



The New Zealand Refugee Reception Centre - Te Āhuru Mōwai

3 August 2025 © Maria Hayward

Our theme for today is: “Refugees: people like you and me”, and during the korero time I’ll be giving you a slideshow of Te Āhuru Mōwai, the New Zealand Refugee Reception Centre in Mangere. I hope you’ll see from this picture story and commentary, that, colour, race, religion, attire, language and gender are merely superficial attributes – what connects us - is our shared humanity. We’re all human beings – yet some of us are born luckier than others.

[Link to Dave Dobbyn singing “Welcome Home”](#)

As mentioned previously, our theme for today is: “Refugees: people like you and me”. I’d like to introduce this theme by reading the lyrics from the song you heard in the prelude: Dave Dobbyn’s ‘Welcome Home’ song. Dobbyn felt inspired to write this song after an anti-migrant march in Christchurch. He wrote it in 2005 to welcome migrants to this country – but it seems to fit the welcoming of former refugees even better - people who have been forced out of their home countries, mostly due to war, and then they come to a new, safe land.

[Link to slideshow](#)

The World Refugee Day Theme in 2025 is Solidarity with Refugees. There are record numbers of people in the world today who have been forcibly displaced. I hope the slideshow today has helped you feel some **solidarity** for people, who through no fault of their own, have been forced from their homes. They are people like us. The theme of solidarity urges us to move beyond words and take meaningful steps to support those forced to flee. Refugees don’t seek charity, they just want the opportunity to

rebuild their lives, to contribute to their communities, and to live with dignity.

We can create change by advocating for lasting solutions to displacement. In listening to and understanding the stories of refugee journeys, we are reminded that welcoming refugees strengthens societies and builds communities where everyone belongs. Finally, to quote from the UN statement on this year's theme of Solidarity: "Through collective action — from policy change and community engagement to sharing refugee voices — we affirm that refugees are not forgotten, not alone, and not without hope" (<https://www.un.org/observances/refugee-day>).

Meditation / Discussion Questions:

- Have you been in a social or other situation where there has been criticism about refugee settlement programmes?
- What have you learned from the recent UU talks that might perhaps help you to respond more confidently should these questions or comments arise again?