

GENERAL SECRETARY'S REPORT
TO THE GENERAL SYNOD / TE HĪNOTA WHĀNUI 2024

Introduction:

The years of 2022 -23 saw us return, post-COVID, to a more familiar face-to-face pattern of working and meeting, though taking with us the learnings of the previous years, as we sought to balance travel with virtual gathering. After a four-year break since 2018 in New Plymouth GSTHW met again together in Nelson, though at the deferred date of October in place of the usual May, and for a significantly shorter timeframe of only four days.

We have seen changes in provincial leadership, with Archbishop Sione Ulu'ilakepa joining the shared Primacy from early 2023 alongside Archbishops Don and Philip, after quite some period of interregnum in the immediate post-COVID period. And then Archbishop Philip stepping down mid-2023, and a consequent interregnum as Tikanga Pākehā followed their due processes of appointing a new Senior Bishop to also become Archbishop and join the shared Primacy.

I acknowledge again with deep gratitude those with whom I work most closely and who offer the regular support for the work I undertake on behalf of our church. Firstly, the Archbishops as noted above and the General Synod Standing Committee, who are a committed and hard-working group. Secondly, the provincial staff 'team' based in the General Synod Office (GSO) at TUIA and around the Church, especially Marissa Alix and Vanda Breslin. In this past period the Rev'd Jacynthia Murphy finished her work with us and went onto parish ministries. And thirdly, the many members of GSTHW and its various Commissions, Councils, Boards, Committees, and Small Working Groups, who offer so much voluntarily to the mission and administration of this Church. Thank you.

The wider three Tikanga staff group, for whom I carry some oversight responsibilities alongside their respective ministry bodies, has had some changes over the past two years, with Cheryl Thomson and Rev'd Vicki Terrell beginning as Disability Ministry Educators from mid-2022, and Kristy Boardman finishing as Social Justice Unit Manager at the end of 2022.

Unchanged positions other than the GSO above include the Anglican Taonga Magazine Editor Julianne Clarke-Morris, Rev'd Chaans Tumataroa-Clarke and Aleshia Lawson with the Youth Commission, and Ceridwyn Parr with CAWS.

This team is a highly skilled and motivated group who often work away alone in their own spheres but who offer support and collegiality to one another as they serve this Church.

Some key highlights of the past two years for the General Secretary have been, participating in the election processes for both Bishop of Polynesia and for Senior Bishop Tikanga Pākehā.

Much of the work of General Secretary involves routine ‘office work’ and many ‘meetings,’ as we seek to serve the many Commissions, Councils, Boards, Committees, and Small Working Groups of the GSTHW and the GSSC. This administrative support work, and the regular accounting, personnel, and payroll oversight responsibilities are key elements of my role and the office team in our day-to-day, week-to-week, and month-to-month routines. I acknowledge the work of the General Synod Office staff, DAC, TML, and the GCTB in supporting much of this task. Also, the work of the Employment Subcommittee, and the Order Paper Committee of the GSSC. As can be seen from the range and detail of reports to this General Synod / te Hīnota Whānui the past two years have again seen some significant work, both ongoing and some exciting new initiatives, by these many and varied bodies.

I commend their various reports to you for further detail and acknowledge the commitment, effort and time that go into achieving their various outcomes.

Key publications handled by the General Secretary and Office included the annual Lectionary (2022 and 2023) through the Liturgical Commission, biennial Clerical Directory (due 2023 but delayed by transition to a new database), and the Proceedings for GSTHW (2022), and a hard copy update to the printed Canons (2020 and 2022 jointly).

The revised edition of A New Zealand Prayer book – He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa (2020, and reprint 2021) quickly sold out copies a second time, so a supply of a slightly revised version is to be printed in 2024.

The General Synod and Online Prayer Book websites are under our oversight, and we do all we can to keep information up to date and add new resources as time and resources allow. The Prayer Book website is highly visited from around the world, while the GSTHW website is old and being reviewed for replacement/ updating as part of a wider communications restructure.

The usual biennial Australasian Anglican Registrars Conference, cancelled during COVID, will meet in 2024, hosted in Christchurch. Our own Registrar-Managers network meet annually as well and have met in Wellington and Auckland in this period as well as regularly by Zoom. These are valuable professional development, networking, and collaborative opportunities.

This GSTHW sees me over 14 years in this role and I am as always much indebted to all those who share in this work with me, and I continue to enjoy the role, both its joys and its challenges.

Michael Hughes
General Secretary

February 2024