### The Interchurch Council for Hospital Chaplaincy - ICHC

#### Report to 66th Session of the General Synod/te Hīnota Whānui (GSTHW) 2024

**Recommendation:**

The Synod affirm the ministry of ICHC

The Synod respond to the invitation for the Anglican Church of Aotearoa New Zealand and Polynesia to make comment to ICHC on the matter of including chaplains of other faiths and beliefs.

The Synod appoint a replacement representative to the ICHC Board for the late Pihopa Richard Wallace

The report be received and noted.

Matthew 25:36 I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you visited me

**Our purpose:**

We provide hospitals with chaplains who offer quality holistic spiritual and pastoral care.

**Overview:**

The Anglican Church of Aotearoa New Zealand and Polynesia is one of 9 denominations which 52 years ago formed the coordinating body for providing Healthcare Chaplaincy to Hospitals in the Public Health Sector.

The Anglican Church of Aotearoa New Zealand and Polynesia has been represented with membership on our Trust Board since the inception of ICHC.

**Pihopa Richard Wallace:**

We extend our sorrow with the recent sudden passing of Pihopa Richard Wallace. As the proverb says Kua hinga te totara i te wao nui a Tane = The totara has fallen in the forest of Tane. Pihopa Rochard was a trustee on our Board and made a significant contribution to the governance of this organisation. We will miss his sense of humour, wise counsel and general support for Hospital Caplaincy as a whole. As a mark of respect our Board Chairperson and five of our hospital chaplains attended the Eucharistic Service of Thanksgiving for Richards life.

**Funding:**

Initially funding for chaplaincy was to be met on a 50/50 cost basis between the churches and the Department of Health. Changes in 1996 resulted in the advisory council becoming the Interchurch Council for Hospital Chaplaincy (ICHC).

Funding is made up of Te Whatu Ora contracts, local public hospital contributions, Church denomination funding and individual donations.

While our contracts with Te Whatu Ora are significant, they represent the employment of 30 chaplains (including provision for continued professional development), the remaining funds received allow us to employ an additional 27 FTE.

Additional support from individuals, organisations, churches and denominations allow for the employment and support of additional chaplains and trained volunteers. Our service would struggle to continue without this valuable support! Our combined income from all sources allows us to provide chaplaincy across 40 hospitals nationally. Currently ICHC employs 62 ecumenical chaplains covering 41 FTE with an additional 29 Catholic chaplains covering 13 FTE.

**Our Outcomes:**

In the last 12-month period, more than one hundred and fifteen thousand patients, whanau and hospital staff have experienced spiritual support from our hospital chaplains. This ranges from informal bedside conversations, assisting individuals and their whānau coming to terms with traumatic adjustments because of illness, accidental or traumatic incidents. Our chaplains have facilitated more than 50,000 spiritual rituals and acts of worship. These have included prayers, blessings, Bible readings, administering eucharist (Communion), funerals and regular chapel services. Annually 5% of spiritual support provided by chaplains is in direct support of hospital staff, though this sits outside of our Te Whatu Ora contract.

Narrative accounts of chaplain encounters include:

* A chaplain being asked to bless a delivery suite following the death of a baby during a difficult delivery. The atheist Midwife was invited to stay so they could report back to the team. They acknowledged that they appreciated the chaplain prayed for the baby and parents and had respected what the staff had experienced; that it had made a difference.
* The hospital chaplaincy team at Wellington hospital worked closely with whanau services in the aftermath of the Loafers Lodge fire. The team were particularly involved in providing karakia when the bodies of the deceased entered and left the hospital. This became an exercise that unified chaplaincy and Whanau services and was quite moving and comforting to those whanau who were there at the time the hearse arrived.
* A Registered Nurse appreciated the chaplain visiting with a patient and asked the chaplain if they could continue to do so as this would assist with the patient’s recovery.
* A patient wrote: “I cannot thank the chaplain enough for their gracious and quiet support during the most difficult and painful times in my life. They helped me to carry on when things were beyond painful, especially during the separation from my children. Thank you.”

Of particular significance during the past twelve months is the continued support provided by chaplains for people impacted by significant cyclonic weather events and the ongoing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. These events have provided opportunities for our chaplains to support patients and their families as well as hospital staff.

We are focusing on enhancing our cultural capability collectively as an organisation and for all chaplains. We were also blessed to host a Te Tiriti o Waitangi workshop, presented by Te Ata Kura Educators in October 2023 with 70 chaplains in attendance. A small work group has also developed a Hospital Chaplaincy Competency Framework with all chaplains participating via regional and on-line workshops. Continued development and implementation of the framework will continue throughout 2024.

**Accountability:**

The use of results-based accountability allows us to provide both statistical and other narratives to demonstrate the value the service performs.

We produce an Annual Impact Report with independent auditor’s report which are available via our website ([www.ichc.org.nz](http://www.ichc.org.nz)) and upon request.

**Looking forward:**

In the coming year, ICHC will continue to be committed to providing sustainable chaplaincy across public hospitals. We continue to focus on mental health, having successfully recruited chaplains to work in this important field. Our opportunities continue to be in providing appropriate support for the increasingly diverse spiritual makeup of our community within public hospitals.

While healthcare chaplaincy is a challenging task, the value of chaplaincy in hospitals is generally well accepted. There has been a progressive embracing by hospitals of a more holistic approach to health care which includes the spiritual dimension. This corresponds to the recognition of wholistic models of wellbeing such as Te Whare Tapa Whā, Te Wheke and Fonofale.

The continued support of the Anglican Church also goes a long way towards ensuring hospital chaplains are available and equipped to support the mental health and wellbeing of New Zealanders. We invite your continued support via financial contribution together with the invaluable service of Board representatives, volunteers and ordained ministers. Recruitment of suitably qualified and experienced chaplains is often difficult, particularly in some parts of the motu. We are grateful for the assistance of the Anglican Church with our recruitment efforts.

The topic of spiritual diversity is becoming an emerging issue, Requests to consider ICHC employing other than Christian chaplains have been raised. This is a complex area with stakeholders, such as the national church leaders and denominations, being asked for their input. Specific input from the Anglican Church would be appreciated to provide additional perspective.

The consultation document has previously been supplied to your Board representatives.

**Your representation:**

The Anglican Church has been well represented on our Trust Board by two Trustees, being the Very Reverend Julian Perkins and the late Pihopa Richard Wallace. Julian contributes a depth of knowledge, skill and experience that is significantly valued and appreciated. ICHC acknowledges the sad passing of Pihopa Richard earlier this year and will miss his wisdom, experience and well considered input to our mahi. His passing now leaves a vacancy on our Trust Board and we invite the Anglican Church to provide a suitable replacement in due course.

We note the retirement from hospital chaplaincy of Rev Helen Gray in November 2023 who served as a Māori Hospital Chaplain for twenty-three years.

There are currently twenty Anglican ministers employed as chaplains in the ICHC hospital chaplaincy service. One serves as a Regional Manager, five as lead Chaplains in their hospitals, one focused on Mental Health Chaplaincy and one as a transition chaplain (for patients who transition from hospital into aged residential care facilities). Further to these, there are others functioning as locums who provide relief cover and many of our voluntary chaplaincy assistants are congregation members of the Anglican Church. All are valued members of our team and we are grateful for their support.

Written by: Barry Fisk

Position: Chief Executive Officer