

Beloved Universal House of Justice,

With hearts aglow with gratitude, the 68th New Zealand Bahá'í National Convention sends its loving greetings to our Supreme Institution.

Our gathering began with a powerful *pōwhiri* led by a group of *rangatahi* who journeyed from afar to serve the Convention, and whose expressions of devotion prepared the way.

The Ridván Message proved to be a *taonga* which delighted and stirred all who were present, and stimulated a lively discussion on how we can each become “true practitioners of peace”¹ and “contribute a share of what humanity needs in this day”².

Rich and constructive discussions on themes of community-building drew on fresh insights from across the nation, and revealed an increasing depth of learning and appreciation of the transformative power of the Institute process. A number of delegates noted a ‘marked growth in receptivity’ in their communities, and others shared experiences of teaching and learning which served to inspire. The friends sought ways to support our youth in their crucial role as protagonists of the current Plan; strategised means to promote pioneering among the friends; and devoted time to a thoughtful consultation on how our communities might move forward in their engagement with *tangata whenua*.

Lovingly accompanied throughout by our dear Counsellor Ms. Tessa Scrine, alongside the full complement of Auxiliary Board members and representatives of key institutions, we were blessed to hear gems of learning brought home from the recent Auxiliary Board members’ Conference in Sydney. For the election, ballots were received from all 57 delegates, including 53 who voted in person and who erupted in joyful *waiata* upon hearing the announcement of their new National Spiritual Assembly.

The generous sharing of the friends revealed the diverse nature of our communities and their varying stages of development, and yet, consultations reflected a strong sense of collective endeavour. In this heightened atmosphere, it was clear that many hearts were moved in the presence of their spiritual brothers and sisters.

Recognising that the journey ahead will require sustained effort, we are determined and eager to answer the call to service and to joyfully advance as one.

Toia te waka o te mātauranga.
Mā wai e tō?
Māku e tō. Māu e tō.
Mā te whakaranga ake e tō.

Haul the canoe of knowledge.
Who will haul it?
I will haul it. You will haul it.
Let the next generation also haul it.

Arohanui,

The 68th National Convention of the Bahá'ís of Aotearoa New Zealand

¹Ridván Message 2024

²ibid

Glossary

pōwhiri – welcome

rangatahi – youth

taonga – treasure

tangata whenua – people of the land, Māori

waiata – song

arohanui – much love