

Media release:

Presbyterian Church backs living wage campaign

The Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand joined the call for a living wage today.

At its biennial General Assembly gathering in Rotorua today, a recommendation was passed that encourages its churches and related organisations to work towards payment of a living wage.

“Christians believe that we are all made in the image of God. People and their work have a dignity that makes the labour market substantially different from the purchase of other goods. The price of a person’s labour shouldn’t be determined solely by the market,” says the Rev Dr Margaret Mayman.

The Church endorsed the Living Wage Aotearoa New Zealand campaign, with Margaret saying a living wage is an important first step in addressing the burgeoning gap between rich and poor in New Zealand, and such a wage would lead to improvement in health, learning and social outcomes for Kiwis and their families.

Today’s decision encourages the Church’s 415 churches, church schools and many related service agencies to examine their own employee remuneration packages and consider how they could work towards payment of a living wage if they are not already doing so, says Margaret.

“Individual churches will begin working through what this means for them in coming months, for example some parishes in the Church’s Wellington Presbytery have already adopted a living wage philosophy.”

“The Church believes that participation of marginalised groups has precedence over the preservation of a system which excludes them. We celebrate this step in the Church’s journey of advocating for those without a voice,” says Margaret.

Notes to reporter:

- The Presbyterian Church is the third largest denomination in Aotearoa New Zealand, with more than 400,000 people identifying as Presbyterian in the 2001 Census, and 30,000 regular church attenders.
- The Moderator is the elected leader of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand.
- General Assembly is the Church’s top decision-making body.

- General Assembly 2012 is being held at Rotorua Boys High School, from 4 October to 7 October. More information about GA12 is available at <http://www.presbyterian.org.nz/about-us/general-assembly>