



August 4, 2017

(For immediate release)

### **Renaissance of Mason Clinic site underway**

A new 15-bed facility is the latest in a series of developments and upgrades designed to address the growing demand for specialist mental health services in Auckland.

Te Aka was officially opened this morning by Minister of Health Hon Dr Jonathan Coleman on the Mason Clinic Auckland Regional Forensic Psychiatry Services site at Pt Chevalier.

Waitemata DHB CEO Dr Dale Bramley says construction of the \$14.4 million building is part of an extensive programme of remediation repairs and facility upgrades underway across the whole site. He says its completion adds a much-needed additional five beds to the regional forensic service of the four northern DHBs.

Mason Clinic bed capacity now stands at 108.

The state-of-the-art building includes sensory modulation rooms, capacity to manage vulnerable populations in different areas, a gym, internal courtyards and large windows allowing for plenty of sunlight.

A whareniui (meeting house) built into the front entrance is where service users of all ethnicities will be welcomed on arrival and is expected to have extra significance for those of Maori ancestry who make up a significant proportion of the facility's population at any one time.

"A culturally respectful treatment philosophy often enables people to reconnect with themselves and their whanau, and can play a critical part in a person's recovery," Dr Jeremy Skipworth says. "Having a whareniui at the entrance sets the scene for the type of holistic cultural engagement which local research has shown to be most effective in rehabilitation."

Auckland Regional Forensic Psychiatry Services assesses treats and assists in the recovery of mentally-ill or intellectually-disabled people who have committed criminal offences or are at high risk in the community.

Dr Skipworth says the new building and other upgraded facilities will provide the right environment for better client outcomes.

“Our teams are multi-disciplinary, culturally diverse, highly skilled and very supportive of recovery from serious mental illness”, Dr Skipworth says. “Our vision, mission and values are inclusive; founded on a therapeutic commitment to the patients, their families and the community.”

The Auckland Regional Forensic Psychiatry Service was established in 1989 and the first units on the Mason Clinic site opened in 1992.

It is the largest forensic psychiatry service in New Zealand and has operated since its opening at full capacity.

Other work completed at the Mason Clinic site over the last 2.5 years includes

- Recladding of the Tane Whakapiripiri minimum secure unit
- Recladding of the Pohutukawa Intellectual Disability secure unit
- A rebuild of the Te Miro Maori and Pacific Nations resource centre
- Kauri medium secure unit remediation project

## **Ends**

Caption: Waitemata DHB CEO Dr Dale Bramley and Minister of Health Hon Dr Jonathan Coleman at the opening of Te Aka.

## **For further information:**

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