



**Media Release  
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For immediate release

### **Water pledge reinforces Waitemata DHB's healthy food and drink stance**

Choose water; choose life.

That's the message from Waitemata DHB as it works on a series of initiatives designed to get people healthy and keep them that way.

The DHB has just signed a Healthy Families Waitakere water pledge – agreeing to promote water as a first option for tamariki (children) and motivate others to do the same.

Waitemata DHB Food Services Manager Roslyn Norrie says the pledge is the latest in a long series of initiatives encouraging people to choose water over potentially unhealthy alternative drinks.

Sugary soft drinks were banned from DHB vending machines and associated food outlets several years ago and consumers were given the option of buying bottled water. Fruit juices containing added sugar were also prohibited.

The DHB makes filtered water available in most areas and has 221 water coolers located across its two hospitals and various community sites.

"It's marvellous that we have signed a water pledge," Ms Norrie says. "This is completely consistent with our own healthy foods environment."

Waitemata DHB is also a signatory to the National Healthy Food & Drink Policy subscribed to by the Ministry of Health and various other DHBs. The policy promotes plain water as the first choice over other drinks.

Waitemata DHB Public Health Dietitian Rebecca McCarroll says water consumption plays a key role in various strategies designed to combat childhood obesity and encourage good oral health.

She says ongoing work is being done through schools and other community organisations to educate people about the importance of water for good health.

The water pledge, she says, is further evidence of the DHB's commitment to the cause.

"Drinking water is such a simple and low cost thing to do," she says. "Everyone has access to it at various stages of the day and it's 100% healthy."

Healthy Families New Zealand is a national initiative and part of the Government's wider approach to helping New Zealanders live healthy, active lives.

Healthy Families Waitakere is one of 10 communities across New Zealand involved and is being led by Sport Waitakere.

Healthy Families Waitakere Manager Kerry Allan says six individuals and organisations have now signed its water pledge.

"What we eat and drink plays a large part in our health and wellbeing so promoting water as a number one choice is a key focus for Healthy Families Waitakere.

"Our team is working with the wider community to make sure water becomes the preferred drink for children - particularly at school."

**Ends**

**Caption:** Healthy Families Partnerships and Engagement Coordinator Caitlin MacColl and Waitemata DHB Chief Medical Officer Andrew Brant toast the signing of the water pledge.

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