



**CATHOLIC  
DIOCESE OF  
BROKEN BAY**

**3 June 2024**

## **Pastoral Care of Migrants Across the Pacific Key Topic at FCBCO Meeting**

The theme of migration across the Pacific and Oceania and our pastoral care of migrants from the region emerged as a key point of discussion at last week's Executive meeting of the Federation of Catholic Bishops Conference of Oceania (FCBCO) in Wellington, New Zealand.

Oceania is as vast as it is diverse with few island nations sharing borders across the region. However the people have always been connected through a sea of islands where for thousands of years they have migrated across the waters seeking new settlements or trade.

In recent decades migration has become the key to the region's economy and sustainability.

"Oceania has a long history of migration which is still very much present today, and is likely to continue into the future," the President of the FCBCO, Most Rev Anthony Randazzo said.

"Gathering as an Executive we heard the call of the vulnerable in our region, particularly those migrating across the many islands separated by vast bodies of water, in search of work, or to escape the impacts of domestic challenges, such as rising sea levels.

"How we provide pastoral care for those affected peoples emerged as a core theme in our prayer and reflections, and we will continue to dialogue as we move forward."

The FCBCO is made up of independent and autonomous Bishops Conferences comprising the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, the New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference, the Catholic Bishops Conference

of Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Island, and the Episcopal Conference of the Pacific (CEPAC) which includes Cook Islands, Fiji, French Polynesia, Guam, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, New Caledonia, Northern Mariana Islands, Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, and Wallis and Futuna.

Attesting to the immense distance of the region, some of the Bishops attending travelled 18 hours on four separate flights to attend.

They experienced a microcosm of the multicultural diversity of New Zealand including traditional Māori welcomes and the Miha or Māori Mass.

They also visited the final resting place of Venerable Suzanne Aubert or Meri Hohepa, herself a migrant missionary from France who came to New Zealand on a whaling boat in 1860. She founded the Sisters of Compassion and is now on the pathway to becoming New Zealand's first saint.

The three-day meeting was hosted by Archbishop Paul Martin SM and the Wellington Archdiocese.

Most Rev Randazzo, who is also the Bishop of the Diocese of Broken Bay said; "Our time together was grace-filled and deeply enriching. We felt the experience of 'paddling together' in the same boat, being awake to, and aware of, the presence of Jesus Christ in the boat, that is the universal Church."

ENDS