



Chaplain Bronwyn with a patient.

# Heartfelt

SUPPORTER NEWSLETTER

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## MAKING SPACE FOR JOY THANKS TO YOU

Hospitals are places we often associate with difficulty — uncertainty, illness, and hard decisions. Yet, every day, moments of extraordinary care and quiet joy happen within those walls.

Recently, I was deeply moved by two such moments. One was a small hospital wedding, lovingly arranged so a young patient could marry her partner while surrounded by those who mattered most.

Another is seen in the simple, uplifting visits of a volunteer and her care dog, bringing comfort, smiles and a welcome sense of normality to patients and staff alike.

These moments may look very different, but they share something important in common: they remind us that compassion can transform even the hardest situations. They show how presence, kindness and creativity can create space for love, connection and even joy.

Most importantly, these moments are made possible by you. Your support ensures chaplains and volunteers can be there — ready to respond, to care, and to walk alongside people when it matters most.

Thank you for helping bring light into difficult places.

### Barry Fisk

CEO, Hospital Chaplaincy Aotearoa



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# Love in Action - Made Possible by You

## BECAUSE YOU CARE, PRECIOUS MOMENTS ARE NOT LOST

**Sometimes chaplaincy creates moments that feel quietly extraordinary — moments where compassion, care and community come together at exactly the right time.**

Brian, one of our hospital chaplains, was contacted by a doctor about a young patient who had recently received devastating news and had been given a very limited time to live. Just weeks earlier, she had welcomed a baby into the world.

Amid the shock and uncertainty, one wish stood out clearly: she wanted to marry her partner.

**What followed was a beautiful example of what becomes possible when people are supported to respond with heart.**

Brian worked alongside hospital staff, the patient's family and a local minister to organise a small wedding ceremony in the hospital chapel. Flowers were arranged through the hospital florist and a hospital photographer offered to capture the day.

The ceremony itself was simple and deeply moving. The family later shared how much it meant to see faith expressed in such practical, tangible ways — **love made visible through action.**



Chaplain Brian



The patient on her wedding day.

Moments like this don't happen by accident. They are made possible because chaplains are present and available to respond when people are navigating life's most fragile chapters.

Brian continued to visit and support the young woman as her journey unfolded beyond that single, significant day. Reflecting on the experience, he notes that moments like this reveal the true heart of chaplaincy — not just responding to a moment, but faithfully walking alongside people through their most difficult times.

**Your support and generosity help make compassion visible in moments like these. Because of you, chaplains are able to respond with time, care and creativity. You help ensure that dignity, hope and connection remain present, even in life's hardest chapters.**

## FEEDBACK CORNER



A message from a Nursing team:  
I wish to express my sincere thanks to moi who attended a difficult event in ED this week.

He was incredibly kind, calm and helpful when assisting with the care of a distressed family and provided much comfort to them.

Please pass on my gratitude on behalf of our ED team.

A message to Tauranga Hospital Chaplaincy Team:

Please pass on my thanks to members of the chaplaincy team.

Joe\* was blessed and uplifted by your many visits during his time in hospital. Myself and my children took great comfort in the ministry and care given to us. The Sunday service in the chapel will live in our memory forever. God bless you all.

\* Name changed to protect identity

# ♥ You helped bring comfort through remembrance

## MOMENTS OF REFLECTION, REMEMBRANCE AND PEACE

**Across hospitals around the country, Easter and Anzac services created meaningful opportunities for patients, whānau and staff to pause, reflect and connect.**

At Whangārei Hospital, a series of Easter services were held in the chapel, welcoming staff, patients and whānau across several gatherings.

Each service provided a quiet space for reflection, with time to light candles, sit in silence and pray for loved ones carrying heavy burdens. These simple but meaningful moments offered comfort, hope and a sense of connection during what can often be a difficult time.



Whangārei Hospital Chapel



Poppies at the Burwood Hospital Anzac Remembrance Service

At Burwood Hospital, the Anzac service once again drew the largest congregation of the year. One attendee, wearing medals carefully arranged by family, was deeply moved as he took part — a powerful reminder of the personal significance of remembrance. Poppies were shared for people to write the names of loved ones who have served, with many choosing to take them away.

A nearby space for prayer for peace continues to welcome people of all faiths and none, with handmade peace cranes offered as symbols of hope and sparking thoughtful conversations.

These moments are made possible through chaplaincy — and through your support, helping create spaces for reflection, remembrance and peace.

## A LITTLE PAW-SITIVITY GOES A LONG WAY!



Volunteer Chaplaincy Assistant Lesley and her care dog, Lexi, regularly visit the Taupo Hospital inpatient unit to spend time with both patients and staff. These visits bring a special kind of comfort — a wagging tail, a gentle presence, and a moment of lightness in what can often be a challenging environment.

For patients, time with Lexi can ease anxiety, lift spirits and provide a welcome distraction from treatment. For staff, it offers a brief pause to reset and recharge. The response is always positive and often lasting, with some patients and staff even keeping dog treats in their pockets in eager anticipation of Lexi's visits!

Thanks to the support of generous donors, volunteer companions like Lesley — and meaningful interactions like these — are made possible, bringing moments of connection, joy and care to those who need it most.

# BEING THERE WHEN IT MATTERS MOST

## Meet Chaplain Bronwyn Owens

**For almost two years, Bronwyn has been a hospital chaplain at Auckland Hospital, bringing calm, compassion and presence to people experiencing some of life's most profound moments.**

Before stepping into hospital chaplaincy, she spent seven years working as a pastor — experience that continues to shape the way she listens, supports and cares for others.

One of the most rewarding parts of Bronwyn's role is the sheer variety of people she meets.

**“Every day is different. You never quite know who you'll encounter or what their story will be.”**

That diversity is at the heart of chaplaincy, where no two conversations — or days — are the same.

For Bronwyn, being present is central to her work. **“Sometimes people won't remember what you said,”** she reflects, **“but they will remember that you were there.”** In moments of crisis, grief or uncertainty, that presence can offer comfort beyond words. The ability to listen deeply and sit with people, without needing to fix or explain, is one of the most important skills a chaplain brings.

Over recent months, Bronwyn has had the privilege of walking alongside families at incredibly tender times. In one case, she was called to support a family grieving the loss of their baby. She was mindful to honour both faith and cultural traditions as she spent time with parents and extended family, offering prayers, quiet presence and respectful gestures that recognised what was meaningful to them. Despite the sadness, she describes it as a deeply special and sacred moment.



On another occasion, Bronwyn supported parents whose child was critically unwell.

At their request, she prayed for their child and stayed with the family for several hours as doctors came and went and difficult decisions were made. Surrounded by photos celebrating their child's life, she remained alongside them, offering steady support during an unimaginable goodbye.

Experiences like these highlight both the privilege and emotional weight of chaplaincy. One of Bronwyn's biggest challenges is remembering to care for herself, particularly after days filled with loss and intensity.

**“It's important to acknowledge the impact of what we witness, and to make space to recharge so we can continue to show up fully for others.”**

Bronwyn wishes more people understood how varied and vital chaplaincy is. **“We're here for you,”** she says, **“no matter what is happening.”**

To our supporters, her message is simple and heartfelt: **“A huge thank you. Your contribution helps make a difference in so many lives.”**