

Wintec Chaplaincy Report - August 2026

My role at Wintec has been slow to develop but I'm increasingly enjoying a sense of being known and recognised by students and staff. I've become more convinced of the importance of simply being present over the long haul and being recognised as a safe and steady presence who can be trusted with confidences and sensitive issues.

Over the course of my almost twelve months at Wintec I've participated in the inductions and introductions of new student intakes at the beginning of each semester. These have been invaluable for the opportunity to communicate what my role is about and hopefully to present as someone warm and safe to approach. Feedback suggests this has come across.

I've sought an opportunity to meet with the staff of CHASP (Centre for Health and Social Practice) and this has yielded some good opportunities in recent times. The most significant was an invitation to address Midwifery students as they engaged with classes on colonialism and Te Tiriti. Apparently this has tended to be quite a fraught and emotional space for some students struggling to come to terms with aspects of NZ history. It was a privilege to be able to speak from my own experience of navigating this space, as well as referencing how I understand my faith to inform my interpretation of and response to our history.

More recently I've been asked by a Vet Nursing tutor to come and say a Karakia before animal dissections in October. These invitations by staff are encouraging and provide a great opportunity to serve, as well as increase my familiarity to students.

I've tried a few initiatives to increase awareness of me and my role and which I believe might bless students at some level, but uptake has been very low. These initiatives include "Living Room Conversations," a facilitated conversation for a small group of people around an issue of importance today; and "Crafting with the Chaplain," a month of one hour of crafting round a table at lunchtimes on Thursdays. I still believe they're good ideas but in conversation with other staff this lack of student participation in similar initiatives seems sadly consistent for inexplicable reasons.

Approaches by students ebbs and flows but overall is steadily increasing. Conversations have been about a great variety of things and it's an enormous privilege to be invited into the inner worlds and struggles of these precious ones. In terms of the spiritual aspect I'm led by the student but when I'm aware faith is present I will usually reference this and consider with the student what part their system of belief plays in the navigation of their challenges. I have, on occasions, offered to pray with students who are Christians and this has consistently been well received.

I attend the TSCF meetings on Tuesdays over lunchtime. I'm there only as a participant and support, but it's been good to meet some Christian students and some of these have come to chat with me separately which has been great.

I'm looking forward to attending the ANZTCA Conference in November and hearing from more experienced chaplains in similar contexts. I appreciate the opportunity to learn from others glean ideas and inspiration that I can employ at Wintec.

As I mentioned above, it has been somewhat slow gaining traction in my role but I do believe this is happening, and overall I'm very encouraged and hopeful about things continuing to develop going forward.

Ngā mihi Nui for all of your support!

Rev. Adair Oosterbroek