

# Maintaining a work-life balance in nursing

GOING back to nursing after having her daughter Charlotte was an anxious time for single mother Sonia Wells.

The Morrinsville woman always enjoyed her nursing career, but could not escape the fears about returning to the workforce as a solo parent who spent the first three years of Charlotte's life at home.

"Having a child changes everything and I didn't know how I was going to manage to go back to work while giving Charlotte everything that she needed from me as her mum," said Sonia.

"But the time came when I needed to go back to work and all I knew was that I didn't want to work full-time and I didn't want to work overnight.

"The logistics of returning to work seemed too hard to make it a positive thought."

Sonia first had the daunting task of finding childcare for Charlotte. She found a babysitter for the evenings and a friend offered to have her daughter on Fridays. Then she rang Waikato Hospital to see what hours she could get through an agency.

"Contacting an agency wasn't something I had never done before, but I will certainly nev-

er regret it," said Sonia.

"It enabled me to get my nursing confidence back and widen my scope of practice."

From there, Sonia was able to secure a afternoon shift position close to home at continuing care facility Rhoda Read and maintains one day per week at Waikato Hospital.

"I must admit it was very nerve-wracking to come back to nursing. Because I was a surgical nurse through and through, the thought of working in a medical ward or the emergency department was pretty scary.

"But it has not been a problem at Waikato Hospital. They gave me a three-week orientation through all the wards that utilise an agency and took me on one day per week from 8am-3.30pm."

Sonia said all the nurses on the wards show her the ropes.

"Sometimes someone from the agency even comes with me," she said. "There is so much more flexibility in nursing now than there was even three to five years ago.

"It has allowed me the work-life balance of doing a job I enjoy in nursing, and doing a job I love – being a mum to Charlotte."



**NO JUGGLING ACT:** Morrinsville nurse Sonia Wells has found balance between being a mother to Charlotte (3) and her career when she returned to nursing recently.

## Rest stop seating on long hospital corridors

Red seats have been installed on Waikato Hospital's main corridors to provide a much needed rest-stop area for visitors.

The seats are the latest addition to the services available for patients or visitors who are finding the long walking distances difficult.

A wheelchair capable bus was added to the hospital's existing shuttle service earlier this year that provides free rides around the campus, starting from the carpark building.

Waikato DHB Service and Campus Redevelopment project director Ian Wolstencroft is keen for visitors to use these services, particularly while the hospital is changing so much.

"It is understandable that some people are finding the distances difficult.

"Having to walk the full length of the red corridor from the carpark building to a clinic is a fair hike for any person.

"Anyone who thinks they will have trouble should get a ride on a shuttle to the hospital area they are visiting. The service is free and there for visitors to use,"



**TAKE A SEAT:** One of Waikato Hospital's volunteers has a breather.

he said.

Waikato Hospital's red corridor is a familiar walkway for patients and visitors and the length of it has been a popular topic of conversation since the opening of the carpark building.

Mr Wolstencroft said not many people would have walked the full distance before the carpark building opened because of where the old main entrance was.

"But this long distance to clinics is only temporary," he said.

"In 2012 when the project

is complete the Waikato Clinical Centre will link directly into the carpark building at three levels so your appointment will be merely a few metres walk from your car."

"The carpark building needed to be built before other planned construction so the hospital could maintain the number of carparks onsite.

"We had to close the old main carpark to allow construction of the new emergency department building to get underway.

"If we hadn't completed

the carpark building before this, then there would be nowhere for patients and visitors to park," Mr Wolstencroft said.

Other planned work for the redevelopment of Waikato Hospital includes:

- Major refurbishment to the delivery suite
- Neonatal Intensive Care Unit extension
- Emergency Department construction
- Forensics upgrade at Henry Rongomau Bennett Centre
- Waikato Clinical Centre construction.

## Maeroa kapa haka star in Fresh Future campaign launch at Waikato

A rousing performance from Maeroa Intermediate School's kapa haka group proved the highlight of the day when Progressive Enterprises' Fresh Future fundraising campaign to support children's health launched at Waikato Hospital last month.

A crowd of about 100 attended the ceremony from various Waikato Progressive Enterprises supermarkets and Dick Smith stores.

The campaign, now into its second year, is raising funds for 10 New Zealand hospitals with dedicated children's wards.

Last year, the appeal raised more than \$1 million, of which Waikato Hospital received more than \$210,000.

Health Waikato chief operating officer Jan Adams said the hospital really appreciated the funds raised from the event last year and was

looking forward to supporting the campaign again in 2008.

"We're very, very grateful for the money received last year and I can assure you that the money was well spent.



"It went towards the Child Development Centre, the children's wards, new born intensive care unit, and the Mothercraft unit.

"Everyone has been delighted with what the money bought," she said.

Television personality and Hamilton city councillor Kay Gregory compered

the launch.

During the next eight weeks, various fundraising activities - ranging from bike rides to head-shaves, trolley races to raffles - will take place for sick kids and their families. Waikato Hospital staff will support and get involved in these activities.

Progressive Enterprises managing director Peter Smith said the team was keen to support kiwi children who are in hospitals, their families and the "wonderful" medical professionals who treat them.

To make a donation to the appeal customers can text 'kids' to 883 to make an automatic \$3 donation; place money in the boxes situated at store check outs, or online grocery shoppers can add a \$1 donation onto their shopping bill when they shop at www.foodtown.co.nz or www.woolworths.co.nz

Eat well. Be active.

Exercise your sense of humour.

Share Sarah Walker's journey to the Kona Ironman World Championship - and pick up some tips for healthy eating and healthy action along the way.



Sarah's blog  
[www.waikatodhb.govt.nz/sarah](http://www.waikatodhb.govt.nz/sarah)

Waikato District Health Board

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

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