



## Newsletter - October 2025

Greetings to each of you

Grab a cuppa and a quiet space in which to read – and catch up on our news.

### The International Inter-Faith Week of Prayer for World Peace – October 12<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> 2025



has just wrapped up for another year. If you missed this, please do check out the daily 'prayer prompts' posted on the WPWP Facebook page :

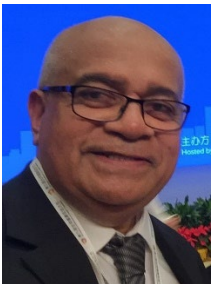
<https://www.facebook.com/WPWPNZ2014>

Prayer for world peace is not just something we should limit to one week in 52. The prayer prompts will be current at anytime, and you can add your own as well.



The **Weaving Empathy** Project has now come to a close – with all the grant money from the Ministry for Ethnic Communities being expended. Across the country some 18 dinners, 3 workshops, 8 art & craft events have been facilitated where 1200 + attendees have deliberately engaged in conversations around faith, empathy, hope, and social cohesion. We have printed sets of **conversation starter** cards which can be used in a variety of situations where 6 – 8 people can be encouraged to engage in non-violent dialogues and learn to listen to diverse perspectives. If you would like a set of these cards for an event you are hosting please contact the RDC or directly contact Jill Shaw or Steph Oh at [weavingempathy@gmail.com](mailto:weavingempathy@gmail.com). We are no longer able to financially assist you in the hosting of such events, but can certainly provide the encouragement to keep 'Weaving Empathy' alive and active.

In May of this year the RDC added two new Trustees **Harminder Gill** and **Sione Tu-itahi**



Sione Tu'itahi is a public health leader, educator, poet, and the author of children's stories and academic works. He is deeply committed to community, environmental sustainability, and Indigenous health equity. Sione remains a courageous advocate for holistic, intergenerational wellbeing and human rights. Sione is a member of the Baha'i Faith.

Harminster has a strong foundation in community engagement, cultural sensitivity, and professional healthcare leadership. She brings a wealth of experience in working across diverse communities. Harminster has also led impactful educational initiatives supporting refugee and migrant families, and in that process; strengthening community resilience and empowerment. Professionally, Harminster is a Nurse, who has co-delivered national programmes of work. This has honed on her skills in active listening, clear communication, and empathetic care. Harminster also applies restorative practice principles, supported by formal training, to resolve conflicts and promote wellbeing. She is a member of the Sikh community.



The **RDC Financial Report** for the year ended June 30<sup>th</sup> 2025 has been completed. We are exceedingly grateful to the three people who continue to make regular monthly / fortnightly donations and the to the further 11 individuals and 2 religious communities who made lump-sum donations during the year. Unfortunately our income is well below what we need to sustain our operations and we are steadily eroding our Term Deposits.

**Would you / your organisation please actively consider making a one-off donation to the RDC, or a regular monthly contribution ?**

Please let us know you are donating by completing the form at : <https://rdc.org.nz/donations/>

Tax receipts are issued in April, and these are required by IRD to have a mailing address or a unique donor number so you can be clearly defined for rebate purposes. For many of you we only have an email address – so please do complete the donor form on the web page.

If you would like a **copy of the 2024 / 2025 Financial Report**, and or a copy of the **2025 /2026 Budget** please email the Treasurer and request this : [treasurer@rdc.org.nz](mailto:treasurer@rdc.org.nz)



Despite a secondary teachers strike coinciding with one of the days of our **Year 12 Leadership in Diversity Days**, we had some 138 x Yr 12 students and teachers from 13 secondary schools in Auckland attending these events at the Unitec and Manukau Institutes of Technology Marae in Auckland across two days in August. There were a large number of very positive reflections and we are hoping to be able to offer a follow-up activity. We are grateful to funding provided by the Astor Foundation.

We are already planning repeat events in August next year. We are also looking to offering a similar experience in Wellington and Christchurch in 2026. If you are (or know) a religious studies teacher, Yr 12 Dean, or someone who knows some Yr 12 students in these cities please let us know if you would be interested in helping us to facilitate these. Contact us at [admin@rdc.org.nz](mailto:admin@rdc.org.nz)

A **Religious Diversity and Anti-Discrimination Workshop** was recently held in Palmerston North. Mary Eastham and Paul Morris were the facilitators of this 3 hr Workshop jointly hosted by the Palmerston North Interfaith Group and the Manawatu Multicultural Council.

It was attended by a diverse group of 20+ most of whom wrote very positive evaluation comments. This Workshop was made possible by a grant from the Ministry for Ethnic Communities. Mary is talking to several people who were present to offer something similar for different organisations in March next year. If this is something that a group you are part of would like to host, please check out the information on the website <https://rdc.org.nz/community-diversity-workshops/> and let us know some details / ideas.



Over the past few months we have been trying to connect with those who were part of the inaugural **RDC Youth Leadership Council - Nga Rangatahi o Maramatanga** with some limited success. Most of those involved have either left the country or have other commitments which preclude their ongoing involvement. We are keen to see how this part of the RDC might be re-energised and are keen to have contact with youth and young adults (16-30yr olds, maybe) who are interested in working with similar aged persons from different religious communities. If you know of anyone in this age range who would be keen to volunteer their time to develop this area please let us know through contact form on the website <https://rdc.org.nz/contact/> or directly to [admin@rdc.org.nz](mailto:admin@rdc.org.nz) Thanks for your help in getting this re-invigorated.



The RDC annual **Religious Leaders Forum** will be run in Auckland on Tuesday November 11th



We are excited to have Mervin Singham, Chief Executive of the Ministry for Ethnic Communities, as our key-note speaker. Mervin will help those gathered to explore how our religious communities might better contribute to MEC programmes on social cohesion and allow him a better understanding of the richness of our diversity within these communities. The Forum will also consider the Salvation Army produced 'State of the Nation Report- 2025' which looks at homeless, poverty, and social inequalities and will also hear a Report on

the recommendations (based on this) presented to the Prime Minister for Governmental action by the Council of Christian Social Services, and the Christian Leaders Network. We hope that those offering connection to Government initiatives might be broadened to include our other religious communities also. If you have not received an invitation to the Forum, and believe that you should have, please contact Ricky Waters, RDC Executive Director, through [admin@rdc.org.nz](mailto:admin@rdc.org.nz)

If you wish to read these documents, they can be accessed at :

<https://www.salvationarmy.org.nz/research-policy/social-policy-parliamentary-unit/state-nation-2025/>

<https://nzccss.org.nz/a-responsibility-to-place-and-people-a-faith-based-call-to-honour-te-tiriti-tangata-and-taiao/>

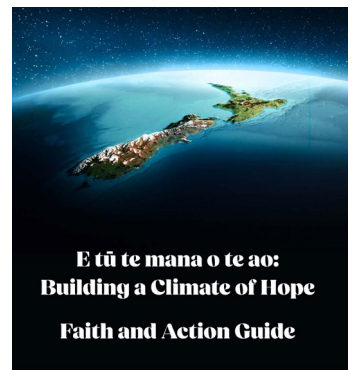


At the Religious Leaders Forum we will also be Launching of **RDC Climate Action Group 'Faith and Action Guide'** .

This was developed following requests from last year's Forum for some kind of resource on how religious communities might better engage with this global concern.

Following this launch, we are planning several public launches across the country in association with the regional Interfaith Councils / Groups. Details will be posted on the RDC website and the RDC Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/religiousdiversitycentreaotearoa> )

Eventually this resource, written by Richard Milne, Nizar Mohamed, Paul Blaschke, Mary Eastham, Philippa Fletcher; will also be available on-line through the RDC website.



Richard Milne | Nizar Mohamed | Paul Blaschke | Mary Eastham | Philippa Fletcher

You may have seen a news item in July regarding **The 'Harmony Accord'** which is a document signed by a number of Muslim and Jewish communities in Aotearoa New Zealand that sought to find some common ground where conversations around the current conflict between Palestine and Israel might be explored. It also recognises that despite our geographical isolation world events can have large impacts on our interfaith / inter-religious networks and conversations. It sits with the Ministry for Ethnic Communities. You can access the document at :

[https://www.ethniccommunities.govt.nz/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0028/77284/NZ-Harmony-Accord-1.pdf](https://www.ethniccommunities.govt.nz/data/assets/pdf_file/0028/77284/NZ-Harmony-Accord-1.pdf)

Within the RDC Trust Board we have had some robust conversations precipitated by world events, and by the reactions in support, and in opposition, of this government action.

Tony Green, RDC Co-Chair, has written a Think-piece : **'Opinion: Some thoughts on conflict ...and Gaza'** which you can find on the RDC website at : <https://rdc.org.nz/thoughts-on-conflict-and-gaza/>

If you have found something in this Newsletter which resonates with you – please do consider how you might partner with the RDC in order that we may continue to be active in this space.

- Perhaps you have contacts with funding agencies with whom we might engage ...
- Maybe you could host a Fundraising event for the RDC ...
- Perhaps you might like to volunteer as a helper at one of our events ...
- Maybe you may like to talk to us about legacy giving ...
- Perhaps you would like to make a donation to keep our work going – monthly, annually, or a one-off – please do not send us cash in the mail but rather through you on-line banking deposit into :

**The Religious Diversity Centre in Aotearoa New Zealand Trust CC 52791**  
**Kiwibank : 38 – 9017 – 0433364 – 00**



#### THE INTERNATIONAL PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lead us from death to life, from falsehood to truth Lead us from despair to hope, from fear to trust Lead us from hate to love, from war to peace Let peace fill our hearts, our world, our universe.



Religious Diversity Centre  
Aotearoa New Zealand