

# Ruapehu doctor sets sights high

Taumarunui-bred Rawiri Keenan says it has been hometown influences that have given him the support and self-belief to complete his first year as a doctor at Waikato Hospital.

Born in New Plymouth, Dr Keenan's family moved to Okahukura, just north of Taumarunui when he was seven years old.

He attended Tarrangower Primary and Taumarunui High Schools where he was encouraged to go to medical school.

"But it wasn't until I talked to a very influential man from Manu Arika Marae, by the name of Alexander Phillips that I really made my mind up," said Dr Keenan (24).

"He gave me the support and belief in myself that I could do it."

Undertaking six years of study at Otago University is no mean feat after 13 years of schooling, but still Dr Keenan jumped at the chance to work at Taumarunui Hospital during two summer study breaks.

Previous hospital manager Karen Akhtar worked with the Waikato District Health Board to create a hospital/nurse aide post at Taumarunui, which Dr Keenan worked at until medical school became too rigorous and study became priority 365 days per year.

He said the opportunity to work at his local hospital was invaluable for experience lead-



**GUIDED BY TEACHINGS:** Dr Rawiri Keenan of Taumarunui.

ing up to his first year in the workforce.

"The team there were all really fun and great to work with," said Dr Keenan.

"My time at Taumarunui Hospital gave me a head start on how wards work, the dynamics and concepts of multidisciplinary meetings and an appreciation of nurses and attendants.

"Although I was working as a nurse aide, once I had the baths done, given a hand with break-

fast and provided nothing more urgent turned up, I got to hang out with the doctors either in the emergency department, or when they came down for visiting ward rounds."

He said the experience was a rewarding one – and to have some money to take back down to Dunedin to help with the winter power bills was an extra bonus.

Having completed his first year as a New Zealand Medi-

cal Council intern, Dr Keenan has spent the past three months working as a house surgeon at Hamilton-based Henry Rongomau Bennett Centre.

But it's the role of a general practitioner that he eventually wants to undertake.

"I was blessed enough to receive two significant scholarships while studying.

"One was from the New Zealand Rural Institute of Health, which was largely contributed to by the Gallagher Group, and I also have a bonded scholarship to Pinnacle Primary Health Organisation.

"My main goal currently is to get into GP work, and Pinnacle was funding some scholarships where you return to work in the rural sector having completed your training, which I would like to do.

"It take a few years to get there, but I'm sure once I'm there, I'll be able to meet those obligations."

So while it's a busy life climbing the medical ladder for Dr Keenan, he still finds time to get back home to visit friends and family.

"And Manu Arika Marae, where I was bought up and is a place that has given me so much," he said.

"Mr Phillips and his teachings are still what guide me in my day-to-day living, and especially my work."



**MEET AND GREET:** Taumarunui Hospital manager Tina Baker, left, with Waikato District Health Board chief executive Craig Climo.

## Climo impressed with local hospital-ity

Taumarunui Hospital and wider community members get the big 'thumbs up' from Waikato District Health Board chief executive Craig Climo, following his visit to the Ruapehu district last week.

Mr Climo and other Waikato DHB staff members were welcomed to the town at Kokiri Community Trust on the morning of Monday, November 19.

The recently-appointed Mr Climo told trust members and residents he was pleased to be invited to Taumarunui and was grateful for the warm welcome.

"While the Waikato DHB has a very long list of objectives, I believe these can be compacted down to two in its simplest form," he said.

"These are: improving the health of Waikato DHB communities, and significantly reducing, or eliminating health inequalities in these communities.

"We can't put the health priorities of our rural communities to one side and primarily focus on the urban populations.

"The Waikato is a very rural region, and we really do need to look after our rural residents as they greatly outweigh that urban population."

Following the powhiri, Mr Climo enjoyed lunch with hospital staff and was given a campus tour by manager Tina Baker, support services manager Don Hall, kai awahina Moira Gawith and kaumātua Jack Wanakore.

## Wintec working with Waikato District Health Board to address regional nursing shortage

Waikato Institute of Technology is working closely with Waikato District Health Board to address the significant shortage of registered nurses in the Waikato region.

The two organisations are currently running a regional campaign explaining the wide ranging career choices within nursing and the health sector.

Recognising however, that face-to-face interaction is the most helpful way to communicate the variety of career paths, the two organisations are holding a health expo on Tuesday, December 11 Wintec's Hamilton city campus.

Wintec School of Health head Heather Forsythe said, each year

about 50 students graduating with a bachelor of nursing from Wintec, are employed within Waikato DHB – in the hospital or community setting – while the rest find work in private hospitals, independent practice, defence services or as community specialist nurses.

"The starting salary for a graduate employed by a district health board is about \$41,000 per year," said Mrs Forsythe.

"Sometimes, students are concerned about whether there will be jobs for them locally, however there are many opportunities in our region for those wanting to work as a registered nurse."

Wintec School of Health also offers postgraduate programs

for registered nurses wanting to continue their education, as well as other health-related qualifications.

If you are interested in working with mothers and newborn babies, Wintec also offers a Bachelor of Midwifery – another health profession which is currently experiencing a staff shortage in New Zealand.

"Midwives specialise in providing comprehensive care to mothers and babies during pregnancy, child birth and up to six weeks after delivery," said Mrs Forsythe.

"A new graduate midwife will earn about \$40,000 per year with experienced midwives earning between \$60-100,000 per year."

### Children's book launch

Taumarunui Hospital is gearing up for its 2008 launch of a book designed especially for children.

With an aim of making the hospital more accessible to children, it is hoped the book will educate young ones on what to expect should they be admitted to hospital.

"It's about making children in the community more aware of the hospital, what they can expect if they need to come here, who they will meet and what might happen," said hospital manager Tina Baker.

"The creation of the book has been a real community project. It's been great to get positive support from different community groups."

She said Taumarunui Waikato Primary Health Organisation Local Management Group chair Harold Pfeffer has been particularly supportive of the project.

"We approached the LMG about it and they got on board and said they would sponsor the printing, which is fantastic," said Ms Baker.

From photography by hospital staff and ambulance drivers – to children of hospital staff drawing illustrations and local primary school teachers checking the suitability of the book's content for primary-aged children.

The book will be launched in the New Year, and distributed to local primary schools, kura and kohanga reo.

## Raising the bar at Taumarunui Hospital

Taumarunui Hospital will soon receive a new and improved communication tool for its clinicians.

Known as S-Barr, the tool guides clinical staff on how to brief each other about a patient.

S-Barr stands for Situation, Background, Assessment, Recommendation and Response.

The last R for 'response' was added by Health Waikato and recognises that what happens as a result of briefing is also very important.

"The tool is all about patient safety," said Tokoroa-based nurse education manager Julie Daltrey.

"Communication needs to be clear and accurate among doctors, nurses, and other clinical staff involved, especially in situations such as a doctor seeking urgent assistance from a senior colleague or an emergency department nurse briefing the doctor about who is coming on duty."

S-Barr is currently in operation at Waikato Hospital and due to be rolled out to Taumarunui, Tokoroa, Te Kuiti and Thames hospitals during the next few months, using a training package developed by the staff project team.

The tool does this by giving

staff a standard list of topics that must be covered by the person caring for the patient – what the current situation is, relevant history, what they think the problem is, what they recommend is done about it, and then the opportunity for the other party to respond.

It was originally developed by Michael Leonard, physician leader for patient safety at Kaiser Permanente of Colorado, one of the leading healthcare organisations in the U.S.

A team of Health Waikato staff assessed and adapted the programme for use in the Waikato. Health Waikato is Waikato District Health Board's hospital and health services provider arm.

Waikato DHB chief medical advisor Tom Watson, said clear communication between clinical staff was an essential factor in patient care and safety, particularly in urgent or critical situations.

"For that reason, Health Waikato sought out the best international tool it could find to build a consistent approach to staff-to-staff briefings about patients," said Dr Watson.

"You cannot have room for misunderstandings or missed information. Patient safety is paramount."

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The starting salary for nurses is \$41,000

Nurses play a key role in society and that is now reflected in the starting salary you will enjoy on graduating.

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Call 0800 2 WINTEC or text 'health' to 8283 to enrol for '08 or book your place at the Health Expo

**41,000**

Waikato District Health Board Wintec

**HEALTH EXPO, 5.30-7.30PM, TUESDAY 11 DECEMBER, WINTEC CITY HUB**