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MEDIA RELEASE

Catholic leaders publish update on Royal Commission response

Bishops and leaders of religious orders have today published an update on the Church's ongoing work to respond to the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care.

The document captures the Church's perspective on each of the Royal Commission's 138 recommendations and, where applicable, provides an update on work undertaken before, during or since the inquiry to address those recommendations.

As outlined by New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference president Bishop Steve Lowe and Sr Clare Conaglen RSJ, the president of the Congregational Leaders' Conference Aotearoa New Zealand, the report categorises the Church's work in two main areas: Responding to Abuse and Safeguarding.

"This update forms part of our ongoing commitment to survivors," the leaders say.

"It is an acknowledgement that we have heard your experiences, listened to your voices and remain committed to a journey of reform.

"We are deeply grateful for the courage of survivors and the ways many of you continue to accompany us on that journey. We acknowledge that others find our responses insufficient."

Bishop Lowe and Sr Clare explain that the work of addressing abuse is a critical job for the Church, but one that is best tackled as a community.

"In Aotearoa New Zealand, we are working alongside the Government and other faith-based organisations to bring about the necessary change," they write.

"We have learned much from the experiences and expertise of others. When society takes collective responsibility for cultural change, we can achieve far more together than we can alone."

Speaking specifically of the Catholic content, Bishop Lowe and Sr Clare noted that there have been important changes in the global Church context to reform processes that contributed, or may have contributed, to abuse and inadequate responses.

"Yet we know more must be done," they write.

"While we cannot change the past, we can help shape the future. As we saw through the work of the Royal Commission, a society that works together can commit itself to building a safer and healthier community for all."

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Among a range of actions the Church has taken in recent years highlighted in the document are improvements in safeguarding practices and responding to abuse complaints, the establishment of a Care and Safety Committee, and reviewing honorifics used in Catholic settings.

The Church has committed to continuing to publish annual updates on its progress on the Royal Commission's recommendations, with this document meeting that requirement for 2026.

The full document can be found at: <https://bit.ly/CatholicUpdateRoyalCommission>