

**3 April 2020**

**Embargoed until 6pm**

### **Waitematā DHB sets aside entire hospital building to care for COVID-19 patients**

Major changes have been implemented at North Shore Hospital in readiness for the arrival of any patients who are unwell enough to require hospital-level care due to COVID-19.

The hospital's Elective Surgery Centre (ESC) has been temporarily closed and converted into a dedicated COVID ward, with 51 beds ready and waiting to treat infected patients.

This includes 37 ward beds and 14 additional intensive care unit (ICU) beds, more than doubling North Shore Hospital's ICU capacity.

The additional ICU beds have been delivered by reconfiguring the area which is normally the Elective Surgery Centre's Post-Anaesthetic Care Unit into a second ICU at North Shore Hospital.

"This work has been done very quickly and the public can be reassured that we are well-prepared and ready to care for any patients with COVID-19 who need to be admitted to hospital for inpatient care," said Waitematā DHB CEO Dr Dale Bramley.

"The Elective Surgery Centre is a separate building to the main North Shore Hospital tower block, connected by an enclosed bridge that allows us to transfer patients between the two as necessary.

"This means we are able to keep COVID patients physically separate from other patients in the main hospital.

"The conversion of our Elective Surgery Centre is part of our region's wider COVID-19 response plan that is seeing all our hospitals gearing up to work differently to manage the specific demands generated by COVID patients.

"At North Shore Hospital, we have been running intensive training sessions in our theatres to prepare our staff for how to manage the particular needs of COVID patients. Our people and our facilities are ready should we be needed.

"We are grateful for the actions the Government has taken to respond to COVID-19, which we expect will result in a significant reduction in any potential impact on our health services, that otherwise would have occurred.

"We have used the last week of the lockdown wisely, reconfiguring our services and planning accordingly. We must prepare for all potential possibilities. We hope that those preparations will not need to be fully activated, however we are prepared."

**ENDS**

**For further information contact**

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**About Waitematā DHB**

Waitematā DHB serves the largest population of any district health board in New Zealand, currently standing at more than 630,000 people. We have a workforce of more than 7,500 staff spread across more than 80 sites, including North Shore Hospital and Waitakere Hospital. We are also the Northern Region provider of forensic psychiatry and child disability services, plus the metro Auckland provider of child community dental services and community alcohol and drug services.