

Report to the Anglican Synod 2024

Waikato Hospital Chaplaincy

The past year has again been one of growth and change in the Chaplaincy Department and we are very thankful for the ongoing Anglican support of chaplaincy within the Waikato Region. The work of the Chaplains would be severely limited if it were not for the widespread support we receive both financially but also through volunteer chaplaincy assistants and by excellent Anglican church representation on our local chaplaincy committee. We are humbled by, and appreciative of, the consistent support generously given from the Anglican Synod in all these areas that enables the Chaplaincy team to serve and care for so many in their worst days and times.

The diverse ministry of hospital chaplaincy to people of all faiths and those of no faith continues with an ongoing increase in establishing deep and meaningful relationship with other health care professionals, which in turn has increased access for our Chaplains, understanding and use of our services and opened up more opportunities to contribute to discussions on policy and at managerial level. We continue to be grateful for the degree to which patients, whānau and staff, from such a wide variety of backgrounds, will turn to and trust Chaplaincy for spiritual care and support in the midst of their great challenges and vulnerability.

Over the past year we have consolidated our new Team with the appointment recently of a new Locum and with Rev Paul Weeding, one of our part-time Chaplains, also coming on board as needed as a locum. Additionally we were delighted to be able to welcome back a few more of our pre-Covid Volunteer Chaplaincy Assistants and to again be able to recruit for a new intake of Trainees. We had a good response to the call for applicants but in the end had a small group of five who were available to continue with the Training. Rev Paul Weeding took the lead in organizing the ten week Training Course but all Chaplains and some of our Volunteers were also involved on a week by week basis. Our new cohort are now on the Wards visiting and bring our total number of VCA's working across Waikato, Taumaranui and Thames Hospitals to 20. Rev. Heather Major has been involved in a number of initiatives, both locally and nationally. The giving out of free muffins to whanau on one of the childrens wards at Waikato has been received very positively by staff and families and led to a number of referrals for ongoing support. At a national level Heather was involved with others in putting together the guidelines for chaplains issued by ICHC regarding Assisted dying. Also at a regional and local level she has been instrumental in helping Christian medics, nurses and allied health professionals to gather together for fellowship and support.

This year has also seen periods where the Team and Locums have been under immense pressure due to the extra responsibilities placed on our two Lead Chaplains and the usual illnesses and leave. Amidst all the pressure, at the heart of the work of Chaplaincy is the care of patients and staff, tempered by the need for self-care within the Team, and this remains the calling and duty of all Chaplaincy service. One area that has provided ongoing debate and concern has been the operation of our Sunday Services since their re-start. After trialing various options, surveying all the chaplains and locums and some robust

discussion around the best way forward a decision was made to adjust how we offer Sunday services. The services are ecumenical, allowing each chaplain on duty to lead the service in whichever is their tradition but still putting a priority on meeting the needs of patients and public who come to the service and the opportunity for local school students and church groups to come along and be involved. In particular we would like to thank students and chaplains of St Peter's School, St Paul's Collegiate and Waikato Diocesan School for girls for their ongoing support. It's a great opportunity for the students to be involved in the mission and ministry of the chaplaincy.

The Team report that relationships and inclusion of Chaplains continues to improve and these improved working relationships, with ICU, ED and the mental health teams in particular, are very beneficial. In all of their efforts to develop and progress Chaplaincy services within the Hospital, the Team have been most grateful for the on-going support and commitment of their DHB Manager, Renee Sharp, and her team, with whom the Chaplaincy Team work closely. This year Pastor Sonny Poutapu and Pastor Brian Ludlow, our Co-lead Chaplains, have been able to meet with Renee weekly and this has been very helpful and much appreciated.

The Team continue to be well supported by our Local Chaplaincy Committee, Friends of Hospital Chaplaincy (FOHC), who enable us to link more effectively with local churches and the wider community. We are grateful for all who partake in this challenging and rewarding ministry freely sharing their time and their many gifts and talents. We are always open to exploring God's calling with those who feel this might be an area for them. FOHC have been able to support the Chaplains this year by continuing to provide uniform items for all the Chaplains and Locums (the summer shorts were very much appreciated), and shirts for our new VCA's, which helps to create a visible and professional profile. Friends also very kindly renewed a paid subscription to Zoom so that the Chaplaincy Team are able to hold remote meetings without time limits. In late August 2023 FOHC, in conjunction with the Anglican Cathedral Choir and the Hamilton Community Gospel Choir hosted a fundraising choral event to support Chaplaincy which was very successful and enjoyable and there are already plans underway for another concert in October 2024. Friends also offered ongoing support by purchasing small items, such as a speaker and microphone for meetings online, as well as providing catering for team Hui and special events.

On the national level, ICHC has involved more of the Chaplains in policy making and Pastor Sonny Poutapu especially, and more recently Pastor Brian Ludlow, have been invited to participate in some of these policy committees. Pastor Sonny has given considerable time and energy as the Chairperson of the Maori caucus of ICHC. The Nga Puna Ora group brief was to provide expert advice regarding Tikanga/Kawa, Maori Spirituality and more, in all aspects of Te Ao Maori. Currently he is working on the development of the Toolbox of Competency Skills and with the Values Working Group inputting Maori values and responses into all ICHC documents e.g. ICHC Values and Vision. Pastor Brian was invited to join a four-person group to participate in the development of a People and Culture Strategy for ICHC. The Team are pleased to report that the structures of ICHC have continued to be stable and supportive and we are also most appreciative for the assistance during the year from both our Regional Manager, Matiu Best and from David Hough, ICHC Manager.

Going forward the Chaplains hope to continue to enhance the relationships they have been trying to build and are excited to continue to find innovative ways to minister within the Waikato region. In all our endeavors we are truly most appreciative and grateful for the support of the Anglican Church. We greatly value all referrals from ministry units and seek to offer the best pastoral and spiritual care possible.

Ngā mihi nui
The Chaplains of Waikato