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|  | Speak Up-KōrerotiaReflections: Christchurch mosque attacks one year on15 March 2020 |
| Male | This programme was first broadcast on Canterbury’s community access radio station Plains FM 96.9 and was made with the assistance of NZ on Air.  |
| Sally  | As-salumu alaykum. Today marks one year since the terror attacks at the Christchurch Al Noor and Linwood mosques in which 51 people were killed and many, many others injured physically and emotionally. It’s been a really difficult year since, with a rollercoaster of emotions: The initial horror and fear; the outpouring of solidarity and support from Christchurch, Aotearoa and elsewhere around the world; the swift law change on gun control, high-level, international discussion on the role and responsibility of social media in curbing the proliferation of extremely violent content online; finally, trying to find some semblance of continuing to live life in the shadow of this act. In recognition of these hard times, we’re doing a different kind of show today. You’ll be hearing from the people who recorded and submitted to Speak Up-Kōrerotia their reflections on the anniversary.The call for reflections was put out repeatedly over the five weeks preceding the anniversary and circulated widely through social media including via several key agencies such as the Canterbury Muslims’ Association and the All Right? Mental Health campaign. One thing that will strike you as you hear these reflections is just how diverse they are, with people choosing to highlight different issues.  |
| Male | A year after the attacks, my health deteriorated somewhat but my spirit did not because I realised that in any act of tragedy you can either let it submerge you and bring you down or you can somehow find a way to draw strength and this is what I’ve done, is I’ve been able to draw strength. It has shaped me in ways I have never fully imagined. It has certainly made me more determined and more stronger than I was before. I’m thankful that I have been able to feel that way and I just pray for the families and the community and the country that somehow we find a way of healing because with closure, then the healing process can truly start. What I hope is that we as a city and as a nation, are not defined by the tragedy that happened but how we as a nation were able to come together for one big moment in history and that that togetherness has remained and will remain. What I guess I’m trying to say is that we are one nation, we speak with one voice. Why is that? Because we are all, every single person in this country, we are all New Zealanders.  |
| Annick | My name is Annick and I’m a new immigrant to New Zealand, I’m a resident of Christchurch, I’ve been here 14 years. I feel very privileged to live in this country. I’m feeling very comfortable with the diversity of the population. My child attends a school that has 62 nationalities and I found that amazing and very enriching. I was very shocked and saddened by the Christchurch attack. I was also very worried at first for myself but immediately I realised I was not a target and I felt really worried about those that I knew were targets, those friends and neighbours and colleagues that were Muslim. I was worried I had lost some of them and I suppose now a year later, I am still quite confused and worried about their position in our privileged society. I do not understand how so much violence can be committed in such a privileged environment. I am still worried for them. I feel that Muslims in New Zealand are not safe and I am confused about what I can do because I still don’t understand where all this hatred comes from.  |
| Female | Approaching this anniversary, we have been checking in with each other a lot and asking if we are OK, sometimes reliving what we were doing when we first heard the news. I was not at Masjid Al Noor on the 15th, nor were any of my family. I was at work eating a late lunch and grumbling about the meeting that had gone on too long. Because I had not had to deal with the direct trauma of being at either of the mosques, nor the loss of family of life, I sometimes question my right to feel such a profound sense of grief. The enormity of what had happened is still hard to process, the outpouring of love and support from Christchurch, New Zealand and the world was overwhelming. The flowers, the messages, the home baking - I really have no words to describe the comfort they brought and through all of this, the world watched. It watched and was in awe of the quiet dignity of the Muslim community, the forgiveness and the ability to show love in the face of such hate. The Prime Minister’s compassion was applauded and she was held up as an example of true leadership. Among the turmoil of feelings that I have had - sorrow, hope, gratitude, grief and sometimes just plain exhaustion - there has been an underlying sense of disquiet. A niggling question. Does the attention of the world’s media and the collective outpouring of grief and love actually just show that brown deaths in a white country are more important than brown deaths in a brown country, and absolutely more important than a single black death on the streets of a white country?I have no doubts that the people who laid the flowers, wore the scarves, stood with us in silence and listened to our call to prayer genuinely cared about our community. They were genuinely shocked, their love for us was real - and that of course, made good footage for the media. This is the media who has long since lost interest in the brown deaths in the brown country and has never been interested in the black death in a white country. This media was suddenly very interest in this beautiful response to hate. We should be proud of the fact that we showed the world there can be light out of dark. We now need to shine that light on the more uncomfortable darkness’s that still exist. Given that we are checking in with each other a lot about whether or not we are OK, here is my poem: ‘Rain from a cloudless sky.’If you are asking me if I’m OK so you can smile sympathetically, well then yes, I am, I’m that type of OK. That particular one. The one for you. But my OK, the one for me, then no. Well maybe.Actually yes, on a good day and today was such a good day. So definitely yes today before you asked. But sometimes, maybe no, randomly no, unexpectedly no, archived no. For things that I had forgotten and events that you have never even heard of, no.Not the expected no, the one you are enquiring about because I have learnt my lines. Not the middle of a dark night, no, because I sleep well. Not the approaching anniversary no, because I am well prepared.I carry my strongest and widest umbrella to share with you but sometimes on beautiful days, when the sky is singing a symphony of blue, when a tiny droplet of random ‘no’ unleashes a hailstorm from a cloudless sky,When my umbrella is as paper parasol and the wind is too strong, At that time I am definitely not OK. But today, I’m fine, thank you for asking.  |
| Male | Anything can happen in New Zealand but quite hard to believe that there’s people with those sorts of views in and amongst our community. For me personally, I think it changed in that I was quite removed from the attack, I didn’t know anybody that was there or anybody that was involved. I have a bit of survivor’s guilt that it’s not fair that that happened to a minority group in our society. I feel guilty sometimes that my life has just kind of carried on and others haven’t, others have been so drastically affected by this. It’s kind of really hard thing to balance out.  |
| Female | I honestly feel like it’s kind of surreal. It still doesn’t feel like it all really happened, it just feels like a bit of a bad dream and yeah, hard to believe that it actually happened a few streets away. For me that’s really hard to grasp. I also feel like there’s the people that were directly affected potentially by the mosque and all that kind of stuff, but then all those nurses that had to see something that they’ve probably never expected that they would see in a small city hospital in New Zealand.  |
| Male | When I lived in Dunedin, we lived next door to the mosque down there and there was an open door - so being curious people, we thought well we’ll go and take a look and it was great. We learnt they were just people just like us. I see there’s a few open days at the mosque here and maybe I’ll go to lunch so do you know what, I’m going to go to that, sounds like a bit of fun. Something positive come out of something so negative. And maybe I wouldn’t have done that before the attacks.  |
| Female | I think it’s amazing how strong some of those Muslim people are during the memorial service and just some of the words they were sharing and the strength and forgiveness for me was a bit of a new experience. I’d never really seen anything like that.  |
| Female | I can’t believe something as awful as what happened on 15 March can happen in a country like New Zealand and one year on I still find myself thinking about it often. I think of the families and communities that have been affected by that act of senseless violence and I hope that the Muslim community in Christchurch can take some comfort knowing that we share their sadness and their anger about what happened. My family and I are not from New Zealand, however we found ourselves incredibly proud to be part of a country that responded in such a way to the terrible events of March last year.  |
| Female | “O mankind, we created you from single pair of a male and a female and made you into a nation and tribes that you may know each other. Not that you may hate each other.” Since 15 March 2019, I brought this verse from the holy Qur’an to the centre of my life. All my efforts are focused to creating cohesive societies by building bridges. It’s been hard for families who have been impacted and has been hard for New Zealand but the generosity and love of New Zealanders has been huge, particularly those from Christchurch so I want to say thank you. Thank you, New Zealand, thank you to everyone from Christchurch who responded with so much love towards the Muslim community. I want to leave you all with this beautiful Maya Angelou quote” “If you must look back, do so forgivingly. If you must look forward, do so prayerfully. However, the wisest thing you can do is to be present in the present, gratefully.” |
| Male  | Just been sitting and thinking... can't seem to find the right words, at least I can't get them out of my mouth.Xenophobia, racism and anti-Semitism are again on the rise globally and here in my native Germany, with right-wing populists sitting in all regional parliaments and in the national parliament. Political debate has changed to the extent that verbal boundaries have been pushed far beyond what only a few years ago was deemed unacceptable. And no one is too surprised that this has led to deadly violence, in Germany, in Norway, in Christchurch, because hate knows no boundaries and is connected now more than ever. Just like any virus it requires global action to overcome it.It requires political answers and action and it requires all of us to take a stand and not look away. |
| Female | I’m Jenny Smith, I am a community development worker for Te Whare Roimata. We began to start to think about how were people in this neighbourhood faring given that this had been the only area that had been badly affected by the quakes and its location with the Linwood mosque. Three of us came and worked on Saturday, just took a little table, had hot drinks, sat and talked and enabled people in the neighbourhood just to call by and stop and reflect how they were feeling. I can’t help thinking that in a way, New Zealand’s innocence was taken but then if you look deeply around things like hate speech, the rise of the new right, that brings it back. I guess I hold in my mind the absolute message of peace and goodwill that the Muslim community demonstrated and forgiveness under immense suffering, that they were able to rise totally above it and kind of spread that love along with, I guess, the work of Jacinda Ardern and some of the others. How it was about this isn’t New Zealand and how do we build a stronger community as a result. You know, often in our culture we rise to anger and almost go to put downs or go to drive the wedge but what runs through their religion and their way of life is this peacefulness and I have seen that in Māori with what could have been really strong anger about grievances and pain from the past, but being translated into that wonderful saying “Mati wā”, all in its own time and being able to believe that one day change is possible. And I guess that’s where I’ve kind of moved, but also reflecting over the months about the hate speech and the racism that exists and the real sadness that for many Muslim people, they felt very isolated and felt the need to hide away. And you’re seeing it now with the coronavirus, the targeting of Chinese people. There’s a lot of people who felt a sense of solidarity and want to stand and say that this is not us, this is not the way that our community or our country deals with issues but I also think that there’s also been like how do we hold our hand out to be able to connect and let people know. Sort of some grappling of ways in connecting with the Muslim community, I think some of that has also happened. And then I think there’s another level where people have just got on with living but as the anniversary comes, it brings it back to the fore as we do more talking and remembering.I think we can be incredibly grateful that we’ve had a prime minister who has shown great leadership and great solidarity and for me, she’s really demonstrated a way of being and like the wonderful connection of Ngāi Tahu with the Muslim community growing closer and the modelling, I guess, of the Treaty relationship and to me that’s what gives us hope for going forward.  |
|  | **WAIATA**Aio ki te Aorangi x2.                  Peace to the universeAroha ki te Aorangi x2               Love to the universeKoa, koa, koa ki te Aorangi x2  Joy to the universePono ki te Aorangi x2                Truth to the universe Aio ki te Aorangi x2.                   Peace to the universe |
| John | Kia ora, my name is John. I’ve lived in Christchurch for the last 22 years. How am I feeling a year on from the tragic attacks? I think we’ve made some great progress from that last 12 months; I think there’s a lot more to do and I just hope we can maintain that momentum of making great changes for the next 12 months, next 5 years, next 10 years, next 20 years, so we may all live together in one community without any hatred. Have I got anything that I’d like to say to the Muslim communities of Christchurch? I’d like to say to them keep being proud, being proud of your religion, being proud of your culture, being proud of who you are. That pride is what makes our city a wonderful place. Don’t ever give up on that pride. Have I got anything I’d like to say to the residents of Christchurch? Never forget, never forget how we all felt on that day 12 months ago, never forget the tears that we all shed over the tragedy that hit our city and never forget the importance of tolerance, tolerance of other people. Never forget the importance of being kind. Just that smile on the street, that nod, that eye contact, that mutual respect that we should have for each other. Have the attacks changed Christchurch? Of course they have. I think we thought that would never happen to our city but it also goes to show that Christchurch can continue to change and improve as time goes on and that we learn from the tragedies of the past and can make our city better and stronger and more united than ever. How have the attacks changed me? Largely I don’t think they have changed my views on things but maybe one of the main things is it’s made me focus on, is how important it is we carry on the great work that we all do to make sure that all these communities can feel part of the greater Christchurch community and that all the communities know that they belong here, as we all belong here and that togetherness is what makes our city so great. I think there’s always been an underlying racism in all cities in the world. However I think this has bubbled it up to the top at Christchurch and it’s something that we don’t like to acknowledge, we don’t like to believe that it’s actually a part of our city but I also think that it’s something that we can make a call on. We can say hey, we’re not prepared to accept that sort of language, that sort of degrading negativity in our city. That we want to be known as a city that is warm and engaged and welcoming and I think that’s made me even more passionate to be able to carry on the work and encouraging others to carry on their work, to make sure that our city is one of being totally supportive of all communities and cultures. I think I am even more vocal on the importance of us working together to make Christchurch an awesome, awesome city to live for everybody that lives here, not just the ones that may have been here for years and years and years but new people to our city, everyone in our city. Make it inclusive and welcoming.  |
| Female | I’ve tried to get some words together for you but I just don’t have any really, it’s too complex. I’m sorry for the victims and families, total disbelief that a person could want to hurt others in such a horrific way and relief that my family were all OK and impressed with the aroha that Christchurch showed in the days and weeks after.  |
| Lorraine | I’m Lorraine, I’m a grandmother. I live not far from one of the mosques and it was a shock to see police officers outside it with guns. It was disappointing to realise what had happened. My most overwhelming feeling was one of disappointment that it could happen here. In the days afterwards it was all people reeling with shock that it could happen here and sorrow for the people to whom it had happened and I think that’s pretty much the approach that I encounter most of the time ever since. I think the awareness that if it could happen here it could happen anywhere and that we do need to be aware that there are people capable of having such strongly antisocial feelings, who could be so filled with hatred for people of a different culture amongst us. It has made me aware that the world and this country is not as kind a place as I thought it was. I really regret that this has happened and I hope nothing like it ever happens again but I fear it probably will.  |
| Mahamuda | As-salamu alaykum, kia ora koutou. I’m Mahamuda Akter. Last year during mosque attack I lost five of my friends from the Bangladeshi community. I lost my friend who is Husna Alhamed, she was very close to me and my family. She was an amazing lady, very supportive to me, kind-hearted, generous and always wanted to help people. I would say she was more than my friend; she was more like my family. I was traumatised after that event; it was hard for me to go back to the mosque and not seeing all these people around us. Another friend was critically injured and she will spend rest of her life in wheelchair. I feel so sorry for her too. It’s been a year but the memories are still fresh and alive. I want to thank to the people of New Zealand who supported us and showed their love and affection to our community. Without their support it would be even harder for us to go through. Thanks.  |
| Female | At the time of the attacks on the actual day, when I heard what was happening and why where I was working had to go into lockdown, I thought selfishly, “Oh no, not again. How can Christchurch be going through another traumatic vicious attack?” We’ve been through a lot here in Canterbury and Christchurch and it just felt like another layer of trauma was already being added to a community that had already been stretched thin and the capacity for people to be resilient and to bounce back from yet another layer caking of pain and grief I think has been tested and I think that what some folk in our community maybe have done as a result of the 15th March terror attacks is they have separated themselves and have said well that didn’t directly affect me and that has nothing to do with me. The other thing is I think maybe there’s more of an awareness within the community about Islam, it’s probably also made me really question why… why would someone do that? Pick on a particular group in that way? I just can’t wrap my head around it. Something we have to remember is we have to provide those people who experienced that massive trauma support and it’s not just going to be a quick fix band aid thing, for some people there are ongoing extensive injuries and emotional and mental support that they’re going to need and I just hope that our agencies and the community are prepared for those people needing that assistance.  |
| Female | One year ago, Christchurch and Aotearoa were changed forever when a man decided that he wanted to show that hatred exists here. His plan backfired. The people of Aotearoa, whether they were born here or not, decided they would not be divided but that they would instead unite around their shared humanity. While we learnt that even though we are geographically isolated, extremism and hateful ideologies can find their way here - we did not let that define who we are. In the face of coronavirus it is important to remind ourselves that fear is no reason for segregation. We are one community and we are at our very best when we embrace that. He waka eke noa. |
| Neha | Kia ora, my name is Neha Parajape. I currently live in London but grew up in and have family in Christchurch. I remember waking up to BBC headline last year, it said something about a terrorist attack in a mosque. What my eyes couldn’t believe was that it had happened at home in Christchurch. The headline and the details that followed left me feeling a riot of emotions - shock, sadness, and helplessness were only some of them. The only way that I was able to express the emotions I was feeling was through these words. I wrote this poem as a response to the attacks and feel it’s still relevant one year on. To Christchurch and its peopleToo many innocent lives lostToo many prayers left unansweredToo many people hurtToo many dreams shatteredSo much hate in the worldJust so much anger.How did it come to this? Is all of the world now in danger?The people of Christchurch, we like our red and black but not the red that comes with bloodstains, not the black that accompanies a terror attack. Christchurch will be back up thoughOnce again rising from the ashesOnce again our people will find that smile after we’ve wiped tears off each other’s eyelashes. Christchurch is my home as it is yoursI hope you all feel safe again albeit with horrific scars.I wish for this paradise to be beautiful againI hope you see your prayers weren’t in vain. Looking back now, I feel so much pride in the way in which the community rallied around those who needed the support. Watching the images and coverages from afar just showed to the world how compassionate, tolerant and closely knit we are as a community. I couldn’t be a more proud Cantabrian and Kiwi. Kia kaha Christchurch, ka kite anō.  |
| Nuha | As-salamu alaykum. My name is Nuha. I’m 22 years old and studying towards a double degree at the University of Canterbury. I’m on the Youth Council for Shakti Ōtautahi as well as a general executive member of the University of Canterbury Students’ Association for 2020. Ice cream is basically what I live off despite being lactose intolerant. I adore cats and I absolutely love going outside. On the 15th of March 2019, my love of being outside was stunted by the actions of one man and his agenda of hatred. Suddenly I was shut away and told by many to stay inside and to stay out of sight. I moved to Christchurch from Wellington at the end of summer 2016 to being my new and exciting student life away from home for the very first time. Even back then I didn’t really pay any mind to the dirty looks or the strange racial comments as I thought it would go away eventually. Little did I know that the covert racism had become my new normal along with the regular stresses of life. Have you ever been a cultural butt of a joke? Maybe at the receiving end of verbal abuse? Or even afraid for your life, purely based on your faith or what you look like. I never thought it would happen either, until it did on March 15th 2019. A year on and I still cry sometimes. I never used to cry easily prior to the attacks but it’s like the floodgates were opened and I’m struggling to close them again. I remember how close I was to going to Jumu’ah that Friday, only passing the mosque Al Noor the day before. Instead I stayed at university to listen to a lecture for a paper I didn’t even take. By God’s will I wasn’t meant to die that day but instead to be kept safe in a lecture about sociology in the city. I was lucky, but my workmate who I looked up to and 50 odd others really were not. New Zealand is not very big and everyone knew someone who was killed that day one way or another. I don’t particularly believe the attacks changed much about Christchurch. One view is that it took a tragedy to make people in Christchurch aware that it even had a Muslim community, let alone any minority community at all. The Muslim community was paid attention to by the majority as it would be a bad look otherwise. The events of 15th March still has a real effect on Muslim communities and for the majority, merely serves as a tragic passing conversation nowadays. The other view is that the events of the 15th really showed the true colours of the city, the humility and kind-heartedness of the people in Christchurch were a lifeline for the Muslim community and really helped us pull through. The attacks made me want to live. They made me want to prove myself and test my ability to help people. So many families and people helped my community and it’s only fair that we give back in any way possible. I decided to run for the UCSA as a way to help those around me start at university when my experience of the 15th started. I’m the first Muslim woman to be on the Student’s Association and I’m really proud to be in a position where I can represent the Muslim community in a small way and help spread the word of diversity and acceptance. A year later, the attacks made me ponder on this statement quite a lot: “They are us.” It makes me think about New Zealand’s racism issues and how, in a time of tragedy, a minority population was able to share the limelight with the majority for a while. It has made me think about how in a time of tragedy, the warm embrace of the city made Christchurch a little brighter. Finally, they are us makes me think if we are you now, who were we before the attacks on March 15th?  |
| Penelope | Hi this is Penelope Swales; I’m an Australian singer songwriter and I wrote this song ‘The Ides of March in Christchurch’ after the Christchurch massacre on 15th March 2019. There were three things I wanted to talk about in this song. The first part of the song deals with the event itself, it asks the question how do we get to this point in our society where something like this could happen. The next thing I wanted to talk about in this song was the political response and the contrast between Australia where Islamophobia has been exploited in a very cynical fashion for political gain for two decades or more. The contrast between that and the way political leadership dealt with it in New Zealand was very, very stark to me as an Australian. The whole country just seemed to rise up in this amazing and incredibly beautiful heartfelt sincere outpouring of grief and love and support and that’s the third thing I wanted to talk about, was that incredible outpouring of love. I’ve been absolutely delighted and feel really, really stoked and very privileged that Matiu Te Huki agreed to contribute to the song. I asked him to do some backing vocals but then he added in this beautiful chant at the end that I think just makes the whole song and it does embody that big, big heart that New Zealanders showed their Muslim population in the wake of… I’m not going to call it a tragedy, it’s an atrocity. In the wake of that atrocity.  |
|  | **MUSIC BY PENELOPE SWALES – THE IDES OF MARCH IN CHRISTCHURCH** |
| Shasha | My name is Shasha, I am a Muslim from Malaysia and the first time I came here I was so fear and petrified because I’ve never encountered such a tragedy because of what happened on 15 March but eventually I made it through because of the love that I received from New Zealanders. I would like to share, there is this one book called *All of this is for you: A little book of kindness* by Ruby Jones. In that book: “Stop, close your eyes, breathe, nothing is going to be perfect. There is no such thing but everything will be OK.” The book really soothed me to feel peace because everyone is so nice, everyone is so care for each other and the love that the Muslim community received here is so overwhelming.And I will also like to share a verse from the Qur’an, it is Surat Al-Hujurat, verse 13: “O mankind, we created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is knowing and acquainted.” So from this verse I know that there is no racism in Islam and we are taught that we are not supposed to hate each other and that is what I see in the multicultural here in New Zealand because Muslim is a minority and they do really take care of us since March 15 and I would like to thank you to all New Zealand people for having us as a family. Thank you so much. To all Muslims who were involved in the tragedy of 15 March, I hope Allah will heal you. You are the strongest person I have ever known and in’shallah, wherever you are I will pray that Allah will heal your soul and give you peace.  |
| Female | On the one hand, it’s been heartening to see the response of the New Zealand public and government and social services to the needs of Muslim people in Christchurch and beyond. I’ve been part of some initiatives which have sought to upskill teachers and how to better engage with culturally diverse, and in particular Muslim, families. But to be honest, it does feel a bit like lip service and too little too late. We need to acknowledge that New Zealand has a problem with racism, it’s all very well to say “This is not us” - but it is who we are. Every day, people of Muslim background and people of colour are being harassed and victimised in a variety of ways. Our media and government departments have been complicit in this by not calling out systemic discrimination. My hope is that a year later, now that all the hype has died down and we move on to the next media drama, that we as a nation have learnt something from this tragedy. That it is not that the enemy is out there, but that the enemy is also within ourselves and that we all have a part to play in combatting racism and terrorism. Instead we need to celebrate and value the diversity and identity of all New Zealanders no matter how long we have lived in this country.  |
| Male | Kia ora, my name is Shirish Parajape. I’m a resident of Ōtautahi Christchurch, a Justice of the Peace and a Community Board member. I have been fortunate enough to have travelled to 56 different countries, each one as diverse as the other. I always feel safer when I see less armed police. More police and more armed officers do not make one feel safer. On the contrary I, and I know many others, feel edgy if we see too many armed officers around us. In our cities the deployment of police helicopter both in 2019 and more recently has evoked mixed reactions from the local community. One year on it is time to reflect perhaps about what we need to do to ensure such incidents don’t happen in our community. How can we get back the Christchurch we all love? Kia kaha, Christchurch.  |
| Male | I suppose from my point of view it started with the earthquakes really because I chose to live in Christchurch and then the earthquake shattered all the visual part of it and then this idiot comes along and took away the soul of the place so I felt really shattered about that. Then I felt really angry that sort of stuff was actually… He brought into our community. It left me soulless for quite a long time and really sad what they’d done to Christchurch really and to the country. I was just in shock, I was just stunned like most of the country… just sort of like stunned and sort of stuck to think that someone from outside, not even living in Christchurch, had brought that into our community. The positive thing I found that gave me faith in New Zealand again, was the way our government handled things but also the way that the people handled things and said there isn’t any room for this rubbish. I was proud to be part of New Zealand. I don’t believe in segregation in that way so as far as I’m concerned we’re all New Zealanders and something has happened to New Zealanders that isn’t OK. People that live in New Zealand, they have a right to live with none of this prejudice rubbish.  |
| Victoria | Kia ora guys, my name is Victoria and I’m a New Zealand European or Pākehā. I’m 20 years old. One year after the mosque attacks it feels really weird just because time has gone so fast. To the Muslim community of Christchurch: I would want them to know that we all support them, that love from the community that they experienced directly after the mosque attacks is always there. They are part of Christchurch, they are an integral part of our community and they are so, so valued and I hope that they’re all doing well. I do wish them happiness. It would be nice if we could see the type of tolerance and patience and the love to the Muslim community in the rest of our community to start with. It really doesn’t take a lot to be kind and show love to someone in your everyday life. It’s not hard but I feel like Christchurch is such a busy city you know and we all kind of get wrapped up in our own lives and unfortunately it seems it takes a big event like this to actually bring us together and snap us out of it. It’s like after the earthquakes, for example, everyone was banding together and talking to each other and it was all kia kaha but then we kind of just slipped back into our old ways. And of course we can’t constantly be banding together like that, it’s just impractical, but it would be nice if some of those values translated a little more visibly into our everyday lives. It’s interesting how the attacks have changed Christchurch. This is my hometown and it feels like barely any time has passed since the attacks. I mean you still see the police hanging around with these gigantic guns, that was such a sight to get used to when I first saw it. It presents such a conflicting image to me because the police are someone who I generally have a lot of respect for and trust to keep us safe but seeing them with these gigantic guns, it’s such a contrasting image for me to try and look at. Yeah, I feel like we appreciate our Muslim community a little bit more. Like we’re a bit more aware of them which is really nice. It’s also kind of brought out opinions that people didn’t really talk about so much. When we all started having these conversations about gun control, I thought that any rational Kiwi would be like oh, these changes that the prime minister are bringing in are really good, they get their money back for the guns they hand in and no-one really needs a semi-automatic rifle like that. I just don’t think guns have a place in our society. They are tools not toys. So one year on from the attacks, it’s an event I still wish had never happened but it sparked some essential conversations that we need to have. Sending love to our Muslim community on the anniversary of this tragic event.  |
| Sally | These words conclude the reflections. You will have noticed the wide range of issues people chose to address. Some people talked of the positives to come out of the horror, most notably the aroha and solidarity demonstrated in the immediate aftermath of the attacks - which, it’s really, really reassuring to hear - is still very much the reality for some people. Contributors spoke of their pride in this response and a couple of non-Muslim contributors commented on the strength, grace and compassion of Christchurch’s Muslim communities and a message of peace in the face of such tragedy. Another noted positive was the increase in awareness of Islam and Muslims in Christchurch although as one person commented, why did we need a tragedy for this to occur? This question finds echo in many of the other themes: the undercurrent of racism in New Zealand. the realisation that the “enemy is in ourselves” as one person so eloquently put it, the rise of xenophobia and right wing populism globally, how racism colours our responses to contemporary events (people particularly pointed to the racial targeting which has developed alongside the spread of coronavirus). These views make us confront the reality that we still have a really long way to go to counter extreme ideologies. I’d like to thank Plains FM for the technical support putting this show together. I’d also like to thank everyone - and there were many of you that I knew about and doubtless many more - who shared the call for reflections with your networks. And most particularly, I’d like to thank everyone who submitted your thoughts. I know how difficult it was for you to put into words your feelings. Most, if not all of you, struggled to varying degrees. Sometimes it’s evident in your audio and sometimes I only noticed because you mentioned it when you sent your email to me. I also know how hard this task was because of the number of people who did not participate. Over the five weeks people could submit audio, I heard from dozens of people who appreciated the idea but who themselves were not willing to participate. People still feel too traumatised and the anniversary reopens these wounds. For some Muslims, anniversaries have little meaning because they remember their lost loved ones every day through prayer. Some people mentioned not being able to find the time or the headspace to sit down and think this through - which points to the emotional energy required to address this topic. Audio was also a barrier for some people, for example not knowing how to self-record or not liking the sound of their voice. But by far the majority of people declined to participate because they didn’t feel they were as badly affected as others. They may not be Muslim or they may not live in Christchurch, and as such they didn’t feel they should be talking about it, taking away space from those who might perhaps have greater need. My hope now, as Christchurch moves slowly forward, is that we all start to feel that we can talk about what happened on 15 March. How it has affected us personally and how it has affected and continues to affect our communities. The voices you’ve heard today - from different faiths, ages, geographic locations, ethnicities - demonstrate that the impacts of the attacks are diverse and wide-reaching and have in some way affected us all.  |