



3 December 2021

Go-ahead for Waitakere Hospital Intensive Care Unit great news for West Aucklanders

Today's announcement that a six-bed Intensive Care Unit will be built at Waitakere Hospital represents a historic moment in the evolution of health care for the people of West Auckland, says Waitematā DHB Chief Executive Dr Dale Bramley.

A total of \$65.1 million has been approved for the ICU and an already-announced additional ward at Waitakere Hospital – the biggest capital injection to the site in almost 20 years.

“There has been a long-running grass roots campaign by the West Auckland community to have more services based at Waitakere Hospital,” Dr Bramley said.

“Waitematā DHB has always been part of that movement and we have pressed the case at every opportunity - but there are many people and groups who have supported the cause and added their voice to the campaign for more investment at Waitakere Hospital.

“This includes our West Auckland Board members, MPs, Waitakere Health Link and a range of community groups who have supported the case for an ICU at Waitakere. We thank them for the role they have played – they have done their community a great service.

“It is a great day for West Auckland and it should be celebrated – the case for investment was overwhelming and I'm so pleased the Government has listened and seen merit in continuing to develop more services closer-to-home for West Aucklanders.”

Waitematā DHB Board Chair Dr Judy McGregor said developing an intensive care unit at Waitakere Hospital had been near the top of the list of priority developments following the opening of a world-class 24-hour Emergency Department in August 2016.

“Today's announcement means fewer transfers for people who need high-level ICU care to North Shore or Auckland City hospitals where there are already dedicated ICU facilities,” Dr McGregor said.

“People who are sicker and needing a higher level of care will be able to stay in their local community in West Auckland. The burden of travel will also be removed for families visiting them and it will help keep loved ones together to reduce a little bit of the stress associated with having a whānau member in-need of ICU-level care.”

Dr Bramley said the development of an ICU would be the building block for a wider range of inpatient surgical services and more complex care that requires an ICU on-site.

“Once the ICU is in place, a range of other services can be developed around it. The ICU is critical to the development of additional services at Waitakere Hospital for West Aucklanders.”

The ICU announcement follows the go-ahead in April of a new ward block with 30 additional beds to be built on the Waitakere Hospital site, with the ICU facility to be on the ground floor of this new block. An expanded and improved Special Care Baby Unit is also under construction and due to open in 2022.

“We are seeing a huge amount of investment going into Waitakere Hospital and we hope to see a lot more. West Auckland is one of the fastest-growing areas of New Zealand with a population greater than the entire Bay of Plenty district,” Dr Bramley said.

“The area has a large Māori and Pacific population and we need to continue developing more services at Waitakere Hospital to assist our ongoing drive to address health inequities. Today’s ICU announcement is a very important step and, we hope, a sign of more good things to come.”

The Government has also announced \$5.58 million today for further developments at North Shore Hospital that will assist the DHB in managing the care needs of COVID-positive patients.

This will include the creation of eight isolation rooms, all with negative pressure capability, within the Elective Surgery Centre.

In the main North Shore Hospital tower block, there will also be two additional isolation rooms created in the High Dependency Unit (HDU) with negative pressure capability. A negative pressure environment will also be created in an open area within the North Shore ICU/HDU facility.

Dr Bramley said these investments would enable the DHB to quickly increase capacity to care for COVID-positive patients.

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