

Transit Lounge eases pressure

WAIKATO Hospital's Transit Lounge helped the hospital get through a busy winter by freeing up a record number of beds and taking pressure off the wards.

Record numbers of people have recently been discharged to the Transit Lounge since it was opened in January.

Clinical nurse manager Fiona Liddle was pleased the Transit Lounge was able to demonstrate its ability to help the hospital in a time of need.

"By sending these patients to the Transit Lounge it meant their beds could be freed up for new patients," she said.

"Often patients are discharged from hospital but are unable to leave because they are waiting for a doctor's letter, a prescription or a ride home.

"Previously these patients would have waited in a ward, usually on their bed, but the Transit Lounge now provides them with a comfortable and relaxing place to wait that is also staffed by a full clinical team."

The Transit Lounge is a purpose-

built facility, established to improve the patients' journey and play an important role in the discharge process at Waikato Hospital by receiving at least 30 per cent of the 80 discharged patients each day. Last week's figures exceeded this target by almost double.

Waikato Hospital's Transit Lounge is located at level B3 of the car park and main entry building which also had a busy week.

More than 900 vehicles were recorded using the building on one day last month; the busiest it has been since opening in March.

Thanks to the car park building, all these visitors to the hospital had the convenience of undercover parking and direct access into the hospital from their vehicle without having to go out in the rain.

These changes and improvements at Waikato Hospital are part of Waikato District Health Board's Service and Campus redevelopment project.

For information about other planned changes visit www.waikatodhb.govt.nz/scr.



PLEASANT WAIT: Waikato Hospital's Transit Lounge has offered countless patients a restful waiting area before and after their stay in hospital.

Warm water aids rehabilitation

FOR hundreds of years, physicians all around the world have prescribed water therapy as a treatment for common health ailments and Waikato Hospital is no exception.

More than 70 patients exercise in the 35-degree heat of the hospital's hydrotherapy pool on a daily basis to aid their recovery from stroke, injury or surgery.

Kylie Parker, physiotherapy team leader said they encourage patients of all ages to use the pool as part of physiotherapy and rehabilitation.

"We have people using the pool as a part of their stroke rehabilitation, following surgery or injury, as well as pregnant women and children with disabilities.

"Hydrotherapy for children is fun as well as therapeutic. The water allows them to experience more freedom of movement.

"It can also be a time for the parent and child to bond and enjoy therapy in a relaxing environment whilst building water confidence," said Mrs Parker.

The use of child friendly equipment makes therapy more enjoyable and effective for children.

Bubbles are used in the pool with young children to help them practice visual skills such as looking and tracking. Kick boards and other floatation devices like noodles are also used.

"Ultimately, each activity in the pool is designed to improve a person's health and wellbeing with exercise

programmes tailored specifically to them.

"The buoyancy and resistance provided by water assists with their exercise programs.

"It's not for everyone, but the warm water provides a relaxing and supportive environment to gain muscle relaxation and the weightless feeling in the water makes it easier for some patients to exercise."

Any person under the care of a Waikato District Health Board physiotherapist can have access to the pool at Waikato Hospital, if appropriate. Patients reap the full benefits from the water if used in conjunction with other physiotherapy or rehabilitation treatment.



POOL TIME: Benjamin Henwood helps his son Cameron practice visual skills in Waikato Hospital's hydrotherapy pool



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

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," 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 redevelopment of Waikato Hospital includes:

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

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Sarah's blog: www.waikatodhb.govt.nz/sarah

