

Our work | Ā mātou mahi

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The Crown Response Unit coordinates the Government's response to the [Abuse in Care Royal Commission of Inquiry](#).

The information below describes our current work programme as we respond to the Royal Commission's final report [Whanaketia](#), published in July 2024 and the [Royal Commission's redress report](#) published in December 2021.

If you would like to stay up to date on our work programme, please email: contact@abuseinquiryresponse.govt.nz with 'Pānui' in the email subject line.

Our work programme

The Crown Response Unit is working through the recommendations in the Royal Commissions' final report, [Whanaketia - Through Pain and trauma, from darkness to light](#), published on 24 July 2024.

In the meantime, our response to the Royal Commission's [He Purapura Ora, he Māra Tipu from Redress to Puretumu Torowhānui](#), published in December 2021 has focused on:

1. improving redress for survivors
2. immediate projects to help improve survivors' experience of redress with current processes
3. consideration of civil litigation settings
4. additional ways to prevent abuse, through a potential new right to be free from abuse and potentially expanding the focus of WorkSafe NZ.

Consideration of civil litigation settings (including both limitation and ACC bars) is led by the Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (as the agency responsible for ACC policy).

Design of a redress system

A survivor-led Redress Design Group and Advisory Group produced high-level design proposals for a new redress system. These have been presented to the Lead Coordination Minister for the Government's Response to the Royal Commission's Report into Historical Abuse in State Care and in the Care of Faith-based Institutions, Minister Erica Stanford.

The high-level proposals cover:

- comment on the system's intended principles, purpose, functions, and scope, with the option to outline a strong case for alteration to any of the specific aspects, especially from a Treaty perspective
- how the system should safely connect with and support survivors to navigate their redress journey – how redress needs to “look and feel” to give survivors confidence in the redress system and to provide them with a safe, accessible, trauma informed, and culturally responsive experience
- the types and mix of services and supports that should ideally be provided as part of each function
- feedback on draft apology and payment frameworks, example redress models and proposals prepared by the Crown Response Unit, with a focus on what is needed to support meaningful recognition of the harms people have experienced
- an outline of the critical issues that will need to be considered in the detailed design and implementation planning, including cost estimates and phasing of implementation.

The Government has agreed that redress options need to be developed for further consideration before final decisions are made on the detailed work required to improve redress to survivors of abuse in care.

This work has the oversight of a Ministerial Group established in April and made up of Ministers whose work relates to the care and redress systems.

[The March 2024 proactively released Cabinet paper \[PDF, 1022 KB\]](#) refers to the establishment of the Ministerial Group.

Cabinet will be making a number of key decisions over the next six months to progress this complex work.

Improving support for survivors of abuse in care

As recommended in the Royal Commission's 2021 redress report [He Purapura Ora, he Māra Tipu. From Redress to Puretumu Torowhānui](#) the Government has been working on four projects while work on a improving redress for survivors of abuse in care is underway.

These four projects have either been completed or are still underway:

1. rapid payments for claimants
2. a listening service
3. easier records access for survivors
4. a national apology.

1. Rapid payments

Rapid payments are being run by four existing claims agencies:

1. Ministry of Social Development
2. Oranga Tamariki
3. Ministry of Education
4. Ministry of Health.



Find out more: [Historic claims agency details](#)

2. Survivor experiences service

In response to the Royal Commission's recommendation to provide an avenue for survivors to share their experiences of abuse in care the Government established [the Survivor Experiences Service](#).

The service is housed within Te Tari Taiwhenua – Department of Internal Affairs and will be guided by an independent Board to provide a safe, supportive, confidential place for survivors of abuse in care, and their whānau, to share their experiences.

Survivors and whānau can contact the Survivor Experiences Service to organise a time and place for them to share their experiences:

- call 0800 456 090
- email contact@survivorexperiences.govt.nz
- text 8328.

Visit [Home | Survivor Experiences Service](#) for more information.

3. Easier records access for survivors

The Royal Commission found that many survivors had difficulty accessing their records. The issues included lengthy delays; or getting incomplete or heavily redacted information.

The Crown Response Unit and Archives New Zealand are working together on five initiatives to make it easier for survivors of abuse to access their personal records while they were in care. Initiatives 1-3 are led by the Crown Response Unit and 4-5 by Archives New Zealand.

1. Principles

The principles are on how agencies and non-state organisations could:

- respond to records requests
- make redactions
- ensure a consistent and transparent approach.

[Shared redaction guidance \[PDF, 206 KB\]](#) has been developed for agencies and non-State organisations to improve consistency when making redactions to records to be provided to individuals. The goal is to improve a person's access to their own information, while being clear when information has been redacted to protect other's privacy.

[Online information has also been developed](#) explaining the records and redactions process.

Organisations that have already indicated their intention to use the shared redaction guidance include:

- Oranga Tamariki
- Ministry of Social Development – Historic Claims Unit
- Ministry of Education – Sensitive Claims

- Ministry of Health
- Whaikaha Ministry of Disabled People
- The Methodist Church Archives of New Zealand.

2. Setting up a central website

Setting up a central website for survivors, care-experienced people, their whānau and support people that would provide:

- practical advice on how and where to access their records
- information about their rights to access and influence records
- what to expect from the experience of requesting their records.

The website would not provide direct access to the records themselves and would not contain people's personal records.

3. The design of a records support service

The design of a records support service is being informed by insights from survivors.

4. Retention and disposal rules

Archives NZ has published the scope and definition of care records to help the government and other organisations know which records are valuable for those in care and should be protected until a wider decision is made about:

- how long to keep these records
- what to do with them long term.

You can find the scope and definition here: [The care records definition](#) (archives.govt.nz)

Temporary care records protection

The Chief Archivist has issued a [temporary care records protection instruction](#) to protect care records while work is undertaken to review the retention and disposal of State care records.

This replaces the previous broad disposal moratorium aimed at protecting records for the Abuse in Care Royal Commission's investigations.

The instruction:

- allows for transfer of records to the control of the Chief Archivist
- transfer of records to another public office where appropriate
- relates to records covered by the [new care records definition](#).

This action will not impact your ability to access your own records. As a member of the public, you can continue to request your own records by approaching the relevant government agency.

5. Cataloguing and indexing care records

This work involves increasing cataloguing and indexing of care records already held at [Te Rua Mahara o te Kāwanatanga Archives New Zealand](#) so records holders can find personal information more easily when someone asks for it.

4. Preparing for a public apology

The Royal Commission recommended the Crown and relevant faith-based organisations should publicly acknowledge and apologise for the tūkino, or abuse, inflicted and suffered after it has delivered its final report.

The Prime Minister Christopher Luxon has announced the Government will publicly apologise on 12 November 2024:

[Government acknowledges courageous abuse survivors](#) | [Beehive.govt.nz](#)

The Crown Response Unit's work on Crown apologies involves survivor groups, tikanga experts and representatives from other communities impacted by abuse in care.

Providing records to the Royal Commission - how it worked

The Abuse in Care Royal Commission of Inquiry had two primary information sources:



1. the testimony of survivors and others involved in State and faith-based care
2. records held by the Crown, churches and other organisations.

As part of our work, we coordinated responses to the Royal Commission's information requests on behalf of the Crown.

We identified the agency holding the information and ensured they provide information on time and in a consistent way. We helped agencies compile their responses and identified information the Commission needed.

The Royal Commission requested from the Crown historical records it needed for its different investigations. The requests varied widely in scale, from a few documents held by a single agency to thousands of documents across many organisations.

Archives New Zealand also provided the Royal Commission with older records:

- [How Archives New Zealand provide records to the Royal Commission](#) 
 - [Accessible version - How Archives New Zealand provide records to the Royal Commission](#) 
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