

# Karanga Atawhai

The voice of Whānau Mercy Ministries NOVEMBER 2024



## Tribute to Denise Fox rsm

Gerald Scanlan, Chair, Board of Trustees

*“A good beginning is of great importance”*

Denise has taken these words of Catherine McAuley and brought them to life in her foundational leadership of Whānau Mercy Ministries, with her characteristic blend of wisdom, humility and practical common sense.



Denise has played a central role in the 20-year journey leading up to the formation of Whānau Mercy Ministries. She was the inaugural leader of Ngā Whaea Atawhai o Aotearoa – Sisters of Mercy New Zealand, when it consolidated the four New Zealand congregations into one in 2005. Under her leadership, Tiaki Manatū was formed in 2008 – the predecessor to Whānau Mercy Ministries. As the Congregation’s discernment around forming a ministerial public juridic person strengthened, Denise was appointed to the Sponsorship Committee charged with its creation.

She led one of the three working parties formed in early 2019, responsible for the detailed planning for the PJP, culminating in the formal petition to the Vatican to approve its establishment. When that happened in November 2022, Denise became the inaugural Chair of the Trustees for Whānau Mercy Ministries.

As Trustees, we couldn’t have wished for a leader more steeped in the Mercy tradition in Aotearoa New Zealand, more familiar with the path of discernment leading to Whānau Mercy Ministries or more connected to the global Mercy network,

with its many precedents of partnership in governance. In each of these dimensions, Denise has been both gift and guide.

From our first gathering as Trustees (designate) in September 2022, Denise has shaped and schooled us in the ways of Mercy and church governance. She has been a consistent advocate for and source of formation in the Mercy charism, in Mercy tikanga and in the

Mercy way of discernment and decision-making. Denise has reminded us often of the centrality of relationships, within and beyond the whānau.

She has forged a strong connection with the Mercy PJPs in Australia and with the wider PJP network there, knowing that we have much to learn from their experiences in walking this new way of ministry governance and navigating the inevitable tensions and challenges.

Denise has also been a skilful and patient Chair, as we have built familiarity with each ministry, developed our teamwork, learned to meet effectively and appointed our Ko te Hapai O. She has recognised and harnessed our strengths and kept us focused on our role, which is at heart the mission of Mercy.

As the circle closes and Denise once more takes up the leadership role for the Congregation, we feel a mix of emotions: gratitude and affection, sadness and apprehension, anticipation and courage. We recall Catherine’s profound trust in God’s providence and take heart that all will be well, recognising that we have enjoyed the best of beginnings under Denise’s careful stewardship.

## Ka haere tonu te haerenga

27 November 2024 marks the second anniversary since Congregational Leader, Sister Sue France received the approval from the Holy See to establish Whānau Mercy Ministries (WMM), a ministerial Public Juridic Person (PJP) that would own and govern the incorporated ministries formerly owned by the Sisters of Mercy New Zealand.

### When did this process begin?

In 2009 sisters and trustees of McAuley Trust attended a conference in Sydney on the role of PJPs where we had the opportunity to hear from overseas and Australian groups who had opted to form ministerial PJPs, a new structure in the Catholic Church.

### So why did the Sisters think it was necessary to transfer the ownership of their incorporated ministries to the PJP?

Acknowledging that the mission of mercy belongs to the whole church and that their ministries were now governed, led and staffed by lay people committed to the mission of Mercy, the Sisters were confident in entrusting the future of their ministries to WMM.

#### Whānau Mercy Ministries Statement of Purpose

We are committed to The Gospel of Jesus Christ, the tradition of Catherine McAuley, Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the sacredness of all creation. Out of God's mercy we respond willingly and walk compassionately with those who are seeking:

- Healing and Wholeness
- Relief from Suffering
- Restoration of Human Dignity
- Knowledge, Understanding and Wisdom
- Care for our Common Home

We do this through our education, healthcare and community ministries in the name of the Catholic Church.

### How does it work?

The civil trust Whānau Mercy Ministries Trust was established to enable this new church entity to operate in civil law. The PJP became effective 1 April 2023 when the ministries were transferred from the Sisters of Mercy New Zealand to Whānau Mercy Ministries.

### Is a PJP still a ministry of the Catholic Church?

'Public Juridic Person' (PJP) is the term the Church uses for an entity established by canon (Church) law to perform a specific function. As these entities have an exclusive responsibility for Church ministries, they are often known as 'ministerial' public juridic persons. Ministerial PJPs are essentially church companies authorised to own and govern ministries in the name of the Catholic Church.

### Has this been done anywhere else?

WMM is the first PJP in Aotearoa but globally, the first ministerial PJP (MPJP), Catholic Health USA, was established in the United States in the 1980s bringing together health corporations formerly owned by religious orders/congregations. Australia followed in the early 2000's and currently there are 13 PJPs in Australia. MPJPs ensure their ministries continue to work with the disadvantaged and marginalised and like the Sisters before them ensure ministries evolve to meet the needs of the contemporary Church and society.

As a Sister of Mercy it has been a privilege to have been involved with others in the search for the solution of ensuring the mission of mercy continues in New Zealand.

Many of you will be aware I take up the role of Congregation Leader of the Sisters of Mercy New Zealand on 5 December 2024. This means that I will retire as a trustee of Whānau Mercy Ministries. As I reflect on the past two years of WMM it is with gratitude I acknowledge the trust of the Sisters of Mercy, the commitment of my fellow trustees and staff, and the willingness of the ministries to embrace this very significant change to respond to emerging needs and to flourish into the future, addressing what Pope Francis has described as '*new forms of poverty and vulnerability*'.

## Ngā kaitiaki o Whānau Mercy Ministries



### Gerald Scanlan *Chair*

Gerald's links with Mercy began in 2019, with his appointment to the Legal (civil and canonical) Working Party formed to help lay the groundwork for Whānau Mercy

Ministries. He was later invited to join the board which oversees the work of Mercy Villas, a facility providing affordable housing for older people developed by the Sisters of Mercy in Upper Hutt. Gerald's appointment as a Trustee recognised his extensive leadership and governance experience within the Catholic Church, at both local and national levels, and lifelong faith commitment.

*'Reflecting back on those earlier experiences, along with the formation I have received over the past two years as a Trustee, I have developed a deepening*

*regard for and appreciation of the Mercy charism,'* says Gerald. *'I have been inspired and humbled by the wisdom and courage of Ngā Whaea Atawhai o Aotearoa Sisters of Mercy New Zealand to reimagine their ministry, to share its leadership and to position it for an unknown future. I have also come to a better understanding of how our commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and care of creation fit with being Mercy.'*

The connections that Trustees have made with other PJPs in Australia, along with the global synodal process in the Church, have reinforced for Gerald the timeliness of the Mercy PJP in New Zealand. *'I feel strongly that we are at the front end of a significant transition in how ministry is led and governed in the Church, with lay people stepping more fully into their baptismal responsibilities. It is a privilege to be entrusted with this opportunity to help shape the emerging church in Aotearoa New Zealand and to give fresh expression to Catherine McAuley's insight that Mercy is God's love in action.'*



### Michael Quigg *Chair, People & Capability Committee*

Michael is an employment lawyer with Quigg Partners, a Wellington-based legal firm which he and his brother David established almost 25 years

ago. Michael specialises in employment law. Michael was married in Dunedin by his former Latin teacher and cricket coach, the late Father Maurice Scull. He and his wife Alison have 2 sons and 4 grandchildren.

During his career he has developed expertise in governance and management matters. In this capacity he has presented on behalf of the Institute of Directors in New Zealand at its various conference forums and Chairpersons workshops for over 25 years.

Michael was a foundation pupil at St Francis Xavier School in Tawa and then attended St Patrick's College in Wellington. At St Patrick's College Michael was a Prefect, Vice-Captain of the First X1 Cricket

Team and captained the winning O'Shea Shield team to which he contributed by winning the Impromptu Speech competition. He obtained his LLB and LLM degrees from Victoria University. Michael has undertaken post-graduate study programmes at both San Diego and Harvard Universities. Outside of the law Michael has served on various Boards of IHC, the NZ Cricket Museum Trust, the Parole Board as well as serving as President of Cricket Wellington.

Two of Michael's aunts were nuns. One was Sister Maria Stephen of the Home of Compassion. It was through her that Michael came to serve on the Board of the Home of Compassion in Island Bay prior to the closure of its hospital.

His other aunt, the late Sister Monica Quigg approached Michael before her death in February 2022 and explained what was being proposed by the Sisters of Mercy regarding the future of their ministries. This led to Michael's application and the invitation to serve as a trustee of Whānau Mercy Ministries. Michael hopes to bring his legal and business experience to this appointment, along with his vocational background.



**Catherine Fyfe**  
*Chair, Formation  
Committee | People &  
Capability Committee  
member*

Catherine's associations with Mercy began with a couple of years at St James Primary School

in Palmerston North and a term at the then St Patrick's intermediate school. Her father was a banker and her family moved frequently. Her last three years of schooling were spent at Villa Maria College in Christchurch. 'This was my home from an educational perspective,' she says.

The Mercy links were re-established about nine years ago when she was appointed to the board of proprietors of St Mary's College in Wellington. A few months later, she was asked to chair the board of St Catherine's College in Kilbirnie. 'We had St Catherine's property progressing well when I was called back to St Mary's to take over from the retiring chair. The last five years have seen us working hard to bring the St Mary's campus into a modern and attractive place of learning for our students. Following many decades of considering many complex options, the project of refurbishing the second major tower block and installing a three-storey link block between the two towers has just commenced. This is a huge milestone and I delighted to be able to get this underway before my term as Chair concluded.'

*Mercy's special character is alive and well at St Mary's with our students and staff!*

Having worked for years as head of Human Resources for banks and insurance companies, Catherine spent four years managing HR for a retirement village company. 'After a career in finance, it was an extraordinary privilege to experience the aged care industry with all its challenges and rewards,' she says.

She and husband Steven have two sons and live between Arrowtown and Wellington. 'We are now grandparents to two and they live in the UK. We are lucky enough to have spent time with them over the summers since our first grandchild was born during lockdown. We are experiencing the joy of hours at the park and the delight of selecting books at the library. I'm also focussing on teaching them the delights of the garden although they are supervising my gardening so far rather than participating!'

Catherine is loving the work as a trustee to the board of Whānau Mercy Ministries. 'The Trustees have spent the last year getting to know each of our ministries and working with them to continue the tradition of Mercy in Aotearoa. The vision Catherine McAuley dreamed of so long ago in Dublin is vital and as necessary as ever in Aotearoa today, just in a slightly different form,' she says.

'The Sisters of Mercy have given so much to education, health and social services, and I feel honoured that they have the confidence in us to take our Mercy mission forward.'



**Charlotte Cummings**  
*Formation Committee  
member*

Charlotte is delighted to contribute to the work of Whānau Mercy Ministries as a Trustee.

She describes herself as a person with a "whakapapa of Mercy", having two aunts as Sisters of Mercy, as well as being educated at Villa Maria College. Her time at Villa Maria College shaped and challenged her to "think and act as a Mercy woman".

Charlotte has a varied professional background including counselling, leadership of health and social services, consultancy work, and response to abuse and harm complaints in faith-based settings.

She is keenly aware of the difficulties which many New Zealanders face in their lives today, and knows that her work with people in need will inform her perspective as a trustee.

Charlotte sees it as a key role of Whānau Mercy Ministries as "building on the legacy of the Sisters of Mercy in this land and ensuring that the Mercy charism remains a central focus as we journey on."



**Judy Whiteman**  
*Treasurer and Chair,  
Finance Committee*

Judy says she has been inspired for many years by the work of Catherine McAuley and her vision of providing practical assistance to those in

need. In 2007-08 she undertook some capacity development work with the Auckland-based Mercy community development ministries Te Ūkaipo and Te Waipuna Puawai.

*‘From 2014 to 2019 I was a director on the board of Te Waipuna Puawai, serving as chair for the last two of these years. This also meant involvement with Tiaki Manatū Trust. Over this time, I was exposed to the values of the Sisters of Mercy and the variety of ministries they have developed.’*

As a trustee of Whānau Mercy Ministries, Judy says her hope is to help ensure that the work which the Sisters of Mercy have begun continues. *‘What excites me most is the chance to share in maintaining and potentially growing the amazing legacy of Catherine McAuley and her sisters in New Zealand.’*

Committed to helping people achieve success for themselves and their organizations, she has been a director, facilitator, mentor and consultant in a range of commercial and not-for-profit sectors.

*‘Whilst having a diverse background in governance, I count curiosity as one of my gifts. I ask questions to understand and explore what has gone before and what is possible in going forward.’*

Judy acknowledges that she is not Catholic and did not have a traditional Christian upbringing. *‘But I like to think that bringing a different perspective to the issues the Trust faces will add to the diversity of thinking around the board table. I have been described as open and honest, practical, and down-to-earth. People don’t die wondering what I am thinking!’*

Judy is a Chartered Member of the Institute of Directors New Zealand, a member of the Chartered Accountants of Australia and New Zealand, and a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. She is currently a trustee of New Zealand Housing Foundation and a director and chair of Carmel College Auckland Ltd. She has previously held several different governance roles which included Presbyterian Support Northern.



**Philip Alexander-Crawford**  
*Finance Committee member*

Philip (Ngāti Hine, Ngāti Rēhia, Ngāpuhi) has been involved with the Sisters of Mercy for more than three years as a Trustee

on Tiaki Manatū, the trust which previously oversaw Mercy’s healthcare, education and community development ministries. He has also served as chair of Te Ūkaipō Mercy Initiatives for Rangatahi, a ministry based in West Auckland that works with youth and their families to help them achieve their potential.

Te Ūkaipō is now part of Te Waipuna Puawai Mercy Oasis.

*‘This has been a rewarding and positive experience for me,’ says Phil, ‘one which has allowed me to live my faith in supporting mahi that I really believe in. To be able now to take this knowledge and experience into Whānau Mercy Ministries as a trustee is a privilege for which I am grateful.’*

Phil says his personal kaupapa is based on whānau in its wider sense (physical, emotional and spiritual) and on whakapapa that includes Catherine McAuley and her Sisters of Mercy. He has a strong sense of whakapono (faith and trust) and ako (teaching and learning). He hopes to make a useful contribution to the collective mahi of this new Trust.



*Stay in touch:* Join the Whānau Mercy Ministries mailing list by emailing [office@whanaumercy.nz](mailto:office@whanaumercy.nz)

## Students from St Catherine's College, Wellington join the campaign for a Living Wage for Ancillary Staff

Report written by the students

The living wage recognises that all people deserve a fair wage for their labour, offering a way to lift people out of poverty. This is why, for our Year 13 social action assessment in Sociology, we decided to approach the Principal and Board of Trustees at St Catherine's College to support the Living Wage Schools Campaign. This campaign aims to ensure that all school cleaners, caretakers, canteen staff and grounds keepers are paid a living wage by calling on the government to provide new funding to schools.

We started by talking to Finn Cordwell who is the Community Organiser in Wellington for the movement, and he gave us lots of ideas on how to move our social action forward. Gaining the support of our Principal, Amélie Kelder, gave us the confidence to present our proposal at the October meeting where Board Members were very responsive and agreed to sign the pledge because they recognised that, as a Mercy School, paying the living wage is essential.

We feel proud that St Catherine's is the first Catholic school in Wellington to sign up, and that we were the first student-led campaign in Aotearoa New Zealand to support the campaign. Looking back, we have learned that young people can make a positive change in our communities if they are brave enough to take a chance and stand up for what is right.



Miranda (BoT Student Rep), Sister Stephanie (BoT), (Living Wage Movement Official), Genesis, Mrs McDonald (Dep Principal), Gemma, Mrs Dai (Librarian), Ms Dixon (Yr 13 Sociology Teacher), Mr Kenedy-Good (Cath Rep on Living Wage Movement), Ms Kelder (Principal)

## Hikoī Atawhai o Aotearoa

The inaugural Hikoī Atawhai o Aotearoa travelled to places of significance and was blessed with wonderful Te Tai Tokerau hospitality from mana whenua. The December edition of Karanga Atawhai will be filled with their stories and reflections.



Some of the Hikoī Atawhai o Aotearoa pilgrims at Ngāwhā Marae near Kaikohe.

## Upcoming important dates

### 27 November - WMM Establishment

WMM was established by decree on the 27 November 2022. This decree, from the Vatican's Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life set in motion all the formal steps required for the congregation to begin transferring ministries to WMM.

### 12 December - Foundation Day

On 12 December 1831, Catherine McAuley and two others professed their vows and became known as the Sisters of Mercy. On 12 December 2005 the four Congregations of Aotearoa united to become a single Congregation – Nga Whaea Atawhai o Aotearoa Sisters of Mercy New Zealand.



**Te Ngākau Atawhai – Heart of Mercy:** In Aotearoa, the Mercy Cross, central to Catherine McAuley's spirituality, is supported by a pair of koru. The koru represent the unfolding of new life and link our Mercy story to the spirituality of Māori and the ancient lore of this land.

Karanga Atawhai is the newsletter of Whānau Mercy Ministries, a Ministerial Public Juridic Person (MPJP) under Canon Law.

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