

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GRANTS COMMITTEE

“Poipoia te kākano, kia puawai”, Nurture the seed and it will blossom

SECTION A - Information and Reporting Back

The PDG Committee is pleased to bring its annual report to Methodist Conference and thanks the wider church for its support. This year the Committee had some membership changes. We said farewell to the former Principal of Trinity College, Nasili Vaka’uta who made many very valuable contributions to our work. We welcomed Emily Colgan (Acting Principal Trinity College) and (from September) Fusi Veia Tufui to our meetings.

Disbursement of grants

Thanks to the restoration of previous Connexional Budget funding levels, the Committee was able to increase the number of grants made during the year. These assisted applicants to undertake degree studies at Trinity College, to attend a variety of overseas events and to represent Te Hāhi at ecumenical gatherings. We are aware that these are often life-changing opportunities especially for young people.

During the period 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026 the Committee made the following grants:

PDG Approved Grants 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026

Name	Synod	Topic
Tauīwi		
Tauese Fuimaono-Afeaki	Vahefonua	Women’s World Assembly
Elizabeth Sauī Salesa	Northern	CCA Youth Assembly
Malia Haloholo	Vahefonua	Women’s World Assembly
Richard Small	Northern	Uniting Church Australia Synod
Leaosavaii Folasā	Sinoti Samoa	Women’s World Assembly
Rev. Suiva’aia Te’o	Sinoti Samoa	Women’s World Assembly
Talapauna Futi	Sinoti Samoa	Women’s World Assembly
Te Taha Māori		
Te Amorangi Tremain Dixon Te-Ahu	Waikato Rohe	CCA Youth Assembly
Iriana Rountree	Te Taitokerau	Free Wesleyan 200 th
Maungarongo Tito	Tāmaki Rohe	Free Wesleyan 200 th
Ngahina Ranui	Taranaki Rohe	Free Wesleyan 200 th
Puspa Barua	Ōtautahi	Free Wesleyan 200 th
Iriana Rountree	Te Taitokerau	Bachelor of Theology Trinity
Marama Hotere	Te Taitokerau	Bachelor of Theology Trinity
Tarati Tia	Waikato Rohe	Bachelor of Theology Trinity

Grants allocated:

Tau Iwi:	\$12,681.72
Te Taha Maori:	\$22,417.90

Total approved grants: \$35,099.62

No payments outstanding

Bradley Trust

The Bradley Trust makes grants of up to \$10,000 annually to support major research projects in the church and community. In November 2025 the Committee was pleased to make a grant of \$7,400 to Dr George Zacchariah, Trinity College enabling him to continue his research in earth, ethics and ecotheology for a book to be published in 2027.

Applications are currently open for this year's grant. Application forms and an accompanying Bradley Trust Criteria and Guidelines document are available on the Methodist website and the deadline for applications is 31 October. Please note the Trust exists to fund in-depth research projects, not operational costs. Priority is given to projects which are aligned with our Methodist ethos and bicultural journey and that reflect our diverse church and/or community context of Aotearoa.

SECTION B - Strategic Plan

PDG focuses on supporting study which will enhance people's theological development aligned with our Methodist ethos and bicultural journey, reflect our diverse church/community context of Aotearoa, offer opportunities to first-time applicants and young people and resource as many people as possible from a limited pool of funding.

After two difficult years, the Committee was extremely grateful when the Budget Task Group heard our request for assistance and increased our 2025-2026 grant back to its original amount of \$20,000. Without this grant and a small amount of interest earned on our endowment fund, the Committee is unable to assist those who offer ministry to develop the skills they need to serve the church well.

This year we have had two main priorities. The first has been to continue promoting our funds throughout Te Hāhi. We have also been proactive in making a variety of study options better known, including training in practical and pastoral ministry skills as well as studies with academic focus. We would love to see more people doing Clinical Pastoral Education, going on retreat, enrolling in te reo classes, signing up for MOOCs and embracing learning opportunities of every kind.

Our second priority has been to be vigilant in preserving the sustainability of our funds as we know that finances will continue to be tight into the future. As noted previously, this may mean making some hard decisions about funding those undertaking several years of study and when we receive large numbers of applications for courses or events.

In the June funding round the Committee received 40 applications for one event, four times the total Taiwi allocation for a year. Sadly, it was impossible for us to fund all of these requests. We were aware that a lot of people spent considerable time and effort putting together applications and writing references. It would be helpful if Synods could contact us prior to submitting large

numbers of applications to check the likelihood of us being able to fund them.

Please note that the Committee does not have the capacity to support funding requests for courses, activities or conferences which do not directly support the work of the church.

Suggested decisions:

1. That the report is received.
2. That Professional Development Grants Committee membership for 2027 shall be: Rev. Dr Susan Thompson (Convenor), Sonia Faulkner, Jackie McGeorge, Rev. Suiva'aia Te'o, Esther Peach, Fusi Ve'a Tufui, the Principal of Trinity College, one representative from Te Taha Māori, Rev. Nicola Teague Grundy (Kai Hāpai) and Rev. Tara Tautari (General Secretary/Corresponding).