

tvnz.co.nz**Brethren co-operate with inquiry**

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A senior member of the Exclusive Brethren being investigated for allegedly molesting children has been given the cold shoulder by the secretive sect.



And the organisation's troubleshooter has delayed returning to Australia as he helps deal with the claims by former church members of sex abuse within the religious group.

The accused member will not be attending Sunday's gospel preachings after being accused by four former female members of sexual abuse when they were aged between five and 10.

According to the man tasked with raising the Exclusive Brethren's image, the accused is no longer welcome at church.

"He won't be attending church functions or being around members until such time as the investigation is complete," says Tony McCorkell.

This week the church officially denied knowing about the allegations from four former members but now its spokesman acknowledges there could be more complaints and is extending his visit to New Zealand to deal with the fallout.

"The Exclusive Brethren don't have a culture that condones this. This is not a cultural issue within the church," says McCorkell.

Five weeks into their investigation police have interviewed two of the four alleged victims. They have not received any fresh complaints but are calling on anybody with information to come forward.

On Sunday Exclusive Brethren will meet in halls across the country but most are unlikely to have seen media reports of the accusations. However McCorkell says the Brethren will co-operate with the ongoing police inquiry.

Source: One News

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