

UNDER Section 20 of the Inquiries Act 2013
IN THE MATTER of the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Historical Abuse in
State Care and in the Care of Faith-based Institutions

**PRESBYTERIAN SUPPORT CENTRAL'S
SUBMISSION IN RESPONSE TO
NOTICE TO PRODUCE NO. 528**

5 October 2022

 **Simpson Grierson**
Barristers & Solicitors

H Smith / S E Kuper
Telephone: +64 3 968 4011
Email: helen.smith@simpsongrierson.com
DX SX11174
PO Box 2402
Wellington

TO: The Chair and Commissioners

History, establishment and governance

2. History and establishment of Presbyterian Support Central including the provision of care services and any changes to the services provided. Please include in your answer any role that the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand had in the establishment of Presbyterian Support Central.

1. The Presbyterian Support Central (**PSC**) story started in 1909 when Reverend Dr. James Gibb, Minister of St. John's Presbyterian Church in Wellington, initiated a project to care for orphaned and vulnerable children.
2. It appears from the foundational documents we could locate that in the early 1930's the Presbyterian Church (**Church**) separated the Social Services arm of the Church from the Church itself and established the Presbyterian Orphanage and Social Services Association as an unincorporated entity. In 1937 the organisation's name was changed to Wellington Presbyterian Social Services Trust Board and a decision was made to incorporate under the Religious Charitable and Educational Trusts Act 1908. This occurred on 4 February 1938. The name was changed again on 19 January 1960 to Wellington Presbyterian Social Services Association (Incorporated) under the Charitable Trusts Act 1957. On 20 May 2002 we became known as Presbyterian Support Central.
3. In the early days "caring for children in need" was the focus of the Church founded organisation. It opened a children's home in Brooklyn with the appointment of a Matron in 1909. With the growth in numbers of children needing care, two homes were established - one for boys and one for girls. In the 1950s, the boys' and girls' homes merged into one, the Berhampore Home (**Home**). At that time, the Home was run by the Wellington Presbyterian Social Services Trust Board, as it was then called. The organisation subsequently expanded into caring for

the elderly and opened its first care home for elderly in Wellington's Island Bay in 1951.

4. In 1976 the Wellington Counselling Centre was opened, later to be re-named Family Works, with a new initiative in-place to support children, families and communities in need (but not providing direct care).
5. The Home closed in 1985 with the focus of the organisation moving primarily to caring for the elderly. At this stage, PSC no longer had children in its care. More detail of the history of PSC can be found in our submission to the Commission dated 1 April 2021, filed in response to Notice 1.
6. As noted above, PSC no longer has any children, young persons or vulnerable adults in its direct care. It operates health and social services across the lower North Island with its Central Hub based in Porirua, and services located between Taranaki and Wellington. PSC currently has around 1000 employees and 350 volunteers. PSC's services for tamariki and their whānau are provided by Family Works, while PSC's services for older people are provided by Enliven.

Family Works

7. Family Works is now a multi-disciplinary service which offers comprehensive support. We have grown these services to include courses for parents and children, and supplying the wider community with support and essential items. At no stage are children taken into the direct care of Family Works or provided residential care services.

Services for the Elderly/ Enliven

8. PSC currently offers a range of positive ageing services across the lower North Island, including eight retirement villages and fourteen care homes. Services for the Elderly was renamed in 2008 and is now known as Enliven. Enliven has grown to be one of New Zealand's most trusted providers of aged care and retirement villages. It is our understanding that elder care does not fall within the Terms of Reference of the Inquiry.

3. The structure and governance of Presbyterian Support Central and changes over time. In your answer include details of the leadership structure including the roles and responsibilities of different positions and the process of selection for those in leadership positions. Please also include any clerical or non-clerical roles within Presbyterian Support Central.

9. In the early years of the organisation the Governance Board primarily consisted of a large number of Ministers from parishes across the Presbyterian Church with a smaller management committee. This structure continued until the early 1980s when it evolved into what is now a smaller governance board with appointments made primarily from within the membership base.
10. PSC continues to be governed by a Board of Directors. The Constitution allows for up to nine members of the Board of which three positions are available to be filled by the Presbyterian Church, a position for a Māori representative (to be appointed by Te Ako Puaho/ The Presbyterian Church) and the balance from within the wider paid members of PSC as a Incorporated Society.
11. There are currently two Board standing sub-committees – the Audit and Risk Committee and the Property Development Committee. The later Committee has a number of non-board members who have particular expertise in property development.
12. When the organisation operated the Home the person in charge was called “Director” and had a small management team. It appears that this title was changed in the 1990’s to Chief Executive (**CEO**). These days the CEO is responsible for managing the organisation within delegated authorities from the Board and within the framework of a Strategic Plan which is subject to annual review by the Board. The CEO is currently responsible for a budget of \$60+m, almost 1,000 staff and has an Executive Team of eight: GM Family Works, GM Enliven, Chief Financial Officer, GM IT, GM Marketing and Communications, GM Property and a Director of Human Resources.

13. Currently the bulk of the staff who provide services for elderly through Enliven or social services through Family Works are qualified in either nursing/caring/counselling or social work disciplines. There are a small number of part-time chaplains attached to Enliven Homes with links to not only the Presbyterian Church but other Christian entities and denominations.

4. *The formation and ongoing relationship between Presbyterian Church Aotearoa New Zealand and Presbyterian Support Central, including how that relationship has changed from 1950 to the present day, if at all.*

14. The historical relationship between PSC and the Presbyterian Church is set out above. Today the Church has a right to make nominations for three positions on the PSC Board, however it exercises no influence over the affairs of PSC and has no governance role within the organisation. While we operate as a separate entity to the Presbyterian Church, the inclusion of Presbyterian in our name is a celebration of our beginnings, our heritage and the values we share.

5. *The role of Presbyterian Support New Zealand and the nature of the relationship between Presbyterian Support New Zealand and Presbyterian Support Central.*

15. The National Council of Presbyterian Support Services was formed in 1983 to provide a cooperative forum for the seven autonomous regions – Northern, Central, East Coast, Upper South Island, South Canterbury, Otago and Southland. Collectively we are one of Aotearoa New Zealand's largest not-for-profit health and social service providers.
16. Operating under a federation structure, the seven regional Presbyterian Support organisations (including PSC) are governed, managed and operated separately to best respond to local needs. The seven organisations come together under the Presbyterian Support federation (Presbyterian Support New Zealand) to share information, best practice ideas and, where possible, resources.
17. Presbyterian Support New Zealand has no governance responsibility of PSC.

6. *The nature of the relationship with other Presbyterian Support organizations and how these relationships were established and have changed over time.*

18. As noted above, while the seven regional Presbyterian Support organisations (including PSC) are governed, managed and operated separately to best respond to local needs, the seven organisations come together under the Presbyterian Support federation to share information, best practice ideas and, where possible, resources. There is also regular communication between the seven Presbyterian Support organisations on areas of commonality such as comparison of standards of care, purchasing opportunities and exchange of ideas including learning opportunities.

7. *Policies, practices and guidelines that underpin decision making for those in governance or leadership positions including those that have changed over time.*

19. The Board of PSC provides oversight of the authorities and policies that are delegated to the CEO. The CEO is subject to specific authorities that are delegated by the Board and the CEO, in turn, delegates specific authorities to the executive team members against which they report to the CEO. The CEO reports to the Board on performance, adherence to policies and financial performance.
20. A scan of Board minutes and records from the 1950's to the 1990's would indicate that the organisation had a similar but smaller management structure.

8. *Whether those in leadership positions or those employed by or volunteering for Presbyterian Support Central, undergo training, police vetting or security checks and whether the approach has changed from 1950 to the present day and why.*

21. Like most organisations, business practices have been tightened because of a greater emphasis on health and safety and employment conditions. It appears from management reports and Board papers

from the 1950's through to the 1990's that the responsibility of appointing staff and/or volunteers was left to the employing manager, with little human resource services support provided to managers – before or after the appointment.

22. The practice of vetting candidates has tightened considerably in recent years along with the establishment of dedicated in-house human resource services. The key thing to note is that both the services we provide have shifted significantly, and so has the availability and need for Police and conviction vetting.
23. Today, all staff are Police vetted as they either work directly, or come into contact, with vulnerable people (which for our purposes include children and elderly).
24. Depending on what volunteers are going to be doing. If they will have direct contact with vulnerable people, they will be Police vetted. If they will not have direct contact, we run a Ministry of Justice check on them. Police vetting is a more significant check and does not “clean the slate” of having been convicted of an offence. In other words, any previous conviction/ interaction with Police will be shown. If something is identified during this process, we will consider whether the findings will impact anyone's employment/volunteering. As an additional control the CEO has the final decision as to whether the applicant with 'history' is employed or not.
25. Regarding training, all Enliven staff receive regular training on working with vulnerable elderly. The same applies to Family Works staff on working with children, young people and their whanau.

9. Any internal accountability mechanisms, including policies, processes and /or practices implemented which relate to the review and monitoring of decisions made by those in leadership positions that affect members of Presbyterian Support Central.

26. PSC is governed by a Board of Directors, with directors appointed to the Board for specific periods. These are described in the Constitution under which PSC operates. The Board has sub-committees for Audit

and Risk and Property Development. It also has oversight of a Management Health and Safety Committee.

27. The Board of PSC provides overview of authorities and policies that are required to operate PSC. The CEO is subject to specific authorities that are delegated by the Board and the CEO, in turn, delegates specific authorities to the executive team members against which they report to the CEO. The CEO reports to the Board on performance, adherence to policies, risk and financial performance.

10. How Presbyterian Support Central has formally acknowledged the Te Tiriti o Waitangi – Treaty of Waitangi. Please include in your answer any commitments made to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and how they have developed over time.

28. PSC works to increase the voice of Māori in its governance and management. Initiatives it has taken include:
- (a) Building closer connections with Ngāti Toa and other Iwi.
 - (b) Establishment of cultural roopu groups across Māori in Family Works and Enliven.
 - (c) Te Tiriti training at national and manager/team levels.
 - (d) Appointment of a respected Cultural Director and a Kaiwhakahaere for the organisation who cover Family Works and Enliven.
 - (e) Cultural supervision for staff.
 - (f) Appointment of 4 (out of 9) senior posts in Family Works are Māori.

11. The role of Presbyterian Support Central in the provision of care for deaf and disabled people and any relevant policies, procedures and practices.

29. As noted above, PSC ceased to operate the Home in the 1980s and from that time has had no children, young person or vulnerable adults in its direct care. The services now provided by PSC (through Family Works and Enliven) are not within the scope of the Royal Commission's Terms of Inquiry, noting that no children, young persons or vulnerable adults are in its direct care. It is our understanding that elder care does not fall within the Terms of Reference of the Inquiry.

Monitoring, oversight and safeguarding

12. What steps have been taken by Presbyterian Support Central to protect children, young persons and vulnerable adults from abuse in care?

30. As noted above, PSC ceased to operate the Home in the 1980s, and from that time has had no children, young person or vulnerable adults in its care. The services now provided by PSC (through Family Works and Enliven) are not within the scope of the Royal Commission's Terms of Inquiry, noting that no children, young persons or vulnerable adults are in its direct care. As noted above, it is our understanding that elder care does not fall within the Terms of Reference of the Inquiry.
31. PSC provides counselling and support to whanau through Family Works. For our Family Works teams there are peer and external peer review systems established to ensure if there is any suspicion of abuse of any kind that this is addressed immediately.
32. Family Works has detailed policy and practice guidance for all staff regarding identifying concerns and making reports of concern to Oranga Tamariki. These processes are reviewed bi-annually by the by the Ministry of Social Development Auditor for social services organisations.
33. Our Enliven services similarly has detailed policy and practice guidance for all staff regarding identifying concerns for the users of our services.

13. Please provide a summary and outline of policies, practices and guidelines in place to ensure the monitoring of and mitigation of the risks of abuse, including:

a. Any safeguarding policies in the period 1950 to the present day.

34. Initially it appears that PSC adopted policies also held by the Presbyterian Church that focused on caring for young people and for monitoring for abuse, rather than creating their own policy. As a result of the complaints in the early 2000s period these policies were reviewed and, with oversight of our legal advisors, updated and adopted as PSC policies. PSC now has a documented process for regular reviews as set out above of all its policies including caring and monitoring for abuse, and reporting abuse concerns to Oranga Tamariki.

b. Any vetting policies in the period 1950 to the present day.

35. This is answered in the response to question 8 above.

c. Past and present approaches to handling known abusers, including those who have joined the Presbyterian Support Central with criminal charges.

36. Board Minutes that PSC has reviewed do not record any complaints from family members, the children themselves or staff members during the life of the Home (i.e. the period in which children and young persons were in the care of PSC). There is also no record of any investigation into abuse that occurred during the lifetime of the Home.

37. When historic allegations regarding abuse that had occurred arose in the early 2000s the Board appointed Dr George Barton QC to investigate them. Settlement was later reached with a number of survivors. The detail of this is set out in our prior submissions to the Royal Commission.

38. The Police investigated the allegations against Walter Lake but he passed away prior to any formal charges being laid. There have been other allegations of physical abuse made against former staff and former residents that are alleged to have occurred in the 1960s and 1970s. As set out in our April 2021, these allegations were independently investigated by Dr. Barton QC in the early 2000s

(following appointment by PSC and the survivors' legal teams). The draft reports of Dr Barton QC evidence that the general view of Dr. Barton QC was that many of the claims lacked credibility. Although Dr Barton QC determined his own procedure, we know that if an investigation was to be run today it would be significantly different to the way it was run by Dr Barton QC (particularly the way he interviewed survivors and tested the veracity of their allegations). We would also require that different approach, by making it clear in the terms of reference or engagement that the investigator must adhere to our survivor centric principles of responding to complaints.

d. Whether survivors of abuse while in the care of Presbyterian Support Central are encouraged to report abuse, including whether they are able to report abuse anonymously. Please set out any support or information available to them.

39. PSC has been proactive in inviting those who wish to access their records or lodge a complaint of abuse while in the care of the organisation to make contact and/or speak to the Royal Commission. PSC's website has the following message:

There is currently a Royal Commission of Inquiry into Historical Abuse in State Care and in the Care of Faith-based Institutions (Royal Commission) taking place.

As part of its work, the Royal Commission is inquiring into historic abuse that has occurred within faith-based entities during the period 1950-1999. The Royal Commission was set up by the government and is completely independent from the government and from faith based entities.

We acknowledge the hurt and pain that has been caused in the past to those affected while in our care. We are devastated that this has happened to some people in our care and are so very sorry. The abuse and mistreatment of children, young people and vulnerable adults was never ok, and is certainly not who we are today. Our values will guide us as we walk the long road with survivors to a place of healing. We will be open and transparent. We will show compassion and humility.

As these historic abuses came to light, we have worked with the survivors who came forward to apologise and support them as best we could.

Presbyterian Support Central has welcomed the Royal Commission and wishes to assist with its transformative goals. In April 2018, Presbyterian Support Central wrote to the Commission welcoming the Inquiry and offering full cooperation.

We are committed to work with the Royal Commission and will take their recommendations on board. In the meantime, as an organisation, we have taken a good hard look at our internal processes and procedures to ensure we always operate to best practice standards.

If you or a member of your family has been harmed while in the care of Presbyterian Support Central, there are a number of ways your complaint can be heard:

- *If you have concerns or experiences that you want to share directly with Presbyterian Support Central or wish to seek redress, please contact Patrick Waite in the first instance at pat.waite@psc.org.nz, or by phone on 04 439 4980.*
- *If you wish to engage with the Royal Commission (either at the same time or separately to bringing your concerns to us directly) there is information on the Royal Commission's website at www.abuseincare.org.nz.*
- *If you have signed a settlement relating to an abuse claim with Presbyterian Support Central, we waive any confidentiality clause or obligation on you that might have stopped you talking to the Royal Commission.*
- *Presbyterian Support Central also encourages any survivor of abuse to approach the New Zealand Police. We will cooperate with the Police in any criminal investigation or prosecution.*

40. PSC has also been proactive in contacting survivors that they become aware of who are interested in accessing their records with some 28 files provided to survivors.

41. As the Royal Commission will be aware, as PSC has become aware of survivors who have given evidence in the Royal Commission, we have tried to contact those survivors, through the Royal Commission, to invite them to be involved in a redress process if that is something they want to do. This occurred both in response to a survivor who gave evidence in the Pasifika hearing, and one who gave evidence in the Marylands hearing about the Catholic Church.

42. We have maintained contact with the survivor whose witness statement was presented at the Royal Commission Pasifika Hearing that we listened to with concern and sadness. That experience has helped further shape our understanding of his experience at the Home and broadened our understanding more generally. We have met with him and his family both at his home and also at our offices. We have provided financial recompense and copies of photos of him when he was in the Home. At our invitation he has offered to speak to our Family Works teams on his experience dealing with agencies so that we can learn and do better in how we respond and provide care for those in need.

e. Any applicable policies of Presbyterian Support New Zealand and the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand.

43. Beyond what has been provided to date and set out in our response above, specific policies are available if required by the Royal Commission, noting that the services now provided by PSC (through Family Works and Enliven) are not within the scope of the Royal Commission's Terms of Inquiry, as no children, young persons or vulnerable adults are in its direct care.

f. How any policies, practices and guidelines relevant to (a) – (f) have changed over time.

44. See the response to question 13(a) above.