

Manawatu-Whanganui

Overall participants thought the conference was brilliant, very positive and they were full of gratitude. There was lots of positive feedback on the venue — using words like “beautiful”, and “empowering to be there”. Non-Māori were grateful to be in the venue and to learn about te ao Māori. Māori themed energizers were very well received and also Kapa Haka and Tuvaluan dancing.

Comments were made about doing this again. Adults who hadn't done it before or for a while liked the intensive nature of the weekend. People wanted to come together to do more of this style of study. Some who came to learn more about the Faith, left with a positive view. Youth said it was empowering and inspiring.

Feedback comments:

- I loved the venue, it was so beautiful.
- It (the venue) was the place of our local people. (During the pōwhiri they said they want us to come back.)
- Our youth feel more comfortable there — it's easier to connect with people and chill out. Everyone had their own part to play: the youth to inspire and uplift. Each heart was helping to create a whole organic unity.
- Very positive environment overall.
- Loved seeing people able to share their talents and qualities
- Loved the way that the youth were able to focus and contribute insights and arts
- What is a vibrant community and what are we going to do now - I think we should have another hui quite soon and bring more people.
- Love to study the Writings and learn together
- It felt like a galaxy of hearts and service
- Amazing to have a really competent chef
- Really good to see the cluster Bahá'ís come together and really help with the hui. And different regions as well.
- It was wonderful to have all the friends from other regions with alignment of vision and action
- Great having people in our own community stimulated to come and take part
- Good example for us of systematic action - we should use this example of blending consultation and arts at our reflection meetings
- Really shone a light on families
- Great that we had Tangata Whenua come and welcome us with the pōwhiri
- Blessing to have the Waikato friends here
- Connecting with te ao Māori as a community - hope this continues
- Outward facing - had Tangi Utikere, Leo Mwape, even Zulfiqar Butt from PNCC, feeling of unity from the community
- So wonderful that so many people came to help us with animating, children's programme, food, etc
- So many friends of the Faith - were able to contribute - Tamia and Putea - teaching the Tuvaluan dance, Ruth Tipene doing the weaving
- Adib liked the junior youth programme and being able to be of service in the kitchen
- Appreciated Laykin doing a haka as we approached the marae during the welcome
- There was such unity in our community with everyone participating
- Very good to use the marae which will help bring our community closer to te ao Māori

Efforts were made to make the programme joyful and creative in all spaces — children's classes, adult and family times. This gave the conference a beautiful spirit. The whole group collectively learning a Tuvaluan dance and kapa haka song went very well. It brought joy and fellowship.

Facilitators felt more comfortable with the artistic section of the programme; they rose to the challenge and built capacity to do it.

Two youth were inspired to go to Book 1 tutor encounter in Auckland – inspired to walk a path of service.

The children's programme went very well; full of joy and creativity. This was possible through working with neighbouring clusters to plan and assist in each others' conferences.

We had a very large range of participants in terms of culture, religion and age. See the stats below.

Our effort to reach out to our community to be of service was admirable, with many coming along to share their talents, be of service and attend the conference.

The venue was brilliant. It was unifying and helped create a beautiful spirit for the conference. We had many families and individuals sleeping at the Marae over the three days. Using our local Marae was very powerful for all involved.

Created stronger ties with this Marae as it was the first time they have welcomed us with a pōwhiri. So this is highly significant. And they encouraged us to use the Marae again in the future.

Details

Held 4-6 June at Te Hotumanawa Marae, Palmerston North

Adults: 77; Youth: 9; Junior youth: 22; Children: 43

Total participants: 151; Friends of the Faith 56 /151; Local Friends 111; Out of Town: 38

Māori: 29; Pasifika: 25

Other ethnicities included — African, Middle Eastern, Persian, Chinese, South American, Philippines, Indonesian, South East Asian : 28

Christian: 13; Muslim 16; Buddhist : 8; Hindu: 2

Note: Reports received from the various conferences have been edited for clarity and conciseness.