



May 9, 2019

Media Release

Hutt Hospital Celebrates 75 Years in the Community

It's not often staff are encouraged to eat cake in a hospital but there are always exceptions to that rule and a 75th birthday is a good exception.

On Wednesday 15 May Hutt Valley DHB staff will be eating one enormous cake to celebrate and mark an impressive 75 years of Hutt Hospital taking care of people in the region.

Seventy five years ago on that day the then Defence Minister the Hon. Frederick Jones officially opened the hospital announcing foundations for a further wing had already been laid. Although patients had been admitted since April 27 1944.

During that time the hospital has:

- treated almost 2.5m people – that's around 20,000 a year or 620 a week
- performed around 361,000 operations – over 4,800 a year or 93 a week
- had almost 1.5m admissions to its emergency department – just under 19,600 a year or 377 a week
- provided over 1.8m district nurse visits –24,324 a year or 468 a week.

There's been almost 10m bed stays during that time.

Acting Chief Executive Dale Oliff says it's been a pleasure and a privilege to observe, during her time stewarding the DHB, its journey of transformation – becoming a modern, fit for purpose facility with a focus on providing relevant services in a dynamic community.

“Our model of care is so different to what it was 75 years ago. The Hutt Valley is home to an extremely diverse multicultural community and our DHB reflects that.

“These days a big focus for us is care in the community – supporting patients, where it's appropriate, to receive care in their home or their primary health organisation, marae, pharmacy or community centre. Not segregating them in a hospital.

“But people will always need to come to hospital and that's why we're celebrating our bricks and mortar on May 15 to remember those that came before us and think about those that will come.”

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History of Hutt Hospital

1906 – The Wellington Hospital Board buys a site in Penrose Street, earmarking it for a future 'Cottage Hospital'.

1921 – Lower Hutt population hits 5,000.

1937 – The Penrose Street property is sold to the Education Board, later to become Hutt Intermediate.

1937 – A massive national housing scheme is launched, boosting the population of the Hutt.

1938 – The Social Security Act gives all New Zealanders the right to free hospital healthcare, putting extra pressure on the Hospital Board to build another hospital to cope with demand.

1939 – Wellington Hospital Board purchases the existing site on High Street, and Pearce House will be known as the High St Maternity Hospital for the next five years.

1941 – Two emergency blocks are erected to accommodate wounded servicemen.

1940 – Lower Hutt population reaches 20,000.

1941 – Lower Hutt officially becomes a city.

1944 – On 27 April the first patients are admitted to Hutt Hospital in ward 11, one of the four 50-bed wards in the Emergency Hospital. On May 15th Hutt Hospital is officially opened.

1945 – Building is finally completed on the main hospital (Clock Tower Building).

1952 – Lower Hutt population hits 45,000.

1954 – Hutt Hospital takes in its first five nursing students as a nurse training school.

1966 – The Nurses Home is extended by the opening of its new wing, now the YMCA facing Pilmuir Street.

1966 - The new Maternity Wing accepts the first patients.

1968 – Wahine storm - the Interisland ferry Wahine sinks and Hutt Hospital, already dealing with flooding, accepts an influx of injured from the disaster.

1970 - Hutt Hospital hosts a royal visit.

1972 – Construction work begins on the Heretaunga Wing.

1979 – Demolition of the old Army Hut.

1982 – Heretaunga Wing is officially opened by Governor-General Sir David Beattie.

1991 - Save our Hutt Hospital campaign results in a large protest march outside the hospital on High St.

1994 - Historic Pearce House removed from hospital grounds and relocated to Otaki where it is now Toad Hall.

1995 – New mental health unit Te Whare Ahuru opened.

1996 – New Emergency/Theatre Block with four operating theatres opened.

2007 – The Frederic and Margaret Wallis Labyrinth is moved and rededicated on Hutt Hospital grounds.

2011 – New larger Emergency/Theatre Block containing eight operating theatres opened, with the old block being repurposed.

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Photo Opportunity

- 10.30 am May 15 Auditorium – Clock Tower Building – a square metre cake will be officially cut
- 11 am – staff photo outside the Clock Tower Building.

For more information please contact Tracey Macleod, senior communications advisor 027 569 7405.