



Wellington  
Hospitals  
Foundation

Stronger Together.

# Supporter news

Autumn/Ngahuru 2026



Every day patients arrive at our hospitals facing the unexpected. When illness or injury strikes, the care that wraps around them and their whānau in those difficult moments extends beyond clinical expertise, it includes the compassion of a community standing alongside them.

This newsletter celebrates the difference your support makes. Thanks to the generosity of donors, volunteers, partners, schools, businesses and community groups we are able to enhance healthcare across our region. From purpose built spaces like Te Wao Nui Children's Hospital, to lifesaving medical equipment, as well as thoughtful touches like patient care packs that bring comfort during long hospital stays; these contributions create a lasting impact.

Inside you'll find stories that show how this support comes to life, from volunteers offering their time and talents, fundraisers bringing people together for a great cause and initiatives that are strengthening patient care across Wellington, Hutt, Kenepuru Hospitals and Te Wao Nui Children's Hospital.

This impact is the result of people like you choosing to care. Thank you to all our donors, volunteers and partners - your support is at the heart of everything we do.

## Celebrating 20 years of impact.

This year marks a major milestone for Wellington Hospitals Foundation as we celebrate 20 years of partnering with our community and healthcare teams to make a real difference for patients and their whānau. Over the last two decades, your generosity has helped bridge the gap between stretched public funding and what's needed to provide truly exceptional care.

Together we've invested **\$160 million in critical hospital projects**, including:

- **A new regional children's hospital** - a purpose built paediatric facility for our youngest patients, made possible by the generosity of benefactors Sir Mark Dunajtschik and Dame Dorothy Spotswood and \$10 million in community donations.
- **A game changing Air Ambulance Flight Simulator**, the first of its kind in Australasia, helping emergency teams train for high pressure situations, alongside lifelike **medical manikins and hi-fidelity simulators** that allow hospital teams to practice complex procedures in a safe, controlled space.
- **More than \$3 million invested in neonatal intensive care equipment**, including intensive care and flight transport incubators, specialised cooling systems that saved baby Elle (pictured), and the first NICU milkbank in our region - ensuring our tiniest patients get the best care possible.
- **Advanced diagnostic tools like a new MRI scanner and 3D Mammogram**, which help doctors diagnose and treat patients faster and with more accuracy.

But it's not just the big projects, it's the small acts of care and kindness that make hospital stays better: care packs for patients, inkless stamp kits for bereaved parents, welcoming family spaces, toys and distraction tools for children and over 590 volunteers who support our hospitals, including gifting more than 12,000 knitted items every year.



Elle, precious NICU baby.



McKenzie, 5mths, in gorgeous volunteer knitwear.

# Hospital spotlight.

## Lynne Cowley, Children's Hospital Charge Nurse Manager.

Lynne's role is demanding, her days are often intense, but they are also deeply rewarding. As Charge Nurse Manager of Piko and Kōwhai Wards at Te Wao Nui Children's Hospital, Lynne leads a busy team caring for children with a wide range of medical needs. But her job is more than just overseeing treatment, it's about supporting families through some of their scariest moments, when every decision feels huge and the future can feel very uncertain.

"I've been working in paediatrics since 1993 and in my current role I combine clinical leadership, people management and operational oversight to support our team in providing safe, high quality care to children and their whānau."



No two days are the same. The work is fast paced and often unpredictable but for Lynne what matters most is creating an environment where her team feels supported and confident, because that directly translates into better care for patients. Many of the moments that stay with her are the quieter ones, times when families feel heard, reassured and supported through uncertainty or a difficult procedure; or when a child is able to return home after a long hospital stay.

"Those moments remind me why we do what we do. People might not realise that working in paediatrics can be challenging. We care for children with complex medical needs, navigate

high emotions and sometimes work with limited resources. It can be demanding, but with a supportive, skilled team, a sense of humour and a shared commitment, we're able to achieve incredible outcomes for children and their whānau."

Lynne is also clear about the role the wider community plays in making this care possible. She describes community support as essential, not just for major projects, but for the everyday experience of children and whānau in hospital. She points to Te Wao Nui Children's Hospital itself as a powerful example of community generosity in action, thanks to benefactors Sir Mark Dunajtschik and Dame Dorothy Spotswood, alongside the community who contributed \$10 million to outfit and equip the interior of the new building. "It's incredibly humbling to know our community cares so deeply. Donor funded support has truly been a game changer and has transformed the hospital experience. Having the right equipment, comfortable spaces and a well-designed, purpose built facility means the team can focus on providing care and support, rather than working around limitations. Ultimately, it allows them to focus on what matters most - caring for children."



Te Wao Nui patient Logan enjoys a moment with Tiaki the hospital mascot and guardian.

# A message from the Chief Executive.

Kia ora,  
On behalf of our team and Board at the Foundation, happy New Year!

The festive season is special for many reasons. For me personally, it was also my youngest son's birthday. Jordy turned 6, and a beautiful reminder for our family of the rather dramatic start he had in life when he arrived early in NICU at Wellington Regional Hospital.

Jordy has been saving up his pocket money, and in January, made his first donation. He chose to support the children's hospital. He's had to go to there a bit over the years, and knows it can be a tough and scary time for kids. He's received great care, and wants to make sure other kids can too.

**"I made a donation because I wanted to help sick children to get better."** - Jordy

Having access to great healthcare is a critical need in our community – for all of us, at every stage of our lives.

The generosity and support of people like you, who choose to support our work at the Foundation – is truly special. Whether you've gifted your time as a volunteer, made a donation, fundraised or supported in some other way – thank you.

Especially in times of hardship, access to public healthcare matters more than ever. Our public hospitals provide round the clock care for people in families when they need it most – 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. We all know the system is under pressure. But we also know that when we work together, and rally around a good cause, we can achieve great things.

Recently we celebrated the Foundation's 20th anniversary – a huge milestone for us all. As we look to the future, let's continue to be ambitious about what great healthcare could look like for our community. Together, we built a world class children's hospital. Imagine what we can achieve together over the next 20 years.

Thank you for your support.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Guy Ryan".

Guy Ryan – CEO



# Enhancing the hospital experience.

The impact of our work at the Foundation is a powerful example of what's possible when our community comes together. The donations we receive and the fundraising efforts of local schools, businesses and community groups are all incredible examples of how we are stronger together.

Do you have a story you'd like to share? Contact our Communications Team at [liz.gibson@ccdhb.org.nz](mailto:liz.gibson@ccdhb.org.nz)



Shona Brunton WHF, Dr Lucie Zwimpfer, Rosemary Escott, Charge Nurse Manager NICU

## A space to breathe.

Having a tiny, fragile baby in the **Neonatal Intensive Care Unit** can be one of the most stressful and heart wrenching experiences a parent will ever face. The emotional toll is especially heavy when a baby is critically unwell or when families are confronted with the unimaginable reality that their little one may not survive.

That's why the work of NICU's Parent and Infant Psychotherapist, Dr Lucie Zwimpfer is so incredibly important. Thanks to the generosity of our community, the Foundation has helped create a dedicated Wellness Room - a quiet, calming space where parents can step out of the highly medicalised environment to breathe and find the emotional support they so desperately need.

The new space isn't just a comfort for families, it's a lifeline for staff as well. In an environment of constant

urgency and emotional intensity, it can be easy to forget that medical professionals are people too; and that caring for the carers is also important. Working day in and day out in the NICU can take a toll and the new space helps Lucie provide support to staff - helping them process what they see and experience so they can continue to show up for families. Like the many machines quietly humming in the NICU, Lucie describes the new Wellness Room as her own 'incubator' nurturing the wellbeing of everyone in the unit.

"Having this room has meant mental health has become a key part of the service we offer in NICU it and has really helped staff and families to recognise and seek support for the big and uncomfortable feelings that can arise in this environment." - **Dr Lucie Zwimpfer, Parent and Infant Psychotherapist, NICU**

## A new look for the future.

On 10 November 2025 we celebrated our 20th anniversary! A refreshed and new visual identity has been created to reflect the genuine care, connection and strength that comes from a community committed to ensuring that exceptional hospital care is there, when it's needed most. The logo combines two hearts to form a subtle 'W' for Wellington - a simple, memorable mark that captures the spirit of being here for each other.



## Scentsy Buddies bring comfort and care to sick tamariki.

For the last nine years, Lucy Cameron's ScentsWithLucyNZ Buddy Drive has brought a huge amount of comfort to children in hospital over the holiday period by gifting them adorable Scentsy Buddies.

These super cute and cuddly companions, complete with a fragrant scent pack, offer both comfort during challenging medical procedures and a cosy friend for kids to hold close during long hours in hospital. Our huge thanks to Lucy and all the families and businesses who sponsor a Scentsy Buddy every year. Your generosity continues to make a real difference for children and whānau in hospital.

"I choose to support Wellington Hospitals Foundation because they are there for our tamariki and their whānau during some of the hardest moments of their lives. Their team show kindness, care and compassion in ways that most people never see and their impact on families is huge." - **Lucy Cameron**



Lucy and her daughter Lucia

Ioane loves his new Avengers Black Panther Scentsy Buddy



# Transformational projects.

A game changer for patient care in our region!



Kenepuru Hospital recently received a state of the art Photon Counting CT Scanner - the second of its kind in New Zealand and the first in our region. This is a big win for healthcare in the Wellington area and will have a huge impact on patients.

With the new scanner, Kenepuru Hospital will be able to handle over



5,000 more outpatient scans every year, which means faster, more accurate diagnoses and shorter wait times for patients. Most importantly patients in Porirua and the surrounding areas won't have to travel to Wellington for their scans anymore. This will make care more convenient, accessible and a lot less stressful for families. Plus it will help take the pressure off Wellington's tertiary hospital services.

Generous community donors have supported this key project by funding furnishings, treatment chairs and an insufflator. The insufflator is a tool that helps doctors get clearer images during scans by gently inflating tissues with carbon dioxide gas. This ensures more accurate and detailed results, helping patients get the best care possible.

## In the News.

### Honour for Dame Dorothy Spotswood.

Our heartfelt congratulations to Dame Dorothy Spotswood who was recognised in the New Year's Honours List for her extraordinary generosity to our community, in particular her support for the new regional children's hospital alongside Sir Mark Dunajtschik, and their continued commitment to the new Mental Health Centre in Lower Hutt.

For more than 50 years, Dame Dorothy has championed a wide range of philanthropic causes and charities, making a lasting difference to the lives of countless people. We are privileged to be part of such an enduring legacy of generosity.



## A clearer picture when it matters most.

Breast cancer is one of the most common cancers in Aotearoa. Thanks to the generosity of our donors, Wellington Regional Hospital has a state of the art 3D digital mammography machine that is transforming care for patients across the region. Funded in late 2023, the new machine delivers clearer images in finer detail, improving the detection of abnormalities, even in dense breast tissue, while also reducing discomfort and stress for patients. It also enables Contrast Enhanced Mammography, an advanced technique that can help determine whether an abnormality is likely benign or malignant, meaning fewer patients need to undergo stressful MRIs or unnecessary biopsies.



Lisa, Unit Charge Mammographer, Wellington Regional Hospital.

**“This is a game-changer for our service and for patients,”** says Radiology Manager Tim McElroy.

Thanks again to our community's care, **additional equipment has now been purchased** to fully integrate the hospital's Vacuum Assisted Biopsy (VAB) and Vacuum Assisted Excision (VAE) capabilities with the new system. These minimally invasive procedures provide faster, safer diagnostic options for many patients, often replacing the need for more invasive surgery.

“Our team is genuinely excited every time we use this machine,” says Dr Sarah Sparks, Subspecialist Breast Radiologist. **“It's raised the standard of care for every patient we see.”**

Thanks to community support, patients in our region have access to faster, clearer and more compassionate diagnostic care, when they need it most.

# Stronger together with community support.

## Incredible kids supporting rangatahi in their region.

It's always inspiring to see young people come together to support others in their community. The Foundation was delighted to be chosen once again by **Wellington Girls' College** as their charity of choice for 2025.

Led by Korimako Dale, the school's fundraising efforts throughout the year raised an incredible \$10,000 for the children's hospital. This support will help fund equipment and resources that strengthen paediatric care across our region.



Guy Ryan  
WHF CEO with  
Korimako Dale

Our thanks also go to the student executive and the wider school whānau for their generosity and mahi. With this latest effort, Wellington Girls' College has now raised an outstanding \$22,000 for the children's hospital, which is a powerful example of young people making a real difference!

And a huge thank you to the caring rangatahi behind the **Wellington Youth Annual Charity Ball** for choosing Wellington Hospitals Foundation as their 2025 beneficiary. Their meaningful mahi raised an incredible \$17,000 - well beyond their original target!

Every year, around 65 young people are treated for cancer, many facing long and challenging hospital stays. The funds raised by WYCB will help provide **Manaakitanga Care Packs**, which



are designed to help young cancer patients feel seen and supported, not just as patients, but as young people. These care packs are a lifeline for those who often feel isolated, offering age appropriate resources that help them stay connected, engaged and cared for during their treatment.

"Today's a pretty special day as I am dropping off the very first Manaakitanga Pack to a 17 year old. This awesome young person is facing a two year treatment regimen for a sarcoma and I am positive this Manaakitanga Pack is going to be a total surprise, something they'd never see coming. It's seriously tough getting a cancer diagnosis so young, especially when you're also trying to manage home life, school and even help out with the family's income. So, I'm really sure this gift will bring comfort and support."

**Jayde, Specialist Clinical Nurse, Adolescent & Young Adult Service.**

## Christmas kindness.

Christmas in hospital can be a sad and difficult time for children and families, which is why the kindness shown by our community means so much. Huge thanks to the families from our Charity Partner **World Marudào Karate Organisation** for once again organising Christmas gifts for children in hospital.



We're also grateful to the team at **McKenzie & Willis** for their wonderful Light the Tree event, which brought in a fantastic collection of presents for tamariki; and to the team at **DHL Express Wellington** who again made an extra special delivery of gifts.

A special shout out to everyone who donated to the **Toyworld Wellington Region NZ** Christmas toy drive supported by **The Hits**, as well as the



Adele enjoys the visit from Dan Ralph, Lisa Barber & Badga from Wellington District Police.

booksellers, families and businesses who supported the **Kiwi Christmas Books programme**. We're also grateful to the **US Embassy's Toys for Tots** Christmas programme for helping bring extra joy to children in hospital.

And finally, a big thank you to the **Wellington District Police** for their ongoing support, bringing smiles and gifts to the children's hospital for the ninth year in a row - including a fun visit with Badga the pawfect police pup!

The impact of this community generosity extends well beyond the hospital walls as gifts are shared by the paediatric community nursing team with kids in our community, many of whom have never received a Christmas gift.

## Give the gift of a lifetime.

After remembering loved ones in their wills, many people choose to leave a gift that reflects the care and values that have mattered most to them. Leaving a bequest to Wellington Hospitals Foundation is a lasting way to support our hospitals and help ensure they can continue to provide world class treatment and care for our community today, tomorrow and for generations to come. Every gift, no matter how big or small, helps support patients and their whānau. If you have already included a gift in your will - thank you! If you would like to find out more about leaving a bequest, please contact [esha.blade@ccdhb.org.nz](mailto:esha.blade@ccdhb.org.nz).



# Hospital Volunteers.

Every single day across Wellington, Kenepuru and Hutt Hospitals, our dedicated team of 590 volunteers provide wrap around care and compassionate support to patients and their families.

## Did you know?

Last year our volunteer guides helped more than 57,000 patients find their way to appointments?

Navigating a busy hospital can be stressful, especially when you're unwell or in a hurry. Our volunteer Hospital Guides are a friendly first point of contact for thousands of patients and visitors every year. You may have noticed that our new volunteer hubs and helpdesks have a fresh new look, making it even easier for patients and families to find help.



Brian, Volunteer Guide, Wellington Hospital.

## A comforting presence when it's needed most

Each year, hundreds of babies born too soon or too unwell begin their lives in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at Wellington Regional Hospital. For families this can be an overwhelming and emotional time. That's where our



NICU Cuddle Buddies come in. These specially trained volunteers provide a calm, caring presence in a highly clinical environment, offering comfort to babies, reassurance to parents and extra support to busy clinical teams.

Jo (pictured) was one of the first volunteers to join the programme. Whether she's holding a tiny hand, sitting alongside anxious parents or helping keep shared spaces welcoming; her presence helps ease some of the emotional weight families carry. "The smallest act of kindness, like a smile or a cuddle, can bring so much comfort," Jo says.

It is reassuring to know that our hospitals are here for us when we need them most. We are honoured to offer a way for families who may have experienced exceptional care from our hospital teams, to express their gratitude. To support all areas of your hospitals please donate at [whf.org.nz/donate](http://whf.org.nz/donate)

Did you know that if you have donated to us in the past 4 years you may be eligible for a rebate of 33.33%. For more information or to make a claim, head to IRD's website: [www.ird.govt.nz](http://www.ird.govt.nz)

## When you support Wellington Hospitals Foundation you're supporting excellence in healthcare across our region.

- Become a Regular Giver and make a lasting impact on patient care in our region. To find out more email: [donations@whf.org.nz](mailto:donations@whf.org.nz)
- Make a regular or one-off donation online at [whf.org.nz/donate](http://whf.org.nz/donate)
- Leave a Bequest. Make an important contribution in the future, without affecting your current circumstances. Email: [esha.blade@ccdhb.org.nz](mailto:esha.blade@ccdhb.org.nz) to find out more.
- Volunteer in one of Wellington's hospitals. For more information, visit [whf.org.nz/volunteer](http://whf.org.nz/volunteer) or email: [volunteer@whf.org.nz](mailto:volunteer@whf.org.nz)
- Hold a fundraiser to raise money for an area in the hospital of your choice.
- Become a Charity Partner and collaborate with us in support of your hospitals. Email: [Shona.Brunton@ccdhb.org.nz](mailto:Shona.Brunton@ccdhb.org.nz) to find out more.



## Thank you to all our charity partners and major supporters.

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