

# Thames Hospital “changing every day”

Construction work at Thames Hospital is continuing to go smoothly and remains on schedule to be completed by the end of the year.

Hospital area manager Jacquie Mitchell said it was exciting to see how quickly everything is changing.

“Everyday I come in to work and there is something different to look at. The hospital is changing every day and it is pleasing to be able to see progress being made.

“Staff can now visualise the end result so the excitement is build-

ing for when they will get to move in,” she said.

The first two stages are now complete with the opening of Sperry Lane Café and the Whānau Facility last year.

“The opening of the new kitchen last year was a big celebration for

more efficiently.

“It’s exciting for them to be working with a new facility because it is a rare thing for ours,” Ms Mitchell said. The three metre high bund wall

that will protect the hospital from any future debris flow is also due to be completed by the end of the month.

Meanwhile, hospital staff are working on the service redevelopment side of the project by looking closely at a patient’s journey at Thames Hospital from an ED visit through to an inpatient admission.

Staff are evaluating this journey and deciding how it will work and possibly change within the new buildings.

This construction work at Thames Hospital is part of Waikato District Health Board’s Service and Campus Redevelopment (SCR) project which is also underway at Waikato Hospital. For more information about what’s happening with the redevelopment at Thames Hospital and to see the latest photos visit [www.waikatodhb.govt.nz](http://www.waikatodhb.govt.nz).

## Progress update on new buildings

Construction of the new Inpatient and Thames Clinical Centres is continuing to make good progress with both buildings sticking to their construction schedules.

### Thames Clinical Centre (TCC)

The roof is currently being put on this new building and the final exterior work is expected to be completed shortly. Work on the interior fit-out will begin next month.

When this new centre is complete in August, it will be next to a new main entrance for the hospital and be home to the Emergency Department (ED), radiology and all outpatient clinics.

### Inpatient Centre (IPC)

Half of the foundations were laid months ago and the framing has begun on this section. The foundations for the remaining area will be laid once the area of the old kitchen is cleared and the roof will be built on over the coming months with work on the interior scheduled to begin in July.

When complete in November, High Dependency Unit will move into the IPC along with the 54 bed ward. Each room in the ward will have its own ensuite and some will be able to view new courtyards.



CLINICAL CENTRE: Foundations were laid in November.



MAKING PROGRESS: The TCC roof will be complete by the end of the month.



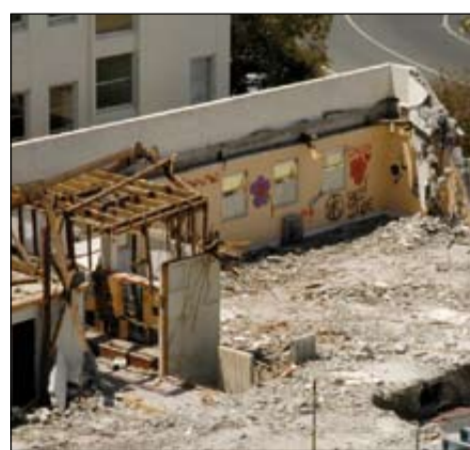
INPATIENT CENTRE: Concreting was completed in November.



UPDATE: The framing is complete for this section of the IPC.



DEMOLISHED: The old kitchen block was gone after only three weeks of work.



## New cafe opens as old kitchen is demolished

The opening of Sperry Lane Café in December made way for the demolition of the old kitchen block.

The 52 year old building had to be demolished to make way for further construction of the new Inpatient Centre.

This construction will create a link to the Thames Clinical Centre.

The demolition of this building progressed smoothly and is now complete after only three weeks.

Work will begin on the new link once the area has been cleared of debris.

Ms Mitchell said that a lot of careful planning and work went into ensuring the demolition was a success.

“We had to be sure that the work wouldn’t affect any other areas of the hospital.

“It created a lot of dust and noise so we are lucky it went smoothly and kept to schedule,” she said.

Before demolition could begin all heating, water, phone, electricity and fire alarm services were disconnected.

The first stage of the demolition involved all timber and fittings being removed, then the roof was dismantled.

The final stages involved collapsing the walls with a large digger and removing all remaining rubble and rubbish from the site.

Concrete walls also had to be cut through in order to separate the block from other buildings.



OPEN: Sperry Lane Café opened in December.

## Better PJs make for a happy hospital

Small adjustments can make big differences to patient comfort and staff time.

Thames Hospital occupational therapist Sue Howes and the rest of the ‘patient nightwear group’ learned just that when they decided to delve deeper into the problem of ill fitting nightwear that had plagued the hospital community for years.

“Basically, the staff had made noises about the fact that a lot of patients’ nightwear didn’t fit very well, were often incorrectly labelled and had faulty fixtures, but nothing had ever been done about it,” said Mrs Howes.

“The situation was causing a lot of wasted time, with staff having to hunt for appropriate garments and it was causing patients some stress as well.”

So the group was established and their first meeting held in November. From there, they held a brainstorm session around what they perceived to be the main problems.

The group also conducted a patient survey and got staff feedback from those staff directly involved.

They found many patients would not go to the toilet as they were afraid their garments might slip, causing incontinence issues, which lead to feelings of indignity. One comment the group had from elderly patients in particular, suffering from arthritis and other medical conditions, was that the domes and flies on pyjamas were hard to manage and staff had to assist.

The next step the group made was to contact other district health boards to find out whether they were experiencing the same problems.

From their research some minor but significant changes were made.

“It sounds simple, but we created a sizing chart which was typical of our patient community, and have set up a system for returning faulty garments and getting quality garments returned,” said Mrs Howes.

“That had never happened before. Faulty garments would go back among the rest and staff were sifting through to find what they wanted. Now we are filtering out the faulty garments until we have a full complement of good ones.

“So we are cleaning up our own backyard by putting new processes in place here, and making the most of what we have.”

The patient nightwear group is now in the process of forwarding their report further within the Waikato District Health Board to go through consultation for even more improvements to be made to patient nightwear.

Mrs Howes said many people who took part in the patient survey said they preferred to wear hospital nightwear while in hospital due to the seemingly endless supply that is often required.

“Taking that on board, it is really important for us to ensure the nightwear we’re providing is comfortable and offering peace of mind to our patients rather than concern,” she said.

“We need to do anything we can to provide them with dignity, respect and more independence by supplying quality products and services – even pyjamas.”

## New graduates thrive at Thames

Thames Hospital staff have been fortunate enough to have two top quality graduates join the ranks in the past month.

Douglas Bell and Ellen Bourke have been on board at Thames Hospital since January and are enjoying every minute of it.

Mr Bell has been placed in the surgical ward having studied nursing at Waikato, while Miss Bourke has been warmly welcomed to the medical ward. The pair will switch halfway through this year.

But for Miss Bourke, accepting a job at Thames Hospital is like coming home.

Not only has her mother Merla worked at the hospital as a nurse for the past four years, but Miss Bourke has called Waihi home for more than 10 years as well.

Originally from Wellington, her family moved to Waihi when she was 10 years old and the coastal township is where she had her first taste of the medical profession while undertaking work experience as a nurse aide at Waihi Hospital.

“I had always tried to resist getting into nursing as an occupation because that was what mum did,” said Miss Bourke.

“But when I did work experience at Waihi, I knew it was something I wanted to take further.”

So the Waihi College student went back to Wellington to study nursing at Massey University.

“When it came time to start looking for jobs, I wanted to come back to the Waikato because I knew they had a really good graduate programme here (including one post graduate paper with Auckland University of Technology) – it’s really well regarded,” she said.

“You had to choose your top six hospitals to work at and Thames was my first pick because it was close to home and had a good name, so I was really lucky to be placed here.”

She is now living on-campus in the nurses’ hostel and has begun what is regarded as a “fourth year of training” as part of the NETP (Nurses Entrance to Practice) programme.

“Some of my friends from university really looked down on working in a rural hospital, but it has just been so great,” said Miss Bourke.

“I really love the ward I am working on and everyone has made me feel so welcomed.

“All the staff are really nice and are as eager for me to learn as I am.

“They tell me that if they are doing something I am interested in, to let them know so that I can observe.

“I think that is the best part about nursing though, you always continue to learn because there is always something new to know and do.”



NEW GRAD: Ellen Bourke (21) has ‘come home’ to the Coromandel to work at Thames Hospital as a nursing graduate.

## Surgeon’s treasured memories



Paul Silvester

One month after the death of great New Zealand icon Sir Edmund Hillary, Thames Hospital general surgeon Paul Silvester has more than a few memories to cherish.

Having worked at Thames Hospital for 24 years, Mr Silvester considers himself a “serious trumper” rather than climber, but his tramping interest and love of the Everest region and its people, meant he crossed paths with Sir Edmund for half of his lifetime – about 30 years.

Mr Silvester and his wife Glen first met Sir Edmund in 1974 when they were being interviewed by the Volunteer Service Abroad (VSA) board to work for the Himalayan Trust soon after hearing of its work.

At that time, Sir Edmund was a patron of the board.

By the end of 1974, Mr Silvester was working as a doctor to the Sherpa community in the Everest region, and the following year ran a village clinic in Solu, which had about 200,000 inhabitants.

In 1976, he was involved in the building and establishment of a new hospital in Phaplu, which 32 years later, is still very active in providing medical aid in Nepal.

In fact, Mr Silvester’s time spent in Nepal is the reason he chose surgery as a vocation rather than general practice.

“Working in Nepal in the 1970s opened up my eyes to the opportunities of surgery, so instead of going into general practice, I went to England in 1976 in anticipation of doing surgical training in London,” he said.

But Nepal drew him back on more than one occasion and he returned to Phaplu in 1982 to



OPPORTUNITY: Paul Silvester’s daughter Annie (left) was fortunate enough to meet the late Sir Edmund Hillary and his wife Lady June Hilary on Nepal Day in February 2007. Like so many other Kiwis, Annie had her \$5 note signed.

resume work in the hospital, before coming back to New Zealand in 1984.

“Sir Ed was often in the region, planning and negotiating with locals and visiting New Zealanders. He was always hands-on with the rest of the building team,” said Mr Silvester.

During their travels, he and his wife also had the pleasure of meeting the late Lady Louise Hilary and the recently widowed Lady June Hilary – as has their daughter Annie.

Of Sir Edmund, the Coromandel doctor says, “I remember him with admiration and gratitude and am honoured to have known him.”

## Welcome to the changing face of your Thames Hospital

Next time you visit Thames Hospital you’ll notice some positive changes

Patient centres taking shape include Thames Clinical Centre and the new Inpatient Centre.

A new kitchen and dining room named the Sperry Lane Cafe.

A makeover for the whānau house.

Parking off Bella Street.

Bund wall protection in place.

Making visits to your hospital more pleasant for you

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