

26 November 2025

Submission to the Social Services and Community Select Committee on the **Redress System for Abuse in Care Bill**.

It has been almost a year since we submitted on the **Responding to Abuse in Care Legislation Amendment Bill** by which we also celebrated the Bill's passing into law last month. We understand that the current **Redress System for Abuse in Care Bill** is aimed primarily at State care facilities, yet we are eagerly observing the cultivation of this Bill, as we believe the Bill holds great merit, and with the amendments and recommendation in our submission, this Bill has the potential to be a balanced law we could fully support.

We support the Bill's goal of delivering justice, recognition, and healing for the many people who experienced abuse in State and Faith-based care. For too long, survivors have endured immense harm without acknowledgement, support, or meaningful redress. This legislation represents a critical step toward restoring dignity, providing compensation, and fostering systemic change.

Our submission is grounded in three interlinked sources of insight:

- The findings of the [Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care](#)
- The lived experience and expressed concerns of survivors, especially those from vulnerable communities
- The ethical framework of Catholic Social Teaching (CST) emphasising human dignity, justice, solidarity, and care for the vulnerable

Uneasy lies the Crown

The Royal Commission documented extensive and systemic abuse in State and faith-based institutions between 1950 and 2019. It found widespread sexual, physical, emotional, and spiritual abuse, as well as institutional failures in safeguarding, complaint handling, and oversight.

Estimates indicate that [200,000 – 256,000](#) people may have been abused in care during this period. Survivors reported long-term trauma, disrupted education, fractured relationships, loss of cultural identity, and social marginalisation. ([AP, 2024](#))

We question whether the Bill's framework basis for financial redress has been developed with adequate professional psychological provision to incorporate the [victim to offender cycle](#) or if indeed, a victim/offender overlap has been clinically diagnosed in a survivor with a history of violent or sexual offending.

Royal Commission findings also confirmed that Māori and Pasifika survivors were disproportionately affected by abuse with an estimate of over 100,000+ individuals directly affected, alongside additional intergenerational impact to whānau. Māori were 3.5 times more likely than Pākehā to experience out-of-home placement, and Māori and Pasifika survivors likely represent more than half of all survivors. ([Cabinet Papers, 2024](#)). These inequities reinforce the need for a redress system that is culturally grounded, equity-focused, and responsive to systemic disadvantage.

The Church & Redress

Catholic institutions in Aotearoa New Zealand have:

- Issued formal public apologies acknowledging harm and systemic failures
- Accepted most Royal Commission findings
- Committed to strengthening safeguarding frameworks, and
- Reaffirmed 5 [Safeguarding Culture Standards](#) including screening and transparency.

Independent reviews e.g., [GCPS Consulting](#) confirmed progress for the Church but noted ongoing gaps in transparency, consistency, and cultural change.

Catholic Social Teaching (CST) provides an ethical framework for redress by:

- **Dignity of the Person:** every survivor deserves recognition and respect
- **Preferential Option for the Vulnerable:** prioritising those most harmed, including Māori, Pasifika, and other marginalised groups ([Cabinet Papers, 2024](#)).
- **Solidarity:** institutional failures inflicted collective harm, redress is a communal responsibility.
- **Justice, Truth, and Reconciliation:** redress must include recognition, accountability, systemic reform, and healing for both individuals and communities.

Key Concerns

Exclusionary Provisions

The Bill's **presumption against financial redress for survivors with serious convictions** risks systemic injustice. Australian experience shows similar exclusions disproportionately affected survivors whose offending was often directly linked to trauma in care reported in the [Australian National Redress Scheme, 2018](#).

Given systemic inequities, Māori and Pasifika survivors are more likely to be affected by this exclusion, reinforcing disparities and undermining dignity, equity, and CST principles ([Cabinet Papers, 2024](#)).

We recommend removing this presumption or replacing it with trauma-informed, case-by-case assessment.

Cultural Safety

The Bill currently lacks explicit provisions for:

- Kaupapa Māori governance and decision-making
- Māori-led services and culturally competent assessment, and
- Trauma-informed, culturally responsive practices.

International evidence shows [Indigenous survivors](#) face alienation or re-traumatisation in formal redress systems without cultural safety mechanisms in place or practice. Embedding cultural safety and Te Tiriti/Tikanga consistent redress design is critical for the healing process.

Access Barriers

Survivors who are elderly, disabled, rural, digitally excluded, or traumatised may face difficulties accessing a formal, centralised system. Access must be broadened with:

- In-person application options
- Survivor advocates or navigators
- Victim-centred processes
- Community outreach, and
- Long-term availability of support.

Independent Oversight

Institutional self-regulation has repeatedly failed survivors. The Bill should establish:

- An independent governance body,
- Survivor representation in oversight and decision-making, and
- Public reporting on outcomes, processing times, equity, and systemic improvements.

Independent oversight ensures credibility, transparency, and survivor trust.

Timely and Consistent Decision-Making

International and Australian redress schemes show that delays, inconsistent assessments, and lack of resourcing exacerbate survivor harm ([AP, 2024](#)).

The Bill must guarantee timely decisions, clear assessment standards, and sustainable resourcing.

Our Recommendations for Amendments

1. **Remove or revise exclusionary provisions** and allow all survivors access, with case-by-case trauma-informed assessment.
2. **Guarantee independent oversight and survivor participation** by establishing governance with mandated survivor representation and public reporting.
3. **Embed cultural safety and Te Tiriti/Tikanga consistency** by providing Kaupapa Māori pathways, Māori-led services, and culturally competent, trauma-informed practice including Pasifika focused support.
4. **Ensure accessibility for all survivors** with multiple application pathways, in-person support, advocacy, outreach, disability accommodations and plain-language or translated materials.
5. **Provide holistic support** through counselling, wellness services, whānau support, cultural reconnection alongside financial redress and psychosocial support.
6. **Commit to sustainable resourcing, consistent standards, and timely decisions** with adequate staffing, funding, guidelines, and deadlines to prevent delays and inequitable outcomes.

Conclusion

The **Redress System for Abuse in Care Bill** represents a historic opportunity to deliver justice, healing, and recognition. To succeed, the system must be survivor-centred, culturally grounded, equitable, and independent. We urge the Committee to strengthen the Bill according to these recommendations so that every survivor, without exception, can access meaningful redress.

We offer our recommendations to this Bill with the wisdom of time and truth: much has changed in a year, but more is yet needed from Crown, State and Faith institutions to keep our children and vulnerable people safe, especially in the form of redress for those who have walked the long path to healing. We remain committed to supporting this process and advocating for justice, transparency, and dignity for all survivors.

Thank you for considering our submission.

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