



WINTER 2022

# Whāia te Tika

*Seek Justice*

Justice & Peace Commission Catholic Diocese of Auckland



## New Zealand is the Wild West of gun control – nobody knows where nearly one million weapons are

**There are a million guns somewhere in New Zealand and nobody knows where most of them are or who has them.**

Despite significant progress in banning some kinds of firearms and confiscating others, New Zealand still has no gun registry.

Making an oral submission to the Justice Select Committee on the Firearms Prohibition Orders Legislation Bill, executive secretary of the Justice and Peace Commission of the Catholic Diocese of Auckland, Peter Garrick, said New Zealand had twice as many guns per capita in circulation as Australia and more than five times that of the UK.

Garrick cited research by Professor Alexander Gillespie who showed – three years ago – how accountability, traceability and safety would be improved by

introducing a comprehensive gun register – an essential next step following the Christchurch shootings.

However, the government was dragging its feet over the matter and a gun register would not now be active until June 2023.

“We might be east of Australia geographically but we continue to be the Wild West when it comes to gun control,” Garrick said.

“We have more than twice as many legally imported but unregistered guns as we have registered dogs.

“We continue to import them on an industrial scale – 52,000 in 2018 alone – and allow them to be marketed aggressively, particularly in rural towns.”

Garrick said the Firearms Prohibition Orders Legislation Bill may be well intentioned, **To P2**



## Editorial

This edition of *Whaia te Tika* comes out in the season of Matariki, our newest public holiday.

Matariki for Māori is a time of transition and remembrance, a time for looking back and reflecting on the year that has passed. It is a chance for us to look back on the Commission's year and reflect on how we have operated in the year from June 2021 to June 2022. Covid has disrupted our meetings and only two of them held *kanohi ki te kanohi* (face to face), the others by Zoom. However, Zoom has been a boon for our advocacy role, in that instead of having to fly to Wellington to address select committees, we have been able to front many more issues with our online submissions.

Among those submissions have been:

- Budget submissions (written and oral)
- Exploitation of migrants
- Rehabilitation of prisoners
- Supporting health care workers
- Promoting New Zealand as a mediator between Indonesia and West Papua
- Maori Education; Oversight of Oranga Tamariki
- Data and statistics leading to inequalities
- Firearms prohibition orders
- Student accommodation
- Inquiry into student attendance

However, our connection with parishes and communities has deteriorated over the year, partly because of the Covid effect on parishes and communities, which has resulted in decreasing numbers and reduced participation, but also because of our failure to engage.

The second aspect of Matariki is the looking forward and planning for the new year.

Bishop Steve addressed us at our recent meeting (May 28) and set us these challenges:

He described this time as one of great change. He asked us why there were hardly any young people present or on the Commission's committees. He recalled a New Zealand representative at the Synod on Youth describing the church as a *waka*, with the elders steering it by the stars, but the young people paddling it, doing the work.

How do we get young people involved? They want action not committees.

How do we repackage Catholic Social Teaching for parishes and communities?

We need to continue to encourage social justice groups, but to think about different ways of doing it.

All this is taking place in the context of post-Covid divisions in our nation, conflict in Ukraine, inflation, China in the Pacific, climate change and inequity in our society. These are the challenges facing the Commission moving into the next year.

Do you have some ideas? Please let us know!

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## Gun laws need to be stronger to be effective

**From P1**

but lacked credibility as a tool for solving the increasing use of firearms in violent situations.

He said the Commission wanted the Arms Act amended so that gun licences were only issued to people with a 'genuine reason' to possess a firearm and that these be renewed every five years. He also wanted all licensed firearms owners to register their firearms within a year of the gun register going 'live.'

There is also a strong argument for licensed firearms owners be allowed to only purchase ammunition that is suitable for their registered firearms and that ammunition sales be recorded on the firearms registry.

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### For this edition

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# Government's lack of action on poverty in 2022 Budget “stunning” says Commission

**The 2022 Budget contains almost nothing to alleviate child and family poverty.**

“We are stunned,” Justice and Peace Commission spokesperson Loraine Elliott said.

While the Commission was pleased with the temporary \$350 cost of living grant for people earning less than \$70,000 per year, it was disappointing that the Government did not do more. In the 2021 Budget there was attention to the injustice of the 1991 slashing of base rates of Social Welfare payments to some of the most vulnerable families.

This had led to decades of inter-generational poverty. “It would have been helpful if this initiative had continued this year to enable so many families to support themselves with dignity, particularly as costs have increased so much recently,” Elliott said.

“The silence of the 2022 Budget on this is astounding.”

## Housing crisis

Elliott said the Government had failed to meet the housing crisis head on.

“Stable, affordable, warm and dry housing is a fundamental necessity for the wellbeing of all people in New Zealand, especially children,” she said.

In spite of various initiatives in recent years there were 26,865 households on the Housing Register waiting list for public housing on March 31, 2022. This reflected an increase of 13.4% since March 2021.

“Although the Government is on record as saying that it has been building the greatest number of public housing units of any government for many years, the list is not reducing,” Elliott said.

“In spite of some current small reduction in values, inflation and interest rate increases only compound the problem for first home buyers “

## Climate change

More work was also needed on climate change. The Government's emissions reduction plan signalled the beginning of long-term carbon budgets, but would need to include agricultural emissions as well.

“We welcome the initiative to reduce transport emissions by improving access to public transport by



extending the 50% reduction in fares and a vehicle replacement scheme for low-income households.

“We commend the continuation of the Warmer Kiwi Homes initiative which helps fund heating and insulation upgrades for low-income households. “

## Attendance

Elliott commended the Government's 2022 Budget efforts to address school attendance by supporting initiatives that helped local communities deal with the issue.

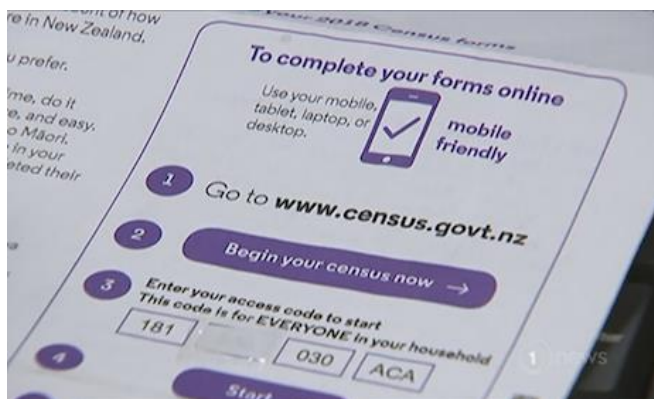
“This is particularly helpful for Māori and Pasifika communities that have suffered badly from the 2014 withdrawal of funding that would have helped schools to address this,” she said.

Other bodies have been equally critical of the 2022 Budget. The Salvation Army described it as disappointing for people struggling the most.

“The Budget's cost-of-living relief package is welcome assistance for a large swathe of the population, but it is a short-term solution and specifically excludes vulnerable people such as those on a pension or benefit from receiving the one-off \$350 payment,” director of the Salvation Army's Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit, Lt Colonel Ian Hutson said. **To P11**



# Flawed census system increases inequality by withholding money from “missing” part of population



## Flaws in the 2018 Census have become a weapon to increase inequality, deprivation and poverty.

Making an oral submission to the Governance and Administration Select Committee on Data and Statistics Bill 2021 earlier this year, executive secretary of the Justice and Peace Commission Peter Garrick said flaws in the way the census was carried out meant that up to a third of all Maori and Pasifika communities had not been covered.

Garrick said the March 2018 Census completion rate was lower than expected, requiring Statistics NZ to use less accurate statistical estimates, rather than actual census data, to make up for the loss.

## Disturbing

In 2019 an independent review of the census showed that the census attracted only an 83% response rate, well short of the 94% census percent target and a nine percent drop from the previous 2013 New Zealand census, the worst for more than 50 years.

“Even more disturbing, the response rate for Māori was 68% and Pasifika 65% indicating that a third of these communities were actually not counted at all,” Garrick said.

“Over little more than a decade structured inequality has been created so that up to a third of Māori and Pasifika communities are deemed not to be worth counting.”

Census Statistics are used to allocate Health, Education, Social Welfare, Transport and other Government funding for each area for the following five years.

The deficiencies in the 2018 census meant that those community areas where there was a concentration of Māori or Pasifika were likely to receive substantially less funding than they would otherwise have received, had the resources been put in to ensure they were actually counted.

“So instead of being a tool for reducing inequality, deprivation and poverty, the deficiencies of the 2018 Census became a weapon to actually increase it,” Garrick said.

## Funding cut

Garrick said the under-count in the 2018 Census was related to the government’s decision to offset IT costs by drastically reducing funding for census field officers to follow-up on households who had not filled their forms online or in paper form.

The end result was that vulnerable communities with traditionally low response rates were further disadvantaged.

Garrick said the Justice & Peace Commission wanted the Government to be legally required to provide the resources needed to ensure that Māori and others were not disadvantaged by being undercounted.

“The recent ruling of the Waitangi Tribunal on the inequity to Māori of the one-size-fits-all approach to the Covid 19 vaccination roll-out is an example of how such inequity can occur,” he said.

“Only belatedly did the Government attempt to rectify the situation. Unfortunately, even such belated efforts are not evident in the Census-gathering area.

“Instead of increasing the number of enumerators (Census follow-up officers) employed to bridge the gap between the overall response rate and those for Māori and Pasifika in the 2013 census, they were slashed by 75% in the 2018 census, resulting in 5200 fewer enumerators being employed, a clear case of structured social injustice.

“When 2018 IT development costs are removed, it is clear that funding for the execution of the 2018 Census was substantially less than for the 2013 Census.”

**To P10**



Last year Pacific Islands community leaders in New Zealand organised a petition calling for support for overstayers seeking permanent residence. Pacific leader Kennedy Maeakafa Fakana'ana'a-ki-Fualu said that with the help of various church ministers more than 24,000 signatures were gathered. It has been estimated there could be as many as 5000 overstayers of Pacific origin in New Zealand.

## Immigration reset offers little for low-waged immigrants; no sign of amnesty for overstayers

The Government's much anticipated immigration reset offers little for low-waged immigrants and makes no mention of an amnesty or any other support for overstayers.

Announced on May 11, the new immigration settings are intended to shift the economy from its dependence on low-skilled migrant labour and to develop a more highly-skilled workforce.

To this end, a "green list" has been announced of 85 high-skill roles, such as ICT and engineering. Migrants taking up these roles will be eligible for priority pathways to residency.

Greens Immigration spokesperson Ricardo Menendez March said the government was entrenching a two-tier system that rewarded high-income migrants while keeping low-waged workers on a precarious and temporary status.

The Green Party has called for a reset centred on workers' rights and the well-being of communities. In a statement posted on May 14 it called on the Government to reconsider its immigration reset so that it "better reflects our relationship with our Pacific neighbours".

Greens MP and community activist Teanau Tuiono said that while Immigration Minister Kris Faafoi had

*By Mary Brophy,*

*Peace and International Justice Committee*

said overstayers were being considered as part of the immigration rebalance, the government's announcement had left them out.

"There was nothing for Pasifika overstayers in the immigration rebalance. It should have been directed towards migrant workers, Pacific families and people who have already lived in, and put down roots, in Aotearoa for many years," he said. March said the Greens would continue to call for an amnesty for overstayers.

On May 10 last year the Unite Union and the Migrant Workers' Association presented 15,000 signatures to Labour MP Marja Lubeck and March, calling for the Government to give residency to long-term migrant workers and overstayers.

At the time Unite's director, Mike Treen told Stuff reporter Steve Kilgallon that New Zealand had a moral responsibility to people pushed into overstaying by exploitation.

He said the economy had become dependent on a cycle of people on temporary visas **To P11**

# The window of opportunity to save Earth from peril of global warming is shrinking rapidly, warns IPCC

**The news is not good. The time left to tackle global warming is small and getting smaller if we hesitate.**

If we do not act now the whole planet is threatened.

That is the latest warning from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

The IPCC is the UN body assessing the science related to climate change. It provides political leaders with periodic scientific assessments concerning climate change, its implications and risks, as well as suggesting adaptation and mitigation strategies.

The scientific evidence cannot be argued with, says the IPCC: Climate change is a threat to humanity and the planet.

“Any further delay in concerted global action to adapt to change and mitigate its effects will miss an opportunity to secure a liveable and sustainable future, the IPCC said.

Jim Skia, who heads the group looking at ways to tackle climate change, said limiting warming to around 1.5°C would require global greenhouse gas emissions to peak before 2025 at the latest, and be reduced by 43% by 2030.

At the same time, methane would also need to be reduced by about a third.

“Even if we do this, it is almost inevitable that we will temporarily exceed this temperature threshold, but could return to below it by the end of the century, Skia said.



**ABOVE:** In this NASA satellite image, smoke from the devastating 2020 Australian bushfires, which have been linked to climate change, streams away across the Pacific.

“It’s now or never, if we want to limit global warming to 1.5°C.

“Without immediate and deep emissions reductions across all sectors, it will be impossible.”

<https://www.ipcc.ch/2022/04/04/ipcc-ar6-wgiii-pressrelease/>

## Season of Creation a time to pray for and protect our common home



**Listen to the  
Voice of creation**  
SEASON OF CREATION 2022

## Where to get help

**Depression Helpline-0800 543 354**

**Kidslines:0800 942 8787**

**Lifeline: 0800 543 354 Free text 4357**

**Need to Talk? Call or text 1737**

**Victim Support: 0800 842 846**

**Rainbow Youth: 09 376 4155**

**Samaritans: 0800 726 666**

**What's Up: 0800 942 8787**

**Youth line: 0800 376 633 or text 2342**

**Shine (get-help):0508 744 633**

**Safe to talk 0800 044 334 FT 4334**

**Better Blokes: 09 378 6812**

**Rape Crisis Centre: 0800 88 33 00**

**Sexual Abuse HELP Foundation: 09 623 1700**

**Youthline 0800 376 635 Free text 234**

**Women's Refuge 0800 733 843**

**Suicide Crisis Helpline 0800 543354**

The Season of Creation begins each year on September 1, the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation.

It ends on October 4, the feast of St Francis of Assisi, the Patron Saint of Ecology.

This year's symbol is the burning bush seen by Moses on Mt Horeb. The fire did not consume the bush, but was a sign of God's presence.

Let this symbol of God's Presence remind us that we need to listen to the Voice of Creation - this year's theme for the Season of Creation. You can find general information and prayers and special rituals for Season of Creation on the Environment & Sustainability Committee website:

<https://www.aucklandcatholic.org.nz/care-of-the-poor/justicepeace/>

You can find out more about the Season of Creation here: <https://seasonofcreation.org/> **To P7**





## Future generations will thank us for acting now on climate change

*A reflection on the latest IPCC report by Susanne Montgomerie, convenor Environment & Sustainability Committee.*

The IPCC report (see page 6) has warned us that we need to be prepared to adapt to climate change and to mitigate its worst effects.

Adapting means taking actions to protect ourselves from future floodings, storms, lower food security and many other effects of a rapidly warming climate.

Mitigation means bringing emissions down and capturing CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere mainly via nature-based solutions like planting and carbon capture in soil by better agricultural practices.

Pope Francis reminds us in *Laudato Si'* (2015, #159) that care for the environment is a matter of intergenerational justice:

"The notion of the common good also extends to future generations. The global economic crises have made painfully obvious the detrimental effects of disregarding our common destiny, which cannot exclude those who come after us. We can no longer speak of sustainable development apart from intergenerational solidarity."

If you want to keep up-to-date with what is happening in the climate change and sustainability arena, then this podcast is excellent: *Outrage and Optimism*:

<https://outrageandoptimism.libsyn.com/>

A new website *It is not too late* brings stories of hope, action and solutions:

<https://www.nottoolateclimate.com/>

If you want to take action and/or pray for our Common Home you can find prayers and our pamphlet 23 green tips here:

<https://www.aucklandcatholic.org.nz/care-of-the-poor/justicepeace/> (at the Environment & Sustainability Committee tab)

## Bipartisan support is needed to address serious issues facing Māori students

The Justice and Peace Commission has called for more support to overcome truancy problems among Māori students that have been exacerbated by Covid-19.

Speaking to the Māori Affairs Committee on Inquiry into Māori Education, the Commission cited research by Kevin Shore, current CEO of the New Zealand Catholic Education Office.

This showed that a range of issues affecting student performance were not helped by short term government funding.

Long term support with support from all political parties was needed to address a range of shortcomings, ranging from truancy to the lack of teaching in critical areas such as science, maths, technology and Te Reo.

### Truancy

Truancy meant students did not learn properly. A lack of science teachers meant students could not study the subjects they needed to apply for university courses like medicine.

Many factors could not be controlled by schools such as transience, employment, poverty, overcrowding and the availability of specialist teachers.

Commission representatives, Vicar for Social Impact and Communication Loraine Elliott and Executive secretary Peter Garrick supported calls for more resourcing to ensure all students had the necessary equipment and internet connections to work at school and home; more resources at iwi level and for local truancy services to work with whanau and ensuring there were enough quality teachers of Te Reo and other hard-to-staff subjects.

They also wanted more support for teaching literacy. Low literacy levels reduced student choice of subjects in the senior school, thereby affecting their career choices and life outcomes.



## Optimism, opposition and realism on the role of women and ordination ahead of Synod

**ABOVE:** This banner was hung strategically near the Vatican.

**The prospect of change in the role of women in the church and ordination has generated equal amounts of optimism, opposition and realism in the run up to next year's Synod.**

The Vatican has Included the Women's Ordination Conference (WOC) on the website promoting the event. WOC has launched a campaign, *Let Her Voice Carry* and a toolkit, which can be found here:

<https://www.womensordination.org/let-her-voice-carry-2/>

The American *National Catholic Reporter* (NCR) quoted WOC's executive director, Kate McElwee, as saying the integrity of the Synod would depend on "courageous conversations about women's equality."

She said the Synod's organisers had stressed the need to listen to those on the margins of the church

"Women's ordination advocates and particularly those women called to priesthood are some of the most marginalised in the church," McElwee said.

NCR's executive editor Heidi Schlumph said she doubted immediate change after the synod was likely, but hoped it could be the start of "a longer-term way of being a church."

Pope Francis declared last year that women religious had an essential role in the process of creating a more synodal church.

"Consecrated women are an extension of the female presence which walked with Jesus and the Twelve, sharing the mission and making your own unique contribution," the Pope said.

However, as the *New Zealand Catholic* noted last year, many women fear they will be left out of the process and a notable distinction is visible in discussions about what is possible in the roles of lay women and those in consecrated orders.

In Germany, participants in that country's often controversial Synodal Way have voted for a text calling for the ordination of women.

The document, *Women in Ministries and Offices in the Church*, said: "It is not the participation of women in all Church ministries and offices that requires justification, but the exclusion of women from sacramental office."

However, several participants criticized the text, saying the ordination of women would cause a schism.

-Philip Cass



# Commission says government must speed up introduction of laws curbing migrant exploitation



**Anybody found guilty of migrant exploitation and people trafficking should be disqualified from managing or directing a company.**

That was one of the recommendations to the committee investigating the exploitation of migrant workers by other migrants from the Justice and Peace Commission earlier this year.

The Commission urged the committee to urgently implement the proposal, which is being developed by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE).

Other proposals include making it a duty for third parties with significant control or influence over an employer to take reasonable steps to prevent a breach of employment standards occurring.

Deacon Sanele Poluleuligaga of the Social Welfare Anti-Poverty Committee said that during the pandemic the situation for temporary migrant workers had become even worse.

"In many ways temporary migrant workers have become the 'forgotten people' caught between a seemingly paralysed Immigration Service and inadequate or non-existent Government support," Deacon Senele said.

He said the introduction last year of the new visa to support migrants to leave exploitative situations was a good step forward.

It was backed up by Employment NZ's migrant exploitation webpage and the funding of the dedicated 0800 number.

"Unfortunately, many migrants in exploitative situations do not know about it or are too frightened to speak out," Deacon Senele said.

"What's needed are publicly-funded programmes to provide information to all migrant workers as to their rights and how they can safely access assistance.

"Community groups need to be supported to enable this to happen. When they were engaged in the Covid vaccination roll-out rates were lifted immediately.

"We welcome the September 2021 decision announced by current Minister of Immigration Chris Fa'afoi of a one-off 2021 Residency Visa for the estimated 165,000 migrants caught up in Covid border restrictions. But the roll-out of this seems to be very slow, which has caused hardship for many families."

Problems with exploitation are long standing. Writing in 2016, researcher Dr Christina Stringer said as well as being a serious human rights issue, the exploitation of migrant workers put New Zealand's reputation at risk. Stringer said many temporary migrants put up with exploitation so they could get permanent residency, or because they were forced or lied to by their employer.

**Speaking in 2019, Wellington Cardinal John Dew said some people knew their working or living conditions were unfair and were afraid to speak up, because their immigration status depended on their employment.**



"We know that some people know their working conditions are below our legal minimums, but are prepared to put up with it because the alternative in their home countries is worse," Cardinal Dew said.

"For many of us, the way to overcome these issues is first to get to know one another. So let's listen, let's watch out, let's respond with kindness. Migrant workers are not a problem to be solved. They are our brothers and sisters, who we welcome with love."

The MBIE's page with information on combatting exploitation is here:

<https://www.mbie.govt.nz/immigration-and-tourism/immigration/temporary-migrant-worker-exploitation-review/#:~:text=To%20contact%20the%20dedicated%20migrant%20exploitation%20team%2C%20contact,migrant%20exploitation%20on%20the%20Employment%20New%20Zealand%20website%3A>

# Plight of West Papuan students in New Zealand triggers plea for special visas and financial support

**The sudden cancellation of scholarships for 40 West Papuan students studying in New Zealand has left some struggling to complete their qualifications in extremely difficult circumstances.**

There has been no explanation for why their scholarships were cancelled.

The students are committed to supporting their families and advancing the wellbeing of their West Papuan people.

After four of the students spoke with Pax Christi in May, the organisation donated \$1000 from the Pax Christi general funds to their association which represents their students studying in Auckland, Palmerston North and Dunedin.

Pax Christi's executive committee has also asked Minister for Immigration Kris Faafoi about their situation.

## Perilous

"The cancellation of scholarships awarded by the Indonesian Government has left many of them in perilous situations relating to the status of their visas and their ability to complete the qualifications which are the basis of their being here, thus rendering their documents practically useless," the committee said.

"There is no evidence that this sudden action has anything to do with the academic achievements of the students; nor that they have been anything but fine ambassadors for their Papuan people. But it will certainly nullify the efforts made by their families to give them this opportunity and will reduce the benefits they could bring to their communities.

"We urge the government to consider the granting of a special case visa for these students so that they can complete their courses and fulfil their promising capacity to make a worthy and very important contribution to the future development of their Papuan nation."

## Donations

Now Pax Christi-Aotearoa has called for donations to help the students. Please send donations to Pax Christi Aotearoa-New Zealand Trust T/A Pax Christi account number 38-9001-0650399-00.



ABOVE: West Papuan student Roy Towolom. He came to New Zealand to study carpentry. Photo: *Stuff*.

## Up to 15,000 people may be missing from count in some areas

**From P4** "And who paid the price for such dereliction of duty to the common good? None other than those who can afford it least, with up to a third of Māori and Pasifika communities not counted at all and so largely unfunded for Health, Social Welfare, Education and Transport and other Government services for their area for the following five years."

Garrick said 75% of health funding was determined by Census figures.

Poverty Action Group co-convenor Alan Johnson said in areas like South Auckland there might be 10,000 - 15,000 people missing from the count.

"The DHB won't be getting funded for them so they and everyone else in that area will struggle with less funding," he said.

## Vulnerable people excluded from Budget relief package



### From P3

“Despite recent increases to benefit levels, The Salvation Army is seeing everyday people who are falling behind due to the ever-rising cost of living and unsustainably high rental costs.

“These people needed a major boost in this Budget that they did not receive.”

There have been calls by academics and health professionals for more to be done to help Pasifika children facing problems with health, education and poverty.

More than 25 percent of Pacific children in New Zealand live in poverty, according to research released last year from *The Child Poverty Monitor*.

One in five Māori and one in four Pasifika children live in material hardship compared with the overall rate of one in 10.

### For more information:

<https://www.cpag.org.nz/the-latest/current-statistics/latest-child-poverty-figures/>;

<https://www.newshub.co.nz/home/new-zealand/2022/05/budget-2022-government-urged-to-implement-long-term-solutions-to-tackle-poverty-in-pacific-communities.html>

<https://mve.salvationarmy.org.nz/news/budget-2022-disappointing-people-struggling-most>

<https://www.stats.govt.nz/information-releases/child-poverty-statistics-year-ended-june-2021>

## Employers’ Association supports call for amnesty

### From P5

and with limited chance of turning this into citizenship or of recouping the costs of coming here.

“We have created the legal and economic and political framework for this to happen on a mass scale. It is not incidental,” he said.

Kilgallon’s article noted that an amnesty for overstayers was not a revolutionary idea. Amnesties were granted in 1987, 1991 and again in 2000, when Labour granted an amnesty for “well-settled overstayers.”

### Labour shortage

On August 4, 2021 in an interview on RNZ’s Checkpoint with Lisa Owen, Employers and Manufacturers Association chief executive Brett O’Reilly called for an overstayer amnesty to “help ease labour shortages.” “There are 14,000 overstayers,” he said.

“That’s 14,000 people who are here, who have a home and would like to be working.”

One third of them were Samoan and Tongan. He said the Government’s apology for the Dawn Raids should have been accompanied by an amnesty. This would put incomes into Islander communities in New Zealand and workers sending remittances home would have a positive economic impact on countries badly hit by COVID.

O’Reilly said there would be ways to ring-fence an amnesty specifically for Pacific people because of their unique relationship with New Zealand.

### Justice & Peace Commission Catholic Diocese of Auckland

Website: <https://www.aucklandcatholic.org.nz/care-of-the-poor/justicepeace/>

### Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/JusticeAndPeaceCDA>

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Phone: 09 378 4380 Mob 022 130 0730





ABOVE: Auckland art Gallery. St George and the Dragon, Crete circa 1500. Egg tempera, gold leaf and gesso on wood. Private collection, Canberra.

## Story of St George and the dragon teaches about exploitation and justice

Auckland Art Gallery is currently hosting a stunning exhibition of Eastern Orthodox icons. *Heavenly Beings* (open until September 18) offers a sometimes overwhelming experience that introduces a style of art and a theology that will probably be unfamiliar to most visitors.

The introduction to the exhibit describes the icons as “windows into heaven” during prayer.

Among the many images on display is that of St George and the Dragon. Some historians have seen the dragon in the story as an allegory for the Emperor Diocletian, who had George put to death for his Christian faith.

The image of St George killing the dragon survives in many countries and is associated with both Moscow and the district of Kyiv, site of some of the fiercest fighting during Ukraine’s current heroic resistance of the Russian invasion.

The story of St George has of course also become a central part of British history and is celebrated in the Anglican Church.

In 2014, the Dean of St Paul’s Episcopal Cathedral in San Diego, the Very Rev. Penelope Bridges, used the story of St George as a parable about greed, exploitation, justice and fairness.

### Dragons of greed

“There are dragons in our world today,” Rev. Bridges said.

“Dragons of hatred, poverty, greed. The centre of Africa is filled with the dragons of greed: their hoard includes blood diamonds and so-called conflict minerals.

“We feed the dragon with our appetite for new technology.

“Meanwhile the people who live in Congo are devastated as the rule of law breaks down and greedy individuals and factions form armies and lay waste the towns and farms, just as deadly as any dragon breathing fire out of the sky.

“We hoard so much of the world’s wealth: does that make us into dragons? Who will slay the dragon of greed in our lives?

“May the memory of St. George and the cross of courage be our companions.”

## Programme highlights legacy of colonialism

Two recent episodes of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation’s programme *Foreign Correspondent* have highlighted the continuing legacy of colonialism. Following the discovery in Canada of cemeteries in former First Nations boarding schools - often run by the Catholic Church - the episode *Stolen Spirits* depicts the efforts of First Nations peoples in the tiny town of Genoa in Nebraska, to find a cemetery in the grounds of what was known as an ‘Indian School.’ In *Keep Hawai’i Hawai’ian*, the programme shows Indigenous Hawai’ians displaced from their land, pushed aside by tourists and the US military and vowing to regain their sovereignty.

Both programmes resonate strongly with the experience of Indigenous peoples in both Australia and New Zealand.

You can find the episodes here:

<https://www.abc.net.au/foreign/stolenspirits/13901338> and <https://www.abc.net.au/foreign/keep-hawaiihawaiian/13881132>