

# New wheels improve hospital journey

IT WAS a long time coming, but Taumarunui's new hospital bus is now running smoothly.

And it seems visitors and patients to Waikato Hospital who are travelling on the new and improved bus from Taumarunui, Te Kuiti and Te Awamutu are pretty happy with the new ride.

"I have received fantastic feedback about the new bus," said Taumarunui Hospital and Family Health Team manager Tina Baker.

"They tell me the new vehicle is now air conditioned, far more comfortable and even has reclining seats, which is great because we have had patients who couldn't physically sit up travelling in the old bus in the past."

New wheels haven't meant a change in service however, with the bus still departing Taumarunui Hospital just after 8am, stopping to pick people up in Te Kuiti and Te Awamutu along the way, arriving at Waikato by 10.30am and departing again at 4pm.

Attendants at both Te Kuiti and Waikato hospitals assist patients to get on and off the bus.

Taumarunui's hospital bus was funded with a portion of Waikato District Health Board's allocated National Transport Assistance Scheme funding.

The DHB is taking a closer look at how it can make better use of the National Transport Assistance Scheme as part of a wider transport project, which is currently underway.



**REVAMPED BUS:** Pioneer Bus Company driver John Mohlmann very happy about his new wheels, outside Waikato Hospital after a daily trip from Taumarunui.

## Right care, right time, right team, right place

PATIENTS visiting Health Waikato rural hospitals and continuing care facilities will get some extra special care now.

Someone to speak up for them, ask the questions they didn't even know they needed, help get them back to their community sooner and just make the journey as a patient that much smoother.

That person is Annette Bradley-Ingle a newly appointed nurse co-ordinator: rural patient liaison.

Mrs Bradley-Ingle has just returned from five years in the UK and after a month of the new 12-month pilot says, she wants to see patients get back to their communities faster.

"It is also evident that Waikato Hospital staff and those working in the rural hospitals work hard to ensure smooth and timely transfers for rural patients.

"I'm hoping this role will assist them to further improve the quality and speed of these processes.

"Over time this should help to significantly reduce staff and patient frustrations."

A South Australian concept for rural people receiving treatment at large city hospitals was the pilot for the project.

Rural and Community Services manager Jill Dibble observed the model while visiting Australia on business in 2008.

Mrs Dibble brought the concept back to her peers and interest around it has been high ever since.

"Everybody seems to be embracing the model, which is great," said Mrs Dibble.

"Particularly those staff who work in the rural areas, as frustrations around getting patients back into their home communities in a timely manner, is something that has been realised for some

time now."

Taumarunui Hospital and Family Health Team manager Tina Baker took the lead as the rural representative in the planning stage.

Representatives from all areas of rural and community services and hospital-based colleagues are part of the ongoing working group.

Ms Baker said it was a lot more beneficial to patients' recovery from a holistic perspective, if they can be cared for in their own community.

"This is about patient centred care – right care, right time, right team, right place," said Mrs Bradley-Ingle.

"Patients no longer requiring secondary level care, should have access to services in their local communities in a well planned and timely manner, which is where my role will assist."

Mrs Dibble said a patient's journey is a shared responsibility across the sector.

"There are several patient journeys, including: home to hospital, community service to hospital, hospital to hospital and hospital to community.

"Each healthcare worker has a responsibility to ensure effective handover of care to the next healthcare provider or facility, and that is why it is so important that this project be as collaborative as it is."

While Mrs Bradley-Ingle's role currently consists of working on patient cases between Waikato Hospital and Health Waikato's rural hospitals; Taumarunui, Te Kuiti, Tokoroa and Thames and at continuing care facilities in Te Awamutu (Matariki) and Morrinsville (Rhoda Read), there are plans to broaden the scope.

"After 12 months, the position will be reviewed and if continued, I hope it will be broadened to include more rural and community-based work as well as hospital," she said.



**ANNETTE BRADLEY-INGLE**

## Kai at the right price hits town

CECIL'S Meat n' Veg in Hakiha Street is helping Waikato District Health Board's Population Health Service to promote healthy lifestyles in its local community.

The local main street store is selling \$10-\$20 fruit and vegetable boxes under Population Health Service's Kai @ the Right Price project.

The project was launched last Monday and looks to promote eating fresh fruit and vegetables affordably while they are in season.

"Kai @ the Right Price is a community-based project supported by local community health service providers," said

Population Health Service health promoter Amy Perez.

"It aims to increase the amount of fresh fruit and vegetables eaten by children and adults, giving people the option to include the fruit and vegetable boxes into their weekly budget."

Mrs Perez said many people do not eat fresh fruit and vegetables due to a perceived high cost or unavailability, and that is why Kai @ the Right Price was formed.

"It's a great project because not only does it support and encourage people to buy fruit and vegetables in a convenient and affordable way, but it also sup-

ports local business like Cecil's.

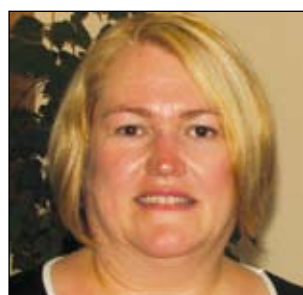
"While Kai @ the Right Price was initially piloted in Otorohanga, and aimed at low socio-economic families, it is a great chance for us all to reap the benefits during the current economic downturn we are facing."

The fruit and vegetable boxes can be ordered either in-store at Cecil's or by phone (07) 895 7570.

Kai @ the Right Price is running on a three-month pilot period in Taumarunui after which it will be evaluated. Spot prizes and fruit and vegetable-based recipes will also be given away throughout the trial period.



**KAI TIME:** A sample of a \$20 Kai @ the Right Price box at Cecil's Meat n' Veg in Taumarunui.



**TINA BAKER**

## Customer service at its very best

TAUMARUNUI Hospital is opening its doors to you on a monthly basis.

Hospital manager Tina Baker and her team are inviting community members to regular meetings at the hospital to share information and ideas about hospital business

with the people who matter – you, the community.

"We know that people in the Taumarunui community are genuinely interested in what happens here at the hospital and so they should be – this is theirs," said Ms Baker.

"We also know there are

great ideas out there about how we can do things better, and that at this point in time there is not a regular forum for us to share new initiatives with the community, or hear their concerns and ideas either.

"While we have community

health forum meetings with the wider district health board, we are looking to keep things more regular, and locally focused.

"So we are going to hold monthly meetings in the dining room of the hospital, where we will provide tea and coffee, our ears and ideas."

**FIRST MEETING** will be held on Monday, 6 April at 4pm.

Further meetings will be advertised in the classified section of the Ruapehu Press.