

COUNCIL FOR ECUMENISM REPORT TO GENERAL SYNOD/TE HĪNOTA WHĀNUI 2026

COUNCIL MEMBERS 2024-2026

Tikanga Māori	The Venerable Ruihana Paenga Mr Bardia Matiu
Tikanga Pākehā	The Very Reverend Anne Mills (Chair) The Venerable Canon Dr Michael Wallace
Tikanga Pasefika	The Reverend Sepi Hala'api'api (until 2024) The Reverend Sonja Hunter Mr Fe'iloakitau Tevi
Interfaith	The Reverend Ivica Gregurec
Co-opted	The Reverend Tamsyn Kereopa (WCC observer)
General Secretary	The Reverend Canon Michael Hughes

The Council reports to General Synod Standing Committee and maintains contact with the Tikanga Pākehā Inter-Diocesan Ecumenical Group, Anglican and ecumenical partners, and a wide range of national and international ecumenical and interfaith organisations.

TIKANGA REPORTS:

Tikanga Māori

The Council noted the death of Kīngi Tūheitia and the coronation of the new Māori Queen, recognising the significant ecumenical participation in these events. The Council also noted wider ecumenical engagement through Anglican Indigenous networks and support for participation in international multi-faith climate initiatives.

Tikanga Pasefika

The Council's June meeting was hosted in Suva, Fiji, providing an opportunity to engage directly with the Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC) and regional ecumenical priorities. Topics included climate justice, youth engagement, self-determination movements in the Pacific, disaster preparedness, and ministry among communities on the margins. The Council received and commended the Tuakoi Lei Declaration and encouraged greater Anglican engagement with Pacific ecumenical initiatives.

Tikanga Pakeha

The Tikanga Pākehā Ecumenical Group continued to promote the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and interfaith engagement, including mosque visits and the hosting of Iftar meals. Local ecumenical initiatives were reported from Auckland and Dunedin.

NATIONAL ECUMENICAL ENDEAVOURS

The Council remains actively engaged with:

- National Dialogue for Christian Unity (NDCU)
- Te Rūnanga Whakawhanaunga o Ngā Hāhi
- Uniting Churches of Aotearoa New Zealand (UCANZ)
- Christian Education Commission / Launchpad
- Interchurch Training and Chaplaincy Coordinating Committee (ICTCC)
- Interchurch Hospital Chaplaincy Commission (IHC)
- Interchurch Bioethics Council (ICBC)
- Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC)
- Student Christian Movement (SCM)
- Christian World Service (CWS)
- Vitae
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The Council noted:

- Ongoing development of relationships between NDCU and Te Rūnanga Whakawhanaunga o Ngā Hāhi.
- Continued engagement with chaplaincy and theological education initiatives.
- Receipt of a Gene Editing resource from ICBC.
- Christian World Service's ongoing advocacy work and collaboration opportunities.
- PCC resources on the Season of Creation and climate justice.
- The continuing importance of ecumenical collaboration across healthcare, education, advocacy, and mission.

INTERNATIONAL ECUMENICAL ENDEAVOURS

World Council of Churches (WCC)

The Council continued its engagement with the WCC through news updates, Bossey Ecumenical Institute opportunities, climate initiatives, anti-trafficking campaigns, and preparations for the Sixth World Conference on Faith and Order to be held in Egypt in 2025. The Council welcomed presentations from Dr Stephen Brown regarding the significance of Nicaea 2025 and associated events, including the Global Ecumenical Theological Institute (GETI).

Christian Conference of Asia (CCA)

The Council received updates from the Christian Conference of Asia, including governance developments and opportunities for future re-engagement. It noted the Myanmar Conference and continues to monitor opportunities for participation and representation.

DIALOGUE REPORTS:

Roman Catholic Dialogue

The dialogue continued to meet regularly. Members undertook a pilgrimage in Northland and ongoing discussions included synodality and shared mission. The Council recommended the reappointment of the Rev'd Dr Beverly Moana Hall-Smith and continues to seek additional Māori representation.

Methodist

The dialogue did not meet during the reporting period. The Council reappointed the Rev'd Peter Bargh and Bishop Waitohiariki Quayle and continues discussions regarding future dialogue methodologies and mutuality.

Lutheran Dialogue

No significant developments were reported. The Council remains open to opportunities for relational and informal engagement with Lutheran partners.

Orthodox

The Council continued discussions concerning the 1700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea in 2025 and explored possibilities for a colloquium in partnership with St John's Theological College and other theological institutions.

Interfaith

The Council acknowledged the retirement of Jocelyn Armstrong as Executive Director of the Religious Diversity Centre. It noted local interfaith initiatives, including engagement with Jewish communities, observance of the Week of Prayer for Peace, and ongoing work through the Auckland Interfaith Council. The Council continues to encourage stronger interfaith relationships throughout the Province.

OTHER BUSINESS

- The Council continued work on:
- Developing a proposal for a paid ecumenical and interfaith officer.
- Strengthening ecumenical and interfaith formation at St John's Theological College.
- Planning a future Taizé pilgrimage and exploring scholarship opportunities through the St John's College Trust Board.
- Reflecting on new models of dialogue that emphasise relationship, shared practice, and contextual engagement alongside traditional theological dialogue.
- Supporting greater Anglican participation in Pacific ecumenical life and climate justice initiatives.

The Council expresses its gratitude to all dialogue participants, ecumenical partners, and interfaith colleagues whose commitment continues to strengthen relationships across churches, faith communities, and the wider society of Aotearoa New Zealand and Polynesia.
