



## A Sustainable Framework for Mining Chaplaincy

Report: February 2011

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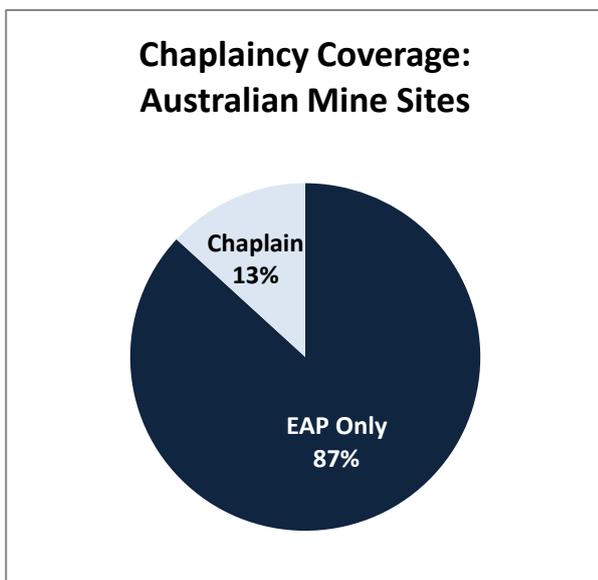
### Executive Summary

Assisting employees with issues external to the workplace is now accepted as part of being a modern workplace. With mine sites, there is the added responsibility of ensuring employees are fit for duty.

There are many ways of achieving this, and different mine sites utilised different strategies.

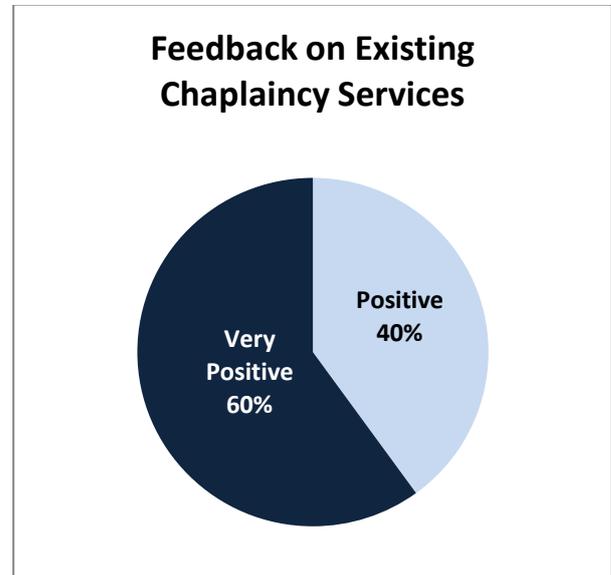
Interviews were conducted with 33 mine employees, representing different states and different minerals.

The following key results were obtained:

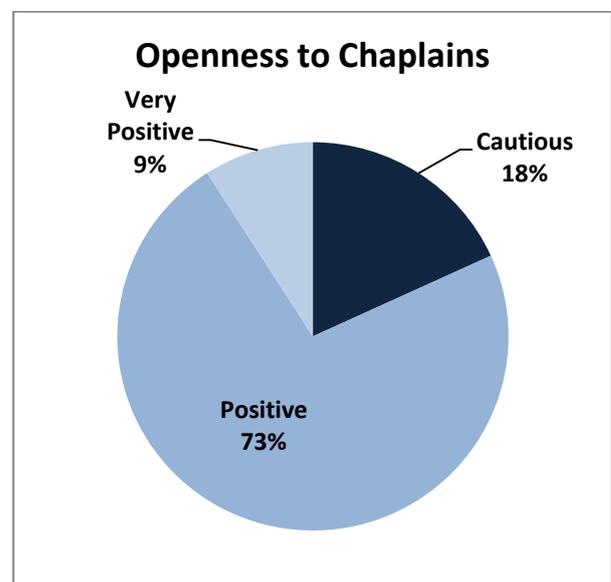


This graph is an extrapolation from a small survey result: 100 calls, 33 interviews. However, it seems a reasonable assumption that should be tested with further investigation.

With those sites where chaplains were present, the feedback was extremely positive. Chaplains were seen as delivering a confidential and consultative presence and familiarity that was not possible for company employees.



Of those interviewees who did not have chaplains onsite, there was generally a positive response to the idea of chaplaincy services:



This initial survey suggests that the mining industry should consider the value that chaplains can provide as a strategic resource; especially in situations where mine sites are remote and employees may be isolated from support networks.



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### Discussion of Results of Mine Site Survey

It would appear that the notion of providing some form of employee assistance is now the norm in the mining industry. Every mine site contacted had some form of employee assistance program, and the major organisations such as BHP, Rio Tinto, Anglo, Xstrata, Goldfields, and Centennial, have company-wide programs.<sup>1</sup>

The goal was to speak with site or mine managers rather than human resource or safety staff, to get the operational perspective on the effectiveness of different programs and services. The significance of this was brought home by the comment by one General Manager that the effectiveness of any service is dependent on the active support and promotion of the operations manager.

Four things stood out with Employee Assistance Programs:

- Most managers had no idea of who provided the service, how well-utilised it was, or how effective the program was.
- Most managers commented that it is difficult to get employees to initiate on a call, because of the typical mining culture where it is hard for employees to “ask for help”.
- Most managers however were grateful that there was something to offer employees who were identified as having problems.
- Some managers felt that professional counselling services were better than internal ad hoc assistance.

Other services provided included:

- Employee health and well-being promotion via newsletters and activities
- Peer support programs, with training provided by Lifeline
- Internal “Speak Out” program

- Internal drug and alcohol counselling programs

Five mine sites contacted had chaplains; a further three managers spoke of experience with sites with chaplaincy services. The benefits mentioned included:

- Personal contact/human touch
- Established relationships with employees, familiar to them
- Able to follow-up on issues identified
- Link between the organisation, the employee, and the home
- Provided advice and debriefing for managers
- Provided spiritual services in the case of deaths, critical incidents on or off-site
- Confidential conversations
- Seen as unaligned with company
- Even when EAP accessed, enabled follow-up services
- Follow-up services in cases of rehabilitation
- Running spiritual services for a remote site
- Availability, often every employee has access to a mobile number
- Providing support to the operations managers on the “soft” issues increasingly impacting on employee wellbeing and productivity
- Especially useful on remote sites where the usual emotional and spiritual networks are not available.

*Comments from interviewees:*

“I’m good at moving large piles of dirt, but I’m not so good at handling a bloke with alcohol problems, and those problems can be devastating. I would like a chaplain at this site who can just help me know what to say or how to help. We can help a bloke get back from a physical injury, but not so good at following up someone who has an emotional problem.”  
Operations Manager at major NSW coal operation

“We are located in town, close to family, support services and churches; but I can see that

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<sup>1</sup> In Queensland it is a legal requirement for coal and metalliferous mine operators to have an employee assistance program established, as a preventative strategy in ensuring employees are fit for duty.



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chaplaincy would be useful for FI/FO sites.”  
General Manager Operations, Gold Mine, WA

“I was involved when there was a fatality at Lake Macquarie, and also spent some time at Pike River Mine in New Zealand; and in both those circumstances, having a chaplain or priest available was significant in providing support for employees.” Mine Manager, Coal Mine, Tasmania

“He is too busy to talk with you. He needs support, someone on the ground, listening to what is going on, noticing when there are social issues or when an employee’s performance is poor. He needs someone to help him debrief and vent who isn’t going to tell anyone else.”  
Personal Assistant to Mine Manager, WA

“Our chaplain was a great influence, not just for us, we shared him with another mine. He was a listening post, someone available on-site. Beyond the EAP, he was a personal touch, someone who was familiar.” General Manager, Coal Mine, WA

“I believe for the industry generally that EAPs only go so far. There is a need for a service that isn’t as formal as psychological counselling.”  
Mine Manager, Coal Mine, NSW

“We have an EAP and a chaplain in the village. The EAP is widely and often communicated, but the chaplaincy service is not often publicised. I’m not sure how to access that service.” Operations Manager, Uranium Mine, SA

“I believe chaplaincy can be very helpful when there has been a major event or a serious injury; it adds value and provides extra resources for employees to deal with the issues.” Mine Manager, Coal Mine, NSW

“EAPs are a start, but different people and different circumstances need different responses.” Mine Manager, Coal Mine, NSW

“We have an EAP but I’m not asked about it often. I think people prefer to keep their personal problems to themselves.” HR Manager, Diamond Mine, WA

“I’ve seen awful things happen to good people, and it’s helpful to be able to refer them somewhere. The danger is that psychologists

have replaced God!” Mine Manager, Coal Mine, NSW

“This is a new generation of workers, and offering services to people to help deal with personal issues is an essential part of doing business these days.” Mine Manager, Chromite Mine, WA

“EAP is good for initial contact, but often there are a series of things that have to happen for someone to solve their problems. Sometimes it can take a long time.” Operations Manager, Coal Mine, NSW

“I have dealt with five EAP providers in different organisations. Some employees use them, some don’t. I have been at one site with a chaplain, and there definitely seemed greater employee contact and familiarity with the site, the people and the issues.” HR Manager, Gold Mine, WA

“We have an EAP and a contractor onsite who provides an informal chaplaincy service. Employees are given the choice of accessing the EAP or the chaplain. The chaplain is appreciated because he is known, there is personal contact, and nothing is recorded. There is some suspicion by employees, unfounded of course, that utilising the EAP might be used against them at performance reviews or when there are cutbacks; whereas contact with the chaplain is a confidential conversation.” HR Manager, Coal Mine, NSW

“The Chaplain at our site is very well-received. There is good feedback from employees and he is proactive. He provided counselling and assistance, but being a minister added another dimension, especially for marriage and relationship issues.” General Manager, Coal Mine, Qld

“If an employee is identified as having personal problems we take them out of production and refer them to the Employee Assistance Program.”  
General Manager, Coal Mine, NSW

“With our EAP there is an online internet support service, which provides a much more discrete way of accessing help. It is important to have someone available on-site if there has been a critical incident.” HR Manager, Gold Resource Company, WA



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“I have worked at sites with EAPs and chaplains, and their effectiveness depends on how effectively the resource is promoted by the Mine Manager. Sometimes spiritual issues are dealt with as psychological issues. I am a keen supporter of the value of chaplaincy services.”  
General Manager, Gold Mine, WA

“Our EAP is a vital service because our employees are isolated, away from families, and can be under a lot of pressure. Many of the issues raised are about marriage and relationship problems.”  
General Manager, Coal Mine, Qld

“We have a chaplain who provides spiritual and pastoral care on-site. I think it is superior to an EAP service; it’s the difference between the end of a phone and the human touch. People know our chaplain, he has complete freedom to roam the site, he has time to sit down and talk to people. There have been two deaths off-site, and the chaplain has been able to conduct the funerals, and having the relationship with the mine was important.” General Manager, Copper-Gold Mine, SA

“I observe that generally families access the EAP more than employees; there is still an issue that blokes won’t freely ask for help. There is a stigma attached. I personally discovered the value when I was involved in a fatality at a mine site and the company forced us to attend a debrief where we were given factual information about the impact of shock and so on. I found it very helpful.” Safety Consultant, Qld

### *Models for Chaplaincy Services*

The following were different models for chaplaincy services at sites surveyed:

- Local Minister/Priest/Pastor volunteers to be on-site 1-2 days a week
- Local Minister/Priest/Pastor applies to run the Employee Assistance Program at the site
- Chaplaincy services contracted by an organisation, formal relationship
- Individual onsite informally offers to provide chaplaincy services

### **Results of Literature Survey**

Chaplains are commonly found in dangerous occupations, such as police and defence force; in places where there is the presence of grief and death, such as in hospitals and prisons; and in organisations where they might ameliorate the impact of external factors impacting on the effectiveness of the individuals, such as in schools.

The mining industry qualifies under all those criteria. It is a dangerous occupation, where grief and death are a too-frequent reality. The fatality rate in this industry in its best years from 2000 to 2008 is more than twice the rate for all other industries combined (minimum incident rate of 5.0 fatalities per 100,000 employees, versus 2.4 fatalities per 100,000 for all other industries)<sup>2</sup>.

Moreover, especially in fly-in fly-out operations (utilised by 45% of employees), there are issues of depression and mental ill-health brought on by isolationism and culture issues<sup>3</sup>; as well as the impact of external factors including: stress on relationships outside the mine, separation guilt/feelings of helplessness especially for parents, difficulty in establishing a regular lifestyle<sup>4</sup>.

These issues in on community have been recognised with government funding of more than \$200,000. The Federal Government website describes the issues well:

Golden lifestyle takes heavy toll on men's health

The Community: Many of the men who work in the resources sector in Kalgoorlie and the Northern Goldfields earn a packet; but the price they pay for it can be high – broken relationships, poor health and high stress levels are commonplace in these geographically remote West Australian communities.

<sup>2</sup> Safework Australia, *Mining Information Sheet*, 2010

<sup>3</sup> Cockran, “Beyond the black stump, but not beyond care”, in *Advanced Safety Magazine*,

<sup>4</sup> Costa et al, “Challenges for Women in FIFO Mining in Canada”, May 2006



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This unique, highly transient community of approximately 30,000 people is famous for its mineral wealth and many are attracted to the region by the lure of higher incomes.

Some men work long hours in around-the-clock operations and the shift-work can impact on the health of the workers and also on their families. In some cases the high incomes and long hours can lead to abuse of substances, including amphetamines.

Generally speaking, this lifestyle is not always conducive to building healthy family ties. Adding to existing stress factors has been the recent slump in gold prices, which has led to a downturn in mine activity and some job losses.

The Challenge: When it comes to their physical and psychological health, men can be reluctant to seek help from available service providers. The biggest challenge for health professionals in the goldfields is educating the men about what help is available and reducing the stigma of accessing those services.<sup>5</sup>

Professor Gary Bouma from Monash University researches the "Australian Soul". There are some important statistics and trends. In the 2006 census, 71% of respondents identified themselves as religious. 10% of the remainder did not state, and 18.5% said they were not religious. There is a growth in religious plurality, and new spiritualities.

There has been a revitalisation of religion globally, with a growth in the importance of spiritual identity, increased participation in spiritual practices, and more issues in religious politics. Bouma points to the failure of secular humanism to produce happiness, to end oppression or to deliver on its promises.

This means that increasingly:

- People seek to engage with God
- They seek to create sacred spaces
- They like to make meaning, to find hope
- They seek justice in relationships.<sup>6</sup>

For Bouma, this justifies the role of chaplains in industry and institutions.

The US Association of Professional Chaplains positions itself as an integral part of society, valuing:

- Professional competency and ethical practice
- Faith as an essential dimension of wholeness
- Dignity and worth of persons
- Inclusivity and diversity
- Justice and equality for all
- Spiritual care of persons, communities, organisations, and systems.<sup>7</sup>

In a presentation about the role of chaplains in the defence forces, Carl Aiken sums it up as performing ritual, relating and identifying. He describes the military chaplaincy doctrine as "The provision of religious ministry, pastoral care, character and moral guidance, advice to commanders and supervisors re religious, morale and welfare issues."<sup>8</sup>

Military chaplains are highly skilled, receiving military training on top of a solid foundation in religious, moral and ethical issues. There exists strong collaborations between chaplains. Aiken makes the interesting point that:

Issues of bereavement, relationship breakdown and the stresses of life are in essence a normal part of lived

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<sup>5</sup> See website: [http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/communities/funding/2000-04SFCS/Pages/sfsc-casestudies\\_general\\_goldenlife.aspx](http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/communities/funding/2000-04SFCS/Pages/sfsc-casestudies_general_goldenlife.aspx); cited 4-02-11

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<sup>6</sup> Gary Bouma, *Australian Soul: Religion and Spirituality in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, Cambridge University Press, 2006  
PDF at

[http://clcaustralia.org.au/downloads/Australian\\_Soul\\_Prof\\_Gary\\_D\\_Bouma.pdf](http://clcaustralia.org.au/downloads/Australian_Soul_Prof_Gary_D_Bouma.pdf); cited 4-02-11

<sup>7</sup> 2006, Association of Professional Chaplains, <http://www.professionalchaplains.org/index.aspx?id=31>; cited 4-02-11

<sup>8</sup> Carl Aiken, ADF Health, December 2008, pp. 74-78; [http://www.defence.gov.au/health/infocentre/journals/ADFHJ\\_Dec08/ADFHealth\\_9\\_2\\_74.pdf](http://www.defence.gov.au/health/infocentre/journals/ADFHJ_Dec08/ADFHealth_9_2_74.pdf); cited 7-02-11



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experience; they happen, and most people have the strength of character and resilience to deal with them, given time and appropriate support. The increasing trend on deployment to use medical or psychological services for counselling for normal life experiences has the potential to exacerbate the issues and may result in them taking on a larger place in a person's life than they otherwise would. Such medicalising of life experiences is inappropriate. It also has the potential to overwhelm the excellent but limited medical and psychological support resources available.<sup>9</sup>

In an article about industrial chaplaincy in a commercial environment, Julian Reindorp comments on the significance of being a personal presence, in addition to an organisation's human resources department, to assist with "situations where relationships were under stress, through work, through debt, through marriage breakdown, through bereavement and through abuse. Team members suggested people might want to talk to me. Occasionally I was asked to follow up a situation in my own. People rang me up at home and, on each occasion, both my confidentiality and the fact that I was an outsider were important."<sup>10</sup>

Reindorp noted an increasing number of concerns being raised with the HR department regarding "personal" problems such as financial or relationship issues.

The role of the chaplain can cover a variety of functions. Some common descriptions include providing:

- Counselling at times of grief or death
- Prayer when requested
- Emotional support
- Community liaison and outreach
- Consultation and advocacy on behalf of employees or family members

- Religious services/rituals
- Following through or supporting company directives<sup>11</sup>
- Teaching
- Support for relatives
- Liaison with employee's pastoral leader
- Spiritual care of employees
- Involvement in employee support groups<sup>12</sup>

There is a growing body of material gathered from the Australian National School Chaplaincy Program regarding the special contribution that chaplains can make to wellbeing and morale, including:

The research found the contribution of chaplains to school welfare was different from that of other school welfare staff in several ways. They worked proactively to build relationships with students as the basis for enhancing students' wellbeing, rather than simply responding to problems that arose. Chaplains were accessible and approachable and many students initiated consultation with chaplains.

Students see them as different from other school staff, as 'neutral' or 'non-aligned', partly because they did not have teaching or disciplinary roles. Chaplains approached welfare holistically, working with families and communities, as well as individual students. They approached their task flexibly according to the needs they identified within the school. They had a strong commitment to their work, seeing it as a vocation in which they were fulfilling their Christian values and not just a job for earning an income. They brought with them into the school their personal connections with the churches

<sup>9</sup> Aiken, op.cit, p. 76

<sup>10</sup> Reindorp, J. "Industrial Chaplaincy: Reflections in a modern commercial world", *Employee Counselling Today*, 5:2, 1993

<sup>11</sup> Flannelly et al, "National Survey... about the Importance of Various Chaplain Roles", *The Journal of Pastoral Care and Counselling*, 60:3, Fall 2006

<sup>12</sup> Williams et al, "A prospective study of the roles, responsibilities and stress of chaplains", *Palliative Medicine*, 18, 2004



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and community contacts which provide valuable support for chaplaincy.<sup>13</sup>

The key functions identified by the research paper into chaplains involved in the program were:

- Pastoral care
- Relationship building
- Teaching and modelling values
- Creating and nurturing ties with community
- Crisis management
- Contributing to the teamwork of staff
- Spirituality<sup>14</sup>

The key features of chaplains identified by the research report that set them apart from other care professionals are that they tend to be:

- Proactive
- Accessible
- Unaligned
- Holistic
- Flexible
- Values-based
- Church-connected<sup>15</sup>

It is important to note that occasionally there may be concerns raised about the presence of chaplains. There has been some isolated but vocal opposition to chaplains in schools as “proselytising by stealth”. The response to that by providers is that chaplains should be interdenominational and focused on providing pastoral care, available to provide ethical and spiritual support when facing issues external to the organisation. Chaplains can own their faith position but never impose their beliefs.<sup>16</sup>

### Further Work to be Done

<sup>13</sup> Hughes et al, “The Effectiveness of Chaplaincy”, Edith Cowan University, September 2009, p.6; [http://www.suqld.org.au/\\_sys/\\_data/downloads/chaplaincyeffectiveness.pdf](http://www.suqld.org.au/_sys/_data/downloads/chaplaincyeffectiveness.pdf); cited 7-02-11

<sup>14</sup> Hughes, op. cit., pp.29-32

<sup>15</sup> Hughes, op. cit., pp.44-47

<sup>16</sup> “Challenging the Chaplains”, Compass, ABC TV, 24-02-2010; <http://www.abc.net.au/compass/s3024993.htm>; cited 7-02-2010

Below is an outline of the project as initially conceived. Stage 1 covering items 1 - 5 under “Approach” have approximately been completed; although the ability to contact mine managers and interview extensively was hampered by their work commitments, particularly the amount of time managers spend in operations.

### Scope

Commissioned research that assesses:

1. The need for mine chaplaincy services on mine sites in Australia
2. How companies are currently serving this need and their expectation of how this need will be met in future
3. Who is doing mine chaplaincy in Australia, how they operate, and how they are supported organisationally, spiritually and financially.
4. The gap between each of these, and a proposed way forward to bridge this gap.
5. Final product will be a framework for best-practice mine chaplaincy that can be endorsed by all key stakeholders. Aim is suggestive rather than prescriptive, and provides a number of options / mine chaplaincy models.

### Approach

1. Approach Mine Managers, the gatekeepers on mine sites, to ask them about availability of chaplaincy services on-site, and what sort of chaplaincy/counselling issues they come across (target top 200 mines)
2. Key issues: Who are the chaplains they have used? What works well? What doesn't work well? How do they expect this need to be met in future?
3. If chaplaincy services available, seek information in the form of case studies of the ways that chaplains have contributed to wellbeing, productivity, and work/family balance.
4. Formulate interim report: basic stats.
5. Then prepare more extensive report with case studies.



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6. Approach chaplains. What are some of their challenges and what are their greatest motivators? (5 for a sample).
7. Approach major denominations to ask them whether they have any initiatives they are trying to launch (e.g. Presbyterian Inland Mission: 5 for a sample).
8. Internet survey and research of relevant articles (approx 3 hours).
9. Input from other industry chaplains e.g. police, school and army.
10. Develop a way forward in consultation with a group of internal (Christian executives, church, chaplaincy, parachurch) advisors.
11. Present the way forward to key industry stakeholders for their input.
12. Present a final framework for endorsement by industry.
13. Launch a best-practice document for use by mine chaplains and mining companies around Australia.
14. We should form a small committee (not necessarily an organisation) to screen and endorse members who want to be a part of the network. This could be facilitated through local church or parachurch, rather than through 'central command'.

It is suggested that the project could be undertaken in stages.

- Stage 1: Initial research and analysis (1-5) - **preliminary report**
- Stage 2: Survey and development of models (6-9) - **prototype framework**
- Stage 3: Consultation (10-12) - **endorsement of finalised framework**
- Stage 4: Development of policy and procedures (13-14) - **Good Practice document**

### The researcher

Kara Martin has worked with several Rio Tinto business units, beginning with Kembla Coal & Coke in Wollongong, and then moving to Minenco and Century Zinc. She has done consulting work with Kennecott Land and Pacific Coal. As well she has worked as a television

journalist, and is currently a Communications and Policy Adviser with a lobbying group representing private higher education providers. She has just completed her Masters of Arts in Christian Studies and lectures in Work & Spirituality and Everyday Ethics. She is also on the Board of the Australian College of Theology, and prepares book reviews for Open House, a national radio program. Kara is married with two children and worships at Macquarie Chapel Presbyterian.

### Appendices:

- Interview Briefing Sheet
- Charts: Chaplaincy Coverage and Openness to Chaplains

### Material available for next stage of project:

- Establishing a Chaplaincy Program
- Australian Anglican Church Defence Force Chaplaincy Code of Practice
- Code of conduct for school chaplains under National School Chaplaincy Program
- Recommendations for induction and training of chaplains
- Distinctiveness of Chaplaincy within multi-disciplinary framework, ACCESS Ministries
- US Common Code of Ethics for Professional Chaplains
- US Common Standards for Professional Chaplains
- Definition of a Chaplain, Association of Professional Chaplains
- Complementary Spiritual Practices in Professional Chaplaincy



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## APPENDIX 1

Interview briefing sheet for Stage 1 interviews of Mine Managers:

Greetings, my name is Kara Martin, I am doing research on chaplaincy services in the mining industry in Australia. I just need 10 mins of your time to ask some questions about the chaplaincy services available at your mine; or the possible opportunities that exist for chaplaincy services.

(If required mention the issues of impact of mental health and family break-up issues on employees, particularly in fly-in/fly-out operations; point to the contribution chaplaincy can make to the wellbeing and productivity of employees, and their work-life balance.)

Questions:

1. Do you offer chaplaincy services on-site?
  - If no, go to Q5
  - If yes, go to Q2
2. Who provides those services for you?
3. What are some of the benefits you have observed in terms of the services provided?
4. Has your chaplaincy experience been positive or negative?  
(Explore)
5. Would you be interested in finding out how chaplains can improve the wellbeing, productivity and work-life balance of your employees?
6. Do you have any other comments you would like to make about chaplaincy services on mine sites?
7. Would you be interested in receiving a copy of the results of this research?