

# Report to the Anglican Diocesan Synod 2021

## Interchurch Council for Hospital Chaplaincy (IHC) in Waikato

We are very thankful for the ongoing support of the Anglican Diocese to support of the ministry of chaplaincy in Waikato and Taumarunui Hospitals and, through volunteer chaplaincy assistants, at Thames and Rhoda Read (Morrinsville). The most obvious support is financial as hospital chaplaincy is only part funded nationally by the Ministry of Health (MoH) and matched by churches, trusts, and individuals. We are also supported by excellent church representation on our local chaplaincy committee and by more than thirty trained volunteers from a wide range of denominations.

The diverse ministry of hospital chaplaincy to people of all faiths and of no faith continues with an ongoing increase in support of staff for a wide range of pastoral matters, set against the background of hospitals under continuing financial pressure and increasing healthcare demand. Over the past twelve months there have also been the immense added pressures from dealing with Covid-19 and a major cyber-attack on our computer system. We are often humbled by 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 great challenges and vulnerability.

Over the past year we have had a number of significant personnel changes. Rev Julian Perkins, Lead Chaplain and Regional Manager, resigned in March to do more project work and joined the National IHC board as the Anglican rep. Our new Regional Manager commenced in June and is Rev Matiu Best, who is a chaplain at Tauranga Hospital. Our Maori Chaplain, Ps Sonny Poutapu was appointed as our new Lead Chaplain. We also have had 3 new staff members join the team over the past few months. Ps Heather Major (0.5FTE) started 1 February 2021, Ps Brian Ludlow (1.0FTE) started 3 August 2021 and Rev Paul Weeding (0.5FTE) started on 1 September. Paul has been Chair of Friends of Hospital Chaplaincy since 2014. Ps Bruce Sligo who had been a Waikato Hospital chaplain for 9 years retired at the end of June, but has since joined our team of locums. We have been very grateful that with the departure of Bruce, Rev Rosie Dell (0.5FTE) has taken on the responsibility for the training and support of our VCA's as well as taking the lead in organising our Education sessions. We have had a new group of VCAs (Volunteer Chaplaincy Assistants) complete their training and have welcomed three additional locum chaplains as well - Rev Alistair McBride, Ps Lance Langley and Rev Jill Clark-Olson. In other changes, our administrative officer, Rayleen Lafaele, relocated to Christchurch at the beginning of January, however, building on our Covid experiences, she continues to work with the team, just remotely now.

We remain 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, and by all our Chapel Helpers who serve on a Sunday assisting patients to attend the Sunday Chapel Service. We are grateful for all who partake in this challenging and rewarding ministry using 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.

We are grateful that the structures of ICHC have been stable and supportive especially during this season of lockdowns and uncertainty. Through the challenges of dealing with Covid the team has focused on trying to offer their best support for patients and staff amid constantly changing rules and requirements. A breakthrough was negotiated by Archbishop Philip Richardson who got the chaplains recognized as essential workers in April 2020, however it has taken a good portion of this year for this to be more widely accepted and integrated within the Hospital at ground level. Additionally, our service and ministry was impacted by the cyber-attack which happened in mid-March 2021. All our computer systems were affected and all emails were lost. It has taken 6 months for our systems to return to some sense of normalcy and for us to be able to once again fully access our files and reports. We have had to rely even more than ever on patients and whanau self-referring to chaplaincy and ministers letting us know if parishioners would like a visit from a chaplain during this time.

A highlight this year was that the Chaplaincy Team received an award at the 2021 Waiora Waikato Matariki Awards ceremony at the Kingitanga offices. Our Award was to acknowledge those who have found innovative ways to continue with traditions and customs. Also new this year, as soon as lockdown levels permit, we will begin a volunteer chaplaincy assistant training course in Thames to expand their number of chaplaincy visitors.

Going forward we are excited by the skills and abilities added to our team by our new chaplains and locums and hope to continue to engage with the wider church community, raising our profile in the hospital and community. In all our endeavors we are most appreciative and grateful for the support of the Diocese.

Ngā mihi nui, the Chaplains of Waikato