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Long-term regional health planning already delivering

Major recent funding announcements worth more than half a billion dollars were proof of the benefits of the new regional approach to health investment planning, according to Waitemata DHB CEO Dr Dale Bramley.

Recent announcements have included:

- A new \$220 million surgical hospital for the North Shore;
- \$24 million for improved facilities at Whangarei Hospital;
- \$275 million to upgrade critical infrastructure at Auckland DHB.

Dr Bramley said the need for these investments was set out in the first-ever Northern Region Long-Term Investment Plan (LTIP) released last week, which pulled together the greater health needs of the region in a way that assisted the Government to prioritise funding decisions.

“The LTIP isn’t just about which buildings are good and those that could be better; it is about meeting the needs of our rapidly growing population now and into the future by investing precious health dollars wisely so that the maximum number of people benefit from investment decisions,” Dr Bramley said.

“The three recent major Government funding announcements are proof that the LTIP approach is already delivering on its goals. A partnership over many years and many governments will be required.

“For the first time, the four DHBs of the Northern Region (Northland, Waitemata, Auckland and Counties Manukau) have come together to commit to a single plan guiding capital investment.

“This is very significant because it sends the signal to Government that any project we submit for funding has already been through a robust assessment of health needs and benefits and that we, as a region, support this investment, wherever it may be.”

Dr Bramley said many ageing DHB buildings across New Zealand would not be built in their current form today as their design did not suit modern models of care. However, despite their limitations due to age, the majority of buildings were still safe to deliver care from.

“If we had the luxury of re-designing all of our hospital buildings today, they would probably look very different to how they actually are,” Dr Bramley said.

“The ideal design now is very different to the ideal design many decades ago but our key hospital buildings are still clinically safe and the quality of care that is provided from within them is very high.”

As LTIP shows, many of the health outcomes the region enjoys are among the highest in New Zealand.

Dr Bramley said the new \$220 million surgical hospital on the North Shore Hospital campus will create significant additional elective capacity to meet the future health needs of the people of the Waitemata district and beyond.

“It creates the opportunity for this new surgical hospital to become a specialist elective surgery centre within the Northern Region, which is consistent with the LTIP.”

The new four-storey surgical hospital will add more than 12,000 square metres of floor space to Waitemata DHB’s existing Elective Surgery Centre and will include:

- Four new wards, comprising an estimated 120 additional beds;
- Four additional operating theatres;
- New endoscopy suites, reducing waiting times for colonoscopy and gastroscopy procedures;
- Clinical support services spaces;
- Patient and whanau-centred design, supporting modern models of care and in-built features that enhance the experience of patients and visitors; and
- An extended Sky Bridge link connecting the surgical hospital to the main hospital tower block, enabling the flexibility to transfer non-elective patients as required.

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