by individuals in religious or pastoral roles, ensuring proactive responses to safeguarding concerns.

We will adopt best practice guidelines for record-keeping and data sovereignty. We recognize the importance of creating and maintaining full, accurate, and objective records that reflect incidents and responses related to abuse, neglect, and overall wellbeing.

These records will be stored securely, indexed logically, and maintained to ensure the integrity and accessibility of information over time. We will also prioritize individuals' rights to access, amend, or annotate their own records and will establish procedures to retain records of abuse and neglect for at least 75 years to allow for delayed disclosures and facilitate claims for redress or civil litigation.

We have begun by ensuring that all contemporary complaints, and redress settlements are recorded centrally. In the case of complaints of Misconduct that are upheld these decisions are publicly notified. Gradually other records such as Clearances for Safe Ministry and Professional Standards training records for lay and ordained ministers of our Church will be centrally maintained.

8. Other Recommendations

a) Church related Recommendations

There are two further specific recommendations which apply to the Church in relation to review of memorials and assistance to police in historical abuse investigations.

We will circularise all 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.

We will give every assistance we can to the police within the five legal jurisdictions (Aotearoa New Zealand and across Polynesia) in which the Church operates in any investigations of historical abuse.

b) Recommendations in relation to Government action

We note the significant number of recommendations of the Royal Commission which call for a wide range of specific Government actions. Some of the Government's decisions in relation to those recommendations will directly impact upon churches, faith-based schools and other parts of the charitable sector affiliated to our church who serve children, young people and vulnerable adults.

We acknowledge and affirm the overarching intention of those recommendations to create a safer environment across our whole society, including within faith based settings. We await the Government's decisions in relation to those recommendations. We cannot respond to them without seeing the detail of the measures intended to be implemented.

We do ask that the government specifically consider the large numbers of volunteers involved within the charitable sector, schools, and churches as it determines the regulatory requirements it imposes.

We also ask that there is greater clarity provided through careful work in definitions so that bodies such as the Church and its affiliated schools and organisations can identify where the Government's requirements will impact upon them. Specifically we ask for clarity of the extent and scope of the term "in care".

We note that recommendation 8 of the Pūretumu Torowhānui Report emphasises that the Crown should consult with those whom its actions will impact. We are more than willing to participate in any consultation process.

9. Conclusion

This response marks the beginning of a long journey towards transformation. We are committed to ensuring that our Church becomes a place where all people—precious in the sight of God—can flourish in safety and dignity.

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 acknowledge the serious flaws in our past, but we are resolute in our commitment to create a safer, more accountable future for all those in our care.

Archbishop Don Tamihere

Archbishop Justin Duckworth

Archbishop Sione Ulu'ilakepa