

20 August 2024

To Presbyterians and members of cooperative ventures in Otago regarding Presbyterian Support Otago

I greet you in the name of Jesus Christ.

It is my privilege to chair the Board of Presbyterian Support Otago (PSO). As we have been the subject of public comment on the front pages of the Otago Daily Times, I want to provide you with an update.

The Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care rightly expressed concerns about issues relating to PSO. One issue arose from our reporting to the Royal Commission that records relating to children in our homes had been destroyed. We lament that destruction. We know how important such records are especially to the people who were children in our homes and to their families. We remain deeply concerned about record destruction.

Most recently, the ODT has suggested that having learned about the destruction, the Board ought to have been more active in investigating the circumstances surrounding that decision. We affirm that as a public body we are accountable for what we do and fail to do. The Board continually reflects on whether it has done or is doing enough and will continue to do so.

We also know there were times when children were harmed. We deplore every such instance and we are deeply sorry that it happened. We encourage people who were harmed to contact us. We seek to respond with care and compassion.

We support the Commission's findings and recommendations. We are working our way through the report and reviewing our policies and processes in light of it. We want to learn from the Commission's report.

As we continue to respond, we are very grateful for your ongoing prayers, practical support and encouragement. PSO has offered support and care in the community for 118 years. The demand for our services continues to grow and we are determined to meet those needs, serving as best we can the communities of Otago of which we have been part for so long.

Thank you again.

Nga mihi nui.

Yours faithfully



Stephanie Pettigrew
Chairperson
Presbyterian Support Otago