



In the Anglican Province of Aotearoa New Zealand and Polynesia
and throughout the World

Provincial Mother's Union Report to General Synod, 2020

I have pleasure in writing this report for Mothers' Union in Aotearoa New Zealand and Polynesia. Mothers' Union has now been in our Province since 1886 - for 134 years. Mother's Union is a global, women-led volunteer movement. United in our diversity and living out our faith, we support individuals and families to transform their lives. Embedded in the Church and community, we have unprecedented reach that gives a voice to those most vulnerable around the world through our 2 permanent chairs at the United Nations. Mothers' Union, for those not familiar with us, was formed by an Archdeacon's wife Mary Sumner in Winchester in 1876. Worldwide we are present in 84 countries with over four million members and growing.

During our global listening process MULOA (Mothers' Union Listens, Observes and Acts) the voices of over 200,000 members worldwide were heard. This enabled the Worldwide Council to draw together key emerging elements, and thus shape the way forward for us as a movement. 'Building Hope and Confidence' has been placed at the heart of our call to support individuals and families to make a difference to their quality of life.

We in our Province take ourselves very seriously as we walk in the steps of the thousands who have walked before us in the light of Christ to carry on his work for him. Our members carry out their role in the church and their community, aware that sharing and caring in our work for families is important and necessary in today's world. Our support for families is very important to us. We support agencies such as the ATWC and the City Mission, women's refuges and women in prisons, and various other groups both within and outside the church. We gather pyjamas for the winter to give to needy children, as well as cars full of linens and household items, and we give support to agencies who look after children in care. We run Mainly Music groups, provide care for teen mothers, and provide holidays for needy families. In fact the care our members give is Christian care for families - sharing the essence of a "Mother's Love" with all who need our care and concern. We also pray for each other, 'holding hands' in a Worldwide Mothers' Union Prayer Chain every day. This year life membership badges have been presented to Vera Green and Myra Berghan.

The past year has been very busy for me as Provincial President. In January I attended Muloa 2 in Brisbane and in June, the Worldwide Council in Rwanda for Muloa 3. The Provincial Presidents from 46 countries attended. Together we set in place our programme for the future for Mothers' Union. We visited places where the local Mothers' Union members had helped in turning around the people from ethnic fighting 25 years ago to peace today. It was simply amazing what can be done with a Christian spirit if people want to make a difference. Their tenacity in raising the community by the building of churches and schools and places of higher education, as well as businesses so families have an income was really inspiring.

Later in the year I attended two Mothers' Union anniversaries, that of Tonga 60 years, and Melanesia 100 years. At the celebrations for the anniversary in Tonga, I commissioned the Princess Salote Malife'o Pilolevu as Patron of Mothers' Union in Tonga, and Archdeacon Colleen Cowley as Chaplain of Mothers' Union in Tonga. The celebration services and meals shared together were wonderful and I was inspired by the church bells and 6 a.m. services each morning. In Honiara at their centenary celebrations held over four days, over two thousand

Mothers' Union members attended from all Melanesia island groups, Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea, and New Caledonia. The food and lodging planning had been amazing and everything ran like clockwork. Members of outlying islands ran saving schemes to pay for their own transportation. I feel they should be really proud of their organisational skills in achieving such an amazing feat. It was thrilling. At a civic reception at Government House to which we leaders were invited Archbishop David Vanagi the former archbishop of Melanesia was enrolled as a member of Mothers' Union.

Mother's Union is for everyone, women, men, young, single, married, whoever. Mothers' Union is for all. Archbishop Justin Welby stated at a service to recommission Lynne Tembey in 2016: "There is such a need for global women's groups. And you Mothers' Union are among the most embedded, most effective, the most widespread, there are few that can rival you - if any." We are grateful for the loving support of our clergy, and members of our congregations who loyally and enthusiastically support us in our endeavours. Bless you all. I end with Mary Sumner's prayer. "All this day o Lord, let me touch as many lives as possible for thee, and every life I touch, do thou by thy spirit quicken. Whether through the word I speak, the prayer I breathe, or the life I live, Amen."

Joan Neild,

Provincial President,
Mothers' Union in the Province of Aotearoa New Zealand and Polynesia

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