



Principles of the MCNZ Resolution and Redress Process for dealing with claims of abuse of children in Methodist care

The Methodist Church of New Zealand/Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa (“the Church”) has created a formal process for people to seek redress and resolution for abuse that occurred while in care of Methodist organisations.

Redress means to remedy, set right and/or compensate. The Church seeks to firstly acknowledge harm done to people who experienced abuse while in the care of a Methodist institution/entity, then actively engage in steps to ‘set right’ the experience.

Overarching Principles

In responding to claims of abuse and applications for redress, the Church will:

- Ensure access to resolution with appropriate support and facilitation and with minimal difficulty and cost for applicants.
- Allow applicants to engage in the process in a manner of their own choosing. This may be verbal, written or on-line.
- Be focussed on the needs of the applicant.
- Ensure all those involved in interaction with the applicant and making decisions affecting applicants have a proper understanding of the issues and relevant training.
- Assess, offer and provide resolution having regard to the nature and impact of abuse and cultural needs of the applicant.

Eligibility for the scheme

To be eligible to apply for redress and resolution, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- the abuse was experienced while in the care of a Methodist Church institution, or
- a Methodist Church institution was responsible for the abuser having contact with the person who was abused

Types of Redress

The Church may offer the following in terms of redress:

1. A personal response from the Church, which may include a verbal and/or written apology to the applicant by the relevant part of the Church, and where appropriate to the applicant’s whānau
2. Funding for counselling or psychological care, where needed
3. Assistance if required to report abuse to the Police, if agreed with the applicant
4. A monetary sum as some acknowledgement of the seriousness of the harm suffered

Personal Response

If the applicant requests a personal response, and their claim has been verified by the Review Panel, the Church may offer the following:

1. A face to face meeting with a Church representative

An opportunity will be provided to meet with senior representatives of the relevant Church entity who will ensure that the process and interactions with the applicant are respectful and empathetic.

Where an applicant requests a personal response from a particular Church entity, that particular Church entity will be responsible for delivering that personal response.

The Church will listen to the applicant's story, tell them they have been believed, apologise and acknowledge responsibility.

The Church will acknowledge the seriousness of the impacts of the matters raised in the application and ensure that the needs of the applicant are taken into account before the meeting is held, including identification of the most appropriate venue and location of the meeting, and support people.

2. Apology

Applicants may seek a verbal and/or written apology, a written acknowledgement of the steps the Church has taken, or will take, to protect against further abuse.

The senior member of the Church may provide a verbal, meaningful and genuine apology at a meeting with the applicant.

A written apology may be provided in a form that is meaningful to the applicant.

The Church welcomes feedback from applicants about the personal response offered and provided. The Church will take that feedback into account in implementation and in ongoing reviews of this policy.

Counselling/Psychological care

The Church may offer counselling or psychological care to the applicant where their need is related to the harm resulting from the abuse suffered while in the care of the Church.

The costs of counselling and psychological care offered by the Church will be supported in accordance with the following principles:

1. Applicants will be allowed flexibility and choice in relation to counselling and psychological care and will be encouraged to seek support from registered practitioners with appropriate expertise in recovery work with people who have experienced abuse.
2. Counselling and psychological care from a professional registered counsellor or therapist will be available for the applicant to meet their particular needs for up to 12 sessions.
Further sessions may be negotiated between the counsellor/therapist and the Church, if required.
3. Counselling and psychological care may be offered to the applicant's immediate family members, if this is necessary for the applicant's treatment.

Monetary Payments

When the Review Panel has verified a claim and recommended an ex gratia payment, the amount offered will take into account:

1. Severity of the abuse
2. Severity of the impact and harm caused by the abuse
3. Any additional factors

The offer of an ex gratia payment will remain open for acceptance by the applicant for a period of one year from the date the offer is made and will be in full and final settlement of the claim.