



Hospital Chaplaincy

Te Kaunihera Whakawhanaunga o nga Minita Hōhipera, Hauora

IMPACT REPORT

2023-2024

Tēnā koutou

It is our pleasure to present the 2023/2024 annual report of The Interchurch Council of Hospital Chaplaincy.

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

This Annual Report covers our financial year 1 July 2023 - 30 June 2024.

Charity Registration Number

CC 21346

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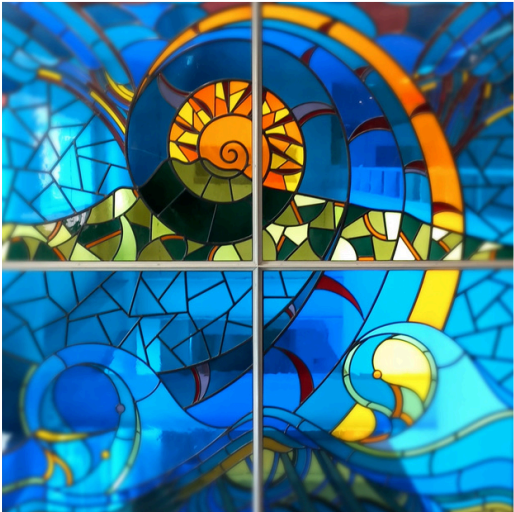
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CONTENTS

Board Chair’s report	4
Chief Executive’s report	5
Our Board and Management	6
About Us	7
Our Mahi - What we do	8
Our Mahi - Where we work	9
Our Impact	10-11
Patient Story - A Journey of Transformation	12
Chaplain Profile - Shelley Gilmore	13
A Hospital Perspective	14-15
Patient Story - A Journey from ICU to Gratitude	16
Our Volunteers	17
Funding - Income and Expenditure	18
Acknowledgements	19



Stained Glass Window in Auckland City Hospital Chapel

MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR

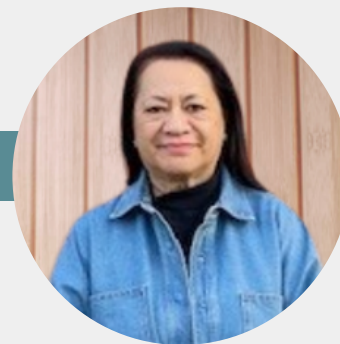
Kia Ora Koutou Katoa. It is my privilege to present to you our 2023-2024 Annual Impact Report.

As Chair I am fortunate to work alongside a highly skilled and dedicated Board, which continues to provide strong governance and strategic direction to the Chief Executive and his team. Together, we strive to ensure that our organisation is well-positioned to achieve its mission and deliver meaningful impact.

It is with deep sadness that we acknowledge the sudden passing of Board member Pihopa Richard Wallace, the Anglican Māori Bishop for Te Waipounamu. *“Kua hinga he totara i te wao nui a Tāne* – a great tree has fallen in the forest of Tāne.” His wisdom, wit and experience are deeply missed by us all. We extend our profound gratitude and aroha to Pihopa Richard’s wife Mere and their extended Whānau.

Like many NGO’s, we are currently facing financial pressures as some of our donors and partner denominations struggle to maintain previous levels of support. The Board remains committed to exploring new avenues for funding, ensuring we can continue to fulfil our mission and serve those who need us most.

We are investing in our Chaplains, placing a stronger emphasis on their professional development and positioning Chaplaincy as an attractive career with competitive remuneration.



As part of our Three-Year Strategic Plan we have established a People and Culture Committee to lead a dedicated workstream in this area. This committee, in collaboration with the CEO and his team, is responsible for bringing forward recommendations that will shape our People Strategy. This strategy aims to develop, grow, attract, and retain talent, all in support of our vision for delivering excellence in Chaplaincy across Aotearoa New Zealand.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to our donors, partner denominations, Health NZ | Te Whatu Ora, volunteers, Chaplains, administration staff and the Leadership Team. Your faithful and sacrificial service enables us to provide care and compassion to patients, their whānau and hospital staff when they need it most. We simply could not achieve what we do without your unwavering support.

Ngā mihi nui

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Loraine Elliott". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Loraine Elliott
Board Chair

MESSAGE FROM OUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The role of chaplaincy in Aotearoa has never been more vital. With rising mental health challenges, increasing pressure on the health system and the growing complexity of health issues facing New Zealanders, chaplains play a crucial role in our hospitals.

Our chaplains support patients and whānau during their most vulnerable moments and we joyfully provide chaplaincy to people of all faiths – or none – ensuring everyone feels respected and cared for.

Some of the most traumatic experiences for whānau and chaplains include the loss of a loved one, particularly in cases of suicide or when a baby passes away in the NICU. In such moments, our chaplains provide love, support and prayer when requested. Hospital staff too, rely on our chaplains for emotional care, particularly in these challenging situations.

Supporting our chaplains is vital. We ensure they receive the training, emotional support and reflective time they need to process the intense situations they face. Our chaplains do a fantastic job despite the challenges, and it has been gratifying to have recently increased their remuneration in recognition of their invaluable work.

“We joyfully provide chaplaincy to people of all faiths – or none – ensuring everyone feels respected and cared for.”



Our vision to provide excellence in chaplaincy throughout Aotearoa drives everything that we do. Financially, we face ongoing challenges, especially given the current economic climate. We are deeply grateful for the continued support of Health New Zealand – Te Whatu Ora, as well as the significant funding we receive from churches, local hospitals and faithful donors.

Last year we reported a \$253,000 gross surplus, allocated to planned projects that were not completed during that period. These funds were transferred to reserves and some projects have since been completed. Reflecting the use of these reserves is an operating loss of \$20,109 reducing the overall increase in previous reserves. Our balance sheet remains strong for future projects.

In closing, I thank our patients, their whānau, hospital staff, volunteers, chaplains, and all who contribute through prayers or financial support. Together, we are delivering excellence in hospital chaplaincy across Aotearoa.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Barry Fisk', with a long, sweeping underline.

Barry Fisk
Chief Executive

OUR BOARD

Trustees

Loraine Elliott - Board Chair

The Very Reverend Julian Perkins

Rev Dr John Douglas

Mrs Julie Patterson

Mr Stephen Packer

Captain Shaun Baker

Mrs Colleen Kaye

Chaplain Ants Haws

Mr John Cavanagh

Catherine Tupou

Representing

Roman Catholic Church of New Zealand

Anglican Church in Aotearoa and Polynesia

Baptist Churches of New Zealand - Ko Ngā Hāhi Iriiri o Aotearoa

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

OUR MANAGEMENT

Barry Fisk

David Hough

Rev. Colin Gordon

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

In 1972, nine church denominations came together at the request of then Prime Minister Sir John Marshall, to establish a national hospital chaplaincy service in the public health system. The Interchurch Advisory Committee on Hospital Chaplaincy (ICAC) was formed and worked in cooperation with the Department of Health.

As the organisation and its responsibilities grew, ICAC became the Interchurch Council for Hospital Chaplaincy (IHC) in 1993. Today, there are currently 93 chaplains working in 36 hospitals across the country.

Chaplains listen and provide service to all people regardless of their religious denomination, faith orientation, belief system, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation.

IHC is funded through a contract with Health NZ, contributions from church denominations, local churches, individual donors and public hospitals.



Auckland Hospital Chaplain, Bronwyn Owens with a patient.

WHAT MATTERS MOST

Our Vision



To provide excellence in Chaplaincy in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Our Purpose



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

Our Values

COMPASSION



Chaplains nurture wellbeing by listening empathetically and supporting others compassionately

RESPECT



Chaplains generate hope by upholding the dignity of others and respecting diversity

SERVICE



Chaplains seek the best possible outcome for others by valuing relationships and serving wholeheartedly

Our Outcomes and Goals

In collaboration with health professionals, spiritual care improves the wellbeing of patients, whānau and staff.

1

Ensure Mana Enhancing Processes result in Partnership, Protection, Participation, Whakapono (Trust) and recognition of Cultural Values

2

Providing high quality holistic spiritual care

3

Being relevant and nimble to respond to fast-paced changing contexts, including natural disasters, pandemic and needs of our funders and Government reforms

OUR MAHI - WHAT WE DO

We collaborate closely with healthcare professionals to enhance the wellbeing of patients, whānau (families), and staff by offering supportive spiritual care. Our services are designed to nurture emotional and spiritual resilience, addressing the often-overlooked spiritual dimension of health in the healthcare system.

Central to our approach is the Māori health model, **Te Whare Tapa Whā**, which highlights four interconnected dimensions of wellbeing: whānau (family), tinana (physical), hinengaro (mental), and wairua (spiritual).

This model is symbolised by the Wharenuī (meeting house), with its four walls representing the essential balance needed for a person's overall wellbeing. Just as a Wharenuī remains strong when all its sides are sturdy, so too does an individual's health when all aspects of wellbeing are in harmony.

At ICHC, we play a vital role in recognising and supporting taha wairua (spiritual health), a crucial yet often neglected area within modern healthcare.

By focusing on spiritual support, we help complete the picture of holistic care, ensuring that the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual needs of those we serve are fully acknowledged and addressed.



Our chaplains work in close collaboration with hospital staff, often receiving referrals for patients in need of additional emotional and spiritual support. They regularly participate in multidisciplinary team meetings to ensure that the holistic needs of patients—physical, mental, and spiritual—are fully addressed.

In addition to individual ward visits, chaplains lead a variety of spiritual practices and rites, including communion, blessings, prayers and chapel services. These practices provide comfort, foster connection, and offer vital spiritual care to those facing illness or distress.

Supporting the chaplains is a dedicated team of Voluntary Chaplaincy Assistants (VCAs), who play an essential role in the delivery of chaplaincy services.

OUR MAHI - WHERE WE WORK

Northern Region

Whangarei Hospital
Auckland City Hospital
Middlemore Hospital
North Shore Hospital
Waitakere Hospital
Mason Clinic
Buchanan Clinic

Te Manawa Taki Region

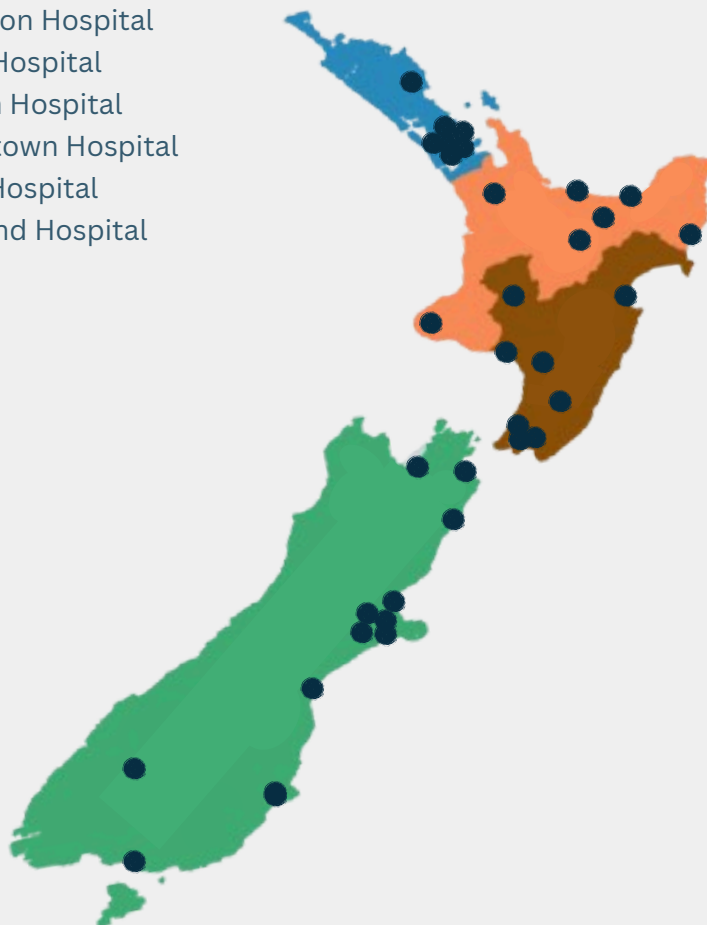
Waikato Hospital
Tauranga Hospital
Whakatane Hospital
Gisborne Hospital
Rotorua Hospital
Taupo Hospital
Taumaranui Hospital
Taranaki Hospital

Central Region

Hawkes 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



YEAR IN REVIEW

OUR PEOPLE

93
CHAPLAINS
53.9FTE



64 ECUMENICAL
CHAPLAINS

29 CATHOLIC
CHAPLAINS

165
VOLUNTEERS



3
VACANCIES
2.8FTE



OUR IMPACT

90,630
PATIENT
VISITS



13,760
STAFF
VISITS



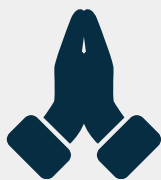
16,028
WHĀNAU
VISITS



120,418
TOTAL VISITS

OUR ACTIVITIES

35,990
PATIENT
RITUALS



2,775
STAFF
RITUALS

5,203
WHĀNAU
RITUALS



43,968
TOTAL RITUALS

The above figures indicates personal rituals which include, Blessings, Prayer, Communion, Anointing of the sick, Baptisms/Dedications etc...

Over 11,000 other hospital community activities were also undertaken, including public chapel services and blessings of hospital rooms and equipment, including ambulances and aircraft.

OUR COLLABORATION

2,571
REFERRALS
MADE



7,550
REFERRALS
RECEIVED

30,169
PASTORAL
CARE HOURS



1,649
HOSPITAL TEAM
MEETINGS
ATTENDED

A JOURNEY OF TRANSFORMATION

A PATIENT'S STORY

David* arrived at Burwood Hospital after suffering a serious medical event. Like many with his condition, he struggled with physical limitations and faced a future with reduced mobility. However, the emotional toll proved even harder to bear. David expressed deep fears about aging, his future, and the potential loss of independence. Living alone, he found himself confronting an uncertain path and he feared life would never be the same. This uncertainty led to feelings of anxiety and depression.

During his six-week hospital stay, David was referred to Hospital Chaplain Eddie O'Connor by the medical staff. Eddie had the privilege of journeying alongside David, offering him much-needed spiritual and emotional support. In their initial conversations, David spoke openly about his fear of being unable to care for himself and his isolation in the face of an uncertain future.

Over the following weeks, however, a transformation began to take shape. Through regular visits and Eddie's compassionate and non-judgmental listening, David found a safe space to express his fears. Slowly, his outlook began to shift. He started to confront his uncertainties with greater strength, eventually finding a sense of peace, despite not being able to control everything in his life.

* Name changed to protect identity

One of the most profound changes in David was his newfound sense of spiritual connection. Though he hadn't previously identified with any religious tradition, he spoke to feeling as though he was "being looked after" which became a deep source of comfort and strength in the face of his challenges.

David credits the medical team's care and Eddie's support as essential to his recovery. **"Your support was crucial for me during this difficult time. I now know I can adjust and live a full life again,"** he shared.

While Eddie is quick to point out that David's resilience and inner strength were central to his healing, this experience highlights the profound impact that compassionate spiritual care can have on patients in their toughest times.

"It was a real privilege to be part of David's recovery and transformation. It's an intimate and vulnerable space we're invited into and it was a special experience to be part of David's journey."

Chaplain
Eddie O'Connor
(pictured)



CHAPLAIN SHELLEY GILMORE

WHAKATANE HOSPITAL

Shelley's desire to serve God began at an early age. She envisioned herself either as a nurse or perhaps the wife of a missionary, dedicating her life to helping others. However, her journey took an unexpected turn, leading her down a path she never could have imagined.

A number of years ago, Shelley faced a personal crisis when her husband was hospitalised with a serious illness. During this difficult time, Shelley found herself feeling isolated, overwhelmed by stress, and in need of someone to talk to—someone outside of her circle of friends and medical professionals. This experience sparked a calling within her.

Recognizing the value of emotional and spiritual support, Shelley decided to pursue a counselling degree. Ten years ago, she fulfilled that calling by becoming a hospital chaplain. For Shelley, being a chaplain is an immense privilege.

“I get to meet the most amazing people and hear the most incredible stories of resilience and strength in the face of their own challenges and vulnerability.”

Shelley's work now primarily focuses on mental health, where she is encouraged by the fact that many Tangata Whaiora (those seeking health) have some level of faith in God.



“Being able to listen and be there with them, even in the hardest places, is extremely special,” Shelley reflects.

Key to her role are the skills of deep listening, compassion, and trusting the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Each patient and situation is unique, but some moments remain unforgettable. Shelley recalls sitting with families who had lost their babies at around 26 weeks' gestation.

“The babies are so gorgeous and perfectly formed. I remember families just loving on their baby, giving it cuddles in its basket, wanting it blessed, named, and given to God. It's a time of immense grief and pain, but also profound love.”

Despite her strong faith, Shelley emphasises that being a chaplain isn't about “being religious.” It's about listening, caring, and simply being present for those in need.

Shelley and her husband have been married for 42 years and are the proud parents of four children and ten grandchildren, who continue to inspire her to bring compassion and care to those she serves.

A HOSPITAL PERSPECTIVE

A Pillar of Wellbeing at Hawke's Bay Hospital

At Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora, spiritual wellbeing is considered one of the four pillars of the wellbeing whare. Integral to fostering this dimension is the hospital's Chaplaincy service, which offers more than traditional faith-based care—providing holistic, non-judgmental support to patients, their whānau, and hospital staff.

David Warrington, Group Director of Operations for Hawke's Bay, highlights the modern approach of the Chaplaincy team;

“While faith is the backbone of the service, it's not pushed. It's a values-based service.”

Increasing Demand Amid Crises

The impact of COVID-19 and Cyclone Gabrielle has heightened the need for emotional and spiritual support. As a result, more people are now accessing Chaplaincy services, finding comfort through their compassionate care during times of stress and uncertainty.

Whether patients are preparing for surgery, undergoing difficult medical procedures, or seeking Holy Communion in the chapel on Sundays, there is always a chaplain on hand to offer pastoral and emotional support. The chaplains also collaborate closely with the Māori Health team, ensuring a wraparound service that aligns with holistic care practices.



“They're always there for people, no matter who they are or what they believe. They welcome everyone and are non-judgmental.”

David Wallington (pictured)

Complementing Clinical Care

The chaplains play an essential role alongside the clinician team by offering emotional comfort during difficult conversations and moments of crisis.

The value of their service is reflected in the gratitude expressed by patients, including a heartfelt letter received from a long-term patient:

“I could not have got through my illness without the chaplaincy support, particularly from Jeannine and John. Jeannine made me realise that Jesus loves me, bringing me to tears of joy. John is wonderful to talk to and helped me process everything. Their care was crucial to my recovery, and I cannot thank them enough.”

A HOSPITAL PERSPECTIVE

continued

Supporting the Entire Hospital Community

The Chaplaincy service extends beyond patient care, offering spiritual and emotional support to hospital staff as well. The chaplains are often called upon to perform blessings and facilitate meaningful moments of reflection.

The hospital's chapel serves as a sanctuary for staff and patients alike—a quiet space to reflect or pray—and a focal point for key events, such as ANZAC Day, Christmas Day services, and the Cyclone Gabrielle Memorial Service.

“Our chaplains are such an asset to the hospital,” says Warrington.



Hawkes Bay Hospital Chaplaincy Team (left to right):

Stuart Hurst, Pastor Jeannine Epplett (Lead Chaplain), Deb Lucy (Catholic Chaplain), Rev Stephen Lindsay, Rev John Davison.



Regional Manager and
Lead Chaplain,
Rev Jeannine Epplett

A Caring, Inclusive Team

The Chaplaincy team, comprising Jeannine Epplett, John Davison, Stephen Lindsay, Deb Lucy, and Stuart Hurst, offers care to all—regardless of religious denomination, belief system, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation.

Lead Chaplain Jeannine Epplett emphasizes the importance of listening as a cornerstone of their work.

“It’s about being there for people. The simple act of really listening can be so comforting in itself.”

With compassion, empathy, and an open heart, the Chaplaincy team at Hawke's Bay Hospital continues to provide a vital, holistic service that touches the lives of patients, staff, and the broader community.

A JOURNEY FROM ICU TO GRATITUDE

A PATIENT'S STORY

One of the most remarkable stories from the past year involves Ronald*, a patient who came very close to losing his life after contracting severe pneumonia. When he was admitted to the Intensive Care Unit (ICU), his condition was so critical that doctors said it was “touch and go.” He was placed on life support in a medically induced coma for three weeks, and there were moments when it seemed he might not survive.

Remarkably, Ronald came out of the coma and Reverend Stephen Lindsay, a member of the hospital chaplaincy team, visited him in the ICU. Unable to speak, Ronald used a whiteboard to communicate. Despite his frailty, his message was clear and powerful—he asked for prayer. Stephen was deeply moved by Ronald’s faith in such a critical moment and was honoured to offer him spiritual support and prayer.

As the weeks passed, Ronald’s condition began to improve, and he was transferred from the ICU to a general ward. His recovery was nothing short of remarkable. As his physical strength returned, so did his spirit. Stephen continued to visit him, and Ronald frequently expressed immense gratitude—not only for his restored health, but for the second chance at life he had been given. **“Every day matters,”** he told Stephen, sharing how he now viewed each breath, each moment, as a gift.

Throughout his recovery, Ronald expressed profound thanks to the chaplains, the hospital staff, and his whānau for their unwavering support. His faith, which had always been strong, now had a deeper, richer quality. Stephen recalls how humbling it was to walk alongside Ronald on his journey and watch his transformation unfold.

“It was a true joy to see Ronald’s progress and to be part of his recovery.”

Ronald’s story culminated in him attending the weekly hospital chapel service twice. Witnessing him worship and give thanks for his healing was a deeply moving experience for Stephen. **“It’s wonderful to see someone with such a deep faith have an even greater appreciation for life and for God,”** he reflected.

Ronald’s recovery is a testament to the resilience of the human spirit and the power of faith and compassionate care. His story reminds us of the profound impact that spiritual support can have on a person’s healing journey—both physically and spiritually.

* Name changed to protect identity

Rev Stephen Lindsay
(pictured)



CELEBRATING OUR VOLUNTEERS

Voluntary Chaplaincy Assistants (VCAs) play an essential role in supporting chaplains to provide spiritual and emotional care within healthcare settings.

Their dedication helps ensure that the pastoral needs of patients, families, and staff are met with compassion during vulnerable moments. VCAs work closely with chaplains, offering a listening ear, emotional support, and spiritual guidance as part of a holistic approach to well-being.

Becoming a VCA is a significant commitment. After the selection process, candidates undergo approximately 30 hours of initial training, covering key topics like pastoral care, communication, and cultural awareness.

This is followed by 12 months of practical training under experienced chaplains. After completing this phase, VCAs are formally commissioned in a special service.

VCAs continue to receive ongoing training and development to enhance their skills and adapt to the evolving needs of the healthcare community.

We are deeply grateful for the dedication and service of our Voluntary Chaplaincy Assistants. Their selfless contributions expand the reach of chaplaincy services, offering hope and reassurance in times of uncertainty.

FOSTERING CONNECTION

John McCoskrie's journey as a VCA is rooted in faith and his love for connecting with people. "I believed that's what God wanted me to do," he reflects, adding that his enjoyment of meeting new people further inspired him to serve in this role.

For John, one of the most rewarding aspects of being a VCA is hearing people's life stories and offering the presence of God in an often-secular environment. Whether with patients, families, or staff, his goal is to provide support with compassion and understanding.

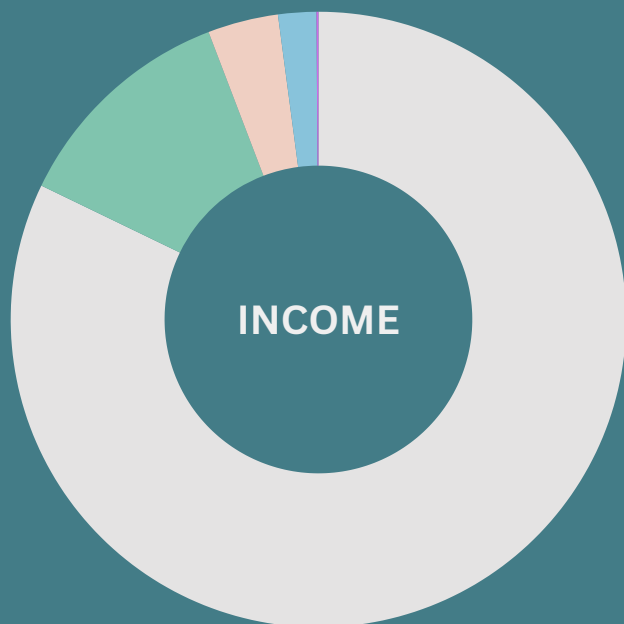
Central to his role is maintaining confidentiality and knowing when a patient has reached their emotional limit. These moments require sensitivity and discernment, which John has developed through experience.

John emphasises the importance of strong communication skills. His ability to connect with others helps foster a space where patients feel safe to share their stories.

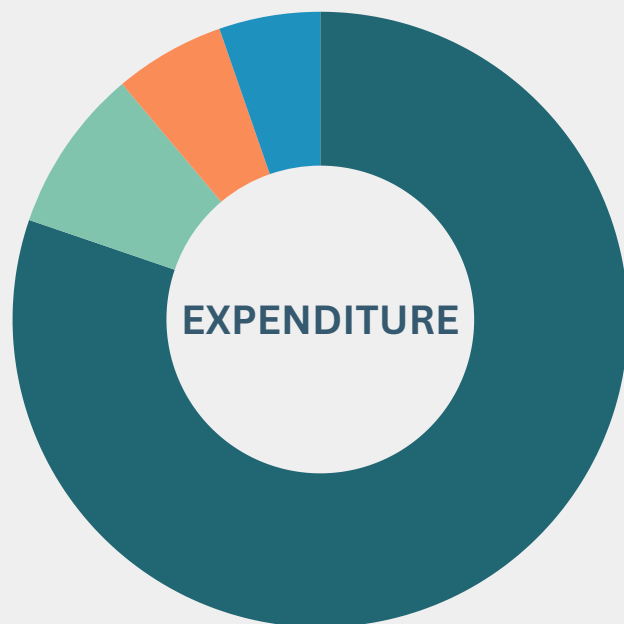
When not volunteering, John enjoys reading, following politics, gardening, and singing. He also has a passion for water sports, including surfing, waterskiing, and windsurfing—a unique and adventurous side to this dedicated VCA.



FUNDING



Government Grants	\$4,248,260
Church Funding	\$650,012
Donations/Grants	\$191,096
Interest	\$104,482
Other	\$4,562
TOTAL	\$5,198,412



Service Delivery	\$4,194,460
Catholic Contribution	\$447,154
National Operations	\$300,872
Overheads	\$276,035
TOTAL	\$5,218,521

The audited financial statements of The Interchurch Council for Hospital Chaplaincy for the year ending 30 June 2024 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 for their support, partnership and funding of our chaplaincy services.

Donors

We extend our heartfelt appreciation to our faithful supporters who continue to help Kiwis through some of their toughest times.

Local Churches

We sincerely thank the many local churches who supported our work over the past financial year.

Local Chaplaincy Committees

We appreciate the work done by our local committees and volunteers who are dedicated to delivering our chaplaincy services across Aotearoa.

Churches

The continued support of the following denominations underpins our work and we are immensely grateful for their continued partnership.

- 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

Thank you to the following funders who make their local communities a better place through their support of our work.

- Aoraki Foundation
- Bibby Charitable Trust
- Gresham Court Trust
- Higgins Trust, Mackay Bailey,
- Pakeke Lions Club, Taupo
- Tidd Foundation
- Wilberforce Foundation



Hospital Chaplaincy
Te Kaunihera Whakawhanaunga o nga Minita Hōhipera, Hauora

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