



4 October 2019

### **Bishop Charles Drennan resigns as the Bishop of Palmerston North**

Cardinal John Dew, the Metropolitan Archbishop of New Zealand, today announced that Bishop Charles Drennan has resigned as the Bishop of Palmerston North. Bishop Drennan tendered his resignation to Pope Francis following an investigation into a complaint of unacceptable behaviour of a sexual nature. The complaint was made by a young woman. Pope Francis has accepted the resignation.

Upon receiving the complaint, the New Zealand Church's independent investigation body, the National Office of Professional Standards (NOPS), contracted an independent, licenced investigator to undertake an investigation under the oversight of Cardinal Dew. Bishop Drennan stood aside from his duties. Both Bishop Drennan and the young woman participated in the independent investigation.

The young woman has been informed of his resignation and the Church is in ongoing contact with her. The Church is committed to giving continuing support to the young woman, her family and those around her.

"The young woman has requested that details of the complaint remain private," said Cardinal Dew. "It can be confirmed that Pope Francis has accepted the resignation. In the eyes of the Catholic Church, Bishop Drennan's behaviour was completely unacceptable, and it fully supports the young woman for coming forward to NOPS," said Cardinal Dew.

The clergy, staff and church leadership of the Diocese of Palmerston North have been told of the acceptance of Bishop Drennan's resignation and provided with guidance and resources to help them to support parishioners and other members of the Catholic community. The wider Church of New Zealand will also be advised and supported.

"The Catholic Church has no tolerance for any inappropriate behaviour by any of its members. I encourage anyone who experiences such behaviour to bring it to the attention of the Church, police or any organisation with which they feel comfortable," said Cardinal Dew.

**ENDS**

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**His Eminence Cardinal John Atcherley Dew DD** is a Roman Catholic bishop. He was appointed Archbishop of Wellington in 2005 and elevated to Cardinal in 2015. He is also the Vice-President of the New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference.

The **Metropolitan Archbishop of New Zealand** is the senior bishop of a group of dioceses in a country or a province. He has limited functions and powers in relation to the other dioceses and does not have authority to intervene on his own initiative in the governance of a diocese in his province. In May 2019 Pope Francis gave Metropolitan Archbishops the power to oversee investigations into abuse complaints against bishops of the dioceses in the Archbishop's province.

The **Catholic Diocese of Palmerston North** is the region of New Zealand assigned to the Bishop of Palmerston North. The region extends through the northern reaches of Taranaki in the east to Hawke's Bay in the west, following the coastlines and internal areas through Whanganui-Waimarino and Tararua into Manawatū and some of the Wairarapa.

The **National Office for Professional Standards (NOPS)** sets the strategic direction and ensures compliance of the Catholic Church's safeguarding policy and procedures for children and vulnerable adults. They are also responsible for overseeing the investigation of complaints of sexual abuse and sexual misconduct against clergy and members of religious orders.

**If you or someone you know has a complaint:**

The Church has a specialist team to receive complaints about inappropriate behaviour in any Church context, to support complainants find the right path towards healing, and to investigate complaints using an established process when any civil process is completed or not undertaken. The National Office for Professional Standards can be contacted on 0800 114 622 or online at: [safeguarding.catholic.org.nz](http://safeguarding.catholic.org.nz).