



Karanga Atawhai

A newsletter for Sisters of Mercy and partners in mission

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PJP journey on track, despite lockdown

By DENNIS HORTON

Despite three months of Covid-19 lockdown, the process of moving towards the establishment of a Ministerial Public Juridic Person (PJP) has not been delayed, says project facilitator and Australian Sister of Mercy Marg Endicott. She spoke to Karanga Atawhai after the latest online meeting of the Sponsorship Committee on June 18.

She indicated that the work of the Legal and Finance Working Parties is nearing completion, as key decisions on the shape of the new entity, to be known as Whānau Mercy Ministries, and on the resources needed for it to operate were handed to the Sponsorship Committee to pursue.

Overseeing the Ministerial PJP will be a Sponsorship Council, members of which will be appointed by the Leadership Team of Ngā Whaea Atawhai o Aotearoa Sisters of Mercy New Zealand. In the first instance this is likely to include sisters, but already being discussed is the long-term future when there may be no members of the Congregation able to assume this role.

Still to be decided is how best to ensure governance between the Council and the ministries which belong to Whānau Mercy Ministries; two models are presently under consideration, says Marg Endicott. "The decision will rest with the Leadership Team.

What's needed is an openness to change in the future."

Helping to clarify the role and responsibilities of the Sponsorship Council was canon lawyer and Australian Sister of Loreto Mary Wright ibvm in Melbourne. Her feedback on a paper outlining issues on this topic will be incorporated by Sister of Mercy Denise Fox who is finalising the statutes and the paper defining the role of the Sponsorship Council.

The Finance and Property personnel have to ensure that authorities in Rome can be satisfied that there are adequate finances and property to sustain the Congregation in the future, and that there are enough reserves of capital and property to enable the PJP to flourish.

The Sponsorship Committee has continued its work throughout the lockdown period, working on legal, financial and property documents. "The things we planned for this year we have still been able to pursue," Marg Endicott said. "What will be delayed is the process of sending our draft material to Rome, since ideally this needs to be presented by people who can be at the Vatican to speak to it.

"This can't happen at present and we don't know when it will. But it is important that when the draft documents are being considered in Rome we are represented by those who can speak on our behalf with the Vatican officials who will be making the final decision."



"The Mercy of God has given us one another"
Catherine McAuley

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Forming hearts and minds for Mercy governance

Preparations are well in hand for providing future Trustees and Directors of Whānau Mercy Ministries with formation in mission. Developed by the Formation for Mission group from the work of the Mission Working Party, a first-year introductory programme spread over four two-day hui has been devised for those appointed to ensure governance of the new Ministerial PJP.

The purpose of the programme is to ensure that the charism of Mercy remains authentic and vibrant at all levels of Whānau Mercy Ministries. Leaders responsible

for governance of the PJP will be helped to make decisions informed by Mercy and by faith in the living Christ. They will also be encouraged to foster the partnership of equals reflected in Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

The formation in mission will also focus on developing the relationships needed to enhance the reality of a whānau/family in which the diversity of all are welcomed and acknowledged as gifts of the Holy Spirit.

**continued overleaf*

Forming hearts and minds for Mercy governance

**from front page*

Some discussion at the June meeting of the Sponsorship Committee focussed on whether all those involved in the ministerial PJP need to be Catholic, or whether most should be. The advice of canon lawyer Mary Wright was that Directors and Trustees need a range of skills, and all should be able to take their place within the Catholic Church and to speak from their hearts about mission. In a country like New Zealand where Catholics are only a minority of the population, it may be enough for those responsible for governance to be committed to Catholic and Mercy practices and values, without necessarily all being Catholic.

"It is up to the Congregation Leadership to define the membership of the Trustees of the Ministerial PJP in the statutes, then to see what the authorities in Rome are willing to accept," Mary Wright explained.

It is important that the formation for mission they receive enables them to talk with bishops and other leaders of the faith community about the Jesus of the Gospel, not just about the story of Mercy, she added.

The Sponsorship Committee next meets on August 11. The next issue of *Karanga Atawhai* will include fuller coverage of the mission formation process.

PJP a way to future-proof Mercy's ministries

Russell Florence has been a member of the Finance Working Party, established to develop a business plan and policies relating to finances, properties and buildings for the Ministerial PJP being set up by Ngā Whaea Atawhai o Aotearoa Sisters of Mercy New Zealand. For the past six years he has served on the board of the McAuley Trust which provides governance of the Congregation's temporal resources and recently became chairman of that body, following the retirement of long-serving Mercy board member Frank Tuck. Russell talked to *Karanga Atawhai* about his role.

Russell Florence became involved with Mercy almost 30 years ago, when Frank Tuck introduced him to Reuben O'Neill who asked him to become the KPMG partner in charge of the financial audit of Mercy Hospital Auckland.

"This led to an involvement in several assignments over the years, including the sale of Mercy Hospital to Ascot Hospital in 2001 and, a couple of years later, the sale of the land and buildings in Mountain Road."

Russell retired from KPMG in 2011.

"In 2014 I was asked if I would like to join the board of McAuley Trust. I was surprised and honoured to be asked, and my respect for the people and mission of the Sisters of Mercy made it an easy decision."

Karanga Atawhai asked Russell what he foresees as the most positive outcome from the process of setting up a Ministerial PJP. "I think it is a great opportunity to future-proof your ministries for a time when the Sisters of Mercy will be unable to have the hands-on involvement that enabled the establishment and early growth of those ministries."

Russell travelled last year to Brisbane with a small group of Mercy personnel from New Zealand to meet with their Australian counterparts. "I have been impressed with what has been achieved by the Congregations in Queensland, where Mercy Partners has grown while at the same time retaining its professionalism and the Mercy ethos. I believe the New Zealand experience can be even better."

Asked about what has impressed him most from his participation in the PJP process, Russell acknowledges the role of the Sisters of Mercy. "It's the generosity of the Congregation that strikes me, and their willingness to pass over control of a part of their organisation that for many has been their life's work."



He admits that it is difficult to foresee how society, business and Mercy's ministries will have to change in the future.

"If I think of the major New Zealand businesses that existed when I became a partner in KPMG 40-odd years ago, very few still exist in a form that is anything like they were in the 1980s."

"Establishing a corporate governance structure that can identify changing needs and ways of delivering services is essential," says Russell. "And just as important, to allow the changes to be implemented is critical. I believe that the Ministerial PJP enables this to happen."

He concludes by saying that when he hears people talk about the vision of Catherine McAuley, "I am struck by how relevant this vision still is in 2020, and half a world away. Her values and her compassion for those in need have remained strong all those years later."

Feedback welcomed

If you have any questions or comments on this newsletter, you are invited to send them directly to either Astrid Lambert (ALambert@somauck.org.nz) or to Richard Kerr-Bell (rkerrbell@somauck.org.nz).