



**Hospital Chaplaincy**

AMOKAPUA HOHIPERA

AOTEAROA

# IMPACT REPORT

## 2024-2025

# Tēnā koutou katoa

It is our pleasure to present the 2024/2025 annual report of Hospital Chaplaincy Aotearoa.

We work in partnership with nine church denominations to provide chaplaincy services to hospitals across Aotearoa New Zealand in co-operation with Health NZ | Te Whatu Ora.

This Annual Report covers our financial year 1 July 2024 - 30 June 2025.

## **Charity Registration Number**

CC 21346

(Legal name: The Interchurch Council of Hospital Chaplaincy).

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## **Cover photo:**

Vanessa and her son Noël with Chaplain Wendy who supported them during a challenging hospital stay. Their story is featured on page 16.

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## BOARD CHAIR'S REPORT

Tenā koutou katoa.

**It is my privilege to present to you the 2024–2025 Annual Impact Report of Hospital Chaplaincy Aotearoa.**

This has been a year of both challenge and change. Across the health system, rising demand and increasing complexity have placed immense pressure on patients, whānau, and staff. In this context, the need for chaplaincy is more evident than ever, as we continue to provide compassionate spiritual care in times of deep uncertainty.

This year also marked an important milestone with our rebrand to Hospital Chaplaincy Aotearoa and the introduction of a refreshed visual identity. These changes strengthen our visibility across the health sector and help us connect more meaningfully with those we serve.

The Board continues to focus on sustainability, ensuring that our services are secure and resilient for the future.

Chaplaincy must be equipped to meet both current and emerging needs, and we remain committed to providing strategic oversight so that chaplains are well supported in their vital work.

On behalf of the Board, I extend my heartfelt thanks to all who contribute to this mission: Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora, our denominational partners, local churches, donors, funders, chaplains, volunteers, administrative staff, and our national leadership team. Each plays a crucial role in sustaining hospital chaplaincy.

Looking ahead, there is no doubt that new challenges will arise. Yet I remain confident that, with the strength of our partnerships and the dedication of our people, we will continue to offer hope, dignity, and compassionate presence to those who need it most.

Ngā mihi nui

**Loraine Elliott**  
Board Chair

“ **Our rebrand to Hospital Chaplaincy Aotearoa strengthens our visibility across the health sector and helps us connect more meaningfully with those we serve.** ”

# CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

**We live in times of economic, physical, and emotional pressures. Nowhere is this more evident than in our hospitals, where patients and whānau face health challenges alongside the wider stresses of daily life. Our chaplains and volunteers provide care, compassion, and a listening ear, helping people feel supported and valued during difficult moments.**

I experienced this first-hand during a recent stay in my local hospital. The warmth of our chaplains, alongside the dedication of nurses, doctors, healthcare assistants, and support staff, reminded me how much difference holistic care makes.

Supporting our chaplains to do their best work is central to our mission. This includes professional development, guidance through challenging events, and encouragement as they accompany patients through their most vulnerable moments. Their work requires strength, empathy, and faith—and it is a privilege to witness the difference they make every day.

We are proud to have chaplains in 39 hospitals nationwide, supported by Volunteer Chaplains, Chapel Assistants, faith community visitors, and our Catholic chaplaincy colleagues.

Together, they provide spiritual and emotional care that respects all cultures, beliefs, and backgrounds.

Despite financial pressures, our Fundraising and Partnerships programme continues to make a real impact. Initiatives such as the Heart & Soul Partnership strengthen links with local churches, while donor and community support helps sustain our services.

The true reward of our work comes in the words of patients and families, who tell us that the presence of a chaplain made a profound difference in their journey. It is these voices that remind us why chaplaincy is so essential.

Finally, I wish to thank our Board, and especially our Chair, Loraine Elliott, for their leadership and guidance throughout the year. Their commitment ensures we remain strong, resilient, and ready to meet the challenges ahead.



**Barry Fisk**  
Chief Executive



“**The true reward of our work is seen in the moments when a patient expresses that our presence has made a meaningful difference in their experience.**”

# OUR BOARD

## Trustees

**Loraine Elliott** - Board Chair  
**Reverend Julian Perkins**  
**Mrs Julie Patterson**  
**Mr Stephen Packer**  
**Major Shaun Baker**  
**Mrs Colleen Kaye**  
**Chaplain Ants Haws**  
**Mr John Cavanagh**  
**Catherine Tupou** - Deputy Chair  
**Reverend Dr Mary Caygill**  
**Reverend Dr John Douglas**

## Representing

Roman Catholic Church of New Zealand  
Anglican Church in Aotearoa and Polynesia  
Roman Catholic Church of New Zealand  
Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand  
The Salvation Army, New Zealand, Fiji, Tonga & Samoa Territory  
Independent  
ACTS Churches New Zealand  
Independent  
Wesleyan Methodist Church of Aotearoa New Zealand  
The Methodist Church of New Zealand - Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa  
Baptist Churches of New Zealand - Ko Ngā Hāhi Iriiri o Aotearoa

# OUR MANAGEMENT

**Barry Fisk**  
**David Hough**  
**Rev. Linda Flett**  
**Rev. Matiu Best**  
**Rev. Jeannine Epplett**  
**Rev. Sandra Wright-Taylor**  
**Tony Lenton**

Chief Executive  
National Operations Manager  
Regional Manager - Northern  
Regional Manager - Te Manawa Taki (Midland)  
Regional Manager - Central  
Regional Manager - Te Waipounamu  
Senior Catholic Chaplain

# ABOUT US

**Our story began in 1972, when nine church denominations joined forces at the request of the Prime Minister to create a national hospital chaplaincy service within the public health system. The Interchurch Advisory Committee on Hospital Chaplaincy (ICAC) was formed in partnership with the Department of Health to make this vision a reality.**

As our work and responsibilities expanded, ICAC evolved into the Interchurch Council for Hospital Chaplaincy (IHC) in 1993. In November 2024, we rebranded as Hospital Chaplaincy Aotearoa to better reflect our national role and commitment to serving all people in Aotearoa New Zealand. Today, we have 92 chaplains serving in 39 hospitals across Aotearoa New Zealand.

Our chaplains are here for everyone—offering care, a listening ear, and spiritual support to people of all religious backgrounds, faith traditions, belief systems, ethnicities, genders, and sexual orientations.

Hospital Chaplaincy Aotearoa's work is made possible through funding from Health NZ, contributions from church denominations and local congregations, as well as the generosity of individual donors and community funders.



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AOTEAROA

## OUR NEW VISUAL IDENTITY

With our transition to Hospital Chaplaincy Aotearoa, we have refreshed our logo and visual identity to reflect who we are today. This modern update strengthens our visibility and accessibility, making it easier for people to recognise and connect with our services.

The new logo features a stylised design of two outstretched arms—an open invitation to all who seek comfort, support, and spiritual care. The arms form a gesture of welcome and embrace, symbolising how we stand alongside people from every background in times of need. At the centre, the cross signifies both the healthcare setting in which we serve and our Christian foundations.

### Our Purpose:

- To provide hospitals with Christian chaplains who offer quality holistic spiritual and pastoral care for all.

### Our Values:

COMPASSION



RESPECT



SERVICE





# OUR MAHI - WHAT WE DO

Hospital Chaplaincy Aotearoa chaplains work alongside healthcare teams to support the spiritual and emotional wellbeing of patients, their whānau (families), and hospital staff. Illness and stress touch every part of a person's life—not just their body. Our role is to make sure the spiritual side of health is recognised and cared for, helping people find strength, hope, and resilience during challenging times.

Our approach is grounded in the Māori health model Te Whare Tapa Whā, which understands wellbeing as four connected dimensions: whānau (family), tinana (physical), hinengaro (mental), and wairua (spiritual). Like the four walls of a Wharenui (meeting house), each part is essential—when one is weak, the whole structure is affected.

Chaplains are an active part of the hospital team, responding to referrals and joining multidisciplinary meetings so spiritual needs are included in care planning. Their work ranges from one-on-one visits and listening support, to leading services, blessings, prayers, and other meaningful rituals. These moments offer comfort, connection, and a sense of peace for people facing uncertainty or loss.

Supporting our chaplains is a dedicated group of Voluntary Chaplaincy Assistants (VCAs).



## At a Glance

- **Who we support:** Patients, whānau (families), and hospital staff.
- **Our focus:** Spiritual and emotional care—often the missing piece in healthcare.
- **Our guide:** The Māori health model Te Whare Tapa Whā, which balances physical, mental, spiritual, and family wellbeing.
- **What we do:**
  - One-on-one visits for listening, comfort, and support
  - Blessings, prayers, communion, and chapel services
  - Input into multidisciplinary care
- **Our team:** Professional chaplains and trained Voluntary Chaplaincy Assistants
- **Our impact:** Helping people find strength, hope, and peace during illness, loss, and change.



# OUR MAHI - WHERE WE WORK

## Northern Region

Whangarei Hospital  
Auckland City Hospital  
Middlemore Hospital  
North Shore Hospital  
Waitakere Hospital  
Mason Clinic  
Buchanan Clinic  
Te Whetu Tawera

## Te Manawa Taki Region

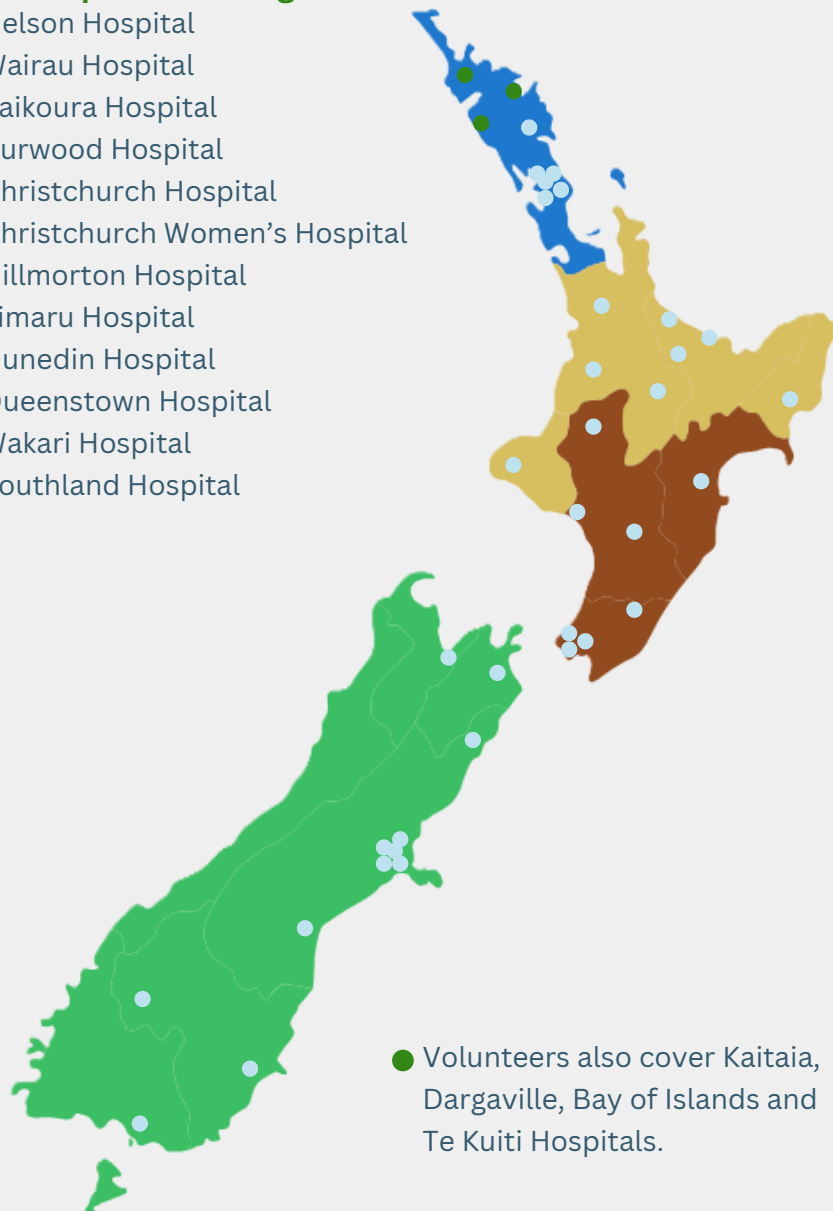
Waikato Hospital  
Tauranga Hospital  
Whakatane Hospital  
Gisborne Hospital  
Rotorua Hospital  
Taupo Hospital  
Taumaranui Hospital  
Taranaki Base Hospital  
Hawera Hospital

## Central Region

Hawke's Bay Hospital  
Whanganui Hospital  
Wairarapa Hospital  
Palmerston North Hospital  
Kenepuru Hospital  
Wellington Hospital  
Hutt Hospital

## Te Waipounamu Region

Nelson Hospital  
Wairau Hospital  
Kaikoura Hospital  
Burwood Hospital  
Christchurch Hospital  
Christchurch Women's Hospital  
Hillmorton Hospital  
Timaru Hospital  
Dunedin Hospital  
Queenstown Hospital  
Wakari Hospital  
Southland Hospital



# BY THE NUMBERS

## YEAR IN REVIEW 2024-25

### OUR IMPACT



101,101



16,191



14,114

131,406  
TOTAL VISITS

The figures below indicate **personal** rituals which include, Blessings, Prayer, Communion, Baptisms/Dedications etc...  
Over 17,296 other hospital **community** activities were also undertaken, including public chapel services and blessings of hospital rooms and equipment.

### OUR ACTIVITIES



38,254



5,269



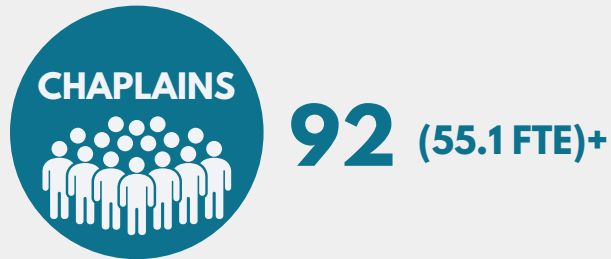
2,655

46,178  
TOTAL RITUALS



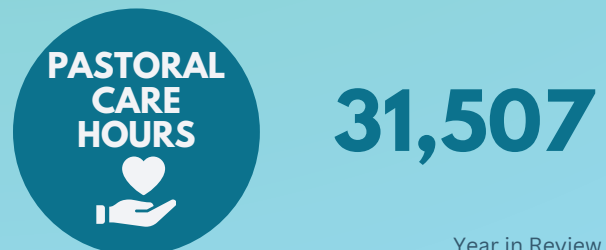
**Hospital Chaplaincy**  
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## OUR PEOPLE



+ The 92 chaplains  
comprise 64  
Ecumenical and 28  
Catholic chaplains.

## OUR COLLABORATION



# FINDING STRENGTH IN GENTLE SUPPORT

## VERA'S STORY

When Vera\* arrived at hospital, she had just received devastating news: there were no further treatment options for her illness. At 82, she was fiercely independent, accustomed to managing on her own, and determined not to become a burden on others. The prospect of needing additional care was overwhelming, and she was deeply unsettled by the uncertainty that lay ahead.

Doctors suggested palliative care or a hospital bed at home. Or possibly even a move to residential care. For Vera, who valued her independence above all else, these were daunting possibilities.

At first, she resisted support. She did not want to engage with social workers, nor admit how much she was struggling. Yet when she met with a hospital chaplain, she began to open up.

The chaplain's role was not to provide solutions, but to be present: to listen, to hold silence, and to offer a safe space in which Vera could express her fears. Over time, this steady, respectful presence allowed her to speak more openly.

One day, she said quietly, *"I keep calling out to God, but I don't get an answer."* That admission became a turning point. Together, Vera and her chaplain explored how she might reconnect with the spiritual practices that had sustained her in the past. She began to return to her prayer routines, draw strength from the Psalms, and rebuild her ties with her church community.

Gradually, Vera also found the confidence to make important decisions about her care. She worked through an advance plan, which provided clarity and gave her a renewed sense of control. She was able to talk more openly about her fears, consider short-term respite care, and accept the support that was available to her.

**"You didn't force me into anything, but helped me be brave enough to use my faith."**

Chaplain Lizzie reflects on their time together: *"Vera taught me the importance of patience and trust. She needed space to rediscover her own strength, and my role was simply to walk beside her until she was ready. Seeing her regain peace and confidence reminded me that chaplaincy is not about fixing problems, but about offering presence, compassion, and respect."*

Vera's story illustrates that by offering consistent, compassionate presence, chaplains enable patients to find strength, dignity, and peace during some of the most vulnerable moments of their lives.

\* Name changed to protect identity



# CHAPLAIN LIZZIE SNOWSILL

## WAIRARAPA HOSPITAL

With 13 years of experience as a chaplain, Lizzie serves at Wairarapa Hospital, offering compassionate spiritual and pastoral care to patients, whānau, and staff. As an ordained Anglican minister, she finds deep fulfillment in creating space for spiritual nourishment and walking alongside people as they navigate life's deepest questions.

Lizzie believes that offering pastoral support in a setting that many find overwhelming is especially important. She values and respects the diversity of faith, belief, and ethnicity within the hospital, ensuring that everyone feels heard and supported—no matter their background.

Her work requires perseverance, a sustained presence, and an open heart—qualities that allow her to meet people exactly where they are.

**“We are more than body, brain and breath. Our physiology is what we are made of, but it’s not all of who we are. My role is to help people who want to regain some holistic balance of who they are.”**

One of the many lives she has touched is that of a man who, after losing close family members in a tragic accident, found new hope and purpose through his church community. Now an active landscape gardener, his story is a testament to the power of connection and healing.



Another memorable story is that of Vera, an elderly patient who was withdrawn, lonely, and deeply anxious during her hospital stay. Lizzie spent time sitting with her, listening without judgment, and gently encouraging her to reconnect with the things that gave her meaning. Slowly, Vera began to open up.

For Lizzie, witnessing this transformation was profoundly rewarding. **“It wasn’t about fixing anything, but about being present, showing care, and helping her rediscover her own strength.”**

Lizzie wishes more people understood the inclusivity of chaplaincy—it's all about working alongside religious and cultural groups throughout the region, regardless of their faith background.

**“I encourage everyone to 'gossip the good news' about the impact chaplains can have, ensuring that those in need receive the care and recognition they deserve.”**

For Lizzie, being a chaplain is a profound privilege—walking alongside people in their most vulnerable moments, offering hope, comfort, and a reminder that they are not alone.

# CHAPLAINCY IN MENTAL HEALTH CARE

## Spiritual Care at the Heart of Recovery

**Mental health care is about far more than treatment plans and medication—it's also about restoring hope, dignity, and a sense of belonging.**

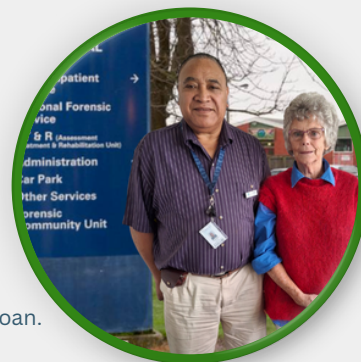
In hospital settings, where people may be experiencing times of distress, stigma, or isolation, chaplains bring a unique kind of support. By offering time, presence, and spiritual care, chaplains help patients, whānau, and staff feel seen and valued – regardless of their beliefs, background, or culture. Their role is to remind people that they are more than their illness, walking alongside them as they navigate some of life's hardest questions.

### Our Work in Mental Health Facilities

While chaplains sometimes meet people facing mental health challenges in general hospital wards, some of the most consistent and meaningful support takes place within dedicated mental health facilities. In these settings, where recovery is often a longer journey, chaplains have the privilege of building trust over time.

### Hillmorton Hospital - Christchurch

The chaplaincy team is an integral part of everyday care within Hillmorton's specialist forensic mental health unit. Chaplains Joan and Tavake play a vital role in supporting the *wairua* (spiritual wellbeing) of consumers, providing support during times of emotional distress, grief, and uncertainty.



Chaplains Tavake and Joan.

Through their presence, Joan and Tavake help people explore meaning, identity, and connection—elements that are often central to recovery and resilience.

*"It's great having the chaplains on site. They often come over at short notice to see our people, and the consumers really appreciate having someone spend the time with them."*

— Nurse, Hillmorton Hospital

*"The chaplains working across our service provide great continuity for consumers. They are able to request a visit whatever ward they are on. For families of long-term consumers, the chaplains can provide a lot of comfort throughout the patient journey."*

— Sharon King, Programme Coordinator

Joan and Tavake's work as hospital chaplains is a quiet but powerful force within Hillmorton Hospital. Their contribution strengthens the spiritual and cultural foundations of mental health care, ensuring that *wairua* is not only acknowledged - but actively supported - as part of the healing journey.



# CHAPLAINCY IN MENTAL HEALTH CARE

continued

## Mason Clinic - Auckland

Mason Clinic is a specialist forensic psychiatric 126-bed secure hospital, which works with some of the most vulnerable people in our society. People supported here may be navigating multiple challenges, such as mental distress, cognitive difficulties, substance use, and the impacts of trauma or social disadvantage. They have all come into contact with the criminal justice system most often for serious acts of violence.

The Mason Clinic is divided into eight units, each comprising of a unique community. It has an over representation of both Māori (approximately 50%) and Pacific peoples (approximately 25%).

It is a highly structured environment where people may sometimes feel reduced to labels or circumstances. Here, chaplains play an important role in affirming each person's humanity and worth.

Programme Coordinator Wayne Forsyth explains: *“Chaplaincy support is an integral part of the care provided for whaiora at Mason Clinic and helps us uphold the DUNDRUM cultural and spiritual pillar that guides our practice.”*

Chaplains Allan and Halamehi provide weekly services across the eight units, as well as individual consultations.

Their “open door” approach is warmly embraced by whaiora from all faith traditions and backgrounds, who value the chaplains’ guidance, acceptance, and non-judgmental presence.



Through quiet conversations, shared reflection, and spiritual practices, they offer reassurance and connection in what can often be a highly complex and challenging environment.

Brian McKenna, Associate Clinical Director for Improvement, emphasises the importance of the chaplaincy service; *“The spiritual needs of these people are immense, though the ability to explore this dimension requires the building of trust. The pastoral encounter creates a centre of calmness by building connections which uplift and restore hope.”*

Across both Hillmorton Hospital and the Mason Clinic, chaplains play a vital role in supporting the spiritual and emotional wellbeing of whaiora. Through quiet presence, compassion, and hope, they remind us that true healing embraces the whole person—body, mind, spirit, and community.

“Look to the horizon, the morning sun is rising, emerging from the ocean. Don’t be afraid to take one day at a time, one step, one kind word at a time. The sun will rise.”

A metaphor for wellness, Chaplain Allan Hawea

# A QUIET ANCHOR IN THE STORM

## VANESSA AND NOËL'S STORY

Vanessa had long dreamed of becoming a mother. Her son, Noël, was her “miracle baby”, conceived through IVF after a challenging fertility journey. But at just 26 weeks, Vanessa’s pregnancy took a frightening turn.

Diagnosed with severe pre-eclampsia, she was urgently transferred from her home in Palmerston North to Wellington Hospital. Doctors warned that without immediate delivery, she risked having a stroke. Noël was born at just 27 weeks, weighing 634 grams. He spent more than two months in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), fighting to grow strong enough to survive.

With her partner at home much of the time, caring for a family member, Vanessa faced the uncertainty largely alone. Isolated and overwhelmed, she met Chaplain Wendy.

Wendy first visited Vanessa on the ward, before Noël was born, and then continued supporting her through the many difficult days that followed. In the midst of the stress and fear of a premature birth, chaplaincy provided a lifeline.

**“She wasn’t there to preach or push anything—she just gave me space to breathe, talk, and feel like a normal mum,”** Vanessa said.

Their conversations ranged from grief and uncertainty to light-hearted topics that offered a moment of escape. On particularly tough days, Wendy’s quiet gestures—like bringing a chia pudding from the café—helped Vanessa feel seen and cared for.

This year, Wendy and Vanessa were reunited. Seeing Noël now—a happy, thriving little boy—was a powerful reminder of the essential role chaplains play in the hospital setting.

As the healthcare environment continues to grow in complexity and demand, so too does the need for the unique, compassionate presence of hospital chaplains. Ongoing support is essential to ensure chaplains can continue walking alongside patients, families and staff through their most challenging moments.

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**“It’s a service of humanity and connection and it’s vital to all of us to have that safe space and to know that the support is available to anyone.”**

– Vanessa



Vanessa and Noël

# CELEBRATING OUR VOLUNTEERS

**Voluntary Chaplaincy Assistants (VCAs) are at the heart of our work, extending the reach of chaplaincy so that more patients, whānau, and staff can experience care and compassion when they need it most.**

VCAs work closely with chaplains in hospitals, offering a listening ear, quiet presence, and spiritual support. Their contribution helps ensure that the emotional and spiritual needs of people are not overlooked, but met with dignity, respect, and empathy.

Becoming a VCA is a significant journey of learning and service. After a careful selection process, new volunteers complete around 30 hours of initial training, covering pastoral care, listening skills, communication, and cultural awareness. This is followed by a 12-month period of practical training under the guidance of experienced chaplains. On completion, VCAs are commissioned in a special service that acknowledges their dedication and commitment.

VCAs continue to take part in ongoing development to strengthen their skills and respond to the changing needs of hospital communities.

We are deeply thankful for the generosity of time, energy, and heart that our VCAs bring. Their selfless service makes a real difference, offering encouragement and companionship to people facing difficult moments.

## A JOURNEY OF SERVICE

When Damian first stepped into the role of Voluntary Chaplaincy Assistant (VCA) in Rotorua, it wasn't by her own choosing. "My husband recommended it, and I had promised to follow whatever volunteer role he suggested when we moved here. I was reluctant, but I had to honour the promise."

What began with hesitation has grown into a deeply meaningful calling. For Damian, the most rewarding part of being a VCA is experiencing the graces of humility and compassion, which deepen with every patient interaction. Listening is at the heart of her work—paying close attention to subtle cues from patients, and being open to the quiet influence of God in each encounter.

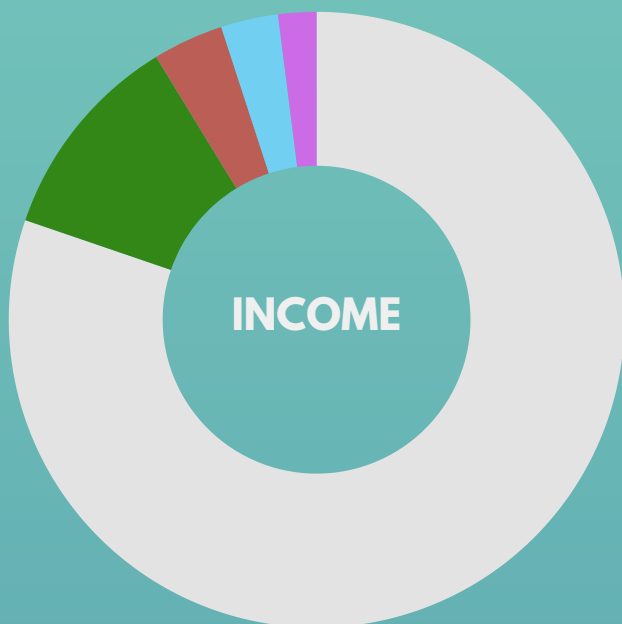
One of Damian's most memorable journeys was walking alongside a young woman with Crohn's disease over the course of a year, sharing both suffering and hope.

She wishes more people understood that chaplaincy is about simple but profound presence—offering compassion and a listening ear, a safe place where patients can speak freely without fear of repercussions.

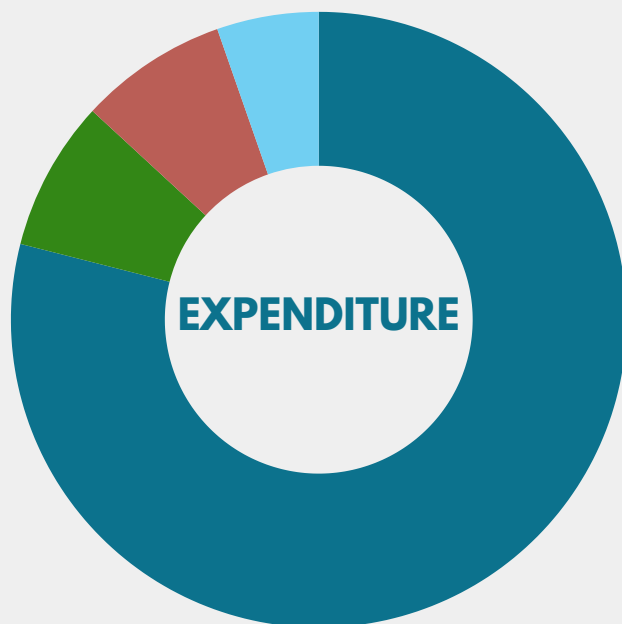
"My role is to listen and be present, giving patients a safe space to be themselves."



# FUNDING



Government Grants	\$4,326,850
Church Funding	\$593,579
Donations/Grants	\$227,591
Other	\$163,961
Interest	\$100,081
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$5,412,022</b>



Service Delivery	\$4,319,411
Catholic Contribution	\$431,174
National Operations	\$426,033
Overheads	\$292,964
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$5,469,582</b>

The audited financial statements of Hospital Chaplaincy Aotearoa (The Interchurch Council for Hospital Chaplaincy) for the year ending 30 June 2025 can be found on our website or are available by request.

**Charities Service Registration: CC21346**

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## Health NZ | Te Whatu Ora

We're grateful to Health NZ and the various regional entities for their ongoing partnership and funding, which makes chaplaincy services possible in hospitals across Aotearoa.

## Donors

We sincerely thank our generous donors whose ongoing commitment enables us to be present for people in some of life's most difficult moments.

## Local Churches

We are deeply grateful to the many local churches who have supported our work over the past year, through prayer, financial gifts, and practical partnership.

## Local Chaplaincy Committees

We warmly acknowledge the dedication of our local chaplaincy committees and volunteers throughout Aotearoa.

### Church Denominations

We are immensely grateful for the steadfast support of our partner denominations. Your commitment underpins our work and strengthens our ability to provide chaplaincy care across the country.

- Roman Catholic Church of New Zealand
- Anglican Church in Aotearoa and Polynesia
- Baptist Churches of NZ - Ko Ngā Hāhi Iriiri o Aotearoa
- Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand
- The Salvation Army - NZ, Fiji, Tonga & Samoa Territory
- ACTS Churches New Zealand
- Christian Churches New Zealand
- Wesleyan Methodist Church of Aotearoa New Zealand
- Methodist
- Congregational

### Funders

We extend our sincere thanks to our funders whose generosity helps strengthen local communities through the support of our services.

- Aoraki Foundation
- Bibby Charitable Trust
- Higgins Trust, Mackay Bailey
- L W Nelson Charitable Trust
- P H Vickery Charitable Trust
- Page Trust
- Pam Torbett Trust
- Tidd Foundation
- Wilberforce Foundation
- Whakatane Hospital Chaplaincy Trust



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