

Karanga Atawhai

Karanga Atawhai - The Voice of Whānau Mercy Ministries

August 2026

From legacy to living mission

Whānau Mercy Ministries has participated in the Australian-based Association of Ministerial Public Juridic Persons (AMPJP) since we began. The formation of WMM benefited from the experience of our 13 Australian counterparts, some of which have been in existence for over 20 years.

AMPJP holds a forum each August, which explores one or two relevant topics in depth and enables trustees/stewards and senior executives to build relationships, share insights and learn together about this still novel form of Church governance.

Gerald Scanlan (Trust Chair) and Dave Mullin (Ko Te Hapai O) attended the forum. The gathering began with a report on the second five-year review conducted independently on AMPJP's performance and impact from 2021-2026. The overall findings were positive and appreciative. The main invitation was for AMPJP to offer a collective Catholic voice on relevant matters, reflecting its unique position as a lay-led ecclesial community. Associated with that is the challenge of being seen as a legitimate expression of the Church, rather than simply a business organisation.

Other priorities affirmed by respondents were a strong focus on formation for mission, developing a pool of candidates for future appointment as trustees/stewards and preparing for a near future in which the active role of religious institutes will have largely come to completion.

One speaker focused on the transition from religious institutes to lay-led MPJPs as carriers of charism and mission leaders. He encouraged us to see ourselves not so much as keepers of legacy but rather as founders or re-founders of the charism, inspired by a contemporary reimagination of the original vision. This is consistent with recent comments from Denise Fox rsm, describing a



new role for religious as prophetic stewards, focused on accompanying, forming (and challenging) the lay leaders who will carry the mission forward. She also used the image of 'midwives of new forms', helping to give birth to new forms of governance and mission.

Another speaker addressed the connection between lay leadership of MPJPs and the theology of eucharist. Eucharist is simultaneously memory, presence and hope – we recall Christ's self-giving love (which inspired Catherine McAuley), his presence sustains us and prepares us for the work of mercy, his example drives us forward with confidence and courage, to see and act boldly in response to need.

AMPJP is an important collaboration for us to be part of, with deepening relationships (especially with the other Mercy-inspired MPJPs) and plenty of resources and experiences for us to learn from. Together we are leading the global Church in delivering lay canonical governance for a mission that keeps calling us to serve with love the needs of our time.

Gerald Scanlan
WMMT Chair

Season of Creation

The Season of Creation runs from 1 September to 4 October each year. It is an opportunity for Christians around the world to reflect on our relationship with creation and our responsibility to care for our common home.

In Aotearoa, it arrives with spring. Just in the last two days I have noticed the light has returned when it is time to get out of bed. New growth is appearing, and the days seem a little warmer. After winter, there is something hopeful about seeing the light earlier in the morning and feeling the warmth of the sun. It is a good time to pay attention.

Most of us know that we need to care for the environment. We hear often about climate change, catastrophic weather events here and overseas. Biodiversity loss and the pressures on our whenua and waterways. The scale of these issues can sometimes make it difficult to know what difference our own choices can make. Care for our common home is about more than a list of environmental actions. It is also about the way we see the world around us, and our place within it.

Mercy begins with noticing, paying attention to what is happening around us, particularly where there is vulnerability or harm, and asking what response is needed.

This month we also mark Social Justice Week, a reminder that care for people and care for creation cannot easily be separated. What happens to our common home affects us all, but its impacts are not experienced equally.



Those with the fewest resources are often the least able to adapt when homes, livelihoods, food or communities are affected.

The Season of Creation is also an opportunity to return to our commitments as Whānau Mercy. Our Care for Our Common Home goals ask us to move beyond concern for creation and consider how that concern shapes our decisions, our ministries and the way we use the resources entrusted to us.

Perhaps this month, simply begin by noticing.

What is changing with the arrival of spring? What do you value about the place where you live and work? Where do you see signs of harm, or things that need greater care? Who is most affected?

And then you are invited to reflect on:

What might caring for our common home ask of me, and of us as Whānau Mercy, at this time?

Celebrating Mercy Day

Each year on 24 September, the global Mercy community celebrates Mercy Day, remembering the opening of the first House of Mercy by Catherine McAuley in Baggot Street, Dublin, in 1827. Nearly 200 years later, Mercy Day is an opportunity to celebrate the many ways that spirit of Mercy continues to find expression in our own time.

We know Mercy Day will be marked in many different ways. We would love to hear what you are doing. Send us a photo and a few sentences about how your ministry is celebrating Mercy Day this year, and we will share stories from across our Whānau Mercy community.

Send stories to: natasha@whanaumercy.nz



This month the Pope's prayer intention is for the care of water. You can find the prayer of the month used by the Holy Father on the website popesprayer.va

[Watch video here](#)

Formation, more than learning

There are plenty of formation opportunities on offer at the moment. While these are opportunities to encounter new ideas and deepen our knowledge, formation is also about how we are shaped by coming together, how we listen, make space for different voices, build relationships and deepen our shared Mercy identity.

Each time we gather, even online, we strengthen whanaungatanga, meet others from across our ministries and remind ourselves that we are part of something larger. Formation helps build community and hope. In learning, reflecting and discerning together, we are also practising what it means to be Whānau Mercy.

Strengthening Strategy

This September, we have two opportunities to strengthen strategic thinking across our Mercy ministries with Jo Cribb CFinstd. [Strategic Essentials](#) on 3 September is a practical introduction to what good strategy looks like and the role boards play in shaping it, while the [Mercy Governance Strategy Masterclass](#) on 10 and 17 September offers directors the opportunity to go deeper across two interactive sessions, applying strategic thinking to their own governance context.

Understanding Church for Good Governance

Join Fr Gerard Aynsley on 15 October, 7–8pm, for a webinar exploring what being part of the wider Church means for our Mercy ministries. Gerard will consider how our understanding of the Church shapes the way we govern and manage our ministries, and how good ecclesiology can support good governance that serves the wider life and mission of the Church. [Find out more information here.](#)

Discernment in Practice

We are delighted to welcome Susan Pascoe AM to St Mary's Convent in Auckland on 24 November, 2–4pm, for a practical workshop on discernment in Mercy governance and leadership. Susan brings exceptional experience as a member of the Vatican's Methodology Commission for the Synod on Synodality and a facilitator at the Synod Assemblies in Rome.

This is a rare opportunity to learn in person from someone who has been at the heart of the Church's developing practice of synodal discernment. We strongly encourage those from our Auckland ministries to attend in person, with an online option available for our ministries elsewhere in Aotearoa.

[MORE INFORMATION](#)

[REGISTRATION FORM](#)

REGISTRATION



Atawhaingia ō tātau kāinga Earlybird bird pricing ends soon

Join leading thinkers from the UK, USA, Australia and Aotearoa at the Catherine McAuley Symposium in Wellington, 13–15 December. Explore what it means to be a faith-based organisation in a changing global environment, with high-quality speakers exploring leadership, identity, mission and the challenges facing religious organisations today. Earlybird registrations close 24 September.

[MORE INFORMATION](#)

[REGISTRATION FORM](#)

Hīkoi Atawhai in October

Invitations have now been sent to our ministries for Hīkoi Atawhai, 28–31 October, and we are asking each ministry to nominate two people to take part. Together we will journey from Waitangi to Pawarenga, creating space to deepen our understanding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, encounter the stories and places that have shaped Aotearoa, and strengthen relationships across our Whānau Mercy community. The hīkoi is an opportunity to learn together, reflect on our shared commitments, and consider what these mean for the way we live and lead Mercy today.



Mercy Alliance Webinar: Engaging with Ethical Issues

The next Mercy Alliance formation webinar, 22 October, 3.00–4.30pm NZ time, will explore ethical issues and decision-making in ministry governance and leadership. Led by Dan Fleming, National Director, Ethics at St Vincent's, the session is also an opportunity to connect, share experiences and learn alongside others involved in Mercy ministries and MPJPs across Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand. The session will not be recorded, so we encourage you to join live if you can.

[REGISTRATION FORM](#)

Looking for new trustees

Whānau Mercy Ministries is seeking expressions of interest from people who feel drawn to our Mercy kaupapa and want to help shape its future in Aotearoa. As part of our succession planning, we are looking for new Trustees who bring diverse experiences, perspectives and backgrounds, with a particular invitation to Māori and Pasifika applicants. If this sounds like you, or someone you know, we encourage you to find out more and consider whether this might be an opportunity to serve.

[MORE INFORMATION](#)

Planting the seeds of Mercy

We are excited to be relaunching Kākano Atawhai, an initiative for graduates of colleges with a Mercy charism to stay connected with Mercy after they leave school and to build community with other young people across Aotearoa.

Centred around outreach, social justice, friendship and making a difference, Kākano Atawhai is an invitation to discover what Mercy might look like in the next stage of life. This year, we are widening the invitation to students from all colleges in Aotearoa that share a Mercy heritage or charism.

At the end of the year, each student will receive a small packet of kōwhai seeds, together with a QR code inviting them to sign up if they would like to be involved.

Vote for 2026 Westfield Local Hero

Lana Petrovic from Mercy Hospice is a Westfield Local Hero Finalist. If successful, the grant will expand the At Home Aged and Palliative Services Programme, funding culturally responsive training resources, community workshops and digital tools for carers.

[VOTE HERE](#)

Please forward this on

We would love to reach more people and share the mahi we are doing and connect to our wider community as well. Please feel free to share this newsletter widely, and we encourage people to subscribe. The QR code will take you to the Karanga Atawhai Subscription page.



Funding the Mercy Mission



Since the first Sisters of Mercy landed in New Zealand in 1850, there have been many initiatives, alongside the generosity of benefactors, to help fund the various works of Mercy mission. Among the most fragrant ideas, is the catalogue of at least twenty “Mercy roses” which have been developed for release through garden centres across the world. In New Zealand, the Sisters of Mercy held “plant variety rights” for the vibrant “Mercy rose” for a decade until 2007 and in Australia, the cheerful “Catherine rose” is still available.

Download prayers & resources at whanaumercy.nz/resources

We're regularly adding new karakia and have include downloadable formation resources for use in your hui and gatherings on the Atawhai Portal. Scan the QR code to access our resource section - so you'll always have a karakia on hand when you need one.



Mercy International Association Resources

There are some great resources on the Mercy International Association including some resources you can use for the Season of Creation. Josie Ruawhare, Operations Manager at Te Waipuna Puawai recently presented on her MELF project, which is available to view on their facebook page at the moment. We look forward to her reflections in the next edition of Karanga Atawhai.

Mercy International also has some great resources that can be used for formation or reflections including their Heritage Portal, Formation resources,

There are also some prayer and reflection resources for previous Mercy Days that you may be able to use.

