



Karanga Atawhai

A newsletter for Sisters of Mercy and partners in mission

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Sponsor's Council to oversee PJP's course

By DENNIS HORTON

Two major milestones were reached at the latest meeting of the Sponsorship Committee working to establish a ministerial Public Juridic Person (PJP) to own and govern ministries established in this country by the Sisters of Mercy.

The first of these was to recommend that the Congregation's Leadership approve the formation of what will be known as the Sponsor's Council. This will be a body of at least three and not more than five members whose primary task will be to ensure that the works of the PJP, to be known as Whānau Mercy Ministries, are in line with the teaching and laws of the Catholic Church and with the charisma and traditions of Ngā Whaea Atawhai o Aotearoa Sisters of Mercy New Zealand.

The members of the Sponsor's Council will be chosen by the Congregation's Leadership. All of them must be practising Catholics and will be appointed for a term of three years. The Congregation's Leadership will appoint one of the members as Chair of the council, who will convoke and chair meetings as required.

The second milestone reached by the Sponsorship Committee was to recommend that Leadership approve the PJP's statutes which outline the duties and powers of the Sponsor's Council, including the appointment of no fewer than five trustees, most of whom must be Catholics. The trustees of Whānau Mercy Ministries will be responsible in canon (church) and civil law for the conduct of the PJP and its ministries. The role and responsibilities of the trustees feature in the story that follows.

It will be the task of the Sponsor's Council to appoint the trustees who will be directly responsible for the governance of Whānau Mercy Ministries. Each year the council will hold at least two meetings, one of these being the annual meeting in which the PJP's trustees will participate and present the annual report to be sent to the Holy See in Rome.

Members of the Council will be expected to complete an initial formation process and to participate in a programme of ongoing formation which will be determined by the Congregation's Leadership. The council's tasks will include defining the philosophy and mission of Whānau Mercy Ministries and approving or amending the PJP's constitution and by-laws.

The next issue of *Karanga Atawhai* will be published in October 2020.



MERCY VALUES: This window in the Te Atawhai block of St Catherine's College, Kilbirnie, was designed by senior students Eva Malthus and Anna Cacace in 2015. As well as the school motto, it features a Mercy cross, the cup of tea that symbolises hospitality, and the walking shoes that image the mission and service of Catherine McAuley and her sisters. Also featured are flowers from the many countries of the school's ethnically diverse community.

Trustees to keep Mercy's ministries on track

A board of trustees will provide governance of all the ministries within the PJP established by the Sponsor's Council on behalf of Ngā Whaea Atawhai o Aotearoa Sisters of Mercy New Zealand. The trustees will be responsible in canon (church) and civil law for the conduct of Whānau Mercy Ministries and its constitutive organisations.

The role of trustees and their responsibilities are outlined in a draft of Canonical Statutes which was recommended to the Congregation's Leadership for approval by the PJP's Sponsorship Committee at its meeting on Tuesday 11 August.

**continued overleaf*



Mr Les Jones is currently the Treasurer of Mercy Partners, the PJP founded with Vatican approval in 2008 by the four Mercy congregations in Queensland to govern their Catholic ministries in the fields of education, health, aged care and social services. He is chair of Mercy Partners Finance Committee and chair of its Audit and Risk Committee. He is also a director of Brisbane Housing Company Ltd and has been director of various not-for-profit organisations. He talks here about his role in the Council of Mercy Partners, similar to that which will be undertaken by trustees appointed to provide governance of our ministerial PJP.

How faith helps to shape business decisions

Les Jones has worked with the Sisters of Mercy and three other religious congregations in Queensland over many years, helping them from an audit point of view to deal with issues facing their health, education and social justice ministries.

"Over the years, I have developed an interest in working with these ministries, often in hard-nosed commercial environments, within the framework of the Catholic Church," Les told *Karanga Atawhai*. "I have discovered a passion for the nuances in fostering these ministries in ways that uphold their Catholic mission and identity, the charism of their founders and the spirit of God's mercy which is always at their heart."

Les had been retired from his professional career for about five years when he was approached about joining the Council of Mercy Partners. "I had been looking for some time for a way in which I might contribute to the ministries in which I had a strong interest. So, I warmly accepted the invitation."

He admits that the implications of canon law as it affects commercial transactions formed a steep learning

curve for him. But attendance at an initial formation course helped him to understand his role within the governance structure of a church enterprise.

"The format of the initial formation sessions helped to build a sense of community among like-minded people, all of whom shared a passion for the ministries in which they were involved. Ongoing formation has gradually evolved into an adult education learning and has assisted me greatly in being able to articulate God's mercy and the charisms of the founding Sisters," Les said.

"This formation process has also enabled me to contribute to the decisions faced by the Council in terms of governance and sustainability. I have been able to deepen my faith and increase my ability to apply that faith to everyday and business decisions."

Trustees to keep Mercy's ministries on track

**from front page*

There will be a minimum of five trustees; the Sponsor's Council will set the maximum number. The majority of trustees must be practising Catholics. They will be appointed by the Sponsor's Council, which will also choose one of them as chair. All of them will be expected to embody the spirituality and sense of mission that are an essential part of every Mercy ministry and to have an adequate understanding of the teachings and laws of the Catholic Church.

The trustees will need to know that as a PJP, Whānau Mercy Ministries continues the mission of Jesus Christ and that its health, education, social and community ministries exist as works of the Catholic Church. The trustees are responsible for ensuring that each of these ministries operates in a way that is consistent with the beliefs, teachings and laws of the Catholic Church.

Trustees will have a special responsibility for seeing that Mercy ministries continue to build on the charism and traditions of the Sisters of Mercy and that they embody gospel values, Catholic social teaching and the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Trustees will be expected to see that Mercy ministries accord with the Statement of Purpose for Whānau Mercy Ministries, and that they adapt to address what Pope Francis has described as 'new forms of poverty and vulnerability' as society changes.

An important task of the trustees will be the preparation of an annual report which will be sent to the Holy See in Rome, after it has been approved by the Sponsor's Council. The annual report on the activities of the PJP will show that the integrity of faith and morals is preserved and that the apostolic activity of Mercy ministries and their use of temporal goods are in accord with its purposes.

Other tasks to be undertaken by the trustees include appointing directors to the boards of ministries within the PJP and approving the content of initial and ongoing formation for both trustees and directors. Trustees will also define the limits for ordinary administration by Mercy ministries, and the process by which acts of extraordinary administration may be carried out in accordance with canon law and the Constitution.