

## Media Release

Issued: 17 August 2023

### **Waitākere Hospital celebrates one-year anniversary of new Special Care Baby Unit (SCBU)**

Waitākere Hospital today proudly marks the one-year anniversary of its state-of-the-art Special Care Baby Unit (SCBU). The upgraded SCBU, which opened to its first babies on 17 August 2022, has significantly enhanced the care of premature babies, providing a supportive environment for up to 18 babies born post-32 weeks' gestation who require specialised care.

Since opening, the SCBU has admitted 350 premature babies, including 20 sets of twins. The unit is equipped with world-leading technology, including remote monitoring of infants' physiology, ensuring that each baby receives the best possible care.

The SCBU also fosters an environment where families feel supported, cared for and at home. It boasts a dedicated mothers' lounge, a separate kitchen and dining area for families, six cot bays with sleeping spaces for caregivers and three dedicated rooms for overnight stays. This design ensures that caregivers can stay overnight with their baby, a crucial feature that promotes bonding during the early days of a baby's life.



Feedback from families has been overwhelmingly positive, with parents frequently commenting on the welcoming atmosphere of the facility. One of the first babies to benefit from the new SCBU was Wereta Fernandez-Tukiwaho, born 10 weeks prematurely. Transferred to the Waitākere SCBU at 33 weeks, he received specialised care before being ready to go home. His mother, Maria-del Fernandez, recalls the challenging period. "It was a surreal time. But at the SCBU, we felt at home, welcome and cared for. The nurses were amazing – they were so caring and really made a difference."

Debbie Daniel, Charge Nurse Manager for SCBU Waitākere, emphasises the positive impact of the new unit. "The upgraded facility provides whānau with more space to 'room in' prior to transitioning home, allowing them to bond with and support their premature tamariki. Being able to provide

these kinds of options is incredibly important during the first few days of a baby's life," she says. "We are proud to offer such great care to new babies at such a crucial time in their lives."

The SCBU was partly funded by \$5 million of community donations through the Well Foundation, Te Whatu Ora – Waitematā's official charity.

**CAPTION:** Maria del-Fernandez and Wereta Fernandez-Tukiwaho at Waitakere Hospital SCBU August 2022 (Left) and at home August 2023 (Right).

ENDS

**Media contact:**

Media Line: 09 487 1276