

# Peace Week

2023

Established in 2021, University of Auckland's annual Peace Week is a coordinated approach with acts of service, and charity to honour the lives lost in the tragic 15 March 2019 Christchurch Mosque attacks. It is also an initiative to spread love, peace, and to learn about and understand different cultures, ethnicities, and faiths in order to build a more socially cohesive society.

Last year, our focus was Empathy; the ability to put oneself in another's shoes, to understand their feelings and perspectives, and use that understanding to guide one's actions. The Maclaurin Chaplaincy with Campus Life invited Dr Hamimah Ahmat (Tuyan), the widow of shaheed Zekeriya Tuyan who died of injuries sustained in the terror attacks, to speak about how empathy has the power to change an individual and to shape society for the better.

Hamimah is the Chair of [Sakinah Community Trust](#), which is an organization comprising of seven women who lost their loved ones in the attacks.

In 2021 the Trust established Unity Week in Christchurch between March 14 and 21. In her opinion [article](#) for Stuff.co.nz, Hamimah talks about the intention behind establishing Unity Week and her hope for this to become a national observance.

In her own words, "as directly impacted family members, we feel a responsibility to reach out and enable a reconnection to this aroha, to commemorate the precious lives we lost and everyone impacted by the atrocity on March 15, 2019. It was also a way of healing for us... The word "unity" is our interpretation of what "you are us" means, and our whakataukī, whiria te tāngata – weave the people together – embodies our intentions. This is not saying that a national Unity Week is the solution to ending racism, intolerance, supremacies and the ecosystems that these abhorrent values are cultured in. It is only a start".

Hamimah also shared that "We can achieve peace with communities of different backgrounds if we all follow the principles of respecting each other and accepting our similarities, as well as our differences."

Peace Week here at the University shares similar principles, ideals and objectives with Unity Week.

The theme for this year is, "To Know One Another - Unity in Diversity."

We can achieve this by:

- Getting to know one's neighbour
- Building (sometimes difficult) bridges
- Using one's skills to help others
- Raising funds for people in need
- Speaking through service

The opening session of Peace Week, on Monday 13 March, will include a discussion with the following distinguished panellists

- Prof. Cathy Stinear, PVC Equity
- Prof. Tracey McIntosh, HOS - Te Wananga o Waipapa, Māori and Pacific Studies
- Bilal Naser, Intern psychologist & doctoral candidate

We will also launch a charity drive led by the university's Muslim Students Association, and a bake sale will take place on Wednesday 15 March in front of the General Library to raise funds for people in need. Last year, the MSA collected toys that were donated to Starship Children's Hospital. This year the money collected will be given to the relief efforts supporting those affected by Cyclone Gabrielle.