

# PREPARED FOR CHRISTIAN SAVINGS CONFERENCE 2024

## LESSONS IN GOVERNANCE FROM THE ROYAL COMMISSION REPORT

**The Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care recently issued its final report, Whanaketia. The report contains 138 recommendations and references a further 95 recommendations from its interim December 2021 report. Many of these recommendations have implications for churches and faith-based organisations.**

*It is possible that, as a consequence of the Royal Commission's recommendations, legal compliance obligations for churches and faith-based organisations will significantly increase in the area of caring for children and other vulnerable persons.*

In our experience, churches and faith-based organisations are responsive to a sense of justice that goes beyond mere compliance with legal obligations.

What should churches and faith-based organisations be considering now to ensure that they care well for children and other vulnerable persons and respond well when complaints are received?

- ① Have we read and discussed the Royal Commission's Recommendations in our leadership meetings?
- ② Have we considered the recommendations for faith-based institutions, the care safety principles, and the recommended implementation time table?
- ③ What are we doing now to implement the Recommendations? Are we acting now rather than waiting for the Government to impose new legal obligations?
- ④ How can we work together with other churches and faith-based organisations in developing best practice models for preventing and responding to abuse and neglect?
- ⑤ Should we make a submission on any legislation the Government tables in response to the recommendations?
- ⑥ Have we reviewed our policies on preventing and responding to abuse and neglect?
  - (a) Have we considered the care safety principles and their application in our organisation?
  - (b) Have we developed a conflict of interest policy to ensure that we act in the best interests of complainants while also providing appropriate support for alleged perpetrators?
  - (c) Have we published our policies on preventing and responding to abuse and neglect so that they are accessible by affected persons?

- 7 How can we ensure that robust accountability structures are in place for all our leaders?
- 8 How can we ensure our leaders, staff and volunteers are given appropriate training on identifying, preventing and responding to abuse and neglect in care, cultural awareness, and addressing prejudice and discrimination?
- 9 Have we identified and developed relationships with appropriate independent organisations that can support our training and response processes?

If your church or faith-based organisation receives a complaint of historical abuse, what should you be considering?

- 1 Is our entity the correct legal entity to be responding to the claim? Would our entity have been the entity that had responsibility for care of the complainant?
- 2 Although we may not have legal liability, currently, for the complaint, morally do we think it is appropriate to investigate and respond to the complaint?
- 3 Do we have insurance that might respond if the claim is substantiated? Have we contacted our insurer to check if they have any requirements as to how we respond to the complaint?
- 4 What external support do we have available to help us with responding to the complaint?
- 5 Have we considered and applied any procedures we have in place for responding to complaints? Have we consider what type of investigation might be appropriate?
- 6 If it is found that abuse likely occurred, and our entity had responsibility for the alleged perpetrator, what approach will we take to considering redress?
- 7 How will we communicate with the complainant, alleged perpetrator and other affected persons throughout? Do we understand our Privacy Act responsibilities?



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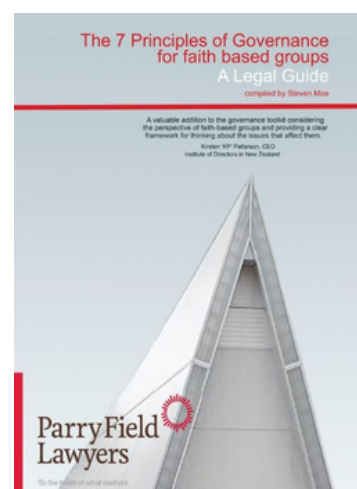


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