



THE UNIVERSITY OF
**WESTERN
AUSTRALIA**



**Centre for Social Policy
Practice Research and
Development**

School of Population
and Global Health

AN OUTCOME EVALUATION OF **SCHOOL CHAPLAINCY**

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First published in June 2022 by:

School of Population and Global Health
M458 | The University of Western Australia
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(Entrance off Clifton Street), Perth 6009 WA
+61 8 6488 6000

uwa.edu.au/schools/population-global-health

ISBN: 978-1-74052-949-5

The University of Western Australia acknowledges that its campuses are situated on Noongar land, and that Noongar people remain the spiritual and cultural custodians of their land, and continue to practise their values, languages, beliefs and knowledge.



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1. INTRODUCTION

This research aimed at evaluating the outcomes of school chaplaincy was commissioned by the National School Chaplaincy Association (NSCA) in 2018. It followed the completion of a first phase exploratory study of activities and outcomes of school chaplaincy conducted in Western Australia on behalf of NSCA in 2017/18 and supported by a primary Western Australian school chaplaincy provider, YouthCARE WA.

The exploratory study, completed in April 2018¹, provided a program-logic and baseline for conceptualising potential measurable outcomes based on a participatory model grounded in practice. This current research embedded this earlier baseline outcome work within a child wellbeing model already developed by the Australian Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) to develop an organising framework for ongoing evaluation at a national level. The model (referred to throughout this document as 'the Nest') is an evidence-based wellbeing framework for children and young people that was developed and then refined over the last 10 years and which 'conceptualises wellbeing as six interconnected domains that support each other to help children reach their potential. To have optimal wellbeing, a child or young person needs to be adequately resourced in all six domains'².

Although planning for the evaluation research was commenced in mid-2018, multiple factors contributed to the delays in both commencing and expediting the work. Obtaining ethics approvals for a national study spanning several jurisdictions and education departments provided an early impediment to speedy progress and meant the research could not commence until ethics approvals from

the national body and each state jurisdiction were received. This occurred in the final term in October 2019 when the first mail out to schools occurred. Delays in recruiting associated with the differential impact of Covid-19 between jurisdictions and allied to school closures and inevitable pressures on school principals and staff, meant that the research had to be suspended from March 2020 until February 2021. The enduring impact of the pandemic throughout 2021 led to ongoing disruptions in the research process. It is testimony to the resilience of school principals and staff as well as school chaplains and indeed, the researchers, that the research was able to be completed.

In the interests of providing a report that is short and readable while also honouring research processes and maintaining data integrity, infographics are included, and a large amount of material is provided in appendices rather than in the body of the report. It has been an exciting and rewarding process despite the harrowing delays. The research team is pleased to be able to make an early contribution to what are necessary and important future evaluations of all school support services including school chaplaincy.



¹ Harries, M., Cant, R. & Butorac, A. (2018). *An Exploratory Study of Activities and Outcomes with School Chaplain Co-Researchers*, Social Policy Practice Research Consortium, The University of Western Australia, April.

² <https://www.aracy.org.au/the-nest-in-action/the-nest-overview>

2. THE TASK

The specific aim of this national evaluation was to identify outcomes of the National School Chaplaincy Program across designated Australian States.

A much earlier study of school chaplaincy in Western Australia had been undertaken by the research team in 2011³. While aimed at identifying the effectiveness of the program in WA and providing strong evidence of stakeholder endorsement of both effectiveness and the value of school chaplaincy to schools, children, families and young people, this research, like much evaluation research at that time, was not outcome based. Two key differences between the current and 2011 research were markers for this current research — it is outcome oriented and nationally focussed. Of particular importance to NSCA was their interest in program evaluations in the future being able to utilise templates that could provide a baseline for a national evidence base, and enable the continuing use of an outcomes focus for measuring school chaplaincy.

The evaluation research objectives as endorsed by NSCA:

1. Determine some immediate outcomes of chaplaincy work.
2. Confirm linkages to longer-term outcomes suggested in earlier Program Logic.
3. Signal recommendations for future/ongoing outcomes-based evaluations of the School Chaplaincy Program — a potential evaluation tool.
4. Inform data collection within NSCA to facilitate further outcomes-based evaluation of the Program.



³ Harries, M., Cant, R., Lavery, S. Phillips, P. & Di Risio, J. (2012) *Evaluation of YouthCARE Chaplaincy Services in Western Australia*, Final Report, Centre for Vulnerable Children & Families, The University of Western Australia.

3. CONTEXTUAL MATTERS

3.1 National School Chaplaincy Program (NSCP)

The National School Chaplaincy program, in which funding went directly to schools from the federal government was established in 2006 and aimed to provide for the employment of chaplains in state schools that requested a chaplain. Most school chaplains were, and still are supplied by faith-based organisations established to train and supply chaplains in each state or territory — and there is a range of such providers. In 2011 the program was extended to include ‘secular student wellbeing officers’ and additional training requirements were deemed necessary. The program has continued to the present time. Various policy changes have ensued, particularly following the High Court decision in 2014 after which funding was provided to states and territories for them to administer funding for chaplaincy services to schools. Since that time, states and territory education departments that continue to utilise the program have refined their own policies, requirements and procedures within and through a Project Agreement which contains the broader policy framework of the federal government.

The overall goal of the program is to ‘support the wellbeing of student and school communities through the provision of pastoral care services’. The more specific aims and constraints are identified as follows:⁴

NSCP chaplains work in collaboration with school communities to support the wellbeing of school students through:

- The **provision of pastoral care**.
- **Running programs** such as breakfast clubs and workshops.
- **Coordinating volunteer activities** within the school community.

In their role working with school communities, NSCP chaplains:

- Do not provide religious instruction or religious counselling.
- May be of any faith.
- Must not proselytise.
- Must respect, accept and be sensitive to other views, values and beliefs.
- Must comply with state and territory laws and policies in relation to child protection matters.
- Must have relevant and valid state and territory working with children or vulnerable person checks.
- Meet the minimum qualification requirements.
- Must undertake the cyberbullying Professional Learning Package.

Rich debates and tensions have accompanied and continue to accompany the life of the NSCP program. Some are associated with challenges about the appropriateness of its faith base, others are more discipline based and challenge the skills of chaplains to attend to the serious needs of school children and young people. The essence of these tensions is well captured in a series of articles in the Australian online academic media outlet, *The Conversation*⁵ in which it is evident that issues of how to identify and meet the needs of children and young people in schools continues to focus on inadequate funding, discipline roles and boundaries, as well as matters of secularism and faith. It is interesting that few of the publicly shared tensions seem to be discussed within the broader, very complex context of evaluation of outcomes and the very nature of student support services, pastoral care of students and indeed student wellbeing itself.

3.2 School chaplaincy as a component of pastoral care or student support services

When a school employs a school chaplain, they are generally located within what are variously called Student Support Services, Pastoral Care Services or similar, and work alongside other professionals including perhaps psychologists, nurses, social workers, disability support workers, Indigenous or cultural advisers – and in high schools, vocational advisers. The composition of the team of support staff is generally determined by a mixture of the requirements of government policies, the assessment of the needs of a school community as well as staff availability. As such, the roles and functions of the school chaplain will vary significantly between schools.

Pastoral care is a concept going back to ancient times and present in almost all cultures and traditions. It refers to all aspects of support — social, emotional, or spiritual — including support for people in faith-based and non-faith-based communities. Pastoral care departments are now established in large numbers of institutions and organisations, and are increasingly multi-faith, secular or non-faith-based and focus on support for people in times of difficulties.

The term ‘pastoral care’ in education circles is generally used to describe the conditions needed to ensure the personal development of students and enable them to meet their life capacities or, more explicitly, ‘the structures, practices and approaches to support the welfare, well-being and development of children and young people’.⁶ Marland’s definition of pastoral care is useful ‘it means looking after the total welfare of the pupil’, and he argues that ‘pastoral care’ has ‘a central educative purpose in itself’, and therefore should not be seen as ‘a way of simply supporting the academic work.’⁷ Increasingly, wellbeing concepts frame the work of student support and pastoral care services.

In Australia as elsewhere, student support or pastoral care services have been seen to be progressively important to the wellbeing of students over the last 30 years.^{8,9} Indeed,

educational scholars have led the way in conceptualising the significance of wellbeing as a framework for policy development in schools.^{10,11} Student wellbeing, that is, paying attention to quality-of-life matters for students, is now well established in all education policies. Alongside this educational leadership have been multiple observations about confusion and absence of clarity about the meaning and scope of wellbeing and how it is or is not supported and embedded within the context of educational responsibilities. While schools are clearly important for locating and addressing wellbeing, it is also evident they and policy makers continue to grapple with how to embed, measure and evaluate — let alone resource — wellbeing policies and practices.¹²

In a recent and comprehensive research evaluation of student’s understanding of wellbeing, Powel and colleagues observe ‘schools in Australia have increasingly been identified as key institutional and relational settings for promoting children and young people’s social and emotional wellbeing’.¹³ Along with numerous recent authors, these researchers highlight the complexity of the term, wellbeing, and the difficulties of establishing measures by which to evaluate it.

3.3 Evaluations of school support services and school chaplaincy

A limited search for evaluations of relevant student support services in Australia was undertaken and it located very little material and none that addressed outcomes in terms of contributing to the wellbeing of children – other than in a general sense such as the 2017 Kantar evaluation conducted on behalf of The Australian Government Department of Education and Training.¹⁴ However, in recent years, chaplaincy services themselves have consistently provided extensive data on their activities and outcomes – perhaps exemplified best by the data and data snapshots provided by mccrindle¹⁵ all of which point to impressive activities, outputs and outcomes of school chaplaincy in Australia. Some international research was located, and this tends to highlight the fact that student support services constellations and

4 <https://www.dese.gov.au/national-school-chaplaincy-program-nscp#:~:text=must%20respect%2C%20accept%20and%20be,meet%20the%20minimum%20qualification%20requirements>

5 <https://theconversation.com/au/topics/school-chaplains-3245>

6 Calvert, M. (2009) From ‘pastoral care’ to ‘care’: meanings and practices, *Pastoral Care in Education*, 27:4, 267-277, DOI: 10.1080/02643940903349302

7 Marland, M. (1974). *Pastoral care*. Heinemann Educational Publishers, London, pp 8-9.

8 Best, R. (2014). Forty years of pastoral care: An appraisal of Michael Marland’s seminal book and its significance for pastoral care in schools. *Pastoral care in education*, 32(3), 175-185. doi:10.1080/02643944.2014.951385.

9 Hearn, L., Campbell-Pope, R., House, J. & Cross, D. 2006. *Pastoral Care in Education*. Child Health Promotion Research Unit, Edith Cowan University, Perth.

10 Powell, M.A., Graham, A. (2017) Wellbeing in schools: Examining the policy-practice nexus. *Aust. Educ. Res.* 44, 213-231. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13384-016-0222-7>

11 Pollard, E., & Lee, P. (2003). Child wellbeing: A systematic review of the literature. *Social Indicators Research*, 61(1), 59-78.

12 ibid

13 Powell, M.A., Graham, A., Fitzgerald, R. et al. (2018) Wellbeing in schools: what do students tell us? *Aust. Educ. Res.* 45, 515-531. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13384-018-0273-z>

14 The Australian Government Department of Education and Training (2017) National School Chaplaincy Programme Evaluation, Kantar Public Research Report, <https://www.dese.gov.au/national-school-chaplaincy-program-nscp/resources/national-school-chaplaincy-programme-evaluation-report>

15 <https://schoolchaplaincy.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/NSCA2020-mccrindle-Infographic-250521-Final-Online.pdf>

structures differ significantly between countries as well as differing in terms of orientation and outcome goals e.g., a US national study focused on the significance of student support services in the US – which is aimed at increasing college retention.¹⁶

It is noteworthy that the federal government has long acknowledged that measurement of the outcome of emotional wellbeing among students and the broader school community is a multi-dimensional factor which is highly individual and, as such, difficult to measure. Svane and colleagues undertook a meta-analysis of what they called ‘the wicked problem of wellbeing’ research in schools and highlighted the paucity of robust evaluations and the need for further research to develop clearer definitions, more robust interventions and measuring methods for interventions aimed at improving school community wellbeing.¹⁷

Numerous other analyses have been recommended or undertaken and of particular interest to the researchers was that commissioned by the South Australian Department of Education and Children’s Services for The Australian Council for Educational Research.¹⁸ The authors of this comprehensive 2004 discussion paper foreshadowed the urgent need to develop measurement instruments of

student wellbeing in schools. One particularly interesting research evaluation of student support services in NSW was undertaken by Katz and colleagues at the Social Policy Research Centre (SPRC) in 2013.¹⁹ Using a selection of methods and interviewing a large range of stakeholders, the team of researchers evaluated the role of the student support officer program throughout the State. There was strong support for the role of student support services and a consistent theme that they ‘made an important contribution to student wellbeing’. The program outcome component of the Review assessed the contribution Student Support Officers (SSOs) made in key areas, and identified the following in particular:

- Promoting positive school cultures, greater connectedness, and wellbeing in the school community.
- Building resilience, self-efficacy, and confidence in students.
- Recognising, respecting, and responding to the identity and diversity of learners across the school community.
- Strengthening social responsibility among students, for example in the prevention of bullying, and providing opportunities for students to have a voice in their school communities.

In relation to school chaplaincy, an independent evaluation of the NSCP also found it to be ‘effective in supporting student wellbeing.’²⁰ Specifically, this evaluation identified the following ‘outcomes’ in relation to student wellbeing:

- Providing advice, guidance, mentoring or strategies (cited by 61%).
- Providing support for students, staff and/or parents (cited by 48%).
- Work towards building and developing relationships (43%).
- Building confidence, resilience and/or self-esteem (33%).

The mccrindle Report of 2020²¹ identifies nine outcomes of ‘pastoral conversations’ conducted by school chaplains and notes the significance at 63% of the outcome, ‘Ongoing pastoral support from chaplain’ of these conversations. All of the nine outcomes the report identifies are activity or process-based outcomes – similar in kind to those noted in the government commissioned independent evaluation of the NSCP. These outcomes are all of a different nature to those being sought by our research which aimed at identifying outcomes for the children and young people themselves.

3.4 Emergence of a national child wellbeing focus – the Nest

In 2009, The Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) commenced a comprehensive research project funded by the Australian Government and aimed at designing and developing a Common Approach interdisciplinary framework to identify the needs of children and families by which to address what had been identified as a clear deficit in public policies about the wellbeing of Australia’s children and youth.²² Following the development of this framework, an extensive consultation was conducted with thousands of children, young people, and sector stakeholders as well as experts from a range of disciplines. Consequently, the ground breaking Australian national plan for child and youth wellbeing was collaboratively developed. Titled the Nest²³, the plan was launched in Canberra in 2013 with the following shared aspirational wellbeing vision:

‘All young people are loved and safe, have material basics, are healthy, are learning and participating and have a positive sense of identity and culture.’²⁴



HOW CHAPLAINS SUPPORT STUDENT WELLBEING*



*As reported by respondents²⁰

16 U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, Policy and Program Studies Service, National Evaluation of Student Support Services: Examination of Student Outcomes After Six Years, Washington, D.C., 2010.

17 Svane, D., Evans, N., & Carter, M. A. (2019). Wicked wellbeing: Examining the disconnect between the rhetoric and reality of wellbeing interventions in schools. *Australian Journal of Education*, 63(2), 209-231.

18 Fraillon, J. (2004). *Measuring student well-being in the context of Australian schooling*: Discussion paper. Carlton South, VIC: Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs.

19 Katz, I., Griffiths, A., Bullen J. & Nethery, D. (2014). Review of the Student Support Officer Initiative, *Final Report for NSW Department of Education and Communities*, Social Policy Research Centre, University of NSW.

20 The Australian Government Department of Education and Training (2017) National School Chaplaincy Programme Evaluation, Kantar Public Research Report, <https://www.dese.gov.au/national-school-chaplaincy-program-nscp/resources/national-school-chaplaincy-programme-evaluation-report>

21 <https://schoolchaplaincy.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/NSCA2020-mccrindle-Infographic-250521-Final-Online.pdf>

22 Goodhue, R (2015). The delivery of a Child and Family Wellbeing Project using The Common Approach – Final Report. A report by the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth for the South Australian Department for Education and Child Development, Canberra, ACT

23 The title derived from the comments of a young participant at an ARACY consultation who described the areas of wellbeing as forming a nest, where ‘if every area is supported, we’re able to be happy and healthy and fly from the nest’.

24 Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) (2014). The nest action agenda: Improving the wellbeing of Australia’s children and youth [https://www.aracy.org.au/publications-resources/command/download_file/id/329/filename/Second edition The nest action agenda.pdf](https://www.aracy.org.au/publications-resources/command/download_file/id/329/filename/Second%20edition%20The%20nest%20action%20agenda.pdf) P.4.

The Nest provides a way of thinking about the whole child in the context of family, education, health, and culture. It captures the six interlocking areas of wellbeing. To have optimal wellbeing, a child or young person needs to be adequately resourced in all six domains.

- Being Valued, Loved and Safe.
- Having Material Basics.
- Being Healthy.
- Learning.
- Participating.
- Having a Positive Sense of Identity and Culture.

A range of indicators is provided for each of these domains (See Appendix 1) and the subtext for each domain is included in the data analysis below.

Refining and measuring the progress of these wellbeing indicators for Australia’s children has been central to ARACY’s work with the Nest since 2013 and there have been three national Report Cards launched – the last immediately before this NSCA research was commenced.²⁵ These reports on the wellbeing of Australia’s children and young people are now linked to OECD report, *Measuring What Matters for Child Well-being and Policies*.²⁶ In which it is stated:

*‘Some areas of children’s lives are measured better than others.... children’s social and emotional wellbeing is less well covered, in part due to the lack of a consistent conceptual and statistical framework’.*²⁷

Since its establishment, the Nest has been used and adapted by many state jurisdictions, government departments, NGOs as well as national organisations and researchers. Its significance is multi-fold. It has international standing as an evidence-based wellbeing framework. It enables service systems at all levels involved in supporting and promoting the health, education and wellbeing of children and young people to engage early in their lives to maximise their effectiveness. It provides a means whereby all services can adapt and augment their work in tailored partnerships to provide safety, reduce abuse and neglect, and enable the provision of support before problems escalate to the detriment of children and young people. A profoundly expressive example of the usage of the Nest is in the recently launched *Tasmanian Child and Youth Wellbeing Framework* which uses it as the foundation for its evidence-based definition of child and youth wellbeing as well as for evaluating outcomes for children and young people.²⁸



25 <https://www.aracy.org.au/the-nest-in-action>
26 OECD (2021), *Measuring What Matters for Child Well-being and Policies*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/e82fded1-en>.
27 Ibid, Executive Summary
28 https://www.strongfamiliesafekids.tas.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0023/5549/1-Tasmanian-Child-and-Youth-Wellbeing-Framework-Web.pdf

4. THE RESEARCH

4.1 Research Team

The Centre for Social Policy Practice Research and Development (CSPRD) at The University of Western Australia was contracted to undertake the evaluation and coordination of the research project. The research team included:

- Dr Maria Harries AM: Social Work academic and Senior Honorary Research Fellow at The University of Western Australia.
- Dr Rosemary Cant PhD: Psychologist and experienced evaluator with a strong background in quantitative and mixed methods research.
- Dr Anne Butorac PhD: Educator and experienced evaluator with a strong background in qualitative research. Anne was Project Coordinator.

Although two of the research team had undertaken the previously named effectiveness research on school chaplaincy, all three researchers are independent and have no connections with school or other chaplaincy services.

4.2 Grounding the work in the Exploratory Study

An exploratory study, which commenced in April 2018,²⁹ was the first phase of this very challenging two-phased national evaluation of school chaplaincy services provided under the umbrella of the NSCA. This first phase involved the participation of chaplains as co-researchers and aimed to develop an outcome-based approach to the evaluation. It involved four components:

- Identifying potential measurable outcomes grounded in chaplaincy practice.
- Testing out ideas about how these outcomes might be evaluated.
- Considering a wellbeing model as an organising framework.
- Developing and testing data collection tools.

A stepped process involved chaplains identifying:

- The activities in which they were involved.
- Who participated?
- What outputs were evidenced?
- What outcomes based on what evidence were achieved?
- What longer term outcomes these activities led to?

The co-researching chaplains were carefully selected on a range of criteria aimed at maximising their diversity, experience, and capacity for reflection. They maintained journals throughout the process of interviews, focus groups and discussions with researchers. In the final analysis of their deliberations with researchers they were invited to interrogate the Nest – the structured wellbeing framework that had recently been updated – and to consider the outcomes of the work they had described in this light.

The chaplaincy activities and outcomes described by the chaplains were then tracked into the Nest framework for their ‘fit’ with Nest outcomes. It is noteworthy that although the Nest was known to the researchers, our attention was independently drawn to it at this very stage by a member of the NSCA.

4.3 Developing the Program Logic

Alongside the incorporation of the chaplaincy outcomes analysis within the Nest framework, the original NSCA Program Logic model was reviewed and adapted. In consultation with a range of stakeholders, including members of the NSCA. A School Chaplaincy Program Logic for the evaluation and baseline for conceptualising potential measurable outcomes was then finalised. It explicitly utilised the Nest Framework and developed it using the data from the exploratory study and the information from the program analysis of mccrindle data, which had usefully identified a range of possible outcomes that linked to the Nest wellbeing outcomes (Appendix 2).

29 Harries, M., Cant, R. & Butorac, A. (2018). *An Exploratory Study of Activities and Outcomes with School Chaplain Co-Researchers*, Social Policy Practice Research Consortium, The University of Western Australia, April.

4.4 Research Process

Following the Exploratory Study, the proposal for the second phase of the evaluation was developed, refined, and approved to commence in August 2018. However, the implementation of this formal evaluation phase was slow and frustrating as it involved managing the complexities of competing jurisdictional requirements in relation to ethics applications and of course, varying departmental arrangements in each state. There was also a requirement to select states to participate and this involved complex discussions about opportunities for, and limitations to, state engagements.

Ethics

Undertaking research across several Australian educational jurisdictions necessitated meeting multiple requirements in relation to ethics approvals. In the first place, the research needed to meet the overarching requirements of the Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE), which was facilitated via a common National Application Form (NAF). At the same time, the research was required to meet each jurisdiction’s guidelines. The specific compliances of each authority had to be addressed. This was a large task, made more challenging by the range of strategies proposed in the evaluation; strategies which, in combination, enabled us to move the evaluation towards a comprehensive outcomes/evidence-based perspective rather than an output-based model.

The NAF applications were submitted in mid-November 2018 to all potential participating states (Queensland, Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia). Meanwhile, a survey instrument based on the Program Logic (linked to the Nest) was developed and piloted. A draft interview framework for the qualitative data gathering phase was designed. Additionally, work was commenced to adapt and trial ‘*This Much!*’, a self-reporting tool which enabled children and young people to be involved in the research.³⁰

Coordinating a national process

The opportunities and challenges of this evaluation were discussed and negotiated at length with chaplaincy providers, education departments and school chaplains. Meeting the challenges and optimising the opportunities

required well-considered management. An underlying organising principle was a process of central coordination and, wherever possible and appropriate, more localised support using key NSCA link personnel within each participating State agency. Two key aspects of that collaborative process are noted:

1. The National School Chaplaincy Association (NSCA)

Throughout the evaluation the NSCA played a key advisory role. This involved regular email, phone, online and, where possible, face-to-face communications as well as feedback on regular evaluation progress reporting.

2. Evaluation Link Officers (ELOs)

ELOs located in state-based chaplaincy organisations provided key linkages with the UWA research team and state chaplaincy providers. They were very well informed about the evaluation and played a critical role with participating schools and school-based chaplains.

Given the hiatus caused by the pandemic, the role of the ELOs proved to be even more important than had been anticipated at the outset. They were vitally important to the success of the evaluation because they had already well-established communication links with participating schools and chaplains, as well as a nuanced understanding of the operation of the School Chaplaincy Program at the state level. They were well placed to help maintain momentum to the evaluation process, especially as this related to school-level participation.

An example of the significance of the role played by the ELOs relates to the COVID-imposed challenges caused by the repeated stops and starts to the survey. Each time the survey process was re-started, and schools were re-invited to participate, ELOs were able to very quickly provide the UWA research team with a current list of schools with chaplains.

It is important to note these ELOs were never involved in school selection, data gathering, and retrieval or reporting.

In summary, it is not an exaggeration to suggest that the collaboration with state-based chaplaincy organisations and their link officers was critical to the evaluation surviving the challenges of the COVID pandemic.

Key tasks/steps	Outcomes	Timeframe
Exploratory study with school chaplain co-researchers	April 2018 study report linking school chaplaincy to Nest framework	Term 1 2018
Evaluation Program Logic	Evaluation Program Logic built on the 6 Nest wellbeing outcomes	April 2018
Project proposal	Comprehensive national valuation proposal approved by NSCA & UWA	August 2018
Exploration and trial of This Much! app as a possible tool for gathering quantitative data	A trial report indicating logistical challenges of This Much! for the current study while acknowledging its potential for future use	March 2018 – June 2019
State education systems’ approvals to proceed	Significant delay as process negotiated separately with each state education jurisdiction	May-Aug 2019
Establishment of Evaluation Link Officer (ELO) network	First meeting of the ELO team	August 2019
1st survey mail-out to participating schools	End of year distractions resulted in lower-than-anticipated response rate	October 2019
2nd mail-out to schools	A promising start, but Covid-19 intervened	March-July 2020
Re-start of evaluation with a new communication to schools	The evaluation process still faced a COVID-disrupted school environment	July 2020
3rd mail-out to raise the survey response rate	A concerted effort by participating states to achieve a desirable survey response rate	Feb-Dec 2021
Data analysis/report writing	Final report	June 2022

Table 1: Evaluation timeframe

30 <https://www.childandfamilytraining.org.uk/102/This-Much>. This Much! was chosen as it uses a well validated interactive visual analogue scale that is used for self-reporting on selected outcomes by young people

5. DATA COLLECTION

The evaluation aimed to utilise a range of quantitative and qualitative data sources including a survey, and facilitated program evaluations and to capitalise on data gathered as well as augmenting it by using a Program Logic based on the Nest outcomes framework.

5.1 Desk top search

A desk-top search was undertaken to investigate existing evaluation reports and research on selected (most frequently used) programs facilitated by school chaplains. A number of the programs are listed on the Be You website³¹ as resources for Australian schools. Be You is a national mental health in education initiative delivered by Beyond Blue, in collaboration with Early Childhood Australia and headspace.

5.2 NSCA administrative databases

The data collected in the annual school chaplaincy census undertaken by mccrindle is the most comprehensive source of national data on chaplaincy activities. Much of the census data are used by mccrindle in annual National School Chaplaincy Snapshot³² infographics accessible from the Internet. SU QLD provided the research team with the unanalysed 2019, 2020 and 2021 census data in Excel format. The research team chose the 2020 census data as representative of the amount and type of school chaplaincy activity during the research period.

5.3 Survey design and process

The survey consisted of 42 Likert scale type questions, 39 of which were based on the Nest framework. It also included two questions around outcomes for school communities, a question on proselytization and an open-ended question inviting respondents to comment further on chaplaincy services at their school (see Appendix 3). The survey was designed and distributed using SurveyMonkey.

The survey was conducted in two stages. The first stage was an invitation from the research team via SurveyMonkey to principals of selected schools for their school to participate in the survey (see Sampling). In stage 2, principals who agreed to their school's participation were sent a link to the survey

by the research team and asked to forward it to those of the school staff with experience of school chaplaincy services, e.g. school management, teachers, members of the student services team and chaplains.

5.4 Sampling

The NSCA consists of separate entities loosely working together under the banner of NSCA. The original evaluation plan aimed to include the four largest states that had chaplaincy programs—Queensland, South Australia, Victoria and Western Australia. However, South Australia declined to participate. In 2019 there were approximately 1650 schools with NSCA chaplains across Queensland, Victoria and Western Australia.

The first 280 schools were initially selected from a larger random sample of 500 schools across three Australian States allowing for a 95% confidence. The remaining 220 schools were used to replace those where the principal declined the invitation or did not respond or the school no longer had an NSCA chaplain. The random selection required participation from 143 Queensland schools, 44 Victorian schools and 93 Western Australian schools. The final tally at 14/12/2021 was 347 schools which accepted the invitation—212 from Western Australia, 88 from Queensland and 47 from Victoria. We were able to more than address the short-fall in Queensland data with Western Australian data.

5.5 This Much!

'This Much!' is a customisable interactive visual analogue scale intended to support self-report by children and some adults which can be used for therapeutic and also research purposes. This Much! was developed by Child and Family Training, UK, and is designed to help answer questions about people and circumstances which elicit a range of feelings. It generates numerical data which can be analysed quantitatively.³³

The UWA research team identified This Much! App as a tool with potential to contribute to measuring outcomes from chaplains' formal pastoral conversations. Pastoral conversations is the term given to conversations that chaplains have with students, staff and carers. A pastoral conversation refers to any meaningful discussion and can be formal or informal; the term formal pastoral conversation is applied when a student is removed from their current setting

to have such a conversation³⁴. This Much! seemed to provide a way to enable a child to voice, reflect on and monitor their own thoughts, feelings and story.

YouthCARE conducted a small-scale trial of This Much! (on iPad) with six YouthCARE chaplains in order to explore:

- Its immediate usefulness for school chaplains and the students in their pastoral care sessions/conversations.
- Its possible contribution in the longer term as a data-gathering tool to enable YouthCARE (and possibly NSCA more broadly) to use This Much! to monitor/evaluate the outcomes of school chaplaincy services.

During the trial, chaplains familiarised themselves with This Much!, created templates and experimented with it in their pastoral care sessions, troubleshooting issues and identifying limits and possibilities. Chaplains commented favourably on the tool's flexibility and creativity, the capacity to involve students in choosing scales and images, and the ability to use the scale to measure changes within and between sessions. However, some chaplains found aspects of This Much! difficult to use and the range of images limited. While these limitations could have been overcome, important practical issues such as supplying iPads to students, exporting the data for monitoring and evaluation purposes, and obtaining school and parental consent were less easily resolved within the timeframe and resources of this evaluation. Liaison with the UK developers of This Much! was also challenging due to time differences. In the end YouthCARE and the UWA research team decided to end the trial. Nevertheless, it is the team's view that This Much! or a similar tool has potential as a way of measuring outcomes using the children's direct experience.

5.6 Accessing Additional Data on Program Outcomes ('Before and After' data)

The original evaluation plan involved checking for the availability of 'before and after data' on the programs that school chaplains tend to run in schools across Australia as, we argued, these could provide an augmented data source on school chaplaincy outcomes. However, it was noted at quite an early stage that in order to access any such data, the schools and chaplains needed to have obtained prior consent from participants and schools for their broader use. Following extensive discussions with providers and schools, this consent proved not to have been provided and we made the decision that it was not practicable to pursue this element of the evaluation plan.

5.7 Selected interviews with School Principals and other staff

The original plan, again thwarted by the pandemic was to visit a small number of schools to engage in interviews aimed at augmenting the survey data. The first survey mail out at the end of 2019 had already resulted in a number of school principals expressing an interest in being interviewed. Unfortunately, it was not possible to follow through with these.

31 <https://beyou.edu.au/resources/programs-directory>

32 <https://schoolchaplaincy.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/NSCA2020-McCrindle-Infographic-250521-Final-Online.pdf>

33 <https://www.childandfamilytraining.org.uk/102/This-Much>

34 YouthCARE personal communication.

6. ANALYSIS

6.1. Quantitative analysis

598 individuals from schools in Queensland (26%), Victoria (11%) and Western Australia (63%) completed the survey, an average of 1.73 respondents per school. Most respondents were from primary schools located in capital cities. The percentage of respondents from different school types is reflective of the distribution of chaplains across schools (mccrindle 2020).

The Likert-type scale data were analysed using descriptive statistics and graphed. As the purpose of the research was to examine outcomes from NSCA chaplains in general, no between-states or between-schools comparisons were undertaken. Don't know/not applicable responses have been excluded from the graphs, which can be viewed in **Section 7** under each Nest theme's outcomes.

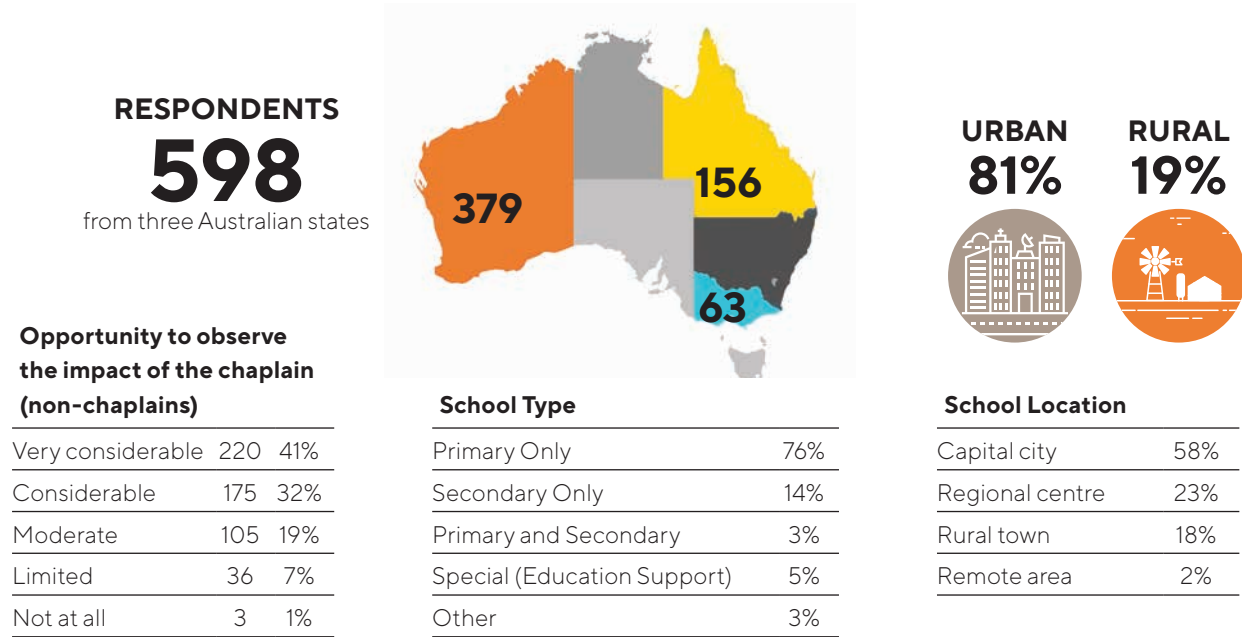


Table 2: School respondents' opportunity to observe the impact of chaplains, their school type and school location.

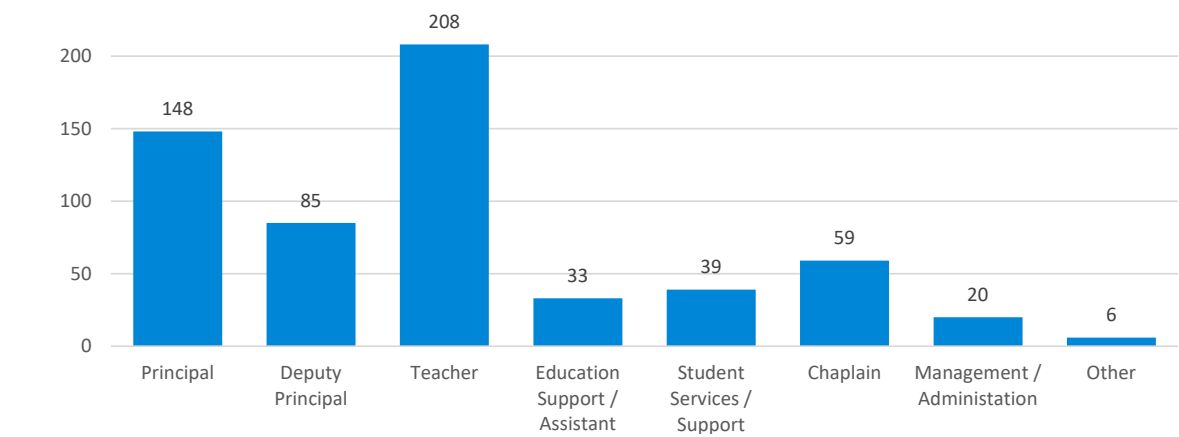


Chart 1: Respondents' role.

6.2 Thematic analysis of qualitative data

In addition to the quantitative data gathered around specific Nest outcomes, at the end of the survey some qualitative data were gathered in response to one item – an invitation to add a personal comment at the end of the survey:

Please take the opportunity to comment further on chaplaincy services to your school.

Of a total of 598 survey responses, 392 (66%) responded to the invitation to add a comment. It is noteworthy that so many respondents volunteered to add commentary after already answering forty two questions. It is particularly striking that they did so by not simply extrapolating on earlier questions but rather by augmenting these with new frames of reference. This generated a comprehensive and rich database. In retrospect and given the subsequent changes imposed on the evaluation by Covid-19, it was fortuitous that the survey generated such data. This was especially so when it became obvious that Phase 2 of the evaluation which was planned around site visits and discussions with school staff had to be abandoned due to the Pandemic. Having access to such an extensive database of respondent comments compensated in some part for the abandoned Phase 2 of the project.

Thematic analysis of the data was done manually and involved:

1. Familiarisation with the extensive database.
2. An iterative process of drawing out emerging themes, moving individual statements around and modifying theme titles to eventually consolidate the major messages.
3. Finally, all themes were presented in order of number of comments to indicate the strength of each theme.

For analysis purposes some responses could readily be segregated into separate items that related to emerging themes. Some less so and in these cases the comments have been used in their entirety.

Two aspects of this analysis are noteworthy. In one sense, the task of making sense of respondents' qualitative comments about school chaplaincy services was easy in that it only involved a single survey item. However, the task was made more challenging by the number of respondents and the multiple, often composite comments offered by many. The scope, breadth and depth of these comments provide a rich source for ongoing analysis as school chaplaincy services seek to continue to evaluate their impact on the lives of students, their families and school communities. The 392 comments formed 40 pages of very rich data which are non-identifying and therefore available in their entirety. At the end of the research analysis, a final document based on a thematic analysis has been designed that can be readily accessible as an evidence base of participants' general reflections on school chaplaincy services. It has been included as an attachment (**Appendix 4**).

6.3 mccrindle data

For some years, social and marketing researcher mccrindle has conducted an annual survey of NSCA chaplains. In 2020 the survey occurred during one week in October. The mccrindle survey provides data on the programs and activities undertaken by chaplains. Approximately 2/3 of chaplains completed the survey and mccrindle extrapolated from the survey to match the total number of NSCA chaplains Australia-wide (1690)³⁵. Except for program data, it was not possible for the researchers to further analyse the data by state. The mccrindle data have been used to connect the Nest and school community outcomes to the programs and activities undertaken by chaplains.

35 <https://schoolchaplaincy.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/NSCA2020-McCrindle-Infographic-250521-Final-Online.pdf>

7. CHAPLAINCY OUTCOMES

Chaplaincy outcomes have been reported under the six Nest themes. Outcomes for school communities are not part of the Nest framework and have been reported separately.

The National School Chaplaincy Snapshot 2020 reveals that chaplains had around 14,600 formal pastoral conversations and 31,400 informal conversations with students on a wide range of issues of concern to the students each week in 2020. Chaplains also facilitated about 26,130 wellbeing program sessions each term engaging some 348,600 students.

The Program Logic (Appendix 2) links chaplains’ activities to the Nest outcomes through the immediate outcomes achieved by chaplains and the longer-term outcomes to which they contribute.

- The six Nest themes are as follows:
- Nest Theme 1: **Being Valued, Loved and Safe**
 - Nest theme 2: **Having Material Basics**
 - Nest theme 3: **Being Healthy**
 - Nest theme 4: **Learning**
 - Nest theme 5: **Participating**
 - Nest theme 6: **Positive Sense of Culture and Identity.**
- These six themes are represented in this document by the following icons.



Nest Theme 1
Being Valued, Loved and Safe



Nest theme 2
Having Material Basics



Nest theme 3
Being Healthy



Nest theme 4
Learning



Nest theme 5
Participating



Nest theme 6
Positive Sense of Culture and Identity.

7.1 Nest Theme 1: Being Valued, Loved and Safe



Children and youth who are valued, loved and safe are confident, have a strong sense of self-identity, and have high self-esteem. They form secure attachments, have pro-social peer connections, and positive adult role models or mentors are present in their life. Children and youth who are loved and safe are resilient: they can withstand life’s challenges and respond constructively to setbacks and unanticipated events.

Based on the number of pastoral conversations each week friendship/peer issues, bullying and harassment and family breakdown/parental separation were among the top five pastoral issues dealt with by chaplains.³⁶ Some of the most frequently used programs facilitated by chaplains related to this theme, e.g. Drumbeat (Discovering Relationships Using Music Beliefs, Emotions, Attitudes and Thoughts), Rock and Water which focuses on body awareness, emotional awareness and self-awareness and includes practical anti-bullying strategies and alternatives to verbal and physical aggression, and Play is the Way—a social and emotional learning methodology using play.

Ten questions explored the chaplain’s contribution to children being valued, loved and safe. The questions were designed to reflect the elements of the theme in a school setting. The questions were:

1. The extent to which students in contact with the chaplain felt listened to and cared for?
- The extent to which the chaplain, either through pastoral conversations or facilitated programs:
2. Helped students experiencing difficulties to develop strategies to manage the situation?
 3. Calmed and assisted distressed or angry students to return to, or remain in, the classroom?
 4. Helped students to manage their emotions?
 5. Assisted students to resolve conflict peacefully?
 6. Assisted students to cope with bullying?
 7. Assisted students not to bully other children?
- The extent to which the chaplain:
8. Provided a role model for students to emulate?
 9. Provided students feeling unsafe with a safe place to go?
 10. Assisted students to develop positive and constructive peer relationships?



³⁶ <https://schoolchaplaincy.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/NSCA2020-mccrindle-Infographic-250521-Final-Online.pdf>



POSITIVE IMPACT*
87%
of respondents felt that chaplains had made a **positive impact** on their student's sense of being **valued, loved and safe**.



GAME CHANGING*
57%
of respondents felt chaplains had made a **very considerable** positive impact on their students.

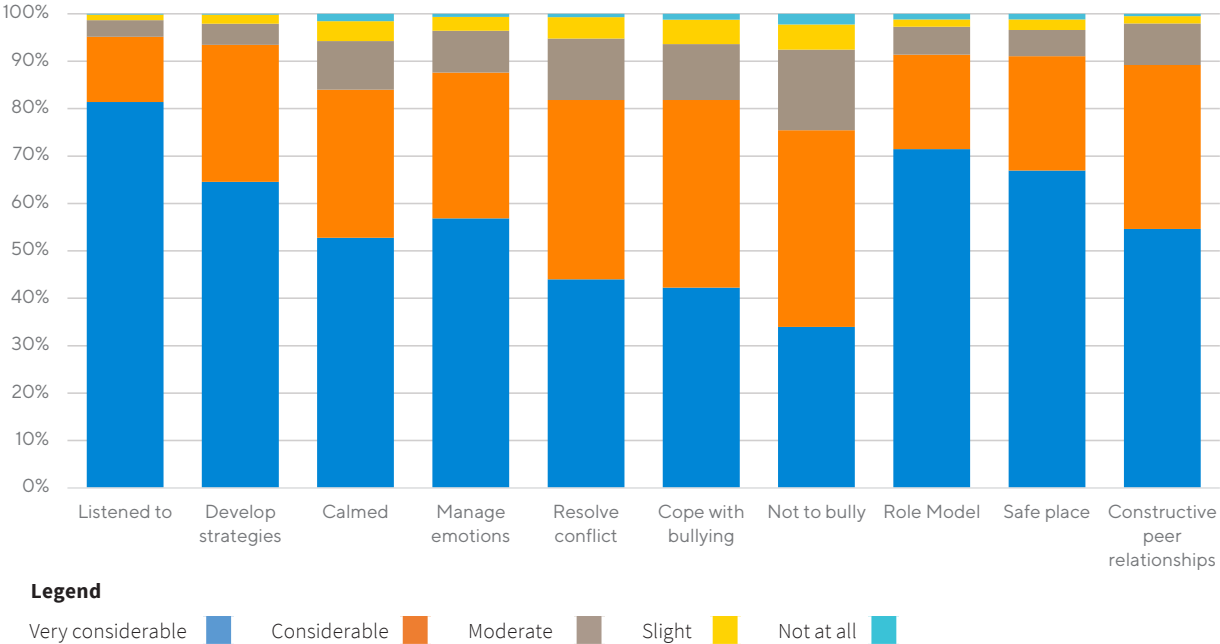


Chart 2: The chaplain's contribution to Children Being Valued, Loved and Safe

	Listened to	Develop strategies	Calmed	Manage emotions	Resolve conflict	Cope with bullying	Not to bully	Role Model	Safe place	Constructive peer relationships
Very considerable	485	373	303	335	254	237	180	423	389	324
Considerable	82	167	179	181	218	222	220	118	140	205
Moderate	21	26	59	52	75	66	90	35	32	52
Slight	7	11	24	17	26	29	28	9	13	9
Not at all	1	1	9	4	4	7	12	7	7	3
Don't know	2	10	24	9	21	37	68	6	17	5
Total	598	588	598	598	598	598	598	598	598	598

Table 3: Being valued loved and safe

* 87% of respondents felt that chaplains had made either a **considerable** or a **very considerable** contribution and 57% of respondents, felt that they had made a **very considerable** impact.

Respondent Comments

Indicative of survey **respondent comments** relating to Nest Theme 1 (Being Valued, Loved and Safe) are the following:

‘Our school chaplain does a wonderful job connecting with our students, providing them with a safe and accepting place to come if they need to chat and supporting and mentoring students at risk.’

‘A wonderful program. Providing students with another positive role model and someone to turn to.’

‘Our school wouldn’t be the place it is without our Chaplain. She is dearly loved by students, staff and parents alike and provides a safe spot for calmness and love for all. She works relentlessly in the background in her quiet demeanour providing opportunities for our kids, checking in on them and staff constantly. Our kids often ask to speak with {name} who can be found with a little gang of kids around her most of the day. She is an integral part of our school community and we are a better place for having her here.’

‘The chaplain in our school has provided a safe person, a safe place and a calm presence to our students, and similar to a lesser extent to staff. The chaplain has been a positive influence in social situations for students, offering calm sensible advice and guidance.’

‘[For the chaplain] To be present and modelling positive attitudes and behaviours is a massive asset to the school and its students.’

7.2 Nest theme 2: **Having Material Basics**



Children and youth who have material basics have access to the things they need to live a ‘normal life’. They live in adequate and stable housing, with adequate clothing, healthy food, and clean water, and the materials they need to participate in education and training pathways.



Many chaplains facilitate or support breakfast clubs in their schools and also assist with providing students living in financially straitened with basic necessities. In Western Australia in 2020 for example, 264 schools provided 286,552 breakfast meals to students. During Covid-19, in 2020 one in two chaplains provided care packages and food parcels outside their normal duties³⁷.

Five questions explored the extent to which chaplains assisted students living in difficult financial or other situations with the basic things they need to participate in ‘normal’ school life.

- 1. To what extent are breakfast clubs or other food programs facilitated or supported by the chaplain important in ensuring students are not hungry at school?
- To what extent do breakfast clubs or other food programs facilitated by the chaplain:
- 2. Improve students’ school attendance?
- 3. Help students who attend to focus on learning?
- 4. Improve the behaviour of students?
- 5. To what extent has the chaplain assisted in providing students with basic necessities (e.g. books, clothes, shoes, equipment)?



POSITIVE IMPACT

76%

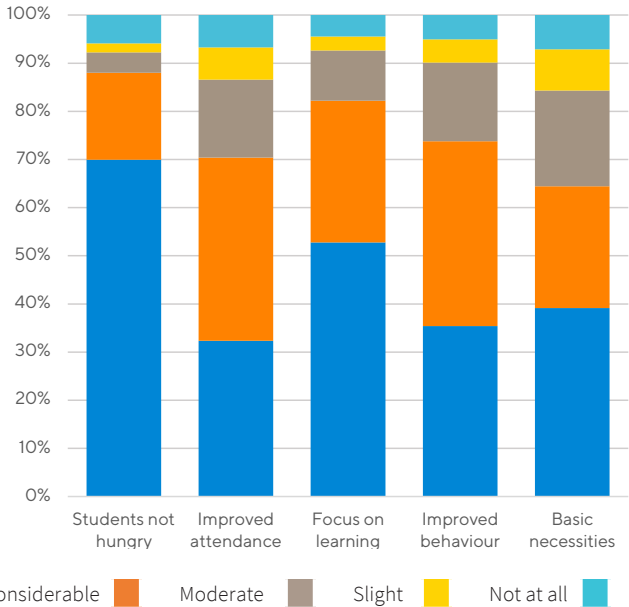
of respondents felt that chaplains had made a **positive impact** on their students’ lives by supporting their basic material needs.



GAME CHANGING

46%

of respondents felt chaplains had made a **very considerable** positive impact on their students’ material needs.



Legend
Very considerable Considerable Moderate Slight Not at all

Chart 3: The chaplain’s contribution to having Material Basics to Live a Normal Life

	Students not hungry	Improved attendance	Focus on learning	Improved behaviour	Basic necessities
Very considerable	333	130	237	154	187
Considerable	86	153	132	167	121
Moderate	20	65	47	71	95
Slight	9	27	13	21	41
Not at all	28	27	20	22	34
Don’t know/not applicable	122	192	149	163	120
Total	598	594	598	598	598

Table 4: Having material basics

37 <https://schoolchaplaincy.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/NSCA2020-McCrindle-Infographic-250521-Final-Online.pdf>

Respondent Comments

In addition to the above quantitative analysis of Nest 2 data emerging from specific survey questions, the following school-based participant comments are illustrative of the Nest 2 theme that emerged from their end-of-survey comments:

‘Our school caters for students with complex and challenging needs. Our chaplain works closely with parent/carers to address educational barriers beyond the scope of the school’s role.’



‘Our Chaplain does so much for our school, she has supported families in getting food hampers, computers through other agencies, uniform funding, food vouchers, donations from agencies of money. She also has free fruit and bread that comes in weekly for our students. Runs morning teas for parents and parenting programs such as Triple P. She has also provided water bottles and backpacks to students as well as her day-to-day ability to speak to a student as they walk in the door and require support or whether she routinely checks in. She also has relationships with parents and the wider community as well, even down to having a youth group come in and run fun activities during recess times on Fridays for students. She provides support to staff at all times and is a valuable team member in many ways.’



‘We have students who have mental and emotional needs that teachers just can’t get to in a day, especially with a large class of 31 students! Our chaplain provides a safe place to talk with our students, she supports them by offering strategies and in turn supports the teacher so the student can return to class ready to learn.’



‘Our chaplain is vital to the running of our school. There are so many vulnerable students who require help that is outside the scope of teaching. She has helped clothe, feed and support students and families as well as providing learning experiences such as camp.’



7.3 Nest theme 3: Being Healthy



Healthy children and youth achieve their optimal developmental trajectories. They have access to services to support their growth and development and have access to preventative measures to redress any emerging health or developmental concerns.

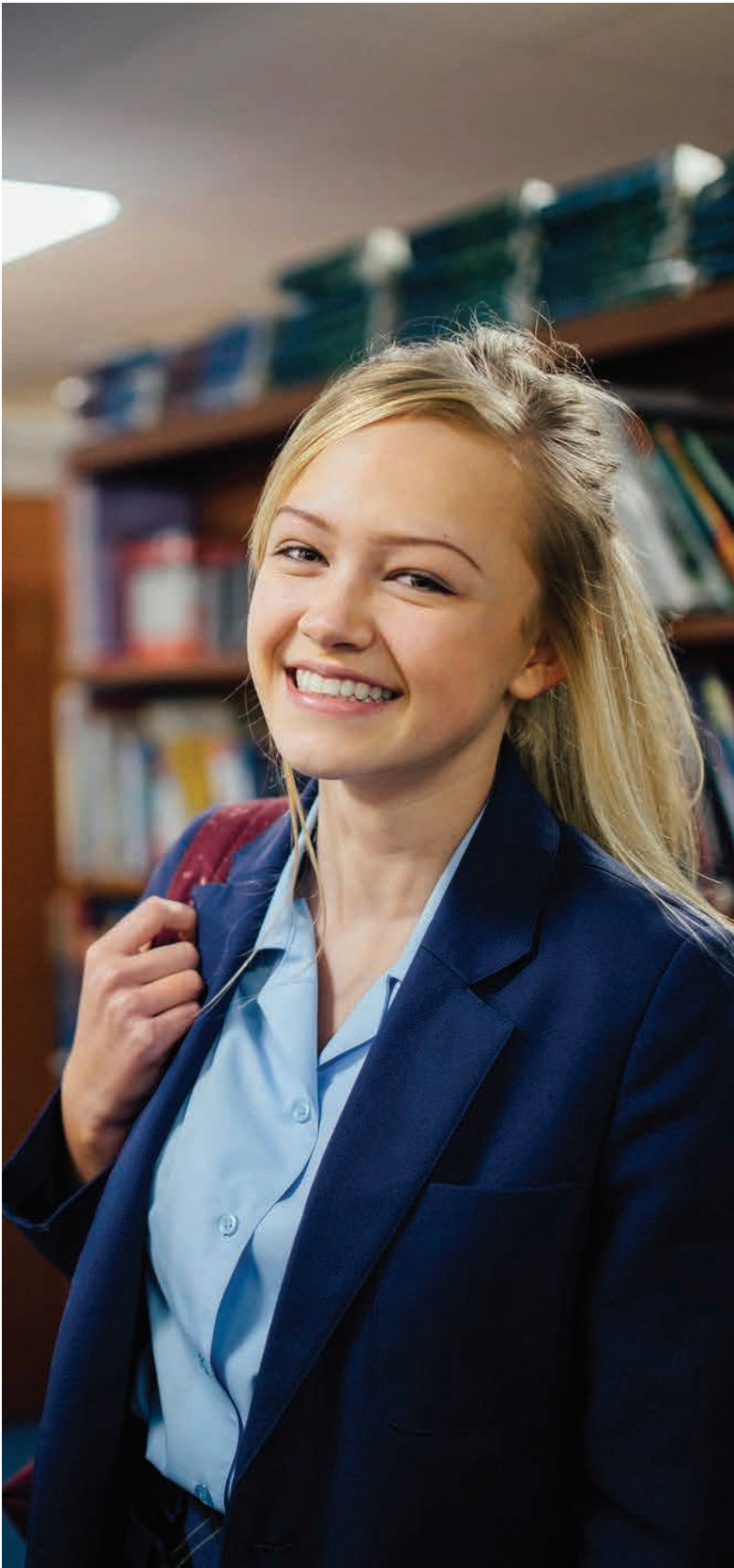
Based on the number of pastoral conversations mental health — anxiety and depression — was the second highest of the pastoral issues dealt with by chaplains in 2020³⁸.

Several of the most frequently used programs facilitated by chaplains were intended to address anxiety and depression, e.g. Friends Resilience — endorsed by the World Health Organisation as best practice for prevention of anxiety and depression — Resourceful Adolescent program (RAP-A) designed by the Queensland University of Technology to improve coping skills, resilience and promote positive mental health, Brave — an online program for the prevention and treatment of anxiety in young people, and Bounce Back — a whole of school social and emotional learning program promoting sustainable mental health, resilience and wellbeing. Chaplains also facilitated Seasons for Growth which is designed to build resilience and wellbeing in children who have recently experienced loss due to death, family separation or migration.

Five questions explored chaplains’ contributions to students being healthy.

- 1. To what extent has the chaplain either through pastoral conversations or facilitated programs helped:
- 2. Anxious students to ‘feel better’ (less anxious, more in control, comforted)?
- 3. Students experiencing grief and loss to cope?
- 4. Psychologists and other staff to address a student’s suicide risk?
- 5. Stressed, aggressive or angry students to develop strategies to self-regulate?

To what extent has the chaplain linked students to appropriate services (e.g., GPs, mental health services)?



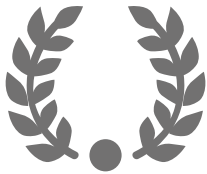
38 <https://schoolchaplaincy.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/NSCA2020-McCrindle-Infographic-250521-Final-Online.pdf>



POSITIVE IMPACT

78%

of respondents felt that chaplains had made a **positive impact** on their students' physical health.



GAME CHANGING

46%

of respondents felt chaplains had made a **very considerable** positive impact on their students' physical health.

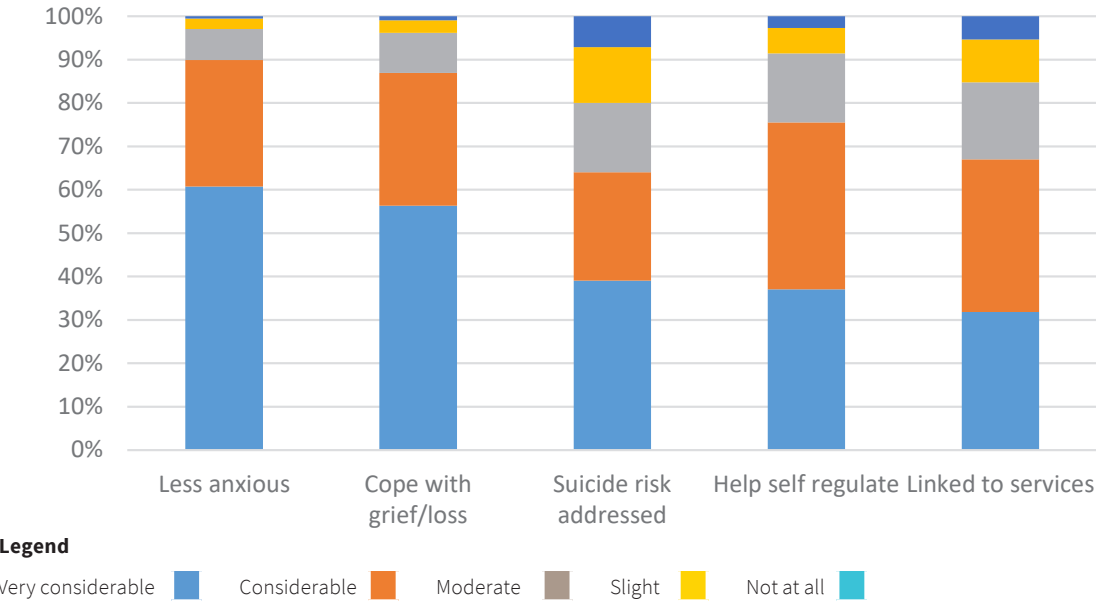


Chart 4: The chaplain's contribution to students Being Healthy

	Less anxious	Cope with grief/loss	Suicide risk addressed	Help self regulate	Linked to services
Very considerable	354	307	149	207	142
Considerable	170	167	95	215	157
Moderate	42	50	61	89	79
Slight	14	16	49	33	44
Not at all	3	5	27	15	24
Don't know/not applicable	15	53	217	39	152
Total	598	598	598	598	598

Table 5: Being Healthy

Respondent Comments

Illustrative of Nest 3 outcome data are the following survey participant's comments; many that related to the chaplaincy role in supporting students with mental health needs:

'In a school with many children from complex homes and homes with mental health issues, we would be lost without the support of a chaplain 2 days a week. Having that person our students, staff and families can turn to is essential.'

'Due to an increase in children being affected by mental health concerns, particularly anxiety, our school has increased our chaplain's days with the support of funds from our P&C. Our school chaplain has many regular students who she counsels and supports. She assists both staff and parents with strategies to help children in a world that is forever changing. Without a chaplain we would see an increase in undesirable behaviours within the classroom.'

'Our chaplain's impact in supporting the pastoral care needs and mental health of our students and staff has been significant.'

'Our chaplain is vital to the running of our school. There are so many vulnerable students who require help that is outside the scope of teaching. She has helped clothe, feed and support students and families as well as providing learning experiences such as camp.'

'I [the chaplain] love what I do. I love being part of the community and see the kids grow into healthy young people!!'

7.4 Nest theme 4: Learning



Learning is a continuous process throughout life. Children and youth learn through a variety of formal and informal experiences within the classroom and more broadly in their home and in the community. Children and youth who are learning participate in and experience education that enables them to reach their full potential and maximise their life opportunities.



Educational support – school behaviour was one of the five top issues addressed in pastoral conversations in 2020³⁹. Chaplains also facilitated a range of educational support programs including breakfast programs, tutoring programs, transition programs, reading programs and practical life skills programs.

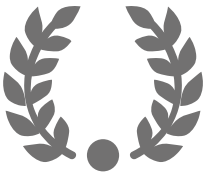
Three questions explored chaplains’ contribution to students’ learning.

To what extent has the chaplain?

- 1. Enabled distressed students to return to the classroom ready to learn?
- 2. Helped improve individual student’s school attendance?
- 3. Supported students to broaden their social networks through work and social experiences beyond the school setting?



POSITIVE IMPACT
69%
of respondents felt that chaplains had made a **positive impact** on their students’ learning.



GAME CHANGING
33%
of respondents felt chaplains had made a **very considerable** positive impact on their students’ learning.

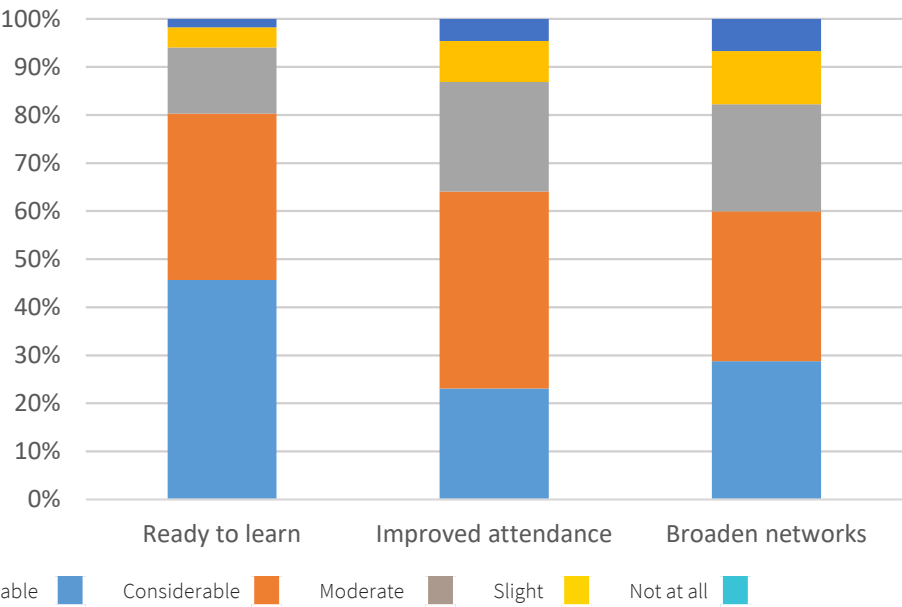


Chart 5: The Chaplain’s contribution to students’ learning

	Ready to learn	Improved attendance	Broaden networks
Very considerable	260	111	120
Considerable	197	197	130
Moderate	78	110	93
Slight	24	41	46
Not at all	10	22	28
Don't know/not applicable	29	117	181
Total	598	598	598

Table 6: Learning

39 <https://schoolchaplaincy.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/NSCA2020-McCrindle-Infographic-250521-Final-Online.pdf>

Respondent Comments

Illustrative of survey responses to Nest 4 questions are the following comments:

‘I work in a very multicultural school and one with a low socioeconomic index. Our school Chaplain is the absolute heartbeat in our school for children experiencing hardship, trauma and anxiety. She spends time with these children and they are almost instantly able to re-engage in the learning process. Above all, all children report back to me that have needed to visit our chaplain that they feel safe and happy after their talk with her. It is an absolute necessity in schools to keep providing this service to our youth!’



‘Our chaplain is vital to the running of our school. There are so many vulnerable students who require help that is outside the scope of teaching. She has helped clothe, feed and support students and families as well as providing learning experiences such as camp.’



‘Often, I [the chaplain] am the only person with the time to listen to them. By helping to support the students mental, social and emotional wellbeing in this way, they are able to focus better on their learning.’



‘Our Chaplain is a consistent, reliable and valued member of our school community. Parents, students and teachers seek her out for support within the classroom, playground and at our Playgroup. She works quietly and steadfastly with all students from Prep to Year 6.’



7.5 Nest theme 5: Participating



Participating includes involvement with peers and the community, being able to have a voice and say on matters and, increasingly, access to technology for social connections. In practice, participating means children and youth are supported in expressing their views, their views are taken into account, and they are involved in decision-making processes that affect them.

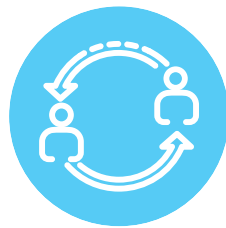
Chaplains engaged in a variety of activities which help students participate, learn about leadership, teamwork, responsibility and cooperation and help develop a sense of belonging to the school. These activities include sports coaching, school sports, camping programs, excursions, cadets, student leadership, music programs and recreational activities.

Five questions explored chaplains’ contribution to student participation.

To what extent has the chaplain helped:

- 1. Students express their views about things that affect them?
- 2. Students take responsibility?
- 3. Students learn about teamwork and cooperation?
- 4. Students develop leadership and communication skills?
- 5. Students develop a sense of belonging at school and in the wider community?

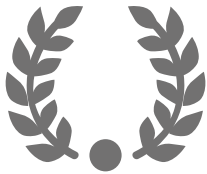




POSITIVE IMPACT

81%

of respondents felt that chaplains had made a **positive impact** on their students' participation.



GAME CHANGING

43%

of respondents felt chaplains had made a **very considerable** positive impact on their students' participation.

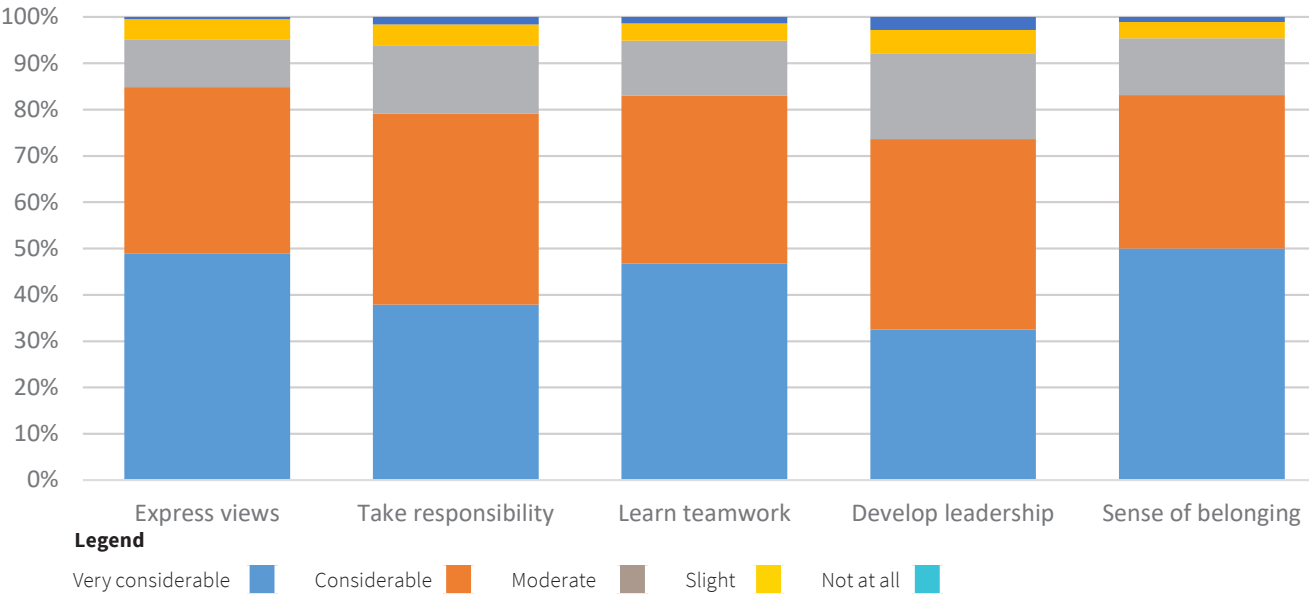


Chart 6: Chaplains' contribution to students' participation

	Express views	Take responsibility	Learn teamwork	Develop leadership	Sense of belonging
Very considerable	275	212	265	175	282
Considerable	202	231	205	221	187
Moderate	58	83	67	99	69
Slight	24	25	21	28	20
Not at all	3	9	8	15	6
Don't know/not applicable	36	38	32	60	34
Total	598	598	598	598	598

Table 7: Participating

Respondent Comments

Illustrative of Nest 5 outcome data are the following respondent comments:

'The chaplain at my school is amazing. She has support staff and students and is well loved. She has facilitated students' interests (for example, facilitated the development of an art club when interest was expressed by a particular indigenous student - she fund-raised for the supplies for this project, connecting community sponsors for the art supplies.)'

'Our chaplain plays an incredibly important role within our school community and we're fortunate to have someone so passionate in the position. Her connections and relationships with everyone impact positively at all times, even during times of emotional distress, on everyone. For students there is an extra advocate within the school for them and for families who need someone else fighting for them and someone with whom they can talk to. I have nothing but the highest of praise for our chaplain and would like to thank-you for giving me an opportunity to participate in this study.'

'Our chaplain is AMAZING! She is the glue that holds our team together and is a voice for those who have do not have one. She advocates for everyone whilst emulating genuine care and consideration.'

'The Chaplain is involved in leadership programs, peer support, resilience training, individual counselling, sport training, debate club, drama club, music, and the school production. They are well integrated into the Student Wellbeing multi-disciplinary team.'

7.6 Nest theme 6: Positive Sense of Culture and Identity



Having a positive sense of culture and identity is central to the wellbeing of children and youth, and is particularly important for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and other culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) children and youth. This outcome includes having a sense of spiritual wellbeing. It underpins and is fundamental to the other Nest child and youth outcomes area. ‘Spiritual wellbeing or spiritual health’ is here defined as per the Queensland Department of Education and Training as: one of the variables that influence an individual’s level of overall health and is considered to be a positive sense of belonging, meaning and purpose in life. It includes values and beliefs that influence the way people live and can be influenced by an individual’s connection to themselves, others, nature and beyond. For some, spirituality takes the form of religious observance, prayer, meditation, or a belief in a higher power. For others, it can be found in nature, music, art or a secular community Spirit.



Each week chaplains had pastoral conversations with Indigenous students (14%), Culturally and Linguistically Diverse students (5%), LGBTQI students (4%) and refugee students (1%). Spiritual issues did not feature highly in chaplains’ pastoral conversations with students although chaplains did facilitate some spiritual support programs.

Three survey questions addressed chaplains’ contribution to students’ sense of culture and identity and a further one was included because the issue of proselytization is such a topical one in contemporary commentary.

To what extent has the chaplain:

- 1. Contributed to the recognition and valuing of students’ diverse religious and cultural backgrounds?
- 2. Affirmed and valued individual student’s faith choices?
- 3. Affirmed students’ spiritual health i.e. their ‘positive sense of belonging, meaning and purpose in life’?
- 4. Attempted to actively promote their religious views?

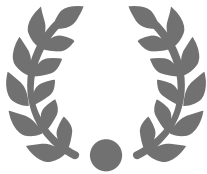
Although the last question was included our findings suggest that it is not significant in the majority of instances. Only 7% of respondents considered that chaplains often or very often actively promoted their religious views whereas 85% considered they did not do so at all.



POSITIVE IMPACT

75%

of respondents felt that chaplains had made a **positive impact** on their students’ sense of culture and identity.



GAME CHANGING

43%

of respondents felt chaplains had made a **very considerable** positive impact on their students’ sense of culture and identity.

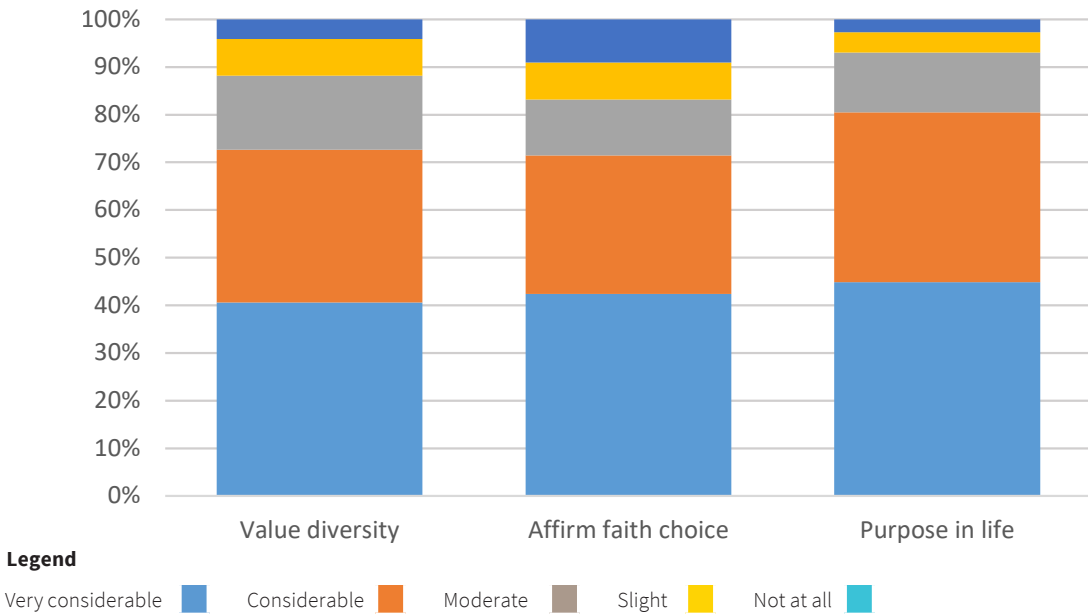


Chart 7: Chaplains’ contribution to students’ positive sense of culture and identity

	Value diversity	Affirm faith choice	Purpose in life
Very considerable	199	159	214
Considerable	157	109	170
Moderate	76	44	60
Slight	38	29	20
Not at all	20	34	13
Don't know/not applicable	107	221	121
	597	596	598

Table 8: Positive sense of culture and identity

	Proselytise
Very often	15
Often	11
Sometimes	11
Occasionally	25
Not at all	351
Don't know/not applicable	185

Table 9: Chaplains’ promotion of their religious views to students

Respondent Comments

Illustrative of Nest 6 outcome data are the following respondent comments:

‘Our Chaplain is a huge support to all at our school. She never promotes any religious bias and is open to support all regardless of beliefs, ethnicity or gender identity. We would be in big trouble without the support of our Chaplain who works as a fantastic role model and supports our students and staff when they feel they cannot or are not eligible to use other channels. She is also the first port of call when seeking support for students as she knows all of them. She also can refer students to the right type of follow up/ support where needed. We would have a lot more mental health issues without her presence, she is a huge support with providing strategies for those struggling.’



‘The Chaplain meets the needs of a very diverse and needy community. She deals with a multitude of issues such as Grief and Loss, DV, Drug addicted families, Poverty and a host of other issues.’



‘The Chaplain works with the well-being team at the school to facilitate pastoral care for the school community [students, parents and staff] and can also provide educational support in the area of well-being, mental, emotional and spiritual health as requested by teachers.’



7.7 Additional Theme: Outcomes for the School Community

As well as providing support to students, chaplains also support parents/carers and staff through their personal conversations. The mccrindle 2020 Snapshot indicates that each week chaplains have around 20,000 informal conversations with parent/carers and school staff.

Chaplains also run or participate in a variety school-based community development activities such as National Homeless Persons Day, 40 Hour Famine, Fred Hollows Foundation Day, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Day, Child Protection Week and many others. In 2020, Australia-wide each term some 209, 400 students participated in such activities⁴⁰.

Two questions related to the chaplain’s contribution to the school community as a whole.

To what extent does the chaplain:

- 1. Contribute to a positive ethos in the school?
- 2. Provide support to teachers and other staff?

Table 10 confirms that chaplain’s personal conversation and community development activities make a substantial contribution to the school community, a finding that is given further weight by respondents’ affirmative comments recorded below. Eighty seven percentage of school chaplains were reported to have contributed considerably to the school community. Indicate respondent comments include the following:

	Positive ethos	Staff supported
Very considerable	447	352
Considerable	92	130
Moderate	29	65
Slight	22	33
Not at all	3	6
Don't know/not applicable	3	12
	596	598

Table 10: Chaplains’ contribution to the school community

40 <https://schoolchaplaincy.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/NSCA2020-McCrindle-Infographic-250521-Final-Online.pdf>

Respondent Comments

The chaplain’s contribution data are the following respondent comments:

‘We believe the chaplaincy program is a valuable and positive resource for our school and wider school community.’



‘Our Chaplain is an important part of our whole school community. She makes a big difference to big and little people’s lives. We would be lost without her.’



‘Our chaplain is a valuable member of our school community. She is actively involved in activities both within the school and outside the school and volunteers as needed. She provides a valuable service to our children in need and has made a huge difference.’



‘Our Chaplain is an integral part of our pastoral care program, actually of our whole school program. She is valued by all and makes a difference in the lives of staff, students and the wider school community. She is invaluable!!!!!!



‘Our Chaplain is a key member of the School Community, who provides support to all – students, parents and staff (teaching and non-teaching). She is in tune with the needs of the community and works well and truly above and beyond her brief. She is entirely embedded in this community which would not function as effectively without her.’



‘Our Chaplain is a vital part of student, staff and community support. In her absence our community would be disadvantaged and the services she provides would lack the follow up, impact and change agency that her role provides to marginalised families and students, as well as dampen the inertia that her programs and presence provide.’



‘The chaplain at our school has allowed myself as a New Graduate Teacher to feel welcomed and supported during a transitional time. I have seen the work our chaplain does in both a school community sense and on a personal sense for students that are of a diverse background.’



8. SUMMARY

Even though, due largely to the COVID pandemic, we were unable to implement our more comprehensive research program, the data we were able to capture and interrogate, provide a very rich composite of appraisals of school chaplaincy, and offer the opportunity to capitalise on both the instrument itself and the outputs for future research.

At the core of this evaluation sits the complex and challenging task of measuring outcomes of school chaplaincy interventions that focus on the outcomes for the children and youth themselves rather than on reporting on activities, processes, and outputs. All participants – school principals/deputy principals, teachers, and members of the student services teams – were invited to respond to questions based on their knowledge of the impact on particular students of the individual or program interventions by the school chaplain. As the relevance of the impact of school chaplaincy for schools and staff themselves has been highlighted in earlier evaluation reports, we also incorporated in our survey a limited assessment of outcomes of school chaplaincy for the school communities.

We utilised the Nest framework for this evaluation as it is a contemporary, tried and enduring one focusing on the wellbeing indicators for children and young people. In so doing we join a range of researchers and policy makers who are meeting the challenge of measuring wellbeing outcomes of interventions to assist children and youth in Australia. Importantly, the Nest captures six interlocking areas of wellbeing for children and young people that link to their family, community, education, health, and culture. It explicitly acknowledges the significance of the interplay of all services that are required to meet the wellbeing needs of children and youth.

The six domains provided the starting point for a Program Logic framework utilising a set of data extracted from an exploratory study with school chaplains and which incorporated data points from the ongoing mccrindle analyses. All of this was utilised to develop a survey instrument needing only self-identification of role within the school and responses on forty-two items requiring ratings on a six-point scale. As is standard practice, we included an opportunity for general comments at the conclusion of the survey. This yielded a remarkable response in which most respondents volunteered positive tributes which

accumulated to provide forty pages of fascinating insights into individual perspectives of the value and impact of school chaplaincy.

Historically, the role of school chaplaincy has been marked by controversy about its association with Christian faith communities and the risks of what has been called proselytization which, in essence, means the risk of inducing children to convert to a particular faith. Additionally, there have been ongoing grievances that chaplains are ill qualified to provide the types of interventions more appropriately supplied by other professionals such as school psychologists, counsellors, or social workers. Even though spirituality is indeed integral to the Nest and focuses on ‘a sense of spiritual wellbeing’ for children and youth, it implicitly and probably explicitly excludes any particulars of religious observance as a potential component of wellbeing. Interestingly, minimal comment was made about either faith or professional competence in the volunteered comments to the survey. Wherever comments were made about these two matters they have been included in the text above.

8.1. Immediate outcomes of chaplaincy work

For each of the Nest outcomes the chaplaincy program is viewed as making a positive contribution to their achievement. These are reflected in the infographic at the beginning of each Nest Theme.

- Being loved and safe 87%.
- Having material basics 76%.
- Being healthy 78%.
- Learning 69%.
- Participating 81%.
- Positive sense of culture and identity 75%.

8.2. Linkages to longer-term outcomes suggested in earlier Program Logic

The Program Logic was explicitly linked to the longer-term outcomes of the Nest. This research indicates the shorter-term outcomes are being contributed to by the work of school chaplains. In turn, this suggests we have some optimism for the achievement of longer-term outcomes particularly if the focus is on how Student Support Services in the education arena work together to achieve necessary outcomes for their cohorts of children and young people. The qualitative data pointed to the important role of chaplains within Student Support Services and ipso facto then to the value of these teams. It would be valuable to explore their contribution of these teams to wellbeing outcomes of students – and how to augment them – in more detail in future evaluations of such teams.

The linkage to the agreed action plans is clear:

- Children and young people are valued, loved and safe.
- Children and young people are healthy.
- Children and young people are learning.
- Children and young people are participating.
- Children and young people have material basics.

8.3. Signal recommendations for future/ongoing outcomes-based evaluations of the School Chaplaincy Program – a potential evaluation tool

The focus of evaluations of multiple services has only in the last short period been on outcomes and impact rather than activities, processes, and outputs. In some part this is due to the complexity of evaluating outcomes or interventions in both shorter and longer terms. School Student Support Services, like most others in education, health, and welfare, are needing to move into a new period in which outcomes are a primary measure of human as well as economic value. The survey instrument itself provides an opportunity for ongoing utility and/or adaptation for future use in terms of outcome evaluations. Equally, the qualitative data, which are being provided in full to the NSCA, provide a rich source of data for further evaluation indices. Additionally, we suggest that a tool such as This Much! could be utilised to obtain direct reporting from students about the impact of school chaplaincy and other student support services.

This research has focused on outcomes of school chaplaincy. In so doing, we have attended to what difference school chaplaincy may be making to the wellbeing of students. There remains an ongoing need of course to consider and evaluate the most appropriate processes for work and the structures within which these services are delivered in a way that maximises their utility and impact. Process and output evaluations have an essential role in capitalising on outcome research.

8.4. Inform data collection within NSCA to facilitate further outcomes-based evaluation of the Program

One of the longer-term goals of this evaluation for the members of NSCA was the promise of developing mechanisms for measuring the value of school chaplaincy in terms of its contribution to the wellbeing of students in general. This evaluation provides one tool for doing that – developing data tools that can measure outcomes for children and young people rather than activities alone. The Nest continues to provide an invaluable framework for generating both indicators and measures of wellbeing. As this research demonstrates, the Nest can be used to establish before and after assessments. Importantly, it is a framework that can be and is being used and analysed across a variety of program areas. Additionally, if not already so applied, it could be incorporated into a more nuanced evaluation of student support services in schools.

A particular contribution NSCA could make to such an evaluation would be to set up a structure to establish before and after assessment of programme work for the variety of well-established programmes already used by school chaplains. These include programs such as Drumbeat, Rock and Water and Friends Resilience. Whilst the original plan in this research was to utilise data related to the outcomes of these programs to triangulate on outcomes, it proved impossible because informed consent of students had not originally been sought in these evaluations. Student consent will need to be included for the data to be used for further evaluations.

Appendix 1

The Nest: Australia’s Wellbeing Framework For Children And Young People

It’s a way of thinking about the whole child in the context of their daily lives, viewing wellbeing in a way that brings together the different elements a child or young person needs to thrive. The Nest conceptualises wellbeing as six interconnected domains that support each other to help children reach their potential. To have optimal wellbeing, a child or young person needs to be adequately resourced in all six domains.

Valued, Loved and Safe

Being valued, loved, and safe means having loving, trusting relationships with family and friends. It involves a child or young person feeling valued by teachers and other adults in their life and knowing that they are important to others and that others are caring and supportive of them. It involves feeling safe at home, in the community and online. Safety also means feeling safe about their future, which includes the knowledge that the environment and climate are a priority and are being protected.

Material Basics

Children and young people who have material basics have the things they need. They live in suitable, secure, stable housing, with appropriate clothing, nutritious food, clean water and clean air. They have access to transport, to required local services (e.g. plumbing) and to open spaces in nature. Their family has enough money for necessities. They have the material items needed to develop as an active member of society such as school supplies, suitable technology or sporting equipment.

Healthy

Healthy children and young people have their physical, mental, and emotional health needs met. All of their developmental health needs are provided for in a timely way. They receive appropriate health services, including preventative measures to address potential or emerging physical, emotional and mental health concerns.

Learning

Children and young people learn through a variety of experiences within the classroom, the home and the community in which they live. Their individual learning needs are addressed to allow them to realise their full learning potential. Families are engaged in their child’s learning. Children and young people are supported and encouraged to learn in a wide variety of settings, including formal education. They have opportunities to participate in a breadth of experiences where their learning is valued and supported by their family and in the wider community.

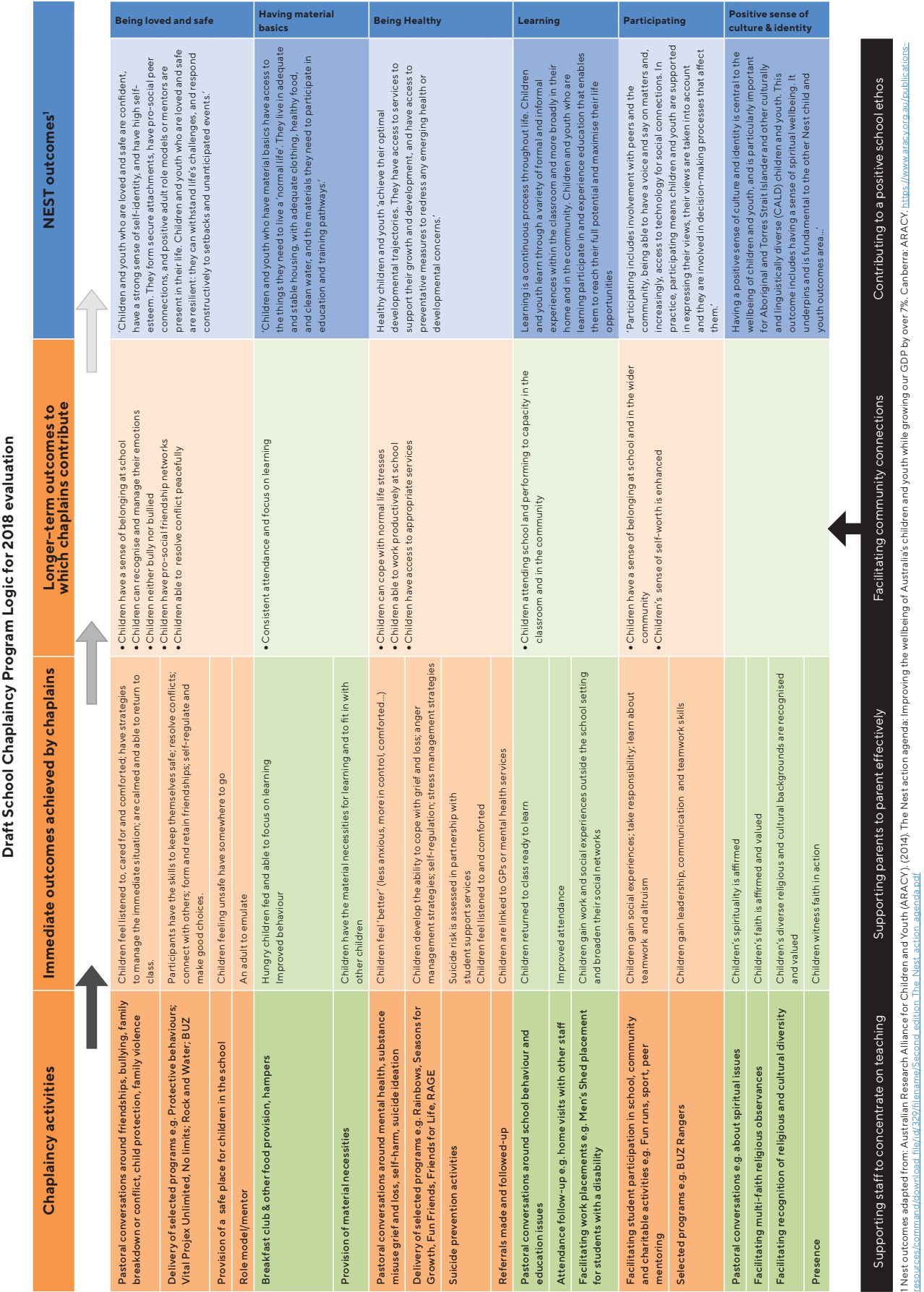
Participating

Participating is about children and young people having a voice, being listened to, and taken seriously within their family and community. It means having a say in decisions that impact them. It is being empowered to speak out and express themselves. Participating includes involvement with peers and groups through a variety of activities, including online communities. Participating means being an active member of society

Positive Sense of Identity and Culture

Having a positive sense of identity and culture is central to the wellbeing of all children and young people. This is important for all, regardless of background, but in Australia, especially for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. It encompasses having spiritual needs met, a sense of cultural connectedness, belonging and acceptance at home and in the community – and confidence that their identity, culture, and community is respected and valued. It involves feeling safe and supported in expressing one’s identity, regardless of gender, sexuality, culture or language.

Appendix 2



Appendix 3

On-line Survey Introduction

You are invited to participate in an evaluation of school chaplaincy services provided to public schools by organisations affiliated with the National School Chaplaincy Association (NSCA), a network of Christian chaplaincy organisations in Australia. The evaluation is being conducted by the Social Policy Practice and Research Consortium at the University of Western Australia. You are asked to take part in this project by completing this on-line survey because of your school-level experience of the service, either as school chaplains or as key personnel in schools that have an NSCA chaplain (e.g. as school management personnel, classroom teachers, members of the Student Services Team or other staff).

What is this project about?

The evaluation aims to identify the outcomes of the NSCA School Chaplaincy Service across three designated Australian States (Queensland, Victoria and Western Australia) around the following key objectives:

- To determine the immediate outcomes of school chaplaincy work
- To confirm linkages to longer-term outcomes suggested within the national NEST Action Plan for child and youth wellbeing
- To signal key recommendations for future/ongoing outcomes-based evaluations of the School Chaplaincy Service.

The survey

The survey seeks your views on the outcomes achieved by the school chaplaincy service in your school. Questions about outcomes for children are based on the six NEST themes and when completing them you are asked to think of children who you know to have had contact with the school chaplain or who have participated in programs facilitated by the chaplain. The NEST themes have been adopted from the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY), 2014. The Nest action agenda: Improving the wellbeing of Australia's children and youth while growing our GDP by over 7%, Canberra: ARACY.

The survey will take approximately 20 minutes to complete.

Participation is voluntary and anonymous.

Your participation in the survey is completely voluntary. You may withdraw from the survey at any time. Your responses will be anonymous and will not be used individually. No information is being collected about you or your school. However this means that it will not be possible to remove your responses from the database set collected should you wish to withdraw them later.

The survey is being conducted using Survey Monkey which is based in America. Information you provide on this survey will be transferred to Survey Monkey's server in America where it is not protected by Australian privacy legislation. By completing this survey, you agree to this transfer and data storage.

If you have any questions or wish to discuss the evaluation please feel free to contact me on maria.harries@uwa.edu.au or Rosemary Cant on rcant@sse.com.au or Anne Butorac on anneb@iinet.net.au

Dr Maria Harries AM, Chief Investigator

1. I have read and understood the information provided and am willing to take part in the survey

☐ Yes

☐ No

Your background

This section asks you to provide some brief non-identifying information about yourself to assist in interpreting survey answers.

* 2. In which state is your school located?

* 3. Where is your school located?

* 4. What level is your school?

* 5. Are you a member of the Student Services Team

☐

Yes

☐

No

* 6. What is your position in the school?

☐

Principal

☐

Chaplain

☐

Deputy Principal

☐

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Officer or Worker

☐

Teacher

☐

Educational Support/Assistant/Aide

☐

Psychologist

☐

Social Worker

☐

Nurse

☐

Other (please specify)

* 7. To what extent do you consider you are or have been in a position to observe the impact of the chaplain's work with particular students or groups of students?

☐

Not at all

☐

To a considerable extent

☐

To a limited extent

☐

To a very considerable extent

☐

To a moderate extent

☐

No knowledge of the chaplain's work

☐

Other (please specify)

* 8. How many days a week are you at the school?

☐

One

☐

Four

☐

Two

☐

Five

☐

Three

☐

Other (please specify)

Student Outcomes Based on NEST Themes

The following questions are based on the ARACY NEST themes. Each group of questions will be preceded by a description of the relevant NEST outcome.

Your are asked to give your responses on a five-point scale. If you do not know how to answer select N/A.

Please think about the students who have had contact with your school chaplain or who have participated in programs facilitated by the chaplain (e.g. Breakfast Club, Seasons for Growth, BUZZ) when answering these questions.

NEST theme 1 – Being loved and safe

Children and youth who are loved and safe are confident, have a strong sense of self-identity, and have high self-esteem. They form secure attachments, have pro-social peer connections, and positive adult role models or mentors are present in their life. Children and youth who are loved and safe are resilient: they can withstand life's challenges, and respond constructively to setbacks and unanticipated events.

* 9. To what extent have students in contact with the chaplain felt listened to and cared for?

Not at all	Slight	Moderate	Considerable	Very considerable	Not applicable
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* 10. To what extent has the chaplain through pastoral conversations or facilitated programs helped students experiencing difficulties to develop strategies to manage the situation?

Not at all Slight Moderate Considerable Very considerable know

* 11. To what extent has the chaplain either through pastoral conversations or facilitated programs calmed and assisted distressed or angry students to return to, or remain in, the classroom?

Not at all Slight Moderate Considerable Very considerable know

* 12. To what extent has the chaplain either through pastoral conversations or facilitated programs helped students to manage their emotions?

Not at all Slight Moderate Considerable Very considerable know

* 13. To what extent has the chaplain either through pastoral conversations or facilitated programs assisted students to resolve conflict peacefully?

Not at all Slight Moderate Considerable Very considerable know

* 14. To what extent has the chaplain either through pastoral conversations or facilitated programs assisted students to cope with bullying?

Not at all Slight Moderate Considerable Very considerable know

* 15. To what extent has the chaplain either through pastoral conversations or programs assisted students not to bully other children?

Not at all	Slight	Moderate	Considerable	Very considerable	Not applicable/Don't know
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* 16. To what extent has the chaplain provided a role model for students to emulate?

Not at all	Slight	Moderate	Considerable	Very considerable	Not applicable/Don't know
------------	--------	----------	--------------	-------------------	---------------------------

* 17. To what extent has the chaplain provided students feeling unsafe with a safe place to go?

Not at all Occasionally Sometimes Very often Always Not applicable/Don't know

18. To what extent has the chaplain assisted students to develop positive and constructive peer relationships?

Not at all	Slight	Moderate	Considerable	Very considerable	Not applicable/Don't know
------------	--------	----------	--------------	-------------------	---------------------------

NEST theme 2 – Having material basics

Children and youth who have material basics have access to the things they need to live a ‘normal life’. They live in adequate and stable housing, with adequate clothing, healthy food, and clean water, and the materials they need to participate in education and training pathways.

* 19. To what extent are breakfast clubs or other food programs facilitated or supported by the chaplain important in ensuring students are not hungry at school?

Not at all

Slightly important

Somewhat important

Important

Very important

Not applicable/Don't know

* 20. To what extent do breakfast clubs or other food programs facilitated by the chaplain improve students' school attendance?

Not at all

Slight

Moderate

Considerable

Very considerable

Not applicable/Don't know

* 21. To what extent do breakfast clubs or other food programs facilitated or supported by the chaplain help students who attend to focus on learning?

Not at all

Slight

Moderate

Considerable

Very considerable

Not applicable/Don't know

* 22. To what extent do breakfast clubs or other food programs facilitated or supported by the chaplain improve the behaviour of students?

Not at all

Slight

Moderate

Considerable

Very considerable

Not applicable/Don't know

* 23. To what extent has the chaplain assisted in providing students with basic necessities (e.g. books, clothes, shoes, equipment)?

Not at all

Occasionally

Sometimes

Often

Very often

Not applicable/Don't know

NEST theme 3 – Being healthy

Healthy children and youth ‘achieve their optimal developmental trajectories. They have access to services to support their growth and development, and have access to preventative measures to redress any emerging health or developmental concerns.

* 24. To what extent has the chaplain either through pastoral conversations or facilitated programs helped anxious students to ‘feel better’ (less anxious, more in control, comforted)?

Not at all

Slight

Moderate

Considerable

Very considerable

Not applicable/Don't know

* 25. To what extent has the chaplain either through pastoral conversations or facilitated programs helped students experiencing grief and loss to cope?

Not at all

Slight

Moderate

Considerable

Very considerable

Not applicable/Don't know

* 26. To what extent has the chaplain either through pastoral conversations or facilitated programs helped psychologists and other staff to address a student's suicide risk?

Not at all

Slight

Moderate

Considerable

Very considerable

Not applicable/Don't know

* 27. To what extent has the chaplain either through pastoral conversations or facilitated programs helped stressed, aggressive or angry students to develop strategies to self regulate?

Not at all

Slight

Moderate

Considerable

Very considerable

Not applicable/Don't know

* 28. To what extent has the chaplain linked students to appropriate services (e.g. GPs, mental health services)?

Not at all

Slight

Moderate

Considerable

Very considerable

Not applicable/Don't know

NEST theme 4 – Learning

Learning is a continuous process throughout life. Children and youth learn through a variety of formal and informal experiences within the classroom and more broadly in their home and in the community. Children and youth who are learning participate in and experience education that enables them to reach their full potential and maximise their life opportunities.

* 29. To what extent has the chaplain enabled distressed students to return to the classroom ready to learn?

Not at all Slight Moderate Considerable Very considerable Not applicable/Don't know

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

* 30. To what extent has the chaplain helped improve individual student's school attendance?

Not at all Slight Moderate Considerable Very considerable Not applicable/Don't know

* 31. To what extent has the chaplain supported students to broaden their social networks though work and social experiences beyond the school setting?

Not at all Slight Moderate Considerable Very considerable Not applicable/Don't know

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

NEST theme 5 – Participating

Participating includes involvement with peers and the community, being able to have a voice and say on matters and, increasingly, access to technology for social connections. In practice, participating means children and youth are supported in expressing their views, their views are taken into account and they are involved in decision-making processes that affect them.

* 32. To what extent has the chaplain helped students express their views about things that affect them?

[illegible]

* 33. To what extent has the chaplain through facilitated programs or other activities helped students take responsibility?

[illegible]

* 34. To what extent has the chaplain through programs or other activities helped students learn about teamwork and cooperation?

[illegible]

* 35. To what extent has the chaplain through facilitated programs or other activities helped students develop leadership and communication skills?

					Not applicable/Don't know
Not at all	Slight	Moderate	Considerable	Very considerable	
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

* 36. To what extent has the chaplain helped students develop a sense of belonging at school and in the wider community?

[illegible]

NEST Theme 6 – Positive sense of culture and identify

Having a positive sense of culture and identity is central to the wellbeing of children and youth, and is particularly important for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and other culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) children and youth. This outcome includes having a sense of spiritual wellbeing. It underpins and is fundamental to the other NEST child and youth outcomes area. "Spiritual wellbeing or spiritual health" is here defined as per the Queensland Department of Education and Training as:

... one of the variables that influence an individual's level of overall health, and is considered to be a positive sense of belonging, meaning and purpose in life. It includes values and beliefs that influence the way people live and can be influenced by an individual's connection to themselves, others, nature and beyond.

For some, spirituality takes the form of religious observance, prayer, meditation or a belief in a higher power. For others, it can be found in nature, music, art or a secular community. Spirituality, and therefore spiritual support, is different for everyone.

37. To what extent has the chaplain contributed to the recognition and valuing of students' diverse religious and cultural backgrounds?

Not at all	Slight	Moderate	Considerable	Very considerable	Not applicable/Don't know
------------	--------	----------	--------------	-------------------	---------------------------

38. To what extent has the chaplain affirmed and valued individual student's faith choices?

Not at all Slight Moderate Considerable Very considerable Not applicable/Don't know

39. To what extent has the chaplain affirmed students' spiritual health i.e. their 'positive sense of belonging meaning and purpose in life'?

Not at all	Slight	Moderate	Considerable	Very considerable	Not applicable/Don't know
------------	--------	----------	--------------	-------------------	---------------------------

40. To what extent has the chaplain attempted to actively promote their religious views to students (proselytize)?

Not at all Occasionally Sometimes Often Very often Not applicable/Don't know

Contribution to the school community

The next two questions relate to the chaplain's contribution to the school community as a whole.

41. To what extent does the chaplain contribute to a positive ethos in the school?

Not at all Slight Moderate Considerable Very considerable Not applicable/Don't know

42. To what extent does the chaplain provide support to teachers and other staff?

Not at all Occasionally Sometimes Often Very often Not applicable/Don't know

Appendix 4

Qualitative database: themed analysis of survey comments

At the end of the survey, respondents were invited to add a personal comment.

Of a total number of respondents (598), 392 (66%) accepted the invitation to add personal comments.

The number (and often the length) of personal comments added an extremely rich qualitative database, which has been summarised below. It should be noted that undertaking a thematic analysis of such a database inevitably involves some duplication and reinforcement of individual reflections.

General positive comments about the school chaplaincy service

A large number of responses (9.2% of the total) offered general positive comments about the school chaplaincy services. The most common expressions related to the overall value and excellence of the services and how essential/ crucial they were to schools. Indicative of these generalised comments were the following:

- The Chaplaincy service to our school has been invaluable.
- A valued and important aspect of our student services team and our school in general.
- Our chaplaincy service is a very valued program at our school.
- The chaplaincy service is an essential element of the school functioning effectively.
- I feel the chaplaincy role is very important to the school and should be continued as the whole school benefits
- Having a Chaplain at school is literally a God send!
- It's brilliant and so worthwhile for students and staff.
- A valuable member of staff! Very supportive of staff and children in lots of different situations.

Personal/valued attributes of individual chaplains

Beyond the general appreciative comments about school chaplaincy services, the greatest number of comments (25.3%) focused specifically on personal attributes of the chaplains working within individual schools. The following comments have been sign-posted under suggested sub-themes for ease of navigation, but often individual respondent's comments are multi-dimensional.

Going above and beyond

- The Chaplain has been a fantastic support to myself and my students this year. She has gone over and above the requirement of her role and I couldn't be more grateful to have her assistance.
- Our Chaplain goes above and beyond for our community, often to her own detriment. Her compassion and commitment are commendable, even when she herself is so humble. We are all so lucky to have her in our lives.
- Our school Chappy is one the rare people in the world that go over and beyond! For everyone no matter what, including the parents.
- Our Chaplain is the most amazingly compassionate and hard-working member of our student services team. He is extremely valued by both staff and students and I just wish I got as much positive attention from the students as he does when I walk the school grounds!!! As the school nurse we work closely together to support each other's roles. I think the service provided is second to none and think our Chaplain (named), is an absolute asset to us. His passion for adolescent well-being is admirable and he has made a massive difference to our school since working with us.
- XX often goes above and beyond to support students experiencing a wide range of concerns both at school and at home. We are very lucky to have someone so dedicated and committed.

Caring, calm and considerate

- The chaplain has been a positive influence in social situations for students, offering calm sensible advice and guidance.
- Chaplaincy has been of significant benefit to our school over many years. All our Chaplains have been caring, enthusiastic, highly skilled and a delight to work with.
- Our Chaplain is a beautiful, sincere and very natural acting person who calms me and calms the students. She goes above and beyond to be there (as much as her work roster allows). She is just the best chaplain that I have worked with because of these natural people skills. I hope she never leaves our school.
- Our school chaplain is a dedicated, caring and much valued member of our school team. Her ability to interact with the students is outstanding, her positivity is infectious and she is such an asset to our students and teachers.

- We are incredibly lucky to have an outstanding Chaplain whose connection, compassion and positivity are a major strength of our student services team.
- Our school environment is so much richer and empathetic with our chaplain

A broad scope of work

- Our chaplain becomes involved in all aspects of the school, is very positive and has initiated and supported many valuable programs in the school.
- Our chaplain is always available to persons within the school community. Her ability to nurture students, identify with teachers and support parents within the school community is always appreciated and constantly remarked upon
- Our Chaplain is a highly valued member of staff and the community who has been at the school and in the community for many years. He gets involved in lots of activities and is loved by all.
- Our chaplain is a valued member of our student services team. She works with some of our most 'vulnerable' students. Her case load is always full. Yet, she is always smiling and greeting families in the morning. We couldn't do without her
- Our Chaplain takes great pride in her role and is an active member of the community. I find that she could make greater use of her time with students as there are many occasions where more time is spent with staff. However, in saying this, she has been an outstanding support to staff with post-Covid anxiety.
- Our chaplain is a huge asset to the secondary school where I currently teach. She is universally appreciated by staff as well as a large group of mostly female students, junior and senior. I have also seen other chaplains doing a great job in some challenging schools, both primary and secondary. I cannot praise this program enough in (state named).

Responsive, adaptable and unobtrusive

- I appreciate that our Chaplain can read situations and be there as needed.
- What I have personally enjoyed seeing from an education support context is having our chaplain adapt their programs for our context.
- I am not in the classroom but in the office but whenever there is an issue at school with a student or staff member and it is on a chaplaincy day, our chaplain is there in an instant offering and trying to help in any way. We don't even have to go an seek her out. She is amazing.
- Our chaplain is very flexible, responsive, caring and professional in dealing with all stakeholders.

- We are very lucky to have such a proactive chaplain.
- Our Chaplain is responsive to feedback.
- Our Chaplain is an active participant within our school and fully supports our students wherever and whenever possible - only here two days per week. Highly valued by our school community. Works unobtrusively with needy families and has positive relationships with them which supports our students.

Focus on student achievements

- Our Chaplain is extremely passionate within her role and always has the students' best interest at heart.
- Absolutely amazing service and we are very grateful to have a Chaplain 3 days a week. Our students are very fortunate that we have a caring Chaplain that is fully invested in the students and their families.
- Our Chaplain plays a huge role in making a difference in the lives of our students. He truly loves and cares for our disadvantaged youth, trauma-affected youth and just those students that need someone to listen. We love him!
- Our Chaplain is very approachable. She listens to concerns and helps to assist with outcomes that will assist our students. She is an asset to our team.
- Our Chaplain is an active participant within our school and fully supports our students wherever and whenever possible - only here two days per week. Highly valued by our school community. Works unobtrusively with needy families and has positive relationships with them which supports our students.
- Our Chaplain is an essential member of our staff. She provides important support to our students that come from challenging backgrounds. She is extremely practical and gives students strategies they can use at home and students often report back that they 'tried it and they worked' So many of our 'at risk' students would be lost without her support and guidance.

Professional and committed

- The Chaplaincy service at our school has been a long-held position by a few different people and has been a highly effective and valuable contribution to the school community. Our Chaplains have been professional, with degrees in Social Work, Psychology and Youth work and Theology and have operated with great integrity.
- Our chaplain is very flexible, responsive, caring and professional in dealing with all stakeholders.

- *The work that has taken place and the capacity of the school Chaplain is five star and so highly valued by the school. The ability to not only provide support but to be so committed to great outcomes for our students is evidenced in every interaction with the school. I cannot talk highly enough of the work that has taken place with our school chaplain and the capacity of the chaplaincy that takes place at the school.*
- *Our Chaplain does not care if you aren't religious ... She doesn't discriminate if you are a student or staff member- if you need a compassionate and non-judgemental person to listen, she will make time for you. A lot of students would prefer to see the Chaplain, rather than the Psych as she is down to earth and doesn't carry the negative stigma/ association/perception with seeking 'mental health' support*
- *Our chaplain supports all students and staff regardless of any differences.*
- *Our current chaplain is a wonderful member of staff who is supportive, gentle and kind. She does not push religious beliefs on anyone unlike other chaplains I have dealt with in the past. Our chaplain is what all chaplains should be.*

The following comments come from respondents who have had varied, and often longer-term, experiences with school chaplaincy services, and as such offer useful summary insights into the range of qualities described above.

- *To tell the truth I have over my 30 years of teaching not been a huge fan of chaplains, have seen a lot of people promise a lot and deliver very little. However, the chaplain at my current school has completely turned me around on the role. She is absolutely incredible and walks the walk and lives the ethos. I feel she makes an incredible difference to this school and my students. She also supports the staff - coming around on her holidays to check in on me after the death of my mother. An absolute gem of a human being. And she does it for everyone. My main suggestion would be to be really selective about who you are placing in schools - and someone with life experience and compassion and empathy is key...*
- *The success of the program is driven by the qualities of the Chaplain themselves and their ability to relate well to kids and adults. I have had a chaplain previously in which provided little value to the school due to their inability to build positive relationships. Our current Chaplain does the most amazing job in school and we would be lost without her.*
- *I have worked with school chaplains over the past 9 years at this school and must admit there have been some chaplains who did not fit into the school environment for a number of different reasons. However, I have been really impressed with our current school chaplain XX who has such a calming and inviting approach with the students and staff and his rapport with the students is amazing.*

- *The positive efficacy and impact of the chaplain is totally dependent upon the individual, having had a number of failures and now a great success.*

An integral part of school and whole community

Another large group of comments (21.4%) clustered around the theme of how integral chaplaincy services were to the whole community and more specifically to the school and specific programs within the school, for example:

Chaplaincy services within the whole community context

- *This is an extremely valuable resource within the college community, indeed within our wider local community.*
- *The school chaplaincy service at our school is much valued by students, staff and parents/caregivers alike. The service is well supported by our school community*
- *Our chaplain is an integral part of our school community. Her links with the broader community have helped her to assist families to access services and develop strong positive relationships with community agencies to provide additional support to the school.*
- *Chaplains make a massive difference in the whole school community.*
- *Valued resource in our school. Always there for whole community when support and guidance is needed.*
- *In every school I have worked at in (state named), chaplaincy has played a vital role in the school communities. Their compassion, understanding, mercy and pastoral support has significance to their school community*
- *Our chaplain is specifically more committed to the community than a Psychologist, Youth Worker or Social Worker could ever be, as her relationships with student are based entirely on trust and a complete commitment to members of this community - during and after school. She is a 24/7 Chaplain.*
- *Our Chaplain is part of our school community and is very active with all students, staff and parents. During this time of much change, she has been invaluable and worked alongside admin to support and thank staff for their efforts to maintain a happy and supportive environment. Lately we as a team including the Parents and Citizens Group have had small treats for staff during breaks to let them know that we value our staff and their continual support for the students above and beyond expectations.*
- *As part of her passionate approach to supporting the school ethos and development she actively networks with external agencies and services to support the needs of our school, students and their families.*

- *We have a significant number of students with trauma. The Chaplaincy service is an essential support our entire school community lean on for support, advice and general peer/collegiate friendships.*
- *Our chaplain continues to connect with the local community businesses to assist with accessing food for our kitchen program and other health related activities. Our chaplain always attends and contributes to significant activities including camps, sports day and school board meetings.*

Chaplaincy services as an integral part of the school

- *Our school environment is so much richer and empathetic with our chaplain.*
- *An invaluable part of the school. Much appreciated, valued and integral to our success.*
- *Our chaplain plays an important role in creating belonging and harmony within the school.*
- *Our Chappy is an integral part of our school community and does extremely important work some of which teachers simply don't get time to do.*
- *Chaplaincy at our school is one of the major heart-beats as it were of how the school functions.*
- *The service has been a valuable part of our cultural development and support for staff and students*

Chaplaincy services and specific school programs

- *Our Chaplain contributes positively to our school environment through her organisation of breakfast club and supporting staff and students by always She is a very valued member of our school community.*
- *Our Chaplain is an integral part of the school and part of our pastoral care approach*
- *We value the Chaplain's important contribution to our school with the reinforcement of whole school programs: Zones of Regulation and Restorative Practice.*

Supporting individual students

Some 9.7% of respondent comments related to the role of chaplaincy services in supporting individual students, teachers and parents. It is interesting to note the observations about individual students seeking out the school chaplain – a person they trust, they know will have the time to devote to them and whose role is ‘neutral’ and not involved in ‘behaviour consequences’.

- *Without our Chaplain we would not be able to support the number of students we do. We would also not be able to identify those students in need as well. Our Chaplain also works with many students who do not respond to other staff. Our students will go to our Chaplain about almost anything and this is a service we could not offer.*

- *Any service a school can offer to assist students with difficulties is always a very valued service.*
- *Our chaplain sees lots of students on a regular basis, talking with them about difficulties they are having, assisting them with social problems, etc. She helps with Breakfast Club and she attends year 6 camp.*
- *Students trust the Chaplain because she is neutral and never involved in behaviour consequences.*
- *Chaplain provides another safety net layer for students. Those who choose to access have had positive outcomes.*
- *At a low socioeconomic school with kids with lots of family difficulties, our chaplain has been hugely valuable for those kids knowing they've got someone they can talk to who won't judge them.*
- *Our Chaplain is an integral part of many of our programmes here at school. The kids love him and he provides so much support to our students in many forms. He is also a great support to staff as they know he will drop everything to assist a child who needs support immediately.*
- *It is clear that the Chaplain is important to this school from the number of students that know her and seek out her support in one way or another.*
- *I think the value of a good chaplain at a school is unmeasurable. It makes such a positive impact on the children that they have contact with and gives those children comfort, confidence and helps them make their way through the school environment.*
- *The chaplain spends much of their time dealing one on one with students talking through a range of issues. The school has seen a high volume of referrals for students from parents and teachers. This has been an essential service for our school.*

Health, social and emotional well-being

The role of meeting well-being needs (health, emotional and social) of students, staff and parents was mentioned by 6.9% of respondents, for example:

- *Our chaplain contributes to the smooth running of the school through making time to connect with all students, developing positive relationships with those students that are at risk and providing support to the well-being of students and staff.*
- *Our chaplain plays a pivotal role in the mental and social welfare of our students, teachers and parents. Her gentle, confident and dedicated approach to her role is to be commended and is very much appreciated by our staff.*

- *The students adore our Chaplain and seek her out in the playground. XX has been a great support for a child who has recently lost her mother to cancer. The teachers and I are very grateful to have her at our school supporting the students.*
- *Chaplaincy services exists in schools who recognise the importance of the emotional well-being of their students, staff and families.*
- *A highly valued member of our school, supporting students and their families, along with supporting school staff in managing student’s well-being and their own wellbeing.*
- *The school Chaplain is a major player when it comes to student welfare and we respect and appreciate what she offers to our school and its students.*
- *Every school should have a chaplain :) They are an invaluable resource to assist the social/ emotional development of our youth.*

Specific link with support services and programs

A further 6.5% of responses made reference to specific support services that school chaplains linked with, for example the specific role they play with student services teams, positive support and well-being teams, and school pastoral care policies.

- *The chaplaincy services have always been integral to our Student Services team. I have been involved in the District Council and worked closely with each of our chaplains over the past 19 years. Each of them has made a vital contribution to our school and wider community.*
- *Really valuable complement to our student services team. Many of the questions make it difficult to pin down the exact role of the Chaplain as she is part of a team that all work together to support students. The roles of everyone in the team intertwine at different levels and for different things.*
- *Our college Chaplain is a crucial member of our Positive Support Team and provides a highly valuable link between school support services and external agencies. We have a number of students and families who are positively engaged with our school due to the work that our college Chaplain has done. Our students and our wider College community would be significantly disadvantaged if she was a member of our school.*
- *The Chaplain at YY is an integral part of the Positive Support Wellbeing team and highly valued student Our Chaplain only started at our school this year but he has quickly become a highly valued member of our Student Services team and a valuable support to our students.*
- *Current and previous Chaplains have been integral to our Student Services Team. Current Chaplain has excellent*

relationships with students, families and staff. Proactive about measures to support students, professional and respectful in all interactions. Valued member of staff and school community.

- *The chaplain (the person and the role, not the inferred religious context) is invaluable to our Student Services Department. He is integral to the team and has, I believe, made huge differences to a number of students. Some of them might not be here now without his help.*
- *The chaplaincy service is a terrific element of our Student Services Team. Our chaplain provides our students and their families with ongoing care and support. She is able to work with groups of students to develop strategies and skills that will assist them to be social and positive citizens.*
- *The Chaplaincy service is a worthwhile service but it is important for schools to understand the skill set they bring. Chaplains do need to work with the Guidance Officer or Psychologist in order to better understand areas that are out of their skill set. When utilised correctly Chaplains bring some lovely holistic support to children and schools.*

Time and space to listen

Specific references (5.7% of the total) gave specific attention to the significance of chaplains having the time and a safe space to listen, for example:

- *The chaplain is seen as an adult that cares and listens, who isn’t associated with school work or behaviour. The ability for students to have an adult advocate who isn’t a teacher, principal or parent is essential in our school.*
- *The students in the classroom I work in find the chaplain a person whom they feel comfortable in talking with and discussing emotions and feelings that happen in their lives. I think it is great that they feel comfortable in seeking the chaplain out to talk things over with.*
- *As a School Chaplain, my office provides a safe space for students to go to when they are feeling anxious, angry, overwhelmed, or sad. The students can talk to me about issues they may be experiencing at home such as parental separation or conflict, or issues they may be having at school, in the classroom or the playground.*
- *I [Chaplain]aim to have a positive impact through listening and gentle guidance, pointing students to strategies that will help them cope. I support them to cope and help them find solutions to their problems.*
- *The chaplaincy service is very valuable in our school. Students feel safe and comfortable talking to our chaplain as she is not a teacher. Staff often use her as a sounding board and we are all very happy with the contribution she has made to the health and well-being of students and staff.*

- *The chaplain is able to provide a neutral caring and listening ear and occasionally advocate on behalf of others.*

Breadth of support

The role played by school chaplains can range across a very broad spectrum. Apart from roles already highlighted, a further 5.3% of comments offered elaboration on how broad their role within schools can be, for example:

- *I have been at this particular school for over 1 year and it has been a great experience; supportive staff and admin, and opportunities to give a lot in the role. I have one-to-one appointments with students covering a range of needs including but limited to mental health, friendships/ peer issues, school behaviour, attendance, anxiousness, parental breakdown/separation, family relationships. I also make a number of phone calls to parents as I support their child/children. I run a LEGO Masters lunch club for 2 terms of the year to encourage development of social skills such as cooperation as they work in pairs to build a creation. I have opportunities to attend excursions and assist with general events at school (e.g Art Exhibition). This year I have assisted the school psychologist with running the Rock & Water Program with an identified group of Year 5 male students. Being a Chaplain is very rewarding, especially when you work in a school like this one that values the role.*
- *The chaplain runs the grief and loss program’s Rainbows and Seasons for Growth The Chaplain facilitates the ‘BUZ’ program (social and emotional) for all PP to Yr 3 students The Chaplain helps coach a basketball team of Year 4’s outside of school time The Chaplain helps run a Great mates program for all Yr 5-6 boys The Chaplain runs the kitchen cooking for the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen/ Garden Program The Chaplain sees students 1 on 1 or in small groups for a variety of issues The Chaplain runs a Yr 6 leaders program, this term he is helping host a Hot chocolate and cookie day for a 3 week period to raise money for charity*
- *The Chaplaincy service provides support to families pre-Prep (through operating a Playgroup) through to moving into high school (by locating assistance with uniforms, fees and computers). I assist with locating practical support - including currently seeking accommodation for a homeless family at school. I work with a network of other support organisations, including other local chaplains, to ensure that students are supported. I facilitate Triple P seminars for parents, and a program for parents with children struggling with anxiety. I also operate the Seasons for Growth grief and loss program and assist with in-school transition into school program (in addition to Playgroup). The Chaplaincy service provides free lunches and free fruit year-round as well as providing for stationery*

packs, school uniforms, payment of school fees and contributions to camp and excursion costs. The chaplaincy service is well respected in the school.

- *The chaplain contributes across a range of school activities and experiences, supporting students and their families, as well as staff. The staff and students trust the chaplain and often work collaboratively to support students. Our chaplain has championed support and advocacy for indigenous Australians, the environment, wellbeing and community connections in our school. Programs are run to support parenting, transitions into adolescents, healthy relationships, grief and loss, gathering project and more. The chaplain also provides individual pastoral support to students, staff and parents. Every school needs a chaplain!*

Future directions

Some comments (6.4%) referred to aspects relating to the future of school chaplaincy services including many who wanted more time to meet existing and growing needs in times of individual and community stress:

- *Our chaplain is one of our most valuable school resources. Our students, staff and community benefit so greatly and I feel that more time and funding is required to cope with the huge level of depression, anxiety and stress that exists within our communities. This resource of a school chaplain allows teachers and school administrators to provide must needed pastoral care to students.*
- *Without our chaplain we would have many more behaviour problems, particularly in the playground. We just need more of her! One day a week in our school is just not enough - she is always flat out, helping individual students, taking group sessions on anger management or social skills plus also preparing things to help support staff and their well-being. Our chaplain is a treasure! We would be lost without her*
- *We only have a chaplain 2 days a week. It was hard to answer some of these questions because with only 2 days at our disposal the focus for much of that time tends to be 1-1 work rather than group/class/team work. There is no doubt though that work of the chaplain is invaluable.*
- *The Chaplain is only on premises two days a week for nearly 400 students. The demand for her time is far greater. She has a number of programs running, that she facilitates, but is often unavailable when students need her the most. I wish we had her full time to support the needs of students and staff, better.*

- *The Chaplaincy Service is an invaluable resource for our school, one which we would love to see expanded. We have so many students and family members (and at times staff) who require some extra time and guidance. Time is the biggest factor in that all other staff within the school are time poor. However, the Chaplains time is prioritised for those important discussions that are needed all the time... We need more time!!!*
- *Our Chaplain is a priceless, loved member of our staff and school community. It would be amazing if we had more funding so she could be here more than just her current 2 days a week.*

Some concerns/qualifications

The following illustrate a range of concerns or qualifications expressed by 4.6% of respondents. Some expressed disappointment with their current or past chaplains. The need for appropriateness of individuals for specific school and community needs re-emerged, alongside consideration of training for the role – whether or not that be a religious chaplain.

- *Our chaplain is well liked by everyone at our school and she provides support for many of our students. I do worry, however, about the lack of training related to counselling when it relates to issues that may conflict with her personal beliefs, such as sexual orientation and gender identity. Schools need additional support when it comes to student wellbeing, although I believe recruitment to this role needs to be based on ability/qualification to fill this need and not religious affiliation.*
- *The role of a chaplain is an important one and it can also be of extreme benefit to the students, staff and families in a school. My issue with some though is that I can name a bundle of people I think would make good chaplains but, they do not meet the criteria required by our provider therefore we are getting staff from a very limited pool.*
- *The Chaplain is great for our Tier 2 students however the complex students with trauma and the challenging behaviours that come with that (Tier 3) can be overwhelming and connection is lost. There also needs to be further Aboriginal cultural training.*

- *Chaplaincy services fill a gap in wellbeing and mental health support and care in schools. However, it is my opinion that this gap should be open to being filled by skilled people other than chaplains. People are excluded from fulfilling this gap in services due to religious or atheist preferences. The wellbeing, mental, physical, social and emotional health of students and staff in school communities should equally be able to be provided by appropriately qualified and skilled counsellors, social workers, youth workers etc. It is an important role, but should not be exclusive to religious persons.*
- *The chaplaincy services at my school are both ineffective and inappropriate. The wellbeing team attend to students’ wellbeing, our in-school psychologist responds to mental health concerns, and our inclusion team help students with their learning and moderating their behaviour. The chaplain is a position that achieves little, and money that would be better spent on employing more teachers or support staff. Finally, at a public school where the majority of students are Muslim, the inappropriateness of a chaplain cannot be overstated. Students do not approach them, and do not trust them. It is also inappropriate to have government-sanctioned religion anywhere near a public school.*
- *I have worked with 4 different chaplains across 3 different schools. I have rarely noticed a significant positive impact on the overall school community, however there is always some benefit. The success of the role is highly dependent on the person in the job - as with most things. The greatest challenge I have seen is an inability of the chaplains to build a relationship with the most difficult, challenging and vulnerable students, but again, the same could be said about most roles in a school.*





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ISBN: 978-1-74052-949-5