

## **Ecumenical Chaplaincy Chairperson's Report for AGM 24 March 2026**

### **1. University 'State of Play' for 2025**

In terms of enrolments (both domestic and international) enrolments were very positive for 2025.

International student EFTS were 45% higher than their pre-pandemic equivalent (2019), with growth in enrolments of postgraduate students from a wide range of countries, particularly India, China, Sri Lanka and Vietnam.

Domestic enrolments were also strong, with the University's largest-ever school-leaver cohort, 15% higher than the same time in 2024. Compared to 2024, the total domestic cohort has grown 6%, and comprises 26% Māori students and 9.7% Pacific students.

Total domestic EFTS: 8694

Tauranga EFTS: 928 (943 including international)

Māori EFTS: 2259

Pacific EFTS: 844

International EFTS (on-shore): 1903

As well as positive enrolment growth, the 'big event' for the university in 2025 was the government approval for the new medical school. This was a significant milestone for the university in terms of growing health-related study and career opportunities for the Waikato region and beyond.

### **2. Assistant Chaplains (voluntary)**

2025 saw the addition of three new Assistant Chaplains (voluntary) to join the existing voluntary assistant chaplain Nick Goodwin. These appointments were ratified by the committee in June for Rose Stokes, Dave Tabrum and Lin Chu. These appointments have strengthened the gender and ethnic diversity of the chaplaincy ministry and all of the people appointed are based in churches relatively geographically close to the university Hamilton campus. Also progress has been made with the Tauranga campus in engaging volunteers from St. Peter's in the City (Presbyterian) for on-going ministry at that campus.

### **3. University Chaplaincy Vision and Purpose Statement**

Last year the committee confirmed a vision and purpose statement which provides a clear scope and purpose for committee members, both existing and new. This statement is to be read alongside the terms of reference from the university which outlines the membership and relationship to the university as a sub-committee of the University Council.

### **4. Financial Position of the Chaplaincy**

Thanks to the sterling work of Jill Schumaker and Jo Knight, regular invoices for the chaplaincy stipend from the university were presented at quarterly intervals during 2026. This is a huge improvement on the erratic billing process of previous years.

Contact was made with Dee Holmes of Perpetual Guardian who came to our June meeting and explained the fund management and disbursement of the Lady Goodfellow Trust for the chaplaincy. This was a really valuable connection which had been missing in the past. In 2025 the LG Trust contributed \$20,000 to chaplaincy finances, which was a double payment (annually \$10,000) to catch up with a missed previous payment.

Other expenditure was aligned with budget expectations. The chapel organ was donated to St. Paul's School who dismantled and removed to that location. It now provides a useful purpose for their music department, thereby releasing the committee from the financial necessity of maintaining the organ (saving more than \$500 per annum) and the future very expensive refurbishing costs to keep it functional.

There were no efforts in 2025 to solicit donations from the Kaimai Presbytery. Diminishing returns from email requests for support to individual parishes made it seem to me that the work involved did not justify the time spent for the return that was gained. My suggestion is that in the future we target larger Presbyterian churches individually in both Hamilton and Tauranga, especially those with whom we are co-operating in ministry (e.g. St. Andrew's Hamilton and St. Peter's in the City Tauranga).

## **5. Chaplaincy Committee Operation**

My thanks to all the committee members who have volunteered your time to be part of supporting this worthwhile ministry. Your commitment is much appreciated.

Last year in December we fare-welled Paul Flanagan (Catholic lay representative) from the committee and welcomed Dr. Judith Burrows as the new Catholic lay representative.

A big thank you to Jill Schumaker for her work as meetings secretary and treasurer during 2025. We have managed to find an admin person from the Health Centre who is willing to act as meetings secretary but we are still looking for a person who is familiar with the Waikato Diocesan accounting system to take up the treasurer function.

As indicated from mid-2025 I am planning to resign as chair from the committee at this AGM. I wish the new chairperson every blessing in this ministry, and will be available to support and advise them when needed.

Stephen Bright  
Chairperson  
5 March 2026