



**National Spiritual Assembly
of the Bahá'ís of New Zealand**

Te Rūnanga Wairua Tapu o nga Bahá'í o Aotearoa

12 February 2023
6 Mulk 179

To the friends gathered at unit conventions throughout Aotearoa

Dearly loved friends, Tēnā koutou katoa

Our warmest greetings to each and every one of you as you demonstrate your love for Bahá'u'lláh by supporting the sacred election process being conducted today, and contribute your thoughts to earnest consultations on the needs of the moment in Aotearoa. Some key themes that we see as important to explore in your unit convention consultations include the following:

- Developing an ever-increasing understanding of the vision of Bahá'u'lláh and the importance of the training institute for preparing the friends of God for an ever-deeper engagement in the life of the wider community
- Building our capacities to have meaningful conversations about a Bahá'í conception of spiritual and social transformation
- Focusing on widening the circle of participation, especially using the proven strategy of groups of households or families who together consider the spiritual and social needs of their neighbourhood or locality
- Learning how to initiate effective social action based on a foundation of community building

These themes, that were explored in the recent summer school programme and video from the National Assembly, signal important areas that need the full attention of our minds and hearts as we rise to meet the expectations of the beloved Universal House of Justice to release in ever greater measure the society-building power of the Faith.

A fresh surge of resourceful action is building in Aotearoa in the wake of last year's world conferences, the summer schools and the recent summer initiatives. We pray that this surge of energy and wider participation by the friends becomes stronger and stronger, to meet the challenges ahead. To this end, it will be vital to consider today the range of spiritual and material resources we will need to deploy. For example, your consultations can help to identify ways of boosting the Funds of the Faith, including the National Fund, through widening the study of Ruhi Book 11 and enhancing understanding of the sacred obligation we all have to support the lifeblood of the Cause.

So far, this financial year we have received donations to the National Fund, including earmarked contributions for Te Whare Akoranga Bahá'í (Bahá'í Centre for Learning), totalling \$1,074,731 which is 14% below last year. This drop does put pressure on the National Assembly, and we have had to borrow \$1,000,000 for the Centre for Learning project from the beloved Universal House of Justice, who offered this loan without being asked. The friends will no doubt wish to support the National Assembly in repaying as soon as possible the Supreme Institution.

We wish you profound joy as you unite with one another in thought and action.

Ngā mihi nui ki a koutou, Loving Bahá'í greetings,

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