

**MEDIA RELEASE: Meeting in Wellington strengthens bilateral ties for Caritas
Australia and Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand**

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Caritas Australia was welcomed to Wellington, New Zealand, by Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand, for a bilateral meeting last week. The goal was to reconfirm the commitment to collaboration on the shared objective to address global poverty and inequities.

The two organisations have a long history of both informal and formal collaboration, and the last bilateral meeting was held in 2017 at the conclusion of the Caritas Oceania Forum in Cairns, Australia.

“We have collaborated together on numerous projects over the years, and our relationship has always been strong. But as we live in a changing world, the contexts we work in are becoming more complex and challenging. Together, we are examining better ways to work towards our shared goal of a just world for all in the face of rising global poverty levels and climate change,” said Julianne Hickey, Director of Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand.

“We’re honoured to have been welcomed with such warmth in Wellington for this bilateral meeting. The opportunity to exchange our skills and learnings from the past few years has meant that we have been able to strengthen our relationship, and discuss new ways to work together in the future,” said Kirsty Robertson, CEO of Caritas Australia.

The visit started with a pōwhiri, a Māori ceremony of encounter, with Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand staff and Board, and included a Kapa haka. The welcome dinner, a hangi, was attended by Cardinal John Dew, Archbishop of Wellington and the Executive Officer of the New Zealand Bishops’ Conference, Siobhan Dilly. Other cultural activities included a visit to Matairangi/Mt Victoria and the hidden collections at Te Papa Museum, and the visit concluded with a Poroporoaki farewell.

“Over the course of this bilateral meeting we have been able to discuss better ways of responding to humanitarian emergencies together, and how we can further support our Pacific neighbours on Disaster Risk Management and resilience. As a fellow Pacific country, Caritas Australia is a great ally to continue our work in supporting our region,” said Ms. Hickey.

“A highlight for me was the talanoa to discuss how we can integrate First Nations frameworks into our programming, and what strategies we can use to ensure that First Nations knowledge and perspectives underpin our work, particularly in the Pacific. These rich discussions help both organisations to become more responsive to the needs of the people we work with, which is always our ultimate goal.” said Ms. Robertson.

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