



FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

AN INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF ARISE CHURCH
JUNE 2022

PREPARED BY
CHARLOTTE CUMMINGS,
REVEREND FRANK RITCHIE
AND CHRIS CLARKE



This report presents the findings and recommendations of the independent review Pathfinding conducted into Arise Church, during April and May of 2022.

This report is in three sections:

1. Introduction

This section presents the context from which this review was commissioned, outlines the review process and the review team, presents the statistics around those who **participated**, and provides **opening** comments.

2. What We Heard

A summary of the experiences and views shared as part of the submission process.

3. Recommendations

Recommendations of changes for the future of Arise Church.

There is also one document presented as an appendix – a theological reflection from one of the review panel members, Reverend Frank Ritchie.

1. Introduction

Context

This independent review was commissioned by the board of Arise Church. The Board committed to the review process in light of the stories which were shared in the public domain about hurts people had experienced during their involvement with Arise. Pathfinding was approached to design and lead the review process, establish a panel responsible for considering the review findings, and to make recommendations for Arise into the future.

Acknowledging what is emerging as best practice for churches when responding to people's experiences of harm within a church, the Arise Church Board committed to ensuring that people would engage with trained and experienced mental health professionals, and that the process would be handled independently of the church and centred on the needs of those coming forward.

Process

On Wednesday 13th April 2022, the commencement of the independent review was announced. People were invited to make contact via an email address or 0800 number, with the option of making a written or verbal submission. In addition, to ensure that staff felt able to engage in the review, all current staff members were contacted directly to offer them an opportunity to engage in the process. This was done in agreement with the Arise Church Board.

Written submissions were acknowledged with a detailed individual response that asked follow up questions where necessary. Verbal submissions were managed by a small team of counsellors and psychologists who engaged with people over the phone or on a video call.

The review process concluded on Thursday 12th May. Due to the volume of people who came forward on the final two days prior to submissions closing, further time was required to respond to submissions and to allow for interviews with those who wished to make a verbal submission. This process was concluded on Thursday 27th May.

Throughout the submission process, the Arise Church Board was alerted to all matters that constituted serious misconduct at the time of receipt of the submission. Pathfinding also updated the Board regularly regarding the number of people who had come forward to make a submission.

Pathfinding has also proactively engaged with the New Zealand Police, who have seen a summary of the review findings.

In early June, we presented the Arise Church Board with a summary of each individual submission, removing any information which would identify individuals. This document will not be shared beyond the Board and review team.

The Review Team

Charlotte Cummings has been the lead reviewer, and was joined by two other review panel members, Reverend Frank Ritchie and Chris Clarke.

Charlotte is a Christchurch based counsellor and an experienced manager within the health and social service sectors. Charlotte's background includes managing highly sensitive complaints of abuse and misconduct, as well as policy and procedure development to prevent **harm within charities and the church**. Charlotte is a full member of the New Zealand Association of Counsellors with a current practising certificate.

Reverend Frank Ritchie is a minister within the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Aotearoa New Zealand. Frank is well known for his commitment to the health and good standing of the body of Christ in Aotearoa New Zealand, and for his public commentary towards that end. Frank is also a broadcaster and a chaplain.

Chris Clarke is an experienced manager and leader, with a career spanning across high level management and governance roles. Chris has particular expertise in establishing appropriate governance structures for Christian charities. Chris' **expertise is well regarded internationally**.

Charlotte, Frank and Chris have a range of experience of different faith communities – Catholic, Anglican, Wesleyan Methodist and Pentecostal.

Statistics

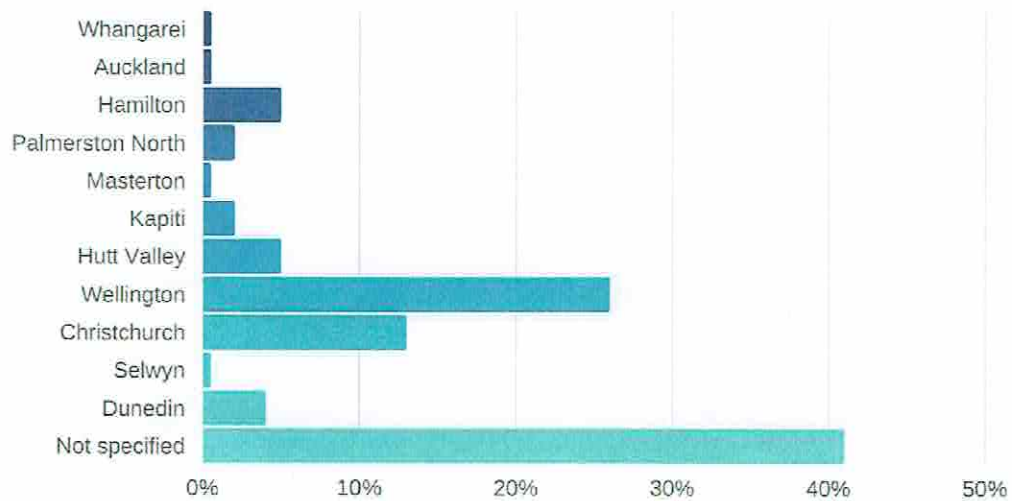
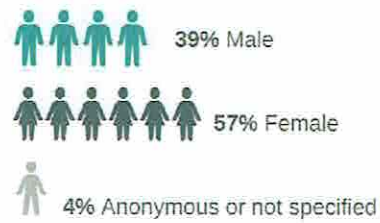
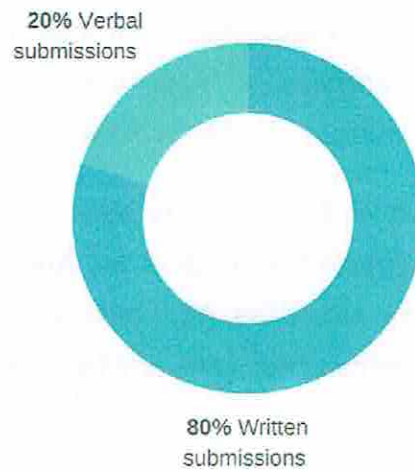
Throughout the review process, we engaged with a total of 617 individuals. Some individuals made contact with questions, or sending links to articles, but did not go on to complete a submission. The total number of completed submissions was 545.

We were pleased that as part of this review process we heard from a range of people. We have heard from people from each of the Arise campuses across New Zealand, from a range of ages, ethnicities, from past and present Ministry School students, current and former members and staff, and from past Board members.

545
Completed
submissions

141
Submissions
from current
and ex interns

117
Submissions
from current
and ex staff



Opening Comments

Firstly, we applaud the Arise Church Board for their willingness to undertake this independent review process and their prioritising of the needs of those who have been hurt through their involvement with Arise. It has been an extraordinarily painful and vulnerable time for the church. We are heartened that the Board chose to initiate a process which was, **first and foremost, person-centred**.

Most importantly, we wish to acknowledge the courage of those who have come forward to share their stories as part of the review process. The attention on Arise over recent months has been deeply confronting for many people, especially for those who have through this time had to recall and recount things that have hurt them or those they care about. Many of those who made submissions contributed a great deal of time and energy to presenting their experiences and views, often sharing many pages of content, or having prepared notes for verbal submissions. We know that for a number of people participation has been uncomfortable and has come at an emotional cost. We thank them for the gift that their feedback is to the future of Arise and we applaud the care they have shown for others in using their **voices to prevent future harm**.

It has been an exceptional privilege to be entrusted with these individuals' stories. We know from feedback that for some people there has been a sense of healing in the opportunity that was created for them to come forward - particularly in being heard, being believed and being validated. On behalf of the team who connected with those making submissions - thank you for the trust you placed in us, and for the opportunity we have had to be part of what we hope was and is a helpful experience for you.

The review allowed space for people who feel significantly aggrieved by their involvement with the church to share their stories and views. However, it has also **encouraged many other people to share their experiences: long standing members, staff, friends of those in leadership, family of people involved with Arise**. It would therefore be incorrect to conceptualise the review as being simply a space for people who feel hostile towards Arise. While we have heard from some people who see no future for Arise and saw no future for its leadership, a great many people have a

strong desire to see Arise move forward positively into the future – addressing thoroughly the things that cause hurt, and allowing the positive impacts Arise has on its members and the community to continue. It would be fair to say that the vast majority of people who came forward with their stories did so with a desire to see Arise improve in the areas where it has caused harm. In fact, 325 of the individuals who completed submissions are current members of Arise, many of whom carried their own stories of difficult experiences, and used this process to voice concerns they have held for some time.

It is undeniable that there have been significant hurts caused to some people through their involvement with Arise. It is also clear from those who engaged in the review process that, while there were particularly difficult times in Arise's history, the submissions reflect with certainty that many harmful practices have in fact continued up until the present time. Many people identified as part of their submission the years in which they were involved with Arise and while it is difficult to present data regarding the years of people's involvement, we can state that submissions cover the entirety of the church's history, from early years right through to the present.

We also wish to acknowledge journalist David Farrier. We are aware that many people who have contributed to the review process, both former and current members of Arise, have expressed their gratitude for his role in bringing these matters to a place where they have been given the attention they deserved.

While some people have been critical of the role and views of the media through this time, we are aware that their role has been significant in leading to the establishment of the review processes to benefit people who have been hurt and to benefit the health of the church going forward.

It is pleasing to see that 545 people completed submissions as part of the review process. We also understand that there are others who, for a variety of reasons, will not have come forward to engage in this process. Thus, the experiences we have heard should be considered as a sample, representing the stories of others we have not heard from. In particular, we note that there were a number of people who engaged with us through the available contact channels, but did not go on to complete a submission. This is to be expected, and our recommendations include

ensuring there are feedback pathways into the future for people to come forward should they choose to do so at a later time.

We recognize that the contents of this report make heavy reading. We also wish to acknowledge that with appropriate structures, and following the recommendations made, Arise Church can embrace a new future - a future where the church's good intentions align with the reality of people's experiences.

2. What We Heard

This section of the report presents a summary of the themes that emerged through the submissions people made into the independent review.

We have heard a number of the things people appreciate about Arise Church. We have heard of people's experience of Arise as a place of belonging, a place of tremendous personal and professional growth. We have heard of the deep gratitude people have for the support, encouragement and care they have received. We have heard of people having great respect and appreciation for the senior leadership, and campus pastors. In particular, we heard many people raise their view that the leadership of Arise has been well intentioned. We have also heard from people identifying that their experience of internship was a foundational and important step in their faith life and work, building.

We have heard that some people feel the church and its leadership have been under attack, and that this has felt unfair. We have heard from some people that their experience of Arise has been wholly positive. We have heard many people **expressing a deep longing that people in the future can experience the great things** about Arise, without the cost they have faced for these benefits.

We have also heard a very significant number of experiences people have had that caused them pain and hurt.

We heard that some who identify as tangata whenua have felt they had to leave their culture 'at the door' and that they have experienced a lack of understanding around their culture and values. We have also heard that a number of Māori felt there weren't opportunities to succeed as Māori within the church. We heard that there were efforts around engagement with Māori that felt tokenistic and were Pākehā led.

We also heard people of minority cultures describe how they felt there wasn't room for their cultural perspective to be included in any way at Arise. We consistently heard that some people felt that their talents could be used, but that the rest of who they were had to be set aside. People of Pasifika, Filipino and Māori identity have felt saddened knowing that people 'like them' are seldom represented in leadership.

We heard people recounting stories of experiencing racist remarks, including from the stage during Sunday church services. Sadly, we heard that these comments came from senior leadership and that racist remarks were also heard privately from guest speakers and former board members. We also heard of staff being told to focus on 'white kids'.

We heard stories of what people faced following sexual harassment, assault or rape. Sometimes these incidents occurred within the person's life outside of Arise, but we also heard of incidents at the hands of other Arise members or staff. We heard from these people that they experienced being disbelieved, and that they felt judged. Often, their stories were shared within the church more widely than was appropriate or necessary. We have heard clearly from these people that they wish no person in the future of any Arise community ever faces the unnecessary additional hurts they experienced from their church at a time of such vulnerability and need.

We heard of the involvement of senior leadership and a former Board member in incidents of nudity in front of a staff member, and of ongoing targeted sexual harassment. We heard that there was a lack of action from the Board in preventing subsequent incidents.

We have heard people expressing their view that the 'culture of honour' has gone too far. We have heard from people who have felt confused about why they did not speak up against the things they saw that were troubling. We have heard the longing within the church to return to honouring and focussing on Jesus, rather than honouring and focussing on church leaders.

We heard of different rules for different people, a sense of favouritism, and the pressure people felt to say yes and to please senior leaders.

We heard of staff and volunteers being subjected to anger and being physically 'handled' by Arise leadership; often in front of others. We also heard of practices from senior leadership where individuals were given nicknames that were derogatory and used over a period of months.

We heard of the difficulties faced by people in trying to find their place within the church if they were older. We heard how saddening it was for these people to see

younger generations overworked while they sat with capacity, struggling to find meaningful places to engage and serve. We heard stories from these people of feeling disrespected, undervalued, and disengaged.

We also heard from professionals with a strong desire to contribute their leadership and business skills within the operation of the church, but felt there was not space to do this. We heard that they felt they were looked to for financial giving, but other opportunities to contribute were scarce.

We have heard from people who feel disillusioned and deeply disappointed by the way their financial offerings to the kingdom of God have been used by Arise. Especially, we have heard that there is a great discomfort from the congregation past and present around what is seen as extravagant spending by senior leadership. We have heard a strong desire for greater financial accountability, for policies guiding expenditure, and for full transparency around the use of church finances. We have also heard from people experiencing pressure around giving financially to Arise, and from people who have felt uncomfortable that their financial giving was known and commented on. We heard of people's experience of enduring personal hardship so they could tithe as expected.

We have heard of the impact on people's sense of self after experiences where control was exerted, and where independence was not encouraged. We have heard of the significant efforts people have had to make to rebuild their identity and lives beyond the church.

We heard of Ministry School students living in impoverished conditions and struggling to make ends meet. We also heard of Ministry School students who did not receive the support agreed by Arise. We heard that there was no ability for Ministry School students to identify the areas they wished to serve in, or the hours or days they would serve. We heard countless stories of exhaustion, burnout, and mental and physical breakdown both during and following people's experience of Ministry School. We have heard of the disappointment interns have experienced in realising that they were often seen as servants to the leadership of Arise, rather than being meaningfully engaged in growing in Christian ministry.

We have heard of the physical impacts on people of their involvement with or work for Arise. We have heard a great many stories of burnout and exhaustion, often affecting individuals for a period of months or years. We also heard from people who were pressured to continue working despite illness or serious injuries – broken bones, concussion etc. We have heard of the dangers people have faced driving through the night on no sleep to meet expectations, and operating heavy machinery after 17 hours of duties on a Sunday. We have heard that many people have felt they had no choice but to serve Arise beyond what they could reasonably manage. We have heard from people who have felt they have had to be available to leadership 24/7, and who have felt overwhelmed by unrealistic expectations. We also heard of the sense that being part of Arise was all consuming, with relationships outside of Arise to be 'limited to 20%' of a person's life.

We have heard that the Arise has not handled its responsibilities to some staff with sufficient professionalism and care. It has been the experience and view of some individuals that Arise has, at times, been in breach of employment law and the principles of good faith.

We have heard from people who have felt not good enough in light of the pressure they experienced from Arise around personal image and appearance. We have heard from people being told they need new clothes to fit Arise's image, and people being told to change their clothing choices if they are 'on stage' on a Sunday. We have heard from people heartbroken knowing they continually never appeared in Arise photographs, or were edited out of shots, which they relate to their size or appearance. We also heard from people who have faced financial hardship because of the expectation to dress according to a 'mood board' for those involved with Sunday services. We have heard from people who have faced eating disorders, anxiety and mood issues that they relate to the pressure to conform to their perception of Arise's standards around physical appearance.

We heard that some women in Arise have felt there have been limits on what and how they could contribute in the church, because they are female. We have also heard from single people that they struggled to find their place within the life of Arise.

We have heard some stories of people walking away from the church and also walking away from faith, because of their experiences within Arise. We have heard from people heartbroken by their experience of being shunned and cut off when they chose to stand down from roles of service or to exit Arise.

We have heard of people's frustration that there have not been appropriate channels to raise feedback or critique, particularly because of the family relationships within the senior leadership.

We have heard an overwhelming volume of submissions highlighting issues with some previous staff members of Arise. Of note, there were some previous staff members we heard almost as many submissions around as those in senior leadership who have recently resigned. This has painted a clear picture that the hurts people have experienced have not been limited to individuals in senior leadership.

We heard a number of people comment on their discomfort that pastors used their role to encourage people towards their own political views.

We have heard that there are significant gaps in how Arise has responded to people in times of mental and emotional distress, and that many leaders appear to be poorly equipped to respond helpfully. We have also heard the impact of what people have described as 'toxic positivity' and that they have felt there has not been room for honesty in times of challenge and struggle. People have also shared that they felt it was unfair for Arise to simplify their experiences of distress as being spiritual issues, and that there was problematic messaging around the supports people should engage.

We have heard of people who have felt deeply betrayed by Arise's lack of protection of their privacy. The significant breaches of confidentiality when people have faced personal difficulty have led to people feeling judged and isolated. We have also **heard countless stories of people's pastoral care needs being neglected, and the sense people felt that pastoral care was not seen as a priority within Arise.**

We have heard that there is a need for Arise to reform its governance structures in order to regain the trust of its members. We have heard that a significant number of

current members desire much greater transparency around church governance in the future. We have heard that there have also been significant gaps in communication to the Board, and that there has been frustration from past Board members about the lack of information available to them.

We have heard that there has been a significant focus on performance and excellence, which has led people to being on the receiving end of unacceptable treatment from some staff and leaders. We have heard of the pressure this has led to in people's lives, and the devastating consequences this has had on individuals both in terms of their physical and mental health, and their sense of place within their community of faith. We have heard people's moral outrage that bullying has been accepted within Arise.

We have heard that members past and present feel like there has been a considerable focus on conversion, however, this has resulted in what has felt like a lack of attention on existing members and on discipleship. We have heard people's desire to move away from the Arise's focus around numbers – the number of people making conversion decisions, the number of people attending, and the numbers of people giving.

We have heard that there has been a failure to report matters to Police on some occasions, and also that in a number of situations people were actively encouraged not to engage with Police.

We have heard people's concerns around what they perceive as cult-like behaviour within Arise – iconic and unquestionable leadership, people's social circles being limited to Arise, experiences of control, and being shunned upon leaving the Arise community.

We have heard people's concern around the Arise's teaching on marriage and sexuality, and people feeling undue pressure to conform to the Arise's views.

We heard from people who identify as belonging to the LGBTQI+ community who have had a strong desire to also belong as members of Arise, who have faced great difficulty finding their place. We have heard from people being subjected to conversion therapy, and being denied opportunities to serve because of their 'sin'.

3. Recommendations

From the submissions received, it is clear that there are a number of significant structural and culture changes required within the life of Arise Church.

It is the opinion of the reviewers that, under new governance and leadership, and with the heartfelt commitment of its members, Arise can rebuild as a church community. While the changes required are significant and wide ranging, we see that, with a clear plan Arise will be well able to make these changes.

These recommendations connect directly with the themes we heard from those who made submissions as part of the review process, and also address what we as the review team see as the systemic issues which have led to people experiencing such significant hurt within Arise.

It must be acknowledged that some of the recommendations might be met with a response from some people of questioning whether these changes are truly necessary. We stress the importance of hearing the voices of those who have been aggrieved at this time, and seeking to understand the importance of the church taking all possible measures to avoid future harm. The future of Arise must include an ongoing commitment to avoiding practices, attitudes and systems which have caused harm.

We make the following recommendations for change:

Apology & Restoration

Recommendation One: Issue a formal apology, acknowledging and apologising for the hurts people have experienced within Arise Church. This should include formally revoking previous comments regarding issues pre-dating 2016, and early comments that reflected a sense that issues were limited to Ministry School students.

Comment: A concern that has also been raised as part of the review process is that there have been some apologies issued to date by senior leadership and the Board, however, it is important that an apology is issued following the conclusion of this review process, when there is a fuller understanding of people's experiences and concerns. We believe that it is imperative that all apology statements acknowledge specifically what the apology is for, showing understanding of people's experiences. We also suggest that it is important that apology statements respect the reality that the power to choose their response lies in the hands of those who have been aggrieved, and that while it is hoped that people may come to a place of forgiveness, this will not be the path all people take.

Recommendation Two: Follow through to ensure there is reporting of matters that have been criminal, or where there has been a lack of appropriate reporting to authorities. This work should be collaborative between Pathfinding and the Arise Church Board.

Recommendation Three: Follow up on individuals' requests for further action, as stated in review submissions. As part of the review process, some individuals identified follow up action they would appreciate personally. This should occur as a priority in July 2022. This process should be managed by a Board member and senior member of staff, reporting back to the wider Board and to Pathfinding when this process has concluded, no later than 1st August.

Comment: The requests for personal follow up include receiving personal apologies, experiences being shared with church staff, and engaging with church staff directly to reconnect with Arise.

Recommendation Four: Make an offer to provide funded counselling for those who have engaged in the review process, with the Arise Church Board to establish a

standard agreed payment rate for counselling and a maximum number of sessions.

Comment: To ensure continued anonymity for those who have engaged in the review process, and to allow anonymity for people in accessing counselling support, this process should include the option of Pathfinding managing invoices from counselling providers, and passing these on to Arise Church, using the unique identifier assigned to each person who participated in the review process. This data would also be looked over by another member of the review panel as a safeguarding measure.

Recommendation Five: Engage a Restorative Justice expert to advise the Board on processes within the church community over coming months, acknowledging that neither the current board nor the remaining leadership hold this expertise.

Governance

Comment: The Review Team finds egregious and systemic failures in governance stretching back over many years including a lack of oversight and independence, a lack of transparency in decision making, no recognised feedback channels for people to raise concerns, insufficient financial accountability, and an absence of policies in key areas.

We believe it to be unacceptable that the Board were unaware of key issues within Arise, and did not initiate the necessary mechanisms to ensure they could exercise their governance responsibilities.

Recommendation Six: That the current Arise Church Board resigns, identifying, by the 31st of July, an exit date.

Comment: Notwithstanding the new appointments, the Board as an entity has lost its moral mandate to govern Arise. The reasons we are recommending that the Board resigns are to:

- 1. Demonstrate public accountability for the seriousness, longevity and scale of the harm caused to individuals.*
- 2. Demonstrate public accountability for the inadequacy of previous governance.*
- 3. Make a further step towards repairing relationships with those who were harmed.*
- 4. Enable new leadership to be appointed, untainted by past inaction and behaviours.*

Recommendation Seven: That the current Board appoints a commissioner. The commissioner should be a committed Christian, and have significant governance and change management experience. We recommend that it is the role of the commissioner to:

- a. Take responsibility for beginning the implementation of the recommendations made in this review report.
- b. Facilitate the process of establishing a new Board.

Comment: We also note that one current Board member could be appointed temporarily to the new Board for a period of 12 months, for the purpose of providing the new Board with any information they require. The selection of this person should be by joint agreement between the outgoing and incoming Board and the commissioner, and they should be precluded from holding any formal office (Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Treasurer).

Recommendation Eight: That the commissioner remains to mentor and advise the new Board, for an agreed term.

Recommendation Nine: Ensure that the Board develops a robust strategic plan for the church which can be shared with church members and made public on the church website.

Recommendation 10: Ensure that all future senior leadership roles should make formal reports to the Arise Church Board, including representing in their reporting input from campus pastors.

Recommendation 11: Establish a plan to ensure diversity is encouraged into the future for the Arise Church Board.

Recommendation 12: Ensure that all new Board members undertake a formation process, which includes a theological component.

Recommendation 13: Ensure that Board members names and a contact channel for the Board are publicised on the Arise website, with staff and church members made aware at least twice yearly that this contact channel is in place.

Recommendation 14: Ensure that all members of the Arise Church Board reside in New Zealand, and that the majority of Board members are current members of Arise Church.

Recommendation 15: Ensure that the Charities Commission website is kept up to date regarding details of current board members.

Recommendation 16: Ensure that early tasks for the new board include:

- a. Establishing the future senior leadership/management structure of Arise, and managing appointments to these roles
- b. Developing indicators of church health
- c. Reviewing the church values
- d. Establishing how discipleship will be prioritised within the church.

Comment: In particular, a number of people who made submissions discussed the Arise's value of 'smile' and their view that, while well meaning, this is an aspect of what was often referred to as "a culture of toxic positivity". Many people commented that they see this as being at odds with Jesus's call for people to come to him as they are, and people expressed their desire for church to be a community where people can be honest and vulnerable.

Leadership, Accountability and Training

Recommendation 17: Invest in further training for campus pastors to strengthen their role within the church. Including:

- a) Establishing base training requirements for campus pastors - especially addressing what they receive by way of spiritual formation and theological training.
- b) Engaging with campus pastors to hear their training needs.
- c) Training in other key areas, including but not limited to people management skills and the handling of complex pastoral care issues.

Comment: A number of review participants who are current members commented on their desire to see their campus pastors take more of a role within the church, in order for their campus to have more of a 'local' flavour than defaulting to centralised leadership and preaching. Given the very central role existing senior leadership have

had across Arise, we believe it is important that plans are made to strengthen and support those in campus pastor roles.

Recommendation 18: Give campus pastors responsibility and appropriate accountability for their campus budgets, including the ability to identify and respond to the staffing and community needs in their location.

Privacy

Recommendation 19: Reform Arise's understanding of and practices around privacy. Including:

- a. Ensuring that training around privacy is a compulsory induction/training module for all staff and volunteers.
- b. Ensuring that when church members/visitors/event participants are asked to share their personal information they receive a disclosure statement regarding who will hold this information, how this will be used, the purpose for which it will be used, and how it will be stored.
- c. Ensure that when a matter needs to be passed on to another individual it is clear what the purpose of this sharing is, and that the person who has shared about an issue is aware of who will know their situation and the reason for this.
- d. Establishing two Privacy Officer roles to champion privacy best practice - one to be based at Arise's office headquarters, and one to be based at a location in another part of New Zealand. In addition:
 - I. Establish a brief description of the function of this role within the church.
 - II. Provide the necessary training, opportunities for networking with other church Privacy Officers, and initial supervision/mentorship for these individuals.
 - III. Identify the Privacy Officer role holders on Arise's website, and ensure church members are reminded twice annually of this role, its function, and how to contact these individuals with any privacy concerns.

Mental and Emotional Health

Recommendation 20: Reform the church's responses to people in mental and emotional distress, including:

a. Reviewing and revising policies and procedures relating to the care of people who are experiencing mental and emotional distress. Policies and procedures should in this vitally important area should also include:

- I. Identifying things church staff and volunteers will not say or do regarding mental health - for example, giving advice around the use of medication, advising that people 'pray harder' for healing etc.
- II. Establishing criteria/scenarios where staff or volunteers refer individuals on to further support from another individual/agency.
- III. Addressing how Arise can be proactive in supporting good mental health for members - for example, considering appropriate messaging 'from the front' around mental health.

b. Ensuring all staff and key volunteers receive training upon induction regarding how to identify and respond well when a person is experiencing mental and emotional distress, with training to be refreshed annually.

c. Establishing a national Head of Pastoral Care role. The development of this role should consider the appropriate qualifications for this work - eg. social work or counselling training plus a church ministry background.

d. Develop a list of local agencies/individuals to refer members to eg. counsellors, budgeting services, social work support agencies, addictions specialty services. Ensure all agencies/individuals referrals are made to have counsellors/health professionals who are:

- I. Fully trained
- II. Members of an appropriate professional body with an Annual Practising Certificate
- III. Can sign a statement confirming they do not engage in conversion therapy practices
- IV. Review Arise's messaging around mental health. Mental health to be spoken about 'from the front' following best practice advice and standards.

Culture & Gender

Recommendation 21: Establish a group of tangata whenua to identify, lead, and champion the inclusion and engagement of tangata whenua in the future of Arise Church. It is important that tangata whenua are given the ability to identify who should be approached to form the membership of this group.

Recommendation 22: Establish a multicultural group to identify, lead and champion the inclusion and engagement of all cultures in the future of Arise Church. It is important that minority cultures are given the ability to identify who should be approached to form the membership of this group.

Recommendation 23: Establish a 'Women of Arise' group, who will meet twice yearly to identify, lead and champion the inclusion and engagement of women at Arise Church.

Recommendation 24: Establish a Board Liaison person for these groups.

Sexual Identity

Recommendation 25: Establish a contact person who identifies as LGBTQI+ and is an active member of Arise, who can act as a contact point for other Arise members who identify as LGBTQI+.

Health and Safety

Recommendation 26: Each campus should appoint a Health and Safety representative, with all staff, volunteers and members advised at regular intervals who this is.

Recommendation 27: Establish a system whereby health and safety concerns can be raised and actioned.

Recommendation 28: Ensure the Board receives a regular report on Health and Safety matters.

Recommendation 29: Review with urgency health and safety issues related to Sunday services and events - eg. volunteers walking alone through the central city at 4am, heavy machinery operation after 17+ hours of duty.

Recommendation 30: Review risk assessment and management processes for Youth Group activities, including a focus on emotional safety for young people.

Ministry School

Recommendation 31: Ensure that Ministry School students have a say in identifying the area/s they are willing to serve in, and are able to accept or decline the position they are offered.

Recommendation 32: Ensure that Ministry School students hold the power to identify the length of their engagement and the hours and times they are willing to commit to.

Recommendation 33: Develop a formal agreement process between Ministry School students and the church. These agreements should:

- a. Establish time limits for Ministry School students serving the church on a week-to-week basis and establish a timesheet system to ensure monitoring of agreed hours.
- b. Document the church's commitment to the support of the Ministry School student, including:
 - I. Who their internal Supervisor will be and the agreed frequency with which they will meet.
 - II. Who their mentor will be, outside of the Arise staff structure, and the agreed frequency with which they will meet.

Recommendation 34: Ensure that Ministry School students have access to counselling funded by the church, if required. Ensure that they are made aware of this option at least quarterly, and have access to details of recommended counsellors.

Recommendation 35: Undertake an annual evaluation of the Ministry School programme, which includes feedback from all students. This should be reported to the Board.

Recommendation 36: Ensure that there is an identified process for Ministry School students to access mediation, supported by an external mediator, should there be issues requiring resolution.

Recommendation 37: Ensure that Ministry School students are reimbursed for costs - for example, when required to transport individuals or run errands.

Staff & Volunteers

Recommendation 38: Establish a Code of Conduct for all staff, interns and volunteers.

Recommendation 39: Develop induction modules which must be completed by all staff, interns and volunteers, including a system for key training modules to be revisited as a refresher at appropriate intervals.

Recommendation 40: Disestablish the practice of staff only having two Sundays off per year. Ensure that staff are able to have Sundays off to attend church services simply as members and alongside their family, or to attend elsewhere if desired, or for any other reason.

Recommendation 41: Ensure the practice of people working for 'promised jobs' ceases.

Recommendation 42: Ensure staff and key volunteers are given options and freedom to decline requests to move to work in different Arise campuses around New Zealand.

Recommendation 43: Establish agreed limits, to be reflected in policy, on serving times on Sundays, to ensure the health and safety, and mental and emotional wellbeing of staff and volunteers.

Recommendation 44: Ensure that senior pastors are accountable to the Board for leave taken.

Recommendation 45: Follow up with staff members identified in the review where the staff require support around appropriate interpersonal interactions and leadership training.

Recommendation 46: Ensure that Sundays are considered a 'work day' for staff within their work pattern.

Recommendation 47: Undertake job scaling for all roles to ensure that expectations for roles are realistic.

Recommendation 48: Ensure that staff initiation does not include induction rituals which might cause discomfort or humiliation.

Recommendation 49: Undertake the task of checking accepted pay rates for pastors in NZ.

Recommendation 50: Establish a 'People and Culture' role to provide strong leadership around Human Resources, beyond HR administration.

Recommendation 51: Review remuneration and key employment conditions for all staff, including expectations around unpaid hours.

Recommendation 52: Ensure that changes to an individual staff member's role are negotiated with due process.

Recommendation 53: Cease the current practice of standing people down from volunteer roles within the church when they are struggling in an area of their life - eg. with mental health challenges or with behaviour considered to be sin. Any stand downs should be approved by the People Care leader, and should include a fair process for the individual concerned.

Finance

Recommendation 54: Ensure that donations made to other churches or individuals are approved by the Board.

Recommendation 55: Ensure that the staff expenditure policy clearly outlines expenses staff are not able to claim - for example, family groceries, personal lunches.

Recommendation 56: Commission a full independent review of the finances of Arise. Submissions into the review raised the following matters:

- How donations 'tagged' for certain purposes (eg. Arise Care, Big Hearts) are used in reality. There has been some discussion that there were processes whereby donations were apportioned over different areas of the church budget, even if they were tagged.

- Spending on personal/household expenses for some Arise staff.

Recommendation 57: Review policies around expenditure limits for senior leadership.

Incident Management

Comment: The review process identified significant gaps in Arise's response to serious incidents. Often, knowledge of incidents was lost with staff turnover, and there were not sufficient practices for noting the follow up to incidents, or for advising the Board. This made it difficult to review what follow up had been enacted.

Recommendation 58: Develop a clear incident management plan, including:

- a. Clearly identifying what constitutes a 'serious' incident
- b. A system around note taking when a serious incident occurs**
- c. An escalation process for advising senior leadership and the Board when a serious incident has occurred
- d. A process through which 'open' serious incidents are regularly reviewed with appropriate plans for follow up
- e. Determining who within Arise holds responsibility for serious incident follow up
- f. A process through which serious incident themes are reflected on at regular intervals, with preventative actions planned where appropriate.

Other

Recommendation 59: Disallow tithing by children (under the age of 18).

Recommendation 60: Cease the practice of having clothing expectations for those involved in 'on stage' roles on Sundays, reserving this only for special events/occasions.

Recommendation 61: Review the scale of any future Arise conferences to ensure that expectations are realistic and that all individuals who pay to attend are able to attend the majority of conference sessions.

Recommendation 62: Cease the practice of directing people around how they should physically respond during worship.

Recommendation 63: Develop a sexual harassment policy and ensure this is a key module which must be covered by all staff and volunteers on induction into roles within Arise.

Recommendation 64: Cease the practice of people being restricted in where people sit within church services, acknowledging that there are a variety of reasons why individuals may desire or need space from others – for example, mental health challenges, neurodiversity, grief etc.

Recommendation 65: Cease the practice of having a designated VIP area in the front rows of church services.

Recommendation 66: Ensure that messaging from Arise on a corporate and individual level is mindful of encouraging all vocations as serving God, and not placing serving Arise as the highest vocation. Arise staff to be cautious to ensure there is not an over encouragement towards internship to meet Arise's needs.

Recommendation 67: Develop guidelines around how people who have left Arise should be spoken about and treated.

Recommendation 68: Develop a policy on conflicts of interest and ensure these are managed appropriately. For example, developing a Board register of conflicts of **interest which is published, and ensuring that relationships such as mentoring and workplace supervisory relationships are not with family members.**

Recommendation 69: Develop a conflict management policy that clearly outlines the stages of how conflict will be handled within Arise Church - for members, volunteers and staff. This policy should clearly identify external channels for mediation support if required.

Recommendation 70: Set up a working group to develop guidelines to address the **culture of Sunday service debrief meetings.**

Auditing & Accountability

Recommendation 71: Conduct a series of audits to evaluate progress against review recommendations making audit findings public on the Arise Church website. Suggested dates: November 2022, March 2023, July 2024.

Feedback

Recommendation 72: Reform Arise Church's stance towards feedback, including:

- a. Developing a policy around compliments, concerns and feedback, including how these are regularly summarised to the board.

- b. Establish channels for people to present compliments, concerns or feedback, and communicate these.

Closing Prayer

Loving God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,

You breathe life into your world and your Church.

We give thanks for the strength of those who have had the courage to share their **stories within Arise.**

We give thanks for your love for your Church;

a love that calls us towards wholeness;

towards healing, reconciliation and a way of being that grows in the reflection of Christ.

We acknowledge that the way forward will not always be easy.

We see that the path forward requires humility, wisdom, and a willingness to change.

May the Spirit of Christ dwell in all conversations and decisions as the way forward is determined.

May the Spirit of truth and wisdom lead all thoughts and actions for His name's sake, and the good of all.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be.

Amen.