

'Fair way to go' to meet targets

Maryanne Twentyman looks at how far the Waikato DHB has come in achieving its goals.

The Waikato District Health Board has hauled itself up the league table in most areas when it comes to meeting Health Ministry targets, though DHB bosses admit there is room for improvement. The *Waikato Times* reported this week that the Waikato DHB had achieved 79 per cent of the 95 per cent target in emergency department waiting times, a 12 per cent increase on its perform-

ance in the first quarter of the 2009-2010 year. Waikato DHB jumped from a first-quarter ranking of 20th to 15th of the 21 DHBs when it came to meeting the target, which requires Emergency Departments to assess and admit or discharge 95 per cent of patients within six hours. Health Waikato chief operating officer Jan Adams said though the result was encouraging, the

DHB still had a "fair way to go" to achieve the six-hour target by June. Waikato DHB moved up two rankings in achieving immunisation guidelines for which the national target is 85 per cent immunisation of two-year-old immunisations by July. The DHB reached 80 per cent of its target, up from 74 per cent in quarter one, using initiatives such as mobile and opportunistic immun-

ising - particularly for Maori and Pacific Island children. Elective surgeries exceeded targets, with the DHB planning for 3600 surgeries but completing 3875. In the shorter waits for cancer treatment and radiotherapy, Waikato Regional Cancer Centre had three patients wait for treatment in October. But it regularly accepts referrals from other centres such as Auckland when

their spaces are full. DHB chief executive Craig Climo said there was room for improvement in diabetes and cardiovascular services where the DHB had dropped four rankings, and also in helping patients to stop smoking. Guidelines require hospitals to offer at least 80 per cent of patient smokers information and tools to quit. Waikato DHB meets just 40 per cent of the target.

HOW WAIKATO DHB RATES:

- Shorter stays in Emergency Departments - 79 per cent, up from 67 per cent.
- Improved access to elective surgery - 107 per cent, down from 113 per cent.
- Shorter waits for Cancer Treatment radiotherapy - 99 per cent, down from 100 per cent.
- Increased immunisation - 80 per cent, up from 74 per cent.
- Better help for smokers to quit - 40 per cent, up from 39 per cent.
- Better diabetes and cardiovascular services - 66 per cent down from 67 per cent.



LONG RIDE AHEAD: Mike Jacobson, Tom Anselmi, Rob Climo, Rob Gray and Misha Kravcenko with their Suzukis. Photo: KRISTY WILSON.

More than a boys' adventure

Nicola Brennan
Waikato University law graduate Rob Gray has more than just Russian street kids relying on him to finish a 25,000-kilometre charity ride across some of the world's most difficult terrain - his fiancée also needs him back for their December wedding. Mr Gray will head off with four of his mates - fellow Waikato University graduates Rob Climo and Mike Jacobson, as well as Tom Anselmi and Misha Kravcenko - for the adventure of a lifetime in April. The trip, which they're calling the 51st Traverse, has been two years in the planning and will take the 24 to 26-year-olds from Russia's Far East through Mongolia and Central Asia, across Turkey and southern Europe, and up

through France before finally ending in London. They have given themselves about six months to do the trip. The idea of riding half-way across the world - a boys' adventure of a lifetime - was floated over a couple of quiet beers. It became much more when Mr Gray told his friends of his travels, a few years earlier, through Russia. He saw child poverty like nothing any child in New Zealand would ever experience, he said. Armed with that insight, Mr Gray suggested they make the trip a charity ride for Living Hope, a Russian charity set up by New Zealander Rachel Hughes. The aim is to raise a dollar for every kilometre they travel to help build a shelter for street children in Vladivostok.

Mr Gray spent some time in the basements and sewers where the street children live in freezing temperatures. "I was just really blown away by it," Mr Gray said. "We had to crawl through a small tunnel, through what smelt like human waste, through some curtains and into a room. It absolutely stank and was full of flies. It had about 12 kids living in it and no beds to speak of, just cardboard mats." Mr Gray said his fiancée, Alanna Muir, was very supportive of the trip, which had been planned before they decided to get married. "She has been incredibly supportive and has never once suggested I should pull out," he said. "I'm feeling pretty blessed, I have an amazing girl and an awesome trip planned."

Mr Climo, who first suggested the ride even though none of the five men had any real riding experience, said raising the money for Living Hope had spurred the group on. "It's more than just us now," he said. "We can't let the charity down." The men picked up their Suzuki motorcycles about 12 months ago and have been trail blazing ever since. Taupo riding expert Nick Reader, of Epic Events, even gave them some free training. Mr Jacobson has only just recovered from a broken leg which he suffered after falling off his bike in September. It has meant he has had less riding time than the others. The adventurous five will update their travels via blogs and videos on their website, 51st.co.nz.

Puffing okay only on field?

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Puffing may become an on-field activity only following the launch of a new initiative that could eventually see all Waikato rugby grounds smokefree. The joint venture between Waikato District Health Board and the Waikato Rugby Union will see Smokefree initiatives rolled out this season and mainly targeting club and school rugby. Waikato DHB population health general manager Barbara Garbutt said an element of the contract would see the rugby union encouraging community clubs to become smokefree. "That is our focus but it would not be enforced. However, the initiative is not just about smoke-free, it's about quitting," Mrs Garbutt said. Waikato community rugby manager Bill Heslop said he hoped clubs would encourage people in the wider rugby community to take part in the smokefree philosophy. The union's rugby development officers would deliver Smokefree information to clubs as part of their usual visits. Mrs Garbutt said the relationship was a fantastic opportunity to spread the Smokefree and quitting message throughout the community. "Rugby means starting at a grassroots level moving right through to the high-profile setting and allows us to get the message across to our target audiences such as youth," she said. Waikato stadium is already smokefree. It is managed by the Hamilton City Council not the rugby union, but Mr Heslop said the union was right behind Smokefree policies. "The relationship with Smokefree ties in with the values of sport which is to create healthier people in our community. We are looking forward to the partnership and encouraging the awareness of Smokefree throughout the province," he said. The initiative will be supported by a \$24,000 Health Ministry grant.

IN BRIEF

1080 consent halt sought
The Upper Coromandel Landcare Association says it will lead a nationwide campaign to fight the granting of 10-year non-notified consents to two helicopter firms it claims discharge the pest-control substance 1080 into Waikato waterways. The group's spokeswoman, Reihana Robinson, said the "conservation coalition" called on Environment Waikato to issue one-year consents for the drops.

Xtreme celebration
Raglan environmental group Xtreme Waste will celebrate its 10th birthday next weekend, with a special event to be held at Kopua Domain. The waste minimisation group will hold its Community and Environment Day on March 6, from 10.30am. It will feature the annual recycled raft race, entertainment, fun, workshops, competitions and performances provided by talented Raglan residents. The event will also combine with Sea Week and Maui Dolphin Day events.

Yacht charter paid by Govt
The Health Ministry's former chief nurse Mark Jones will be asked to pay back \$1250 after he chartered a yacht with ministry money without approval. Mr Jones resigned suddenly before Christmas following an investigation into his personal expenses. The ministry will now investigate all expenditure against his budget. The *The Dominion Post* revealed on Thursday that Mr Jones' spending may have included chartering a yacht during a December 2008 meeting with Australian nurse executives in the Bay of Islands. Ministry deputy director-general Margie Apa confirmed those spending details yesterday.

Natural funeral seminar
A seminar on natural funerals will be held at the Hamilton Environment Centre next Tuesday. Lynda Hannah, of Nelson-based firm Living Legacies, will speak on issues including natural burial parks and arranging natural funerals. For more information, or to book, contact the Environment Centre on 07 839 4452.

Rehab society under threat
The Prisoners' Aid and Rehabilitation Society is facing closure with Government plans to cancel its contract. The 132-year-old group is staffed mostly by volunteers and helps 25,000 prisoners, ex-prisoners and their families each year. Corrections Minister Judith Collins said the society's head office had "insurmountable" financial issues.

Have your say...

Waikato Super City?

Auckland is undergoing its biggest local government reorganisation ever, with a Super City being formed this year. Politicians led the discussions in Auckland and the voice of the people was barely heard. With amalgamation discussions starting in the greater Waikato, we want our readers in the region to set the agenda. The *Waikato Times* and *Waikato Regional Community Newspapers* are asking the question: What do you think about council mergers? Fill in our survey and ensure your community is heard by the decision-makers. **Please note: your comments may be used in the paper.**

BY POST Return to: Super City Survey, *Waikato Times*, Private Bag 3086, Hamilton 3240.

BY FAX 07 849 9603

ONLINE Visit www.waikatotimes.co.nz and click on the survey link in the top right corner.

Question 1
Are you over 18? Yes No

Question 2
Which territorial authority do you live in (Please tick box)

<input type="checkbox"/> Franklin	<input type="checkbox"/> Waikato District	<input type="checkbox"/> Waitomo
<input type="checkbox"/> Hamilton City	<input type="checkbox"/> Otorohanga	<input type="checkbox"/> Waipa
<input type="checkbox"/> Hauraki	<input type="checkbox"/> South Waikato	<input type="checkbox"/> Thames/Coromandel
<input type="checkbox"/> Matamata-Piako	<input type="checkbox"/> Taupo	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) _____		

Question 3
Should your local council merge with other local councils as part of a large Waikato council based around Hamilton City?
 Yes No

Question 4
Should any mergers include the regional council Environment Waikato?
 Yes No

Question 5 (For Hamilton residents only)
Are you interested in other areas joining an expanded Hamilton City Council?
 Yes No

Question 6 (For non-Hamilton City Council residents only)
Are you interested in your council merging with other councils in the region (not necessarily Hamilton)?
 Yes No

Question 7 (For non-Hamilton City Council residents only)
If your council does enter amalgamation discussions, which towns/cities or councils should it consider merging with? (Refer to list on left)

Question 8
Do you think the general public should have a say in council mergers?
 Yes No

Question 9
If you have any final comments you would like to make about council mergers, please write these in below.

If you are happy for your comments to be printed in the paper with your name attached, please fill in your name below.

Cardiology Clinical Trials

Would you like to improve your cholesterol?

You could be able to take part in a new study at the Cardiology Clinical Trials Unit, Waikato Hospital

You might be eligible if you:

- are aged 18-75 years
- have treated or untreated high cholesterol; and
- are able to participate in a study for up to 32 weeks (involves approximately nine visits, one to six weeks apart).

We are offering people the chance to take part in this study of a new medication that may help improve cholesterol. If eligible, you will receive a medical review. Travel costs will be covered.

For an information sheet, contact:
Fleur Bartley
(07) 839 7136 or (07) 839 8899 ext. 8157 or;
Liz Low 0274 823 205

Waikato District Health Board