

Media release

National Day of Reflection on Abuse in Care should be made annual event

One year on from the Crown apology for abuse in care, Te Pai Ora SSPA is joining with many survivors to call for today's National Day of Reflection to be made an annual event.

Te Pai Ora SSPA Kaiwhakahaere Matua Belinda Himiona says the work of responding to the Royal Commission of Inquiry's report into Abuse in Care has only just begun. "We welcome today as an opportunity to pause, reflect and recommit to the promises made, and the actions needed, to ensure that abuse in care does not continue. This accountability is needed every year until the work is done."

Belinda says progress on responding to the recommendations made by the Royal Commission has been slow to date and there have been setbacks. "Most notably, we were disappointed with the decision to not establish an independent redress system and are concerned about aspects of the Redress System for Abuse in Care Bill. There is still a long way to go to ensure that meaningful and long-lasting changes are made."

She points out that recommendations from the Royal Commission called for more community-based solutions and devolution of care to community and iwi organisations – a challenge that has been embraced by many providers. "It has been wonderful to see the community sector coming together to provide safe and nurturing care for tamariki and vulnerable adults," she says. "We hope to see much more of this in the future."

While much of the responsibility for implementing the recommendations lies with the Crown and government agencies, there is a broader duty for all New Zealanders. "It is on all of us to know this history – to know the stories of the tamariki who lost their childhoods and lives to horrific abuse and to ensure it can never happen again."

Belinda encourages all New Zealanders to learn the survivors' stories. "If you are looking for a place to start, I would [encourage you to listen to the voices of the survivors](#) or [watch this excellent documentary from 1News](#). We also suggest that you read this [recent report from VOYCE Whakarongo Mai](#) which highlights the current experiences of rangatahi in care and again shows how much more work is still needed."

By marking 12 November as an official annual day of remembrance, the Crown would indicate that it is committed to the long-term efforts needed to change the system, Belinda says.

"Today should be a day to remember the enormous courage of survivors who relived their stories in the hope that it would change the system of care for future generations of mokopuna. We must remember them."

ENDS

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Editor's Notes:

ABOUT SOCIAL SERVICE PROVIDERS TE PAI ORA O AOTEAROA

Te Pai Ora SSPA is a membership-based organisation, representing more than 250 non-profit, community-based social service organisations from around Aotearoa New Zealand. Our member organisations are diverse, including small rural organisations, Iwi and kaupapa Māori service providers, Pacific providers, and large national children's organisations. Our members provide life-changing and often life-saving services and support in their communities.

Te Pai Ora SSPA strengthens the social sector through advocacy and engagement, learning and development, relationships and sector leadership. Our mahi contributes to ensuring children and whānau can thrive now and intergenerationally. Find out more: <https://www.sspa.org.nz/>