



# GA25 PCANZ WHITE RIBBON

- SACRED SPACES
- SACRED LIVES
- FROM SILENCE TO ACTION

Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand's initiative to end violence

## OVERVIEW

The 2025 PCANZ White Ribbon Campaign calls on our churches throughout Aotearoa New Zealand to transform silence into meaningful action against all forms of violence. Launched at General Assembly 2025 and culminating in White Ribbon Day (25 November) and the 16 Days of Activism until Human Rights Day (10 December), this campaign empowers PCANZ parishes to become agents of change within their communities.

This year's theme Sacred Spaces, Sacred Lives: From Silence to Action connects the faith mission of PCANZ with the White Ribbon campaign by:

- **Sacred Spaces:** Acknowledging that all environments—churches, homes, schools, communities, and natural settings are meant to be sanctuaries of safety and respect.
- **Sacred Lives:** Affirming the inherent dignity and worth of every person as created in God's image.
- **From Silence to Action:** Challenging the Church and its members to move beyond passive witnessing to active intervention and prevention.

This campaign calls us to recognise that wherever violence exists, something sacred is being violated. It invites presbyteries, parishes, congregations, schools, cultural groups, and church organisations to change their commitment from private conviction to public witness, creating a movement that honours both the spiritual foundations of our faith and the practical requirements of justice in the communities.



## WHAT IS WHITE RIBBON

White Ribbon is an international movement that began in 1991 in Canada and has spread to over 60 countries. At its core, White Ribbon represents men and boys working to end violence against women, with the white ribbon symbolising a personal pledge to never commit, condone, or remain silent about violence against women and girls.

The White Ribbon campaign offers the PCANZ a powerful framework to fulfil our calling as agents of reconciliation and restoration in a broken world. By participating in this movement, we demonstrate that creating safe spaces for everyone is not merely a social initiative but a sacred obligation central to our witness as a body of Christ.

## OUR BROADER COMMITMENT

While White Ribbon specifically represents men's opposition to violence against women, our PCANZ campaign extends this commitment to address all forms of violence and abuse across the motu. We recognise that creating safe environments in our churches, schools, homes, and communities requires a comprehensive approach to violence prevention and a response that protects all people – women, men, children, elders, those of diverse gender identities, and even the animals in our care and the environment. Everyone deserves to live free from fear and abuse in all the spaces they inhabit.



# UNDERSTANDING VIOLENCE AND ABUSE

Violence and abuse take many forms, all of which cause harm:

- **Physical violence:** Hitting, pushing, restraining, or any unwanted physical contact.
- **Emotional/psychological abuse:** Constant criticism, humiliation, manipulation, isolation, or controlling behaviour.
- **Sexual violence:** Any non-consensual sexual act or behaviour.
- **Financial abuse:** Controlling someone's access to money or economic resources.
- **Spiritual abuse:** Using faith, beliefs, or religious authority to control, manipulate, or harm others
- **Digital abuse:** Harassment, monitoring, or controlling behaviour using technology.
- **Animal abuse:** Neglect, physical harm, or cruelty toward animals, which often correlates with interpersonal violence and can be used to control, threaten, or punish family members.
- **Environmental violence:** Destruction or degradation of the natural environment that sustains communities, particularly affecting vulnerable populations who depend directly on local ecosystems, and disregarding our role as stewards of creation.

Violence and abuse often escalate over time and can occur in any relationship regardless of ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or church involvement. As Christians, we are called to recognise these patterns, raise awareness and respond with compassion, accountability, and a commitment to change.

## REQUEST THE PCANZ WHITE RIBBON AMBASSADOR TO ATTEND YOUR EVENT

### CONTACT

To request the PCANZ White Ribbon Ambassador to attend your event contact Rev Hana Popea at least three weeks prior to your event

Email: [hanapd.pcanzwrnz@gmail.com](mailto:hanapd.pcanzwrnz@gmail.com)  
Mobile: 0274629313

### RESOURCES AVAILABLE ONLINE

Access our collection of resources on the PCANZ website

<https://www.presbyterian.org.nz/speaking-out/pcanz-white-ribbon>

## WHITE RIBBON DAY 25 NOVEMBER

Each year on November 25th, communities worldwide mark White Ribbon Day to raise awareness and promote action to prevent violence against women and girls. The white ribbon represents men's opposition to violence against women.

### 16 DAYS OF ACTION

The period between White Ribbon Day (November 25) and Human Rights Day (December 10) provides a focused opportunity for parishes, church schools, and church groups to engage in meaningful activities that promote non-violence in their local communities. These 16 days represent a commitment to action, creating safer homes, churches, schools, and communities throughout Aotearoa New Zealand.

## HOW YOUR PARISH CAN PARTICIPATE

### WORSHIP & PRAYER

- Dedicate a worship service during the 16 days to focus on non-violence
- Incorporate prayers for victims and survivors of domestic violence
- Develop liturgy that addresses themes of respect, dignity, safety and healing

### EDUCATION & AWARENESS

- Host discussion groups on healthy relationships, sacred lives and spaces
- Display White Ribbon materials in church spaces, for example a white ribbon tree installation for church entrances where congregation and visitors can tie ribbons with prayers or commitments
- Altar/sanctuary cloth design with white ribbon symbol or banners
- Share information about local support services

### COMMUNITY ACTION

- Organise a White Ribbon walk for change or community event
- Sacred Pledge Campaign: Public commitment boards where men can sign pledges to stand against violence
- Partner with local schools, businesses, other denominations, or community groups
- Hold a fundraiser for women's refuges or support services
- Spread White Ribbon posters in the community