

WHAT IS SCHOOL CHAPLAINCY?



When people examine what chaplains do in schools, they find a service that supports the particular needs of the school community, and enhances both school culture and the efforts of other care professionals – at a low cost, and achieving significant social outcomes:¹

1. Almost 175,000 support programs, for over 1.2 million participants nationally every year, including:
 - More than 80,000 sessions supporting social, emotional and spiritual wellbeing, with more than 560,000 participants, including 230 funerals and memorial services.
 - Almost 50,000 educational support programs, involving over 475,000 participants, including more than 31,000 free breakfast programs.
 - Almost 15,000 extra-curricular activities in which chaplains are involved.
2. More than 420,000 preventative and responsive formal pastoral care conversations with students every year, including conversations involving:
 - Friendship / peer concerns (141,100)
 - School behavior (74,300)
 - Mental health (many of which are referred on to therapeutic counselling services – ensuring students receive the care they need, but might otherwise not find) (69,800)
 - Bullying and harassment (67,500)
 - Family breakdown / parental separation (67,300)
3. More than 230,000 formal pastoral care conversations every year (54% of total formal pastoral care conversations) across Australia with students in the following categories:
 - Disabilities (72,800)
 - Indigenous (65,500)
 - In state care (42,520)
 - Culturally diverse (29,160)
 - LGBTI (8,640)
 - Refugees (6000)
 - Juvenile justice (5,800)

Here are some of the dimensions of school chaplaincy:

Chaplaincy dimension

Notes

- a) Chaplains' role is to provide social, emotional and spiritual support

Chaplains perform pastoral care, in two ways:

- engaging students with structured programs (e.g. to build self-confidence, help with self esteem, develop skills in peer and other relationships, manage life transitions, deal with bullying, and work through grief and loss and family breakdown), and
- pastoral care conversations to build resilience and connect students with support networks.

¹ Each of the figures in paragraphs 1-3 represent the outcomes for NSCA-affiliated chaplaincies (in approximately 2000 of the 3000 schools funded by the NSCP), for which we have data – so the total outcomes of the program in 3000 schools reasonably would be even greater than these figures.

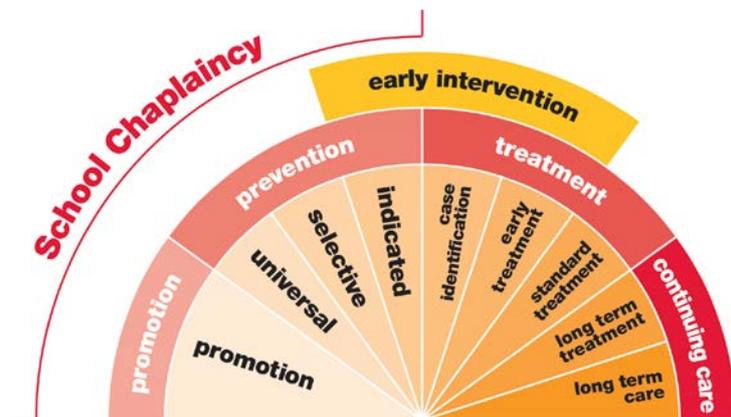
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Chaplaincy dimension

Notes

These activities seek to promote positive wellbeing, prevent negative wellbeing factors and ensure students are referred appropriately to others where therapeutic intervention is needed – the 'PPEI' model (Promotion, Prevention, and Early Intervention):²



The evidence is overwhelming that school chaplaincy is strongly positive for schools – in wellbeing and educational terms – as shown by those who know schools and students best:³

- School staff (42%), the students themselves (26%) and their parents/carers (17%) are the largest sources of referral of a student to a school chaplain. Those closest to the students (and the students themselves) are the ones creating 85% of the demand for school chaplaincy services.
- Those interactions result in thousands of referrals to other sources of professional support – including guidance officers, counsellors and psychologists.

In this way, many students who might otherwise not seek the help they need can find the support of a chaplain, as well as referral to sources of therapeutic care. This is hardly surprising, given that all chaplains are trained in how to identify mental health issues and refer appropriately.⁴

² This is adapted from PJ Mrazek and RJ Haggerty, *Reducing the Risks for Mental Disorders: Frontiers for Preventive Intervention Research* (Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 1994).

³ Refer to page 2 of McCrindle Research snapshot in the appendix.

⁴ Clauses 9(c)(iv) and 30(b) of the Commonwealth-States-Territories Project Agreement at http://www.federalfinancialrelations.gov.au/content/npa/education/project-agreement/nat_school_chaplaincy.pdf

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Chaplaincy dimension

Notes

- b) Chaplains are qualified in youth work, community work and equivalent disciplines
- The mandated minimum standard qualification is a Certificate IV in youth work, community work or equivalent. All school chaplains meet that standard and 77% of NSCA affiliated chaplains exceed the mandatory educational standard.
- Through their chaplains, the NSCA has a committed workforce of around 2000 trained pastoral care workers (66% in rural or remote communities, and 58% of the chaplains are women) involved in promotion, prevention and early intervention activities for youth and children.
- c) Parents, teachers and psychologists who are connected to the chaplaincy program find it highly valuable
- For example, a 30 month longitudinal study completed in 2012 by the Research Centre for Vulnerable Children and Families demonstrated (among other outcomes):⁵
- the social and emotional support provided by school chaplains to students has a considerable positive impact;
 - school chaplains help to build up students' confidence to a considerable extent;
 - the programs that the school chaplains run helps to develop students' self-esteem;
 - students from culturally and linguistically diverse communities are assisted by their chaplains; and
 - students experiencing grief and loss or facing relationship difficulties are helped by their chaplain.
- d) The chaplaincy program has been shaped to meet all legal requirements
- Commonwealth financial support of school chaplaincy has evolved through several models, with the current funding model meeting all constitutional and legal requirements.
- In 2012 the High Court was unanimous (7:0) in finding that the school chaplaincy program is valid under the establishment clause (s.116) of the Australian constitution.⁶
- In a 2014 High Court decision, the joint judgement observed, *'it may be assumed that provision of chaplaincy services at a school will help some students... will be of benefit to them ... in the sense of providing them with an advantage or a good.'*⁷

⁵ Harries, Cant, Lavery, Philips and Di Risio, *Evaluation of YouthCARE Chaplaincy Service in Western Australia* (University of Western Australia, 2012) ch 4. The study reinforced the 98% acceptance rate by school principals of an earlier 2009 study. The 2012 study looked at a wide group of stakeholders including school principals, teachers, parents (including regional indigenous parents), students, psychologists and professional associations such as primary and secondary school associations, and Parents and Citizens Associations.

⁶ James, Peter CJ; Benson, David - "School Chaplaincy, Secularism and Church-State Separation in a Liberal Democracy" (2014) 33(1) University of Queensland Law Journal 131, at <http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/journals/UQLawJl/2014/8.html>

⁷ Per French CJ, Hayne, Kiefel, Bell and Keane JJ, *Williams v Commonwealth* [2014] HCA 23 (Williams No.2), at 44.

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Chaplaincy dimension

Notes

- e) Spirituality is an important dimension of the role

Students should be free to explore spirituality for themselves, as an expression of the human right of freedom of thought, conscience and belief.

Because NSCA chaplains have a personal faith connection, they are able to relate to and support students who come from a personal or cultural faith background. However, chaplains offer support to students regardless of whether or not they have a religious faith, and must not proselytise, respecting the views of all students (whether religious or not). As the European Court of Human Rights has observed:

*'Neutrality requires a pluralist approach on the part of the State, not a secularist one. It encourages respect for all world views rather than a preference for one. ... A preference for secularism over alternative world views – whether religious, philosophical or otherwise—is not a neutral option.'*⁸

Chaplains do not define spirituality for students, but work with them to develop a positive spirituality, taking account of the student's own cultural, family and religious background. No other role in schools fills that space.

This means the chaplaincy program is a proven tool in meeting the spiritual development objectives of the Melbourne Declaration on Australian Educational goals: that students develop intellectually, physically, *socially, emotionally, morally, spiritually* and aesthetically.⁹

Those goals make sense from an educational perspective, but they also contribute to developing the wellbeing of students, as spirituality and connection are a strongly positive protective factor in the literature.¹⁰

⁸ *Lautsi v. Italy*, Appl. No. 30814/06, Grand Chamber (18 March 2011), per Judge Power. Discussed by Ian Leigh in 'The European Court of Human Rights and Religious Neutrality', Gavin D'Costa, Malcolm Evans, Tariq Modood and Julian Rivers (eds) *Religion in a Liberal State* (Cambridge University Press, 2013).

⁹ Emphasis added. Ministerial Council on Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA), Melbourne Declaration on Education Goals for Young Australians (2008) 4.

¹⁰ Jean Twenge, Brittany Gentile, Nathan DeWall, Debbie Ma, Katharine Lacefield and David Schurtz, 'Birth Cohort Increases in Psychopathology among Young Americans, 1938–2007: A cross-temporal meta-analysis of the MMPI' (2010) 30(2) *Clinical Psychology Review* 145-154. See the set of protective factors (which include 'moral beliefs' and 'participation in a church or other community group') and risk factors in Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care, Promotion, Prevention and Early Intervention for Mental Health – A Monograph (Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care, 2000) 15-16.

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Appendix - National School Chaplaincy Snapshot

APPENDIX 1: MCCRINDLE 2017 SNAPSHOT

2017 NATIONAL SCHOOL CHAPLAINCY SNAPSHOT

QUICK FACTS

1,562 CHAPLAINS

working in

1929 schools



The average number of work days is 3

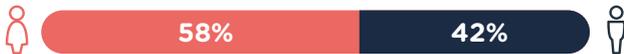
Average age **45 years**



QUALIFICATIONS



Gender



77% of chaplains exceed the minimum qualification level of Cert. IV across Youth Work, Social Science, Education, Ministry/ Theology and other disciplines.

WHAT DO CHAPLAINS DO ?



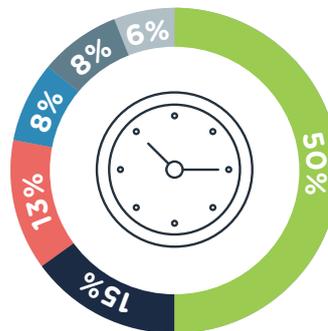
Social, emotional & spiritual support



Wellbeing outcomes



Educational outcomes



How chaplains spend their time:

- Social, emotional and spiritual support
- Role modelling and mentoring
- Educational support
- Extra-curricular activities
- Team contributions
- Community Development

School chaplains promote social, emotional and spiritual wellbeing through role modelling, mentoring, pastoral care, structured activities and programs.

A CARING PRESENCE



Every week chaplains have **28,264** informal conversations with students

Every week chaplains have an additional **17,867** informal conversations with parents/carers & school staff



Chaplains are uniquely placed to connect with students through quality time and significant conversations about everyday life.



As adult role models & mentors who built into the school system, chaplains become protective factors for the wellbeing of students.

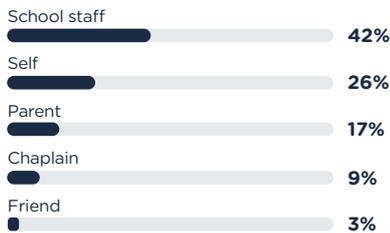


Chaplains also provide a caring & supportive environment for both parents/carers and staff through personal conversations.

APPENDIX 1: MCCRINDLE 2017 SNAPSHOT

PASTORAL CONVERSATIONS

Sources of referral

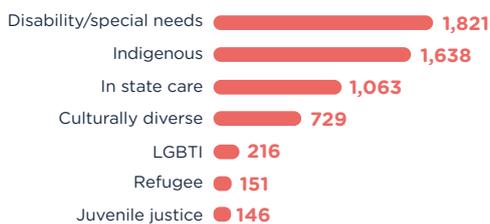


Outcomes

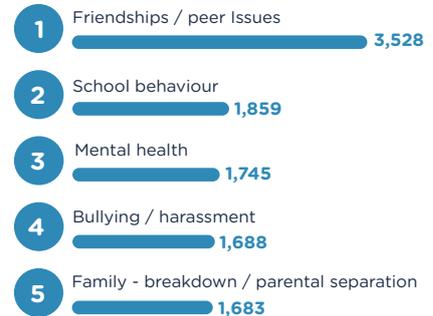


EVERY WEEK
chaplains have
13,461
formal conversations
WITH STUDENTS

Formal pastoral conversations with particular student groups per week



Top 5 pastoral issues



5,582

meetings with school based support professionals including guidance officers, counsellors, special needs coordinators and many others.

PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES



Chaplains make a **significant contribution** to the wellbeing of school communities through the facilitation of social, emotional and spiritual wellbeing programs and participation in extra-curricular activities.



Each term chaplains run

43,262 SESSIONS

supporting

314,353 STUDENTS

Extra-curricular school activities

Chaplains are involved with **3,626** extra-curricular school activities each week...



1236
Fun/recreational activities



849
Sports



406
Excursions



341
Student leadership



292
Music



502
Other

Program breakdown

Social, emotional and spiritual support programs

140,612 participants

20,564 sessions

Including 58 funeral/memorial services

Role modelling and mentoring programs

20,570 participants

8,795 sessions

Educational support programs

119,510 participants

12,167 sessions

Including 7,945 breakfast programs

Community development programs

33,661 participants

1,736 sessions

Methodology

The 2017 National Chaplain Census took place during term 3, 2017 when 1184 chaplains took the survey with 940 completes. The data presented in this infographic has been extrapolated from the survey data to match the total number of chaplains (1562) in Australia working for organisations that are part of the National Schools Chaplaincy Association (NSCA) at the end of term 3.

Background information

The National School Chaplaincy Association (NSCA) is a network of Christian Chaplaincy organisations in Australia. It is represented by Access Ministries (VIC), Generate Ministries (NSW), Schools Ministry Group (SA), YouthCARE (WA) and Scripture Union (ACT, QLD and TAS).

Research and infographic by:

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