

Back in action after 16 years away

NO MATTER how long you stay away from nursing, you can always come back.

Just ask Katarina Simon of Hamilton who is back on the wards at Waikato Hospital after 16 years away.

When Katarina went along to the Waikato District Health Board's open day earlier this year, she had no idea what to expect.

Katarina left the profession in 1992 to raise her three sons and was unaware how much nursing had changed.

In the intervening period she continued her studies and you can today call her Dr Simon because she completed a PhD last year.

She also has a postgraduate diploma in development studies, master of social sciences and bachelor of social sciences.

However, when Katarina heard about the open day at her old stomping ground she decided to go along.

"The open day was a great idea," said Katarina.

"I am really glad I went along as it enabled me to familiarise myself with the new registered nurse context of Waikato Hospital in a non-threatening way."

The changes in working conditions for nurses made such an impression on Katarina that she has since completed the six-week return to nursing course offered by Wintec.

The 41-year-old is due to start full registered nurse duties in Waikato Hospital's Neonatal Intensive Care

Unit this week.

"The course was absolutely brilliant. It covered all the necessities for coming back to nursing today, within a user-friendly environment," she said.

"A significant amount of time was spent on cultural safety and the Treaty of Waitangi with much enthusiasm, which was neat to see."

Included in the six-week course is a clinical placement, which Katarina spent in ward 51 (gynaecology).

"I thoroughly enjoyed and appreciated my clinical placement. It was a valuable opportunity for me to get back into the swing of things under the guidance of a mentor.

"It felt wonderful to experience the passion for the job again; being part of the nursing team and going home inspired and feeling you make a real difference."

Following the successful clinical placement, Katarina went for a job interview where she more than impressed the panel with her knowledge and passion.

Fifteen nurses completed the competency programme to reenter the nursing workforce as a result of Waikato Hospital's open day.

Due to this success, the hospital will host another open day for former and future nurses on Friday, September 5 from 9.30am to 2pm.

Katarina is one of the faces and voices of Waikato's 'return to nursing' campaign and can be spotted in newspaper advertising and heard on



SHE CAME BACK: Katarina Simon.

the radio promoting the next open day.

She says she is glad to help Health Waikato's drive for the return of experienced nurses to its hospitals and communities.

"Coming back with fresh eyes certainly made me realise what a wonderful profession nursing truly is

and how much of a privilege it is to be part of," said Katarina.

"It is a pleasure to share that with others who may be thinking about returning too."

Visit www.waikatodhb.govt.nz for more information about next month's nurses open day.



Jacquie MITCHELL

Accreditation complete

MONTHS of hard work by staff has resulted in Thames Hospital getting the tick of approval from the Ministry of Health for a further two years. All New Zealand hospitals have regular tests to ensure the safe delivery of healthcare through a stringent certification process. Thames Hospital received a further two years' certification for providing medical, maternity and surgical services to local residents, last month.

The accolade comes from the director-general of health Stephen McKernan. Health Waikato chief operating officer Jan Adams said she and her staff should be very proud of this achievement, considering the disruption of major campus redevelopments they have had to contend with during the past two years.

GP After Hours Pilot

THAMES ED after hours change has operated since the end of May. To date, the change has happened without significant difficulty. The Emergency Department from 10.00pm - 8.30am Monday - Friday has had little change in the numbers of people presenting to the Emergency Department while GPs are off line.

On Saturday and Sunday, when the hours for GP clinics changed to 9.00am - 1.00pm the system has worked well. The Emergency Department plan to have extra staff available on the weekends and public holidays.

While people may use the Emergency Department after hours and at weekends, their GP continues to be their primary caregiver.

Paul Silvester's trip

THAMES general surgeon Paul Silvester recently returned from a four-week stint providing surgical and medical services in Rarotonga.

Dr Silvester took annual leave to carry out the work as a volunteer for Exercise Tropic Twilight, a joint project between NZ AID and Cook Islands Hospital.

The project aims to clear the surgical waiting list for the Cook Islands, bring environmental health and dental care to villages and schools on Rarotonga as well as deliver training to medical staff.

Dr Silvester first made the connection with the Civilian Volunteer Health Service when he spent time in East Timor in 2001 and 2003 as a surgeon in Forward Surgical Teams.

Paul's feedback for his staff and colleagues is fascinating and very welcomed.

Overseas review

THAMES Hospital Operations Manager Boudine Williams will complete a review and report on the recruitment and orientation of overseas doctors to a rural hospital environment.

The project will complement other work done within Waikato District Health Board to ensure the attraction and retention of staff to the board's four rural hospitals.

The board recognises the importance and value of overseas-trained medical staff in rural hospitals.

Thames Hospital 140!

THAMES Hospital formally opened on November 2, 1868 but originally named Goldfields Hospital or Diggers Hospital. The hospital occupied a one-acre section on the corner of Mary St and Baillie St.

■ Jacquie Mitchell is Thames Hospital area manager.

Long serving serving Ngatea nurse celebrates golden time

NGATEA nurse Angela Harrison celebrated 50 years of nursing with her colleagues at Thames Hospital on July 31.

Mrs Harrison, 67, began her training at 17 years old. She trained in the second class of her age group at Greenlane Hospital, Auckland. The base tertiary hospital at the time was Middlemore, but Angela worked at every hospital under Auckland District Health Boards (or hospital board as it was known) realm in her four years of training.

Mrs Harrison arrived in Thames some 23 years ago after a 23-year hiatus from nursing in which time she raised four children and ran a dairy farm with her husband.

Having ended up as a patient in Thames Hospital in 1985, existing staff encouraged her to return to the workforce.

She was welcomed back with open arms in November

that year and has not looked back since.

Mrs Harrison has undertaken many different roles at Thames Hospital, with her main vocation in surgery and stomal therapy, after she completed her specialised training in 1997.

"Angela loves nursing and interacting with patients, teaching and guiding new staff, which is great," said Clinical Nurse Manager, Sue Challis-Morrison.

The biggest change in the workforce, she says, is that nursing is a lot more patient-focused now rather than task focused as it was when she entered the sector.

Mrs Harrison is now looking forward to starting work in the new Thames Hospital Inpatient Centre when it is completed.



LOOKING FORWARD: Angela Harrison will work in the new inpatient centre.



Hospital Hosts

Wonderful people providing a wonderful service



Do you have great people skills? Are you friendly, courteous and resourceful? Could you gift a small amount of time to make a big difference in our hospital?

Thames Hospital is looking for hospital hosts to provide a much-valued service.

Hospital hosts provide directions, hospitality and information to patients and visitors at key entry points.

They assist people into wheelchairs, escort people to clinics and wards and field a variety of inquiries.

A commitment of four hours per week, Monday-Friday is needed.

This is an active, interesting role with lots of variety. Your help is needed now as we redevelop our hospital.

For further information please contact our volunteer coordinator
Ph: 07 868 6550 Ext: 8872
or go to www.waikatodhb.govt.nz/volunteer



Clinical centre due to open soon

THAMES Hospital's new clinical centre is almost complete and will be fully functional by the end of October.

Initially scheduled to open in September, construction of the clinical centre has seen some delays after the recent bad weather.

Area manager Jacquie Mitchell wanted to assure the Thames-Coromandel community that the new facilities would be open soon.

"Anticipation is growing as everyone sees how close it is to being finished," she said.

Ms Mitchell said more progress would be evident for passers-by over the next few weeks with the transition of the building from a construction site to a building ready to open.

"The scaffolding will come down, new signage will be put in place, the street lighting will be upgraded and the final touches to the new outpatients' entrance off Mary St will be completed."

Thames Clinical Centre will house

all outpatient clinics, radiology and emergency department.

The building boasts brand new facilities, modern décor, larger rooms - some with an ensuite - and the latest nurse call technology and security systems installed.

This is quite a change for everyone, Ms Mitchell said.

"Brand new facilities are very rare for a hospital our size so it's an exciting time for the people who work here and the community who visit.

"I'm confident the changeover will go smoothly but to help everyone get accustomed to the new rooms, layout and facilities a staff orientation period is planned for September.

"We want to be sure everyone who needs to see inside has done so before we open."

Completion of the new Inpatient Centre will closely follow the opening of the Thames Clinical Centre with practical completion scheduled for November.



FINAL STAGES: The finishing touches are being applied to the new clinical centre entrance off Mary Street.



Thames maternity facility: where to now?

WAIKATO District Health Board chief executive Craig Climo says his preferred option for a Thames maternity unit is a stand-alone primary facility in Mary Street.

However, he needs to know why so many women leave the area to have their babies rather than give birth in Thames.

Today sees the release of a questionnaire asking just that question among others.

"The status quo isn't good enough (for Thames) but before we build a new one I want to know the barriers to use of the existing one," he said.

Primary birthing facilities are free and are for uncomplicated deliveries and postnatal care. Waikato provides services for women who require specialist secondary care for more com-

plicated births like caesareans or multiple births and they need access to the facilities of a tertiary hospital like Waikato.

Last year 119 women birthed at Thames and 223 discharged from there after giving birth at Waikato Hospital.

More than 220 women used other facilities. Some went to Tauranga while others went to Morrinsville, Waihi, Auckland and private facilities in Hamilton.

"What we need to know is how many of those women would have chosen to give birth in Thames if there was a purpose-built primary unit," said Mr Climo.

The unit favoured by Waikato DHB for Thames would comprise two birthing rooms with a deep

pool bathroom, three bedrooms complete with en-suites, lounge, visitors lounge, sibling play area, two consulting rooms, and a base for lead maternity carers, partially covered decks and a garden. Waikato would provide secondary services.

The proposed build could accommodate up to 200 births a year.

The birthing unit in Thames Hospital is far from ideal, said Health Waikato chief operating officer Jan Adams.

"Development happened eight years ago in an existing ward when the then paediatric ward closed and comprises one birthing room, one birthing pool and two bedrooms for post natal (after birth) care," she said.

Mothers at a recent Breastfeeding Week latch

on session in Thames provided some feedback. Comments included:

- Want a facility that does not look like a hospital
- Would like a birthing pool
- Subdued lighting
- Ensuite facilities
- Want partners to stay
- Privacy
- Hate going into the medical ward after they've had baby
- Hospital too cramped

Please fill in the questionnaire and if you have any queries or would like to be contacted phone **0800 100 178** and leave a message on the answer-phone.



Birthing Questionnaire for Coromandel/Hauraki mothers

This questionnaire is to get an understanding as to why so many women leave the area to have their babies rather than give birth at Thames and also how many of those women would have chosen to give birth in Thames if there was a purpose-built primary birthing unit. These answers are important for Waikato DHB. We are committed to having primary birthing facilities at Thames.

1. Name and contact telephone number:

2. Area where you live: (please tick)

- Coromandel Whitianga Whangamata
 Hauraki Plains Thames Waihi
 Paeroa Other _____

3. Where did you (or plan to) birth? (please tick)

- Thames Other _____

4. What made you to decide to birth away from Thames?

5. Did anyone influence your decision to birth there? (please circle)

- Midwife General Practitioner Friend Family
 Other _____

6. Would you use Thames if there was a new unit built? (please tick)

- Yes No

7. What would be important for you to have in a new unit?

8. Are you aware that Thames Maternity Unit is open 24 hours a day/seven days a week and that it is limited to primary birthing only?

- Yes No

9. Are you aware that complications or secondary birthing will always need to come to Waikato Hospital?

- Yes No

10. Are you aware that your husband/partner can stay overnight with you at Thames?

- Yes No

11. Were you aware that there is a birthing pool at Thames?

- Yes No

Any other comments? (use separate piece of paper if necessary)

Thank you for your feedback

Please deliver to Thames Hospital reception or post or fax to:

Mary Anne Gill, Director of Media and Communications, Waikato District Health Board, P O Box 934, Hamilton.
 Ph 07 839 8899 Ext 7684 Fax 07 834 3674 (before Friday 12th September)

I came back to nursing...

So can you

Nursing Open Day
 Friday, September 5, 9.30am-2pm
 Bryant Education Centre,
 Waikato Hospital

Calling all former nurses keen on getting back into the workforce or people wanting to pursue a nursing career.

Why Health Waikato?

- Flexible working hours to suit you!
- Supportive orientation
- Ongoing education and learning opportunities
- Staff discounts at a number of retail outlets

Why not come along and have a chat with us?

- Have fun practising with equipment
- Have a ward/hospital tour
- Refreshments provided
- Information packs/handouts available.



To register:
 T: 07 839 8899
 X: 8614



www.waikatodhb.govt.nz