

23 November 2018

For immediate release

New radiology facilities to cater for population boom in West Auckland

The opening of a newly-expanded Radiology Department at Waitakere Hospital is specifically designed to match the increased demands of West Auckland's fast-growing population – doubling capability and giving more people better access to a world-class service.

Over 100 people, including Associate Minister of Health Hon Jenny Salesa, gathered today for a ribbon-cutting ceremony marking the completion of a year-long project that included the installation of two new high-tech CT scanners to provide extra cardiac, brain and vascular imaging.

One of the scanners replaces an older model that had reached the end of its working life. The other doubles the service's capability, ensuring West Aucklanders have access to a bigger, better diagnostic imaging service that is closer-to-home.

"Our investment in this new digital technology enables increased capacity and faster imaging time - ultimately improving the service, enhancing patient experience and contributing towards better health outcomes," Waitemata DHB CEO Dr Dale Bramley says. "A good example can be seen around our ability to complete inner-ear examinations. This procedure took between 80 and 90 seconds on the old CT scanner. Latest technology will enable the same task to be completed in 0.5 seconds with absolute accuracy."

Demand for radiology services at Waitakere Hospital has grown by over 52% since 2010 when 6980 people had CT scans. Some patients have received care at North Shore Hospital in order to lessen waiting times out west and the DHB has also outsourced appointments to make sure people get as prompt a service as possible.

"We have worked with the resources available to us to ensure everyone has received the best possible care," Dr Bramley says. "This development minimises the need for those additional measures - putting us in an excellent position to support the phenomenal population growth in West Auckland and the increased demand for our services."

The Radiology Department has been extensively upgraded to accommodate the new scanners and includes new and improved waiting areas for patients. Additional staff hired to run the expanded facility will include two senior medical officers, two medical imaging technologists, one registered nurse and one radiology assistant. A part-time administration person will also be added to the team.

Dr Bramley says the development follows a major expansion of the Waitakere Hospital Emergency Department in 2017 that included:

- a new paediatric zone
- two negative pressure isolation rooms to help meet modern standards of infection control
- mental health rooms to better cater for acute presentations
- eleven new treatment spaces including three monitored adult beds

"Today's opening is yet another example of our investment in the evolution of Waitakere Hospital and the high quality service we provide today for the people of West Auckland," Dr Bramley says.

Ends

For further information, contact:

Waitemata DHB Media Line, ph. 4871276