

New regional facility for blood cancer patients

Auckland City Hospital's Motutapu Ward, the new Northern Region Haematology and Bone Marrow Transplant Unit, opened with a 6 August event celebrated by donors, former patients, Board members and staff.

The stunning facility has been co-designed with patients and has a range of unique features which have set a new standard in patient-centred care. Former leukaemia patient and fundraising ambassador, Molly Rowlandson, says the new ward has exceeded all her expectations.

Auckland DHB Chair, Dr Lester Levy said the Motutapu Ward was a step up for Auckland DHB and has set a new standard.

"This new ward is a step up for Auckland DHB and not some one-off exception. We now expect that our facilities should match our high standards of clinical outcomes, quality and patient experience."

Haematology Clinical Director Dr Richard Doocey said a five-year-effort combining hard work, planning, patient co-design and extraordinary donor generosity had produced an outstanding outcome.

"No one has seen anything quite like it. And this is particularly exciting given the opening of the new University of Auckland Leukaemia and Blood Cancer Research Unit. We now have a clinical environment to integrate with that research unit."

Integrating research achievements into patient care and translating them into better health outcomes is not isolated to the field of cancer research. It's the aim of a related and broad-based Auckland DHB-University of Auckland initiative called the Auckland Academic Health Alliance. The vision is to accelerate research in all the medical specialties and speed its progress 'from the bench to the bedside' for patient benefit.

Feedback from those attending the opening ceremony and the public open day has been overwhelmingly positive with many commenting on the large airy rooms, the light, views and wide corridors. Among the standout features are the large graphics depicting beautiful New Zealand scenery. While visually stunning, these also manage to instill a peaceful presence throughout the ward.

Charge Nurse Manager Helen McIlwraith said staff and patients were thrilled and excited with the move into the new ward.

"They also appreciated the opportunity to contribute to the design. Patient's lives are often turned upside down and they can face uncertainty and fear every day. We felt it was crucial to get their input into the new ward. They gave us insights into what's important – a sense of welcoming with a focus on positivity and warmth. I think we have created a ward environment that will make this very difficult journey more tolerable for our patients and their loved ones."

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