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**Media release**

*For immediate release*

### **Multisensory Snoezelen room opens at Wilson Centre**

A new multisensory Snoezelen room to support children's and adolescents' wellbeing has opened at the Child Rehabilitation Service, based at the Wilson Centre in Takapuna.

An event was held to mark the opening of the room, which helps to reduce anxiety, encourage communication and positive interactions.

Snoezelen originated in the Netherlands in the 1970s and translates as "explore" and "relax". The room is a controlled environment designed specifically for sensory stimulation through the use of colours, lights, scents and sounds.

Operated by Waitematā DHB, the services based at the Wilson Centre provide rehabilitation and respite services to children with physical disabilities in the Auckland region and nationally. Children who visit the centre for these services have started using the Snoezelen room.

As well as the opening of the Snoezelen room, invited guests and staff have celebrated the opening of its new whānau (family) room.

Waitematā DHB Kaumātua, Fraser Toi, blessed the two rooms with a karakia (prayer), before the group joined in to sing a waiata (song) followed by an afternoon tea.

Wilson Centre play specialist, Vicki Davis, who is Snoezelen-trained, says the room can be customised to suit the needs of the child.

"The unique thing about a Snoezelen room is it is full-immersion of many different things that can be varied, depending on who is using it," she says. "It maybe used for active engagement or could be used for a calming session."

The Child Rehabilitation Service and Site Manager, Susan Schroeder, says donations from community groups and families who use the centre have seen the room come to life.

"The room has been two years in the making and we are thrilled it is open," says Ms Schroeder. "The feedback we've had so far from children, young people and their families has been overwhelmingly positive."

Snoezelen rooms can be found all over the world in many different environments from rehabilitation centres and mental health facilities to rest homes and schools.

“Many of our children will benefit from the room, including adolescents who are struggling with chronic pain issues,” says Mrs Davis. “We will be able to incorporate Snoezelen sessions into their treatment journeys to help them manage their anxiety and increase relaxation, which will help with their pain.”

New Zealand currently has six Snoezelen-trained teachers – two of whom work at Waitematā DHB.

“We are very excited to have opened the Snoezelen room and we wish to thank all of our generous donors,” says Ms Schroeder. “We see this as a valuable tool that will benefit the children and young people who access our services.”

**ENDS**



*Play and Snoezelen-trained therapist, Cara Davidson, in the Snoezelen room with one of the centre's respite residents.*

For further information, contact: Waitematā DHB Media Line, ph. 487 1276