



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

30th November 2020

**A statement from the two Aotearoa/New Zealand-based Archbishops prior to the Faith-based Redress
Hearing of The Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care**

Abuse in any form is incompatible with the love of God. It is completely unacceptable within the Church. It violates our sacred belief that all people are made in the image of God, are loved by God, and deserve to be treated with dignity and respect.

All people, and especially our children and the most vulnerable among us, must be assured that they are safe when they are in our churches, our schools, our agencies and organisations. There must also be confidence that when a complaint is made it will be treated seriously and with a process that everyone can have confidence in.

That is why, when the original terms of reference for the Royal Commission were released, we knew that we had to approach the Government and ask that they be extended to include faith-based organisations such as ourselves.

We made this request because we believe that there can be confidence in the independence, transparency and rigor of a Royal Commission. We're grateful that the Government listened to the same request from survivor groups and extended the terms of reference.

As we approach the Redress hearings there can be no doubt that the evidence will show that people have been abused within the Anglican Church, our schools, our agencies and organisations. Abuse has happened throughout our wider communities and in State care in the past. It will have happened within the wider Church as well.

The evidence shows that there are clear examples of the Church failing to handle complaints of abuse appropriately, further victimising survivors. Any good person would be horrified by this, and rightly so. It is completely unacceptable and that is why we are cooperating fully with the Royal Commission.

It will be right and appropriate that the Church apologises for these failures and for the impact of these failures, and that apology will be unequivocal. It will also be important for the Church to offer appropriate support and to approach redress in real and tangible ways.

We are utterly committed to ensuring that abuse in all its forms is eradicated from our communities.

What is most important now is that the survivors of abuse be heard, and that they be treated with the dignity and respect they deserve.

Archbishop Donald Tamihere
Te Pihopa o Aotearoa

Archbishop Philip Richardson
Senior Bishop of the New Zealand Dioceses

