

Presbyterian Support Central Response to the Royal Commission Recommendations on abuse in care.

Review date: August 2025

Introduction

Presbyterian Support Central operated a children's Home in Berhampore, Wellington from early 1930's until around mid 1980s when it was closed.

The Royal Commission's Final report which was released in July 2024 contained 138 recommendations. Whilst all are very relevant in the context of the purpose of the Review undertaken by the Royal Commission, xx are directly relevant to Presbyterian Support Central (PSC). A full schedule of these recommendations is attached.

For the purpose of clarity, we have focussed on those Recommendations contained in the Final Report that have implications and relevancy for: PSC as follows:

No. 3 Public acknowledgement and apologies for historical abuse and neglect in the care of the State provided by faith-based institutions.

Response: PSC has issued an apology which has been published on its website – see www.psc.org.nz

No. 5 All entities that provide care, or have provided care, directly or indirectly on behalf of the state and faith-based entities, local authorities and any other relevant entities should review the appropriateness of any streets, public amenities, public honours or any memorial named after, depicting, recognising or celebrating a proven perpetrator of abuse and neglect in care.....

Response: PSC does not have any entity, property or awards etc. in the name of the reported perpetrator.

Nos. 6 – 7 Where there are reasonable grounds to believe that torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment have occurred in care.....

Response: Whilst it is clear that abuse occurred to some children whilst they were in the care of PSC, the Home closed in mid 1980s. PSC has not been involved in the residential care of young people since then.

Nos. 8-9 The establishment of the puretumu torowhanui system requires all faith-based institutions and indirect care providers join the scheme and are required to ensure that survivors, their whanau and support networks are made aware of the puretumu torowhanui system and support options available to them.

Response: PSC will ensure that those impacted will be made aware of the Puretumu Torowhanui scheme

No. 20 The Government and faith-based institutions should jointly establish a fund to provide contestable funding for projects that promote effective community healing from the collective impacts of abuse and neglect in care.....

Response: Whilst PSC supports the concept, until we know further details it is difficult for us to form a firm view at this stage.



No. 39 The State, faith-based entities (including indirect care providers) and others involved in the care system should be guided by prescribed Care Safety Principles for preventing and responding to abuse and neglect when making decisions, performing functions, or exercising powers and duties in relation to the care of children, young people and adults in care.....

Response: PSC does not now provide residential care for children and young people, but it does provide care for older residents in its aged care facilities which are regulated by health care standards.

No. 50 The leaders of faith-based entities providing care directly or indirectly should ensure there is effective oversight and leadership of safeguarding at the highest level. Including at governance or trustee level where applicable.

Response: We agree and PSC leaders both at management and governance are alert to the criticality of safeguarding those in our care.

No. 51 The leaders of all state and faith-based entities providing care directly or indirectly should ensure that safeguarding is a genuine priority for the institutions, key performance indicators are in place for senior leaders and sufficient resources are available for all aspects of safeguarding.

Response: PSC is fully alert to the need of safeguarding those in its care, although it has not provided for care for children and young people since the mid-1980s.

No. 113 The government and faith-based entities should disseminate and publicise the findings and Recommendations of this Inquiry to the widest and most transparent manner possible.

Response: We have consulted with the Crown Response Office and will be guided by them as to how to effectively meet this recommendation. It is our intention at the least to place our responses on our website.

No 125 The government and faith-based institutions should take any and all actions required to give effect to the Inquiries recommendations set out in the Commission’s Final Report.

Response: Agreed, we will do whatever is required to ensure that the recommendations that are applicable to PSC are implemented.

No. 126 – 127 Requirement that providers of care recognise the diversity of children, young people and adults in care and put in place practices that reflect the rights, experiences and needs of people in care

Response: Agreed.

No. 130 The government and faith-based institutions should publish their responses to the Final Report and the Inquiry’s Interim Reports on whether they accept each of the Inquiry’s findings in whole or in part. The responses should be published within two months of this Report being tabled in the House of Representatives.

Response: We published on its website: www.psc.org.nz its response to the two findings in relation to PSC.

No. 131 The government and faith-based institutions should issue formal public responses to this report about whether each Recommendation is accepted, accepted in principle, rejected or subject to further consideration. Each response should include a plan for how the accepted Recommendations will be implemented, the reasons for rejecting any Recommendations, and a timeframe for any further consideration required. Each response should be published within four months of this report being tabled in the House of Representatives.

Response: Date response published on our website: www.psc.org.nz prior to November 2024.

No 133 The government and faith-based institutions and other agencies that implement the Inquiry's Recommendations should:

- a) Publicly report on the implementation of the inquiry's' Recommendations contained in the final report and all previous reports including the implementation status of each Recommendation and any identified issues and risks;
- b) Publish the implementation report annually for at least 9 years commencing 12 months after the tabling of this Report in the House of Representatives (by 24 November 2025). We need to synchronise and provide a copy to the Care System Office and Care Safe Agency.

Response: Noted. We will synchronise this obligation with the production of our Annual Report in November each year to meet this requirement.

No. 138 The government and faith-based institutions should publish formal responses to the Independent 9-year review, indicating whether its advice on further steps is accepted, accepted in principle. Rejected or subject to further consideration. Each response should include a plan for how the accepted Recommendations will be implemented, the reasons for rejecting any recommendations, and a timeframe for any further consideration required. Each response should be published by 31 December 2033.

Response: Noted. Further consultation with other PS organizations, legal advisors and the Crown Response Unit will be required so that we fully understand our obligations.

Recommendations 52-56, 59, 60-67, 75, 78-83, 89-110. Apply to Faith-based entities that provide care for children, young people and adults in care regarding safeguarding culture and practices. As PSC does not provide care for children and young people, whilst we support the concepts, they are not directly applicable to PSC. We have assumed that the term 'adult in care' refers to those requiring hands on care e.g. intellectually disabled and not those who are residents in our Age Care facilities.

Summary

Presbyterian Support Central has continued to meet with survivors who make contact and provide copies of files that we hold to them and in the case of a deceased survivor, to their family. We continue to hold approx. 1,000 individual files of those who were in the care of our Berhampore Children's Home. Along with the files we have a large collection of photos which we copy and provide to survivors who see themselves in the photos. We are very open and available to continue to respond to any enquiries we receive from survivors, their families or via Survivor Experiences Services.