

Media Release

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Planned new whānau rooms welcomed by advocate Dame Rangimārie Naida Glavish



A new state-of-the-art hospital building due to open on Auckland's North Shore in 2024 will include modern whānau rooms that enable families to be in close-proximity to loved ones requiring medical care.

Confirmation of their inclusion is being welcomed by Dame Rangimārie Naida Glavish, whose tireless advocacy for improvement first saw whānau rooms opened at Auckland City Hospital in 2003 – followed by similar facilities at North Shore Hospital a few years later.

The latest rooms will be part of the four-storey Tōtara Haumarū complex now under construction on the North Shore Hospital campus. The building will include eight state-of-the-art operating theatres, 150 additional inpatient beds and a four-room procedure suite for colonoscopy and gastroscopy procedures.

The whānau rooms are another win for the equity that Dame Naida, Chief Advisor Tikanga at Auckland and Waitemātā, has dedicated much of her working life too – especially within the health sector.

The cause is deeply personal – dating back 30 years to when her late mother had a stroke and needed to be hospitalised.

Dame Naida and her whānau rallied to support their loved one - ensuring she had people with her as often as possible, in accordance with Māori custom.

“We were at the hospital for three days in order to be close to Mum - sleeping in the car and using public facilities,” she says. “We had nowhere else to stay.”

The experience shaped Dame Naida's drive to provide better options for visiting whānau and the planned Tōtara Haumarū development is an impressive example of how significantly times have progressed.

The five purpose-built, fully fitted-out spaces will be used by people of all cultures and funded by donations through Well Foundation, the official charity partner for North Shore and Waitakere Hospitals.

Confirmation of plans to include the whānau rooms in Tōtara Haumaru is seen as a major step towards making the hospital experience less stressful for patients and their families.

Dame Naida says the whānau rooms will be known as Nohoanga Haumaru - a safe place for shared care by whānau and the clinical team.

“Having a loved one in hospital is difficult for family who want to be by their bedside as much as possible, especially when the patient is very unwell. A space where families can gather, have a cup of tea or take a quick nap gives everyone more capacity to focus on their loved one and what really matters,” she says.

The multi-use spaces will include a small kitchenette, chairs, a table and room to sleep. An adjoining door will lead directly to the patient’s room, with space to accommodate a larger number of whānau if required.

Whānau who are assisting with end-of-life or extreme care needs will also find the rooms helpful.

“These rooms are a special space for whānau to be together. We hope that whānau will find comfort and peace in the Nohoanga Haumaru as they provide their loved ones with care and support during challenging times,” Dame Naida says.

A separate whānau accommodation facility for whānau with family who are patients in the adjacent main North Shore Hospital building is also nearing completion and is scheduled to open within the next few months. It will replace quarters currently in use within the hospital which will then be repurposed for use by other services.

CAPTION: An artist’s impression of the whānau rooms planned for inclusion in the new Tōtara Haumaru hospital building on Auckland’s North Shore. The room give whānau direct access to loved ones who are in hospital care.

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