

**MINUTES OF THE THAMES/COROMANDEL
COMMUNITY HEALTH FORUM MEETING HELD
FRIDAY 5 SEPTEMBER, THAMES WAR MEMORIAL CENTRE**

PRESENT:	<i>Frances Bicknell (Chair), Frances Burton, Laurie Franks, Deborah MacDonald Brown, Robyn Pengelly, Gill Leonard, Val Sparks, John Robert, Kathy Archibald, Margaret MacKay, Anne hay-Smith and Jackie Gausden.</i>
APOLOGIES	<i>Janet Clissold, Jacquie Mitchell, Fiola Siaiatu</i>
IN ATTENDANCE:	<i>Grant O'Brien – Waikato DHB Representative Amy Thomsen – Waikato DHB Communications Consultant Gordon Chesterman – Waikato DHB Elected Board Member</i>

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS	<i>Chairperson welcomed everyone to the meeting and made special mention of the attendance at the meeting of Waikato DHB Board Member Gordon Chesterman.</i>
APOLOGIES	<i>S Fitzpatrick, Thelma Chantrey, Marie Reilly, Sharon Preston, Janet Clissold, Jacquie Mitchell and Phillippa Barriball</i>
MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING	<i>Minutes of previous meeting held Thursday 12th June were tabled and taken as read.</i>
MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES	<i>A number of actions were recorded for the last meeting these had been acted upon and distributed with the agenda for this meeting</i>
ITEM 1:	<p>WAIKATO DISTRICT HEALTH BOARD UPDATE</p> <p><i>Grant O'Brien attended for this item and provided a power point presentation covering a number of DHB and Health sector developments. Key items included:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• Continuing workforce challenges and the need to support local initiatives and do more to ensure health services remained available to rural communities. Health Waikato (the DHB's Provider Arm) routinely advertised locally, nationally and internationally for staff and on average carried 80 – 100 vacancies across all workforce groups. A new website had been developed with a focus on contribution to the attraction of people wanting to come and work in the Waikato region.</i> <i>• The new car park and Transit Lounge at Waikato Hospital was officially opened in July by the Prime Minister and King Tuheitia. An impressive crowd of Members of Parliament, Ministry Officials and Tainui supporters were on hand to witness the occasion where the new building was blessed in memory of Te Ariki Dame Te Atairangikaahu.</i> <i>• Transport issues are the focus of a new project designed to develop a tool to better identify inequalities across the region. There is a willingness within the DHB to be innovative in finding new solutions to</i>

	<p><i>these lingering problems. Members were invited to feed local suggestions into the planning process for consideration. Feedback and consultation on the outcomes of this project is likely to occur at the next forum meetings.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The DHB had commenced work into finding new ways to sustain rural health services. The concept of clustering services into a ‘health village’ around an existing rural hospital is being considered as one way of improving access and delivery of these vital local services. Taumarunui has been identified as the pilot site. Extensive consultation and community engagement has commenced to achieve a bottom up approach to this project outcome.</i> • <i>Workforce challenges were highlighted in a presentation showing demand for health care set to outstrip supply in a very short time-frame. While this is worrying, it does create opportunities to be innovative around new approaches to these issues. The DHB has commenced some work looking at establishing new community nursing services and further project work and consultation will occur further down the track.</i> • <i>Health Waikato (the DHB’s Provider of health Services) had recorded a record year with 10.3 million procedures. This includes over 600,000 patient meals, over 20,000 surgical procedures, over 154 outpatient attendances and greater than 7million blood tests. Health Waikato is also undertaking significant redevelopment projects including campus upgrade, IT and system improvements.</i> • <i>Mental Health services across the region are set to be improved with the allocation of new funding for Primary Mental Health Services. The DHB reported that between 20 – 28% of people in NZ has a diagnosable mental illness at any one time. Until 1 July this year DHB’s only received funding for 3% of this population. This meant that a number of people fail to have their needs met adequately. This new primary funding will be a welcome addition to health resources locally. PHO’s will have the responsibility of working with their communities to develop and implement these new services.</i>
<p>ITEM 2:</p>	<p>LOCAL ISSUES</p> <p>Arthritis services under valued <i>Little support is available for people suffering arthritis according to a member of the forum. Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Rotorua has excellent resources and services available to reduce the impact of arthritis but poor access to this resource by DHBs means that many people needing the service cannot attend.</i></p> <p><i>Grant O’Brien Waikato DHB Change Manager said he was aware of the service but was not aware of the funding issues for Waikato DHB people are sent to the service. Grant offered to investigate this and provide information at the next meeting.</i></p> <p><i>Te Korowai Hauora had commenced a monthly outreach arthritis clinic in Thames but without a representative of that organisation present an update on its success was not available</i></p>

	<p>Home help form not meeting needs <i>This process was described as cumbersome and does not recognise the needs of many people needing the services. ‘A review is needed said one member’. Grant O’Brien offered to review the form and discuss its use with the DHB people responsible for this area. Perhaps a focus group of ‘users’ would be a good way of changing the form to better meet the need.</i></p> <p>Local progress with improving access to transport <i>The DHB’s Population Health Service had been doing work on identifying the community transport options that were available locally. A draft document for discussion was presented to the meeting by local Health Promoter Kathy Archibald. Members were asked by Kathy to review and provide feedback on the document so a final version could be implemented.</i></p> <p><i>Some concern was raised that there were different transport projects underway and the potential for wasteful duplication needed to be avoided. Waikato DHB would be presenting their work at the November meeting, and it seemed like a good idea that all transport projects come together to identify the best way of ensuring access to these needed services.</i></p> <p>Thames hospital redevelopment progressing <i>Area Manager Jacquie Mitchell was unable to attend the meeting to present an update on the work at the Hospital. Progress on the Clinical Centre was well advanced and the staff expected to move into the new facility in November. There will be an open day for local people to visit and view the new facilities, the date for this would be advertised once set.</i></p> <p>A new birthing unit gets closer <i>Grant O’Brien in response to a question on progress with this new facility commented that it was likely to be located across the road from the Hospital in land currently occupied by the staff car-park. Costing work had been completed and a decision to commence work was expected soon.</i></p>
<p>ITEM 3:</p>	<p>GENERAL BUSINESS</p> <p><i>Gordon Chesterman, Waikato DHB Board Member told the meeting that the role of the Board was to employ and support the Chief Executive Officer. “Often the needs of the community were not always known to Board members and attendance at meetings like this was useful” says Mr Chesterman.</i></p> <p><i>The workforce challenges are not particular to New Zealand. Mr Chesterman commented that an Australian newspaper recently reported an abundance of newly trained medical practitioners and the fear that this might lead to a drop in quality due to so few older more experienced practitioners remaining in the workforce.</i></p>

	<p><i>Some of the key issues facing the health system, in New Zealand according to Mr Chesterman included, challenging the nature of an extensive volunteer assisted system. Largely this was provided by elderly people and the sustainability of this was something that clearly needed to be questioned. Once we loose volunteers more gaps in services are likely to appear.</i></p> <p><i>Waikato DHB is predicting a \$30 million surplus in the current financial year and this offered opportunities for new services to be purchased through the prioritisation funding process. It needed to be mentioned however, the bulk of the surplus is budgeted by the organisation as they prepare to fund the new services and the redevelopment of the Waikato and Thames Hospital campuses. Once the new facilities come on stream, operational costs will begin to hit the organisation. Surpluses are therefore predicted to be a short term situation.</i></p> <p><i>Commenting on service quality Mr Chesterman felt that the media attention on health services tended to portray a picture of a struggling system in trouble. In fact, in response to a question from Mr Chesterman most people in the audience were able to report positive health sector experiences they or others had received. “The media weren’t necessarily interested in good new stories when it came to health or the Public sector”, he said.</i></p> <p><i>Nursing innovations in Australia had resulted in training being reduced from a three year to a two year ‘fast-track’ programme with the final year working and learning at the ‘coal-face’. As Chair of the WINTEC Board, Mr Chesterman was going to discuss this option with the WINTEC as a possible option here in New Zealand to help with the workforce shortages.</i></p> <p><i>Overflows and long waits in the Emergency Department were also an issue the DHB was concerned with. This appeared to be due to the high cost of attending Anglesea Clinic with many people needing a service but unable to afford the cost. The DHBs undertaking work in this area now and it is hoped some relief will become available.</i></p>
<p>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</p>	<p>Wednesday 26th November 2008 10.00am – 12.00pm Thames War Memorial Civic Centre 200 Mary Street THAMES</p>