

27 August 2018

### **Māori nurses encourage others to follow in their footsteps**



#### Case study one

Māori Clinical Nurse Specialist Coral Skipper has been honoured for her exemplary leadership and Waitemata DHB is now looking for new recruits to follow in her footsteps.

The trail-blazing nurse was “humbled” to receive Waitemata’s inaugural Kauae Raro Māori Nurse Leader Award and says it shows just how much the DHB values Māori nurses.

Her receipt of a traditional korowai cloak in recognition of her work coincides with the DHB’s efforts to enlist more Māori into its nursing ranks and is a fitting tribute for a woman committed to reducing inequities for Māori.

Coral, who is of Ngāti Whātua descent, started her nursing training at AUT in 2007 as an unemployed solo-mum with four children aged between three and 13.

She wanted to help reduce some of the cultural barriers that prevented Māori, including her own friends and family, from engaging with mainstream healthcare providers. Nursing, she says, seemed like a way to effect change from within the system.

Coral, who also mentors nursing students at AUT, wants to see more Māori nurses at the DHB - breaking down barriers and reducing inequities in the health system.

“Coming into a new environment where some tough and personal conversations about your health take place, isn’t easy for many people. When Māori patients see me, they easily relate which helps them feel at ease,” she says. “It’s about building relationships and by having more Māori staff we can gain stronger engagement.”

Professor Max Abbott, Pro Vice-Chancellor and Dean of the Faculty of Health and Environmental Sciences at AUT, says: “We see many of our Māori graduates as social citizens who are affecting positive change within New Zealand’s health system. And, we foster their ambitions to be of service to their families, communities and culture.

“As a long-standing member of our Kawa Whakaruruhau Komiti, Coral Skipper has also helped shape the way our nursing programme is delivered in relation to Māori.”

As one of New Zealand’s leading health education providers, AUT is responsive to the changing needs in the clinical environment. It has the country’s largest university cohort of Māori staff and students in nursing, as well as a dedicated member of staff to support their progress and success.

**Caption:** Coral Skipper receives her korowai from Clinical Nurse Director for Māori, Dianna McGregor.

---

### Case study two



Kawhena Boyd graduated from NorthTec in Whangarei two years ago and has worked at North Shore Hospital since February 2017.

Kawhena, who is of Ngāpuhi and Ngāti Porou descent, and comes from the small rural settlement of Horeke in the Hokianga.

She was seven when her mum became a nurse and was quick to see the difference she made in their tight-knit community.

“There were a lot of sick people and hospital admissions who turned to my mother to help them understand what was happening to them,” the 22 year-old says. “Some didn’t understand what the health system was telling them and mum helped bridge the gap.

Kawhena says that same gap still exists, particularly in more isolated Māori communities where some people have an ingrained mistrust of the system.

“That can be for a number of reasons,” she says “It might be due to a lack of health education, economics or the fact that some have been geographically isolated from health services.

“A lot of the time people just don’t understand what they’re being told and are very conscious of the fact that they might be seen as needy. That can leave them feeling very vulnerable and reluctant to seek further help and treatment when they should.

“My mum was able to help those people and it is something I want to do too.”

Waitemata DHB this month welcomed 50 new nursing graduates into its ranks, including seven Māori.

It is also the lead DHB for Kia Ora Hauora (KOH) – a national Māori health careers programme.

CEO Dr Dale Bramley, who is of Ngāpuhi descent, says Waitemata DHB is committed to boosting and supporting the Māori workforce.

“We are committed to eliminating inequities wherever they exist, particularly in relation to Māori. Our efforts have already contributed to Māori gaining twice as many years in life-expectancy compared with the non-Māori/non-Pacific population since 2008.

“Having a health workforce that better reflects the community we serve plays its part by increasing engagement, so that is what our DHB continually works to achieve.”

- Interested in a nursing career at Waitemata DHB? Go to [www.wdhbcareers.co.nz](http://www.wdhbcareers.co.nz)

**Caption :** Kawhena Boyd followed her mother’s example when she trained as a nurse. She now wants to help bridge the gaps that prevent some Māori from fully accessing the health system.

ENDS

**For further information, contact:**

Waitemata DHB Media Line (09) 487 1276