

**Provincial Mother’s Union Report to General Synod 2024**

I have pleasure in writing this report for Mothers’ Union in Aotearoa New Zealand and Polynesia.

Mothers’ Union has been in our Province since 1886. Mother’s Union is a global charitable volunteer movement. United in our diversity and living out our faith, we support individuals and families to transform their lives. Mother Union was formed by an Archdeacon’s wife Mary Sumner in Winchester in 1876. It gradually spread across the Anglican Communion.

The Covid restrictions significantly affected Mothers’ Union, and unfortunately some branches have disbanded. However, some branches have banded together with Anglican Association of Women (“AAW”) to hold joint meetings due to lack of numbers in order to keep things going. There is a home membership scheme to keep people involved in Mothers’ Union, if they are no longer able to get to Branch meetings, for example if they are working or not located near a branch.

In May 2023 we held the Provincial triennial meeting at St Thomas Church in Tamaki, Auckland. Members from across the province attended. Robin Ray Provincial President of Mother Union Australia attended and gave an inspiring presentation about how they are changing Mothers’ Union in Australia.

Elections were held and I was elected as the new Provincial President with commissioning on Mary Sumner Day, 17 August 2023. From the outset of my term which commenced in August 2023, the theme chosen by my Executive was one of regeneration: be bold, be visible. So we have been looking at new ways to achieve this.

Mothers’ Union Australia have invited us to attend a Zone C (Oceania region) Mothers’ Union retreat in Brisbane in May that is focussed on growth which will help us to focus on the issue of intergenerational growth and succession-planning.

We are thinking about ways in which to make our organisation more inclusive and accessible for working women and men and young mothers. Each of our branches is cultivating a different localised response to this issue but we share knowledge of what is working at Diocesan Days and other forums.

From a Provincial Perspective, continuing with producing and distributing newsletters and organising events on Zoom to link up members across the Province who may no longer be close to a branch, be a home member and/or just want to fellowship with others is one of our strategies going forward to achieve connectedness commencing on March 8, International Women’s Day with a joint Zoom evening prayer service with AAW.

As mentioned above, Mothers Union is truly a global organisation. We have regular zoom calls with other Provincial Presidents around the world and head office at Mary Sumner House in order to share expertise and experience and to unite together. An example of this is our united efforts in the Rise Up Campaign against domestic violence and our united prayer campaign in relation to the situation in Sudan.

As part of our international efforts, I have been selected as part of an international delegation to attend the United Nations on behalf of Mothers’ Union World-Wide for the 68th Session into the Commission on the Status of Women. The session will consider the priority theme of, " Accelerating the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by addressing poverty and strengthening institutions and financing with a gender perspective." I will be travelling to New York in March 2024 to attend the 68th Session.

As an organisation we look forward to meeting the challenges that lie ahead as our organisation transforms to meet the needs of a changing society while retaining the history and tradition that has made Mothers’ Union so strong and distinctive. In particular, Mothers’ Union’s determination to live out its philosophy and objects that include caring for the needs of women and children especially those facing adversity and sharing our faith, undergirded by devotion to prayer and a love for others. We work towards this in a myriad of different ways including our long-standing support of the Anglican Trust for Women and Children (ATWC) and its work in the community. Similar work is being undertaken around the motu in order to support young mothers and families. It is a joint effort and I am deeply grateful to all those who serve on Mothers’ Union Executives, are branch office holders and/or branch members.

In its prayers for the upcoming Mary Sumner Day 2024, Mother’s Union Worldwide reminds us of the reason and vision for the work we do as Mothers’ Union:

“Today we celebrate Mary Sumner, the founder of Mothers’ Union. We celebrate her insight and perceptiveness in seeing what was needed and recognising the means by which the need could be met. Across the globe the 4 million members of Mothers’ Union celebrate the life and faith of our founder. We pray for the mission of Mothers’ Union as lived in so many countries. Mary Sumner’s life showed clearly her belief in the vocation to prayer and the call to social action that flowed from it. These are the foundations on which MU has been built.”

Likewise, let us be called, through prayer to social action for women, children and family, in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Sarah Pidgeon

Provincial President

Mothers’ Union in the Province of Aotearoa New Zealand and Polynesia