



Karanga Atawhai

A newsletter for Sisters of Mercy and partners in mission

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A journey for Whānau Mercy begins to unfold

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Kia ora koutou, talofa lava, mālō e lelei. Welcome to this first edition of what is hoped to become a bi-monthly newsletter for Sisters of Mercy in New Zealand, Samoa and Tonga and their partners in ministry, helping us all to keep informed on this new and unfolding journey.

Thanks to Richard Kerr-Bell, te Kaihautū Wairua mission administrator of Tiaki Manatū Ministries Trust for the title, *Karanga Atawhai*. His choice of name reminds us that it was the original karanga or call from Māori women, taken to Europe by Bishop Pompallier in the 1840s, that first accounted for the decision by Sisters of Mercy in Ireland to come to Aotearoa. The call has never been withdrawn and is the reason why the successors of those sisters are here today, still responding to Mercy's call in whatever way seems necessary or appropriate in the circumstances of our day.

Increasingly, that call is being heard by an extended Mercy whānau, as women and men from a wide variety of backgrounds accept the call which Sisters of Mercy have made to join them in a mission which is not theirs but God's, the unfolding of a vision for human life which is inclusive and all-embracing. Today Whānau Mercy comprises sisters and their colleagues, staff and volunteers, students and alumnae, all drawn by the same charism of Catherine McAuley and united in wanting to make a difference through the works of mercy to other lives and to our planet Earth.

In looking ahead to an unfolding future, Ngā Whāea Atawhai o Aotearoa Sisters of Mercy New Zealand have given thought to how their diverse ministries might be made sustainable, how their initiatives in healthcare, education and community development might continue to flourish even when there may be no sisters to guide and nurture them.

The Sisters of Mercy are not alone in facing this dilemma, which is shared today by many other Catholic religious Congregations around the world. Church authorities have responded to the challenge by creating a new legal and canonical entity, the Public Juridic Person, enabling Congregations to future-proof their ministries when they are no longer able to support them. Some PJs, as they have come to be known, are entrusted to the local bishop or diocese.



Participants at the initial PPJP meeting in Wellington in January include (from left) Judith Moroney rsm, Rosemary Revell rsm, Frank Tuck, Katrina Fabish rsm, Sheryl James rsm, Bruce Macdonald, Luke Ryan and Doc Godfrey.

Others are placed in the hands of the Pope or a Vatican department; known as Pontifical Public Juridic Persons, these entities are particularly appropriate for religious Congregations which have been working across several dioceses or countries, as is the case for Sisters of Mercy in New Zealand, Samoa and Tonga.

Without specifically naming it, our Congregation has already set itself on a journey towards this goal. Following their last Chapter in 2014, our Sisters have committed themselves to a series of eight action steps to be taken by 2020; these include a clear plan for the future of their ministries, which will involve letting go of ownership of their larger works and establishing a strong mission formation pathway for their future governance and staffing.

The details for this complex undertaking are being entrusted to a new Sponsorship Committee and a raft of three working parties. These were launched at a commissioning ceremony in Wellington on January 24. A brief summary of this event appears overleaf. More details will follow in future editions of this newsletter, as sisters and partners in mission continue to respond to this karanga of Mercy. May the charism of Catherine, whose homemade boots carried her and her walking sisters on Mercy's path, lead us together on this voyage of discovery.

Sponsorship committee will guide PPJP process

The establishment of a Pontifical Public Juridic Person (PPJP), a new entity for ensuring the future of Mercy's ministries, will take all of us - Sisters of Mercy and their lay partners in mission - into uncharted territory. The aim of this newsletter is to track this journey and to keep us informed as the process unfolds.

The initiative for pursuing the creation of a PPJP rests with what is known as the Sponsorship Committee. The sponsors we know best are the significant adults who serve as models or mentors for young people wanting to be confirmed in the Catholic faith. In the wider world, sponsors are the companies who donate funds and lend their names and reputation to sporting teams. The deal works successfully, so long as the behaviour of sports people on and off the field is without reproach. If standards slip, sponsorship may well be withdrawn.

In the PPJP context, the sponsorship committee has a governance role, to ensure that the new entity is able to remain faithful to the charism or spirit of Mercy and sustains its Mercy character and values into the future. There is an expectation that through the work of the PPJP, all those who belong to Whānau Mercy, whether



Catholic or not, will share the charism of Catherine McAuley and be committed through the works of Mercy in responding to the cry of the poor and the cry of Earth.

In practical terms, our Sponsorship Committee comprises the Congregation Leader and members of the

Leadership Team; these four sisters are joined in this role by Astrid Lambert, group administrator of Tiaki Manatū Sisters of Mercy New Zealand Ministries Trust, by Richard Kerr-Bell, the Trust's Kaihautū Wairua, and by Debi Tatana, the Trust's executive assistant.

The Sponsorship Committee is being assisted by Australian Sister of Mercy Margaret Endicott from Brisbane (pictured above) who is facilitator of the PPJP project and comes to that task with first-hand experience of Mercy Partners, a PPJP established in November 2008 by the Queensland Sisters of Mercy.

Three working parties commissioned to turn plan into action

Three working parties will help the Sponsorship Committee of the Sisters of Mercy New Zealand pursue its goal to set up a PPJP. The parties were formally commissioned and given their terms of reference at a ceremony at Te Wahanga Atawhai Mercy Conference Centre in Wellington on January 24.

The first of these groups is the Legal Working Party, charged with developing the canonical structure of the PPJP in accordance with church law, and a legal structure recognised by New Zealand civil law. This working party is being chaired by Sister of Mercy Denise Fox, who is currently chair of Mercy International Association and is based in Sydney, where she serves as CEO for McAuley Ministries Ltd. This entity was set up by the Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea to provide governance for a wide range of their ministries.

There are two other Sisters of Mercy on this working party, and four lay people. Its tasks will include establishing the authority and powers of the PPJP, shaping its decision-making structure, and defining its responsibilities to the Congregation and to the Catholic Church.

Another group in this cluster is the Finance Working Party, charged with developing a business plan to establish the PPJP, with particular attention to the costs for mission, properties and buildings which the new entity may require to ensure the integrity and sustainability of the ministries of the Congregation.

This working party is being chaired by Doc Godfrey, general manager of Ngā Whāea Atawhai o Aotearoa

Tiaki Manatū Sisters of Mercy Ministries New Zealand Trust. He is a chartered accountant and holds an MBA from the University of Cape Town Graduate School of Business. He took up his appointment in 2006, having held senior management roles in property and financial services industries.

Two other laymen and two Sisters of Mercy serve on this working party, whose tasks include developing a business plan for mission and identifying the funding sources required by the PPJP. All financial policies and processes will need to be in harmony with the core principles and values of Whānau Mercy.

The third group is the Mission Working Party, set up to develop structures, policies and programmes that ensure ongoing fidelity to mission during and after the establishment of the PPJP. This group, which will also develop the PPJP's mission and vision statement, is chaired by Lorraine McArthur who has served on the board of Tiaki Manatū Trust since 2008. She is a former director of Archdiocesan Pastoral Services, Wellington, a past principal of St Catherine's College, Kilbirnie, and is currently a member of Te Mahi Whakapono, the Congregation's mission advisory group.

Besides the chair, there are three other lay people and four Sisters of Mercy on this working party. Key tasks for this group include the development of a model of mission formation for those in leadership at every level of the PPJP, and the creation of practices associated with the three principles of Whānau Mercy - whānaungatanga, aroha and kaitiakitanga.