

TE KOROWAI TRUST REPORT TO 2026 GENERAL SYNOD

Introduction

The Te Korowai Trust was established on 20 September 2024 by the authority and direction of the General Synod Standing Committee to provide governance, contractual oversight, and implementation support for key Church-wide initiatives, particularly in relation to safe ministry, complaints processes, and the Church's response to the Royal Commission into Abuse in Care.

It is a registered charitable trust, registration number CC63715.

Current Trustees are: The Right Reverend Philip Richardson
The Right Reverend Susan Wallace
Mr Fe'iloakitau Tevi
The Venerable Suzanne Fordyce

Core Areas of Work

The Trust's initial major project was the engagement of an independent provider, Kooyoora Ltd, to deliver services to the Church in relation to:

- a) reception, pastoral care, investigation, and reporting to the Registrars of the Ministry Standards Commission regarding Title D complaints; and
- b) claims for redress involving the core Church and Boards of Church-affiliated schools and charitable trusts.

That contract has now been in place for over twelve months. The Trust is also the contractor for the Registrar and Deputy Registrar.

A second project assigned by General Synod Standing Committee has been to take over contractual responsibility for the contractors to the Anglican Schools Office and to consider and report back to General Synod Standing Committee as to the future operation of that Office.

The Trust oversees management of these contracts and maintains financial oversight of budgets and expenditure.

Other engagement, development and oversight

As part of its role in reporting to the Crown on the Church's response to the Royal Commission, the Trust has also engaged with the wider implications of the Commission's findings and recommendations. Through its involvement in complaints and redress processes, the Trust has developed a close working relationship with the Ministry Standards Commission.

Trustees have attended both the 42nd Diocesan Synod of the Diocese of Polynesia last December and a meeting of the Diocese Standing Committee in March this year to better understand the particular needs and challenges arising from the Diocese's cultural and legal diversity in relation to complaints processes and wider safety aspirations.

The Trust has also engaged extensively with the Crown Response Unit, including formal reporting on behalf of the Church regarding progress on the recommendations of the Royal Commission at the end of both 2024 and 2025. These reports are available on the Church's website.

Trustees have additionally met with both the responsible Minister and Crown Response Unit staff to remain informed about Crown developments and to provide feedback, particularly regarding redress processes.

Trustees have recently produced a paper for the House of Bishops in relation to vetting processes generally and the impact of coming legislative change in respect of Police vetting services. Kooyoora Ltd operates a comprehensive vetting service, and the Trust has worked with Kooyoora to adapt that service to New Zealand requirements as a means of strengthening the level of background checking available to the Church, particularly for clergy and lay people in positions of significant pastoral leadership.

The Trust has also initiated and coordinated a working group tasked with developing proposed amendments to Title D. These amendments respond to aspects of the Canon identified as requiring adjustment to support more proportionate, effective, and timely responses to complaints. This work has been undertaken in close consultation with the House of Bishops, Ministry Standards Commission and the Registrars, and the proposed amendments are being presented to this General Synod.

Trustees are currently working alongside the Ministry Standards Commission and a small working group to develop a unified set of Church-wide safety principles and, flowing from these, high-level policy frameworks. The intention is to articulate within our core identity as a Church of mission and ministry our shared expectations for safe ministry and mission while recognising the distinct cultural contexts of the respective Tikanga. Any procedures required to implement these policies will necessarily need to be developed at a Diocesan or Hui Amorangi level, taking account of Tikanga, culture, local capacity, and relevant legal jurisdictions.

In relation to the Anglican Schools Office the Trustees are currently awaiting a report being prepared by its contractor and will then engage further with scoping a potential future for the Office in consultation with the Archbishops.

Throughout this work, the Trustees have remained committed to regular reporting and consultation with both the House of Bishops and General Synod Standing Committee and are grateful for their ongoing guidance and support.

Funding Oversight

Currently the activities of the Trust, along with all of the costs of operation of the entirety of the Church's current disciplinary processes and the work of the Ministry Standards Commission, are being funded from an initial grant from the St John's College Trust. That funding was specifically granted to enable the Church's desire for a greater transparency as to independence in its handling of complaints to be achieved and for the Church to faithfully engage in its response to the Report of the Royal Commission.

The Trust is overseeing and monitoring the costs being incurred and will be reporting to General Synod Standing Committee by the end of 2026 with projected costs going forward. In due course, the Church will need to determine sustainable long-term funding arrangements to support its ongoing commitment to safe ministry and effective complaints and redress processes.