



# Helen Mason

*Healthy, thriving communities, Kia Momoho Te Hāpori Ōranga.*



10 September 2019

Last week we had the pleasure of hosting the Minister of Health, Hon Dr David Clark, at Whakatāne Hospital. He visited us on Tuesday to announce a new Mental Health and Addictions Service (MHAS), Pregnancy and Parenting Services (PPS). Whilst he was here we also took the opportunity to showcase some of the great work going on at Whakatāne.

The Minister’s announcement on PPS is an exciting one. The PPS is a service which works with mothers with addiction and/or mental health issues to support them, and ensure their children have the best start to life possible. The service is currently available in Tairāwhiti, Waitemata, Hawkes Bay and Northland DHBs. Eastern Bay of Plenty has been selected as one of two new sites nationally. More details of PPS can be found in the sidebar included within this newsletter.

Response speeches to the Minister’s announcement were given by our MHAS Clinical Director Dr Fiona Miller and Toi Oranga Ngakau: Change Leader Peta Ruha.

*Pictured from left: BOPDHB Clinical Director of Mental Health Dr Fiona Miller, CE Helen Mason, Health Minister Hon Dr David Clark and Toi Oranga Ngakau - Toi Ora Change Leader - Mental Health and Addictions Peta Ruha.*



Fiona noted the importance of the first 1000 days of a child’s life. This is a time of tremendous potential and enormous vulnerability. How well or how poorly mothers and children are nourished and cared for during this time has a profound impact on a child’s ability to grow, learn and thrive. This is because the first 1,000 days are when a child’s brain begins to grow and develop and when the foundations for their lifelong health are built.

Meanwhile Peta referenced Dame Whina Cooper’s famous quote: “Take care of our children. Take care of what they hear, take care of what they see, take care of what they feel. For how the children grow, so will be the shape of Aotearoa.”

She added that we would be looking to leverage off the learnings of the other PPS providers around the country and that she felt the ultimate success of the service would be based on relationships and everyone working together.

The Minister was joined by MP for Waiariki Tamati Coffey who brought his eight-week-old son Tūtānekai and partner Tim Smith with him. It felt very appropriate that there was a baby there, given the focus of the service. It also provided a lovely opportunity to see that our Chair Sally Webb’s Public Health Nurse skills are as good as ever!



*Above: Board Chair Sally Webb is left holding the baby as Te Pou Tikanga - Māori Health Gains and Development Graham Cameron addresses the audience.*

I’m delighted that this service will now be available to support our Eastern Bay of Plenty communities.

During his speak the Minister recognised the hard work of all those delivering health care in the Eastern Bay, and thanked all of you for the support you provide to our communities.

Following the announcement we had a chance to show the Minister briefly around the Mental Health Unit, Clinical Campus and main hospital before an informal lunch was held. At this event he was able to meet some of our Māori nursing graduates, Rural Health Immersion Programme (RHIP) students and our General Manager Māori Health Gains and Development Tricia Keelan, who spoke to him about our Te Toi Ahorangi Strategy.

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**“A healthy start to life is one of the greatest contributors to health and wellbeing later in life.”**

*Health Minister Hon Dr David Clark*

I have a strong sense that the Minister left feeling very appreciative of the warm welcome he received. He really enjoyed the opportunity to meet so many of the team and to deepen his insights into the work you do for our community. It was great to have him recognise the great work that is done for the Eastern Bay community, by passionate, dedicated health workers. It was also really good to hear him convey an understanding of some of the challenges our communities face. His announcement on the new Pregnancy and Parenting Support service was the icing on the cake.

I came away from the hui feeling very fortunate to be part of such a great health team.



*Pictured above: Minister Clark got the chance to meet members and organisers of the RHIP programme as well as Regional Māori Health staff Denise Tahuri (third from right) and Astrid Tawhai (second from right).*



*Pictured above: Whakatāne Hospital NETP nurse graduates, acting Director of Nursing Ros Jackson (fifth from right) and Director of Nursing & Health Science of Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi, Associate Professor Dr Deborah Rowe (far right) were also able to spend time with Minister Clark.*

## What is Pregnancy and Parenting Services (PPS)?

The PPS is a service which works with mothers with addiction and/or mental health issues to support them, and ensure their children have the best start to life possible.

“PPS aligns with this Government’s view to treat addiction as a health concern,” said the Health Minister, “supporting those with addiction issues to get healthy and stay healthy through the support of agencies rather than criminalise them, which can have long-term impacts which outweigh their alcohol or drug use.

“PPS also works to address the ongoing, intergenerational cycle of harm addiction causes. It helps families have safe homes and receive support when caring for their child, to ensure they have the best start to life possible.”

Mothers with addiction issues or poor mental health in the Bay of Plenty will be better supported through the PPS, he said.

“PPS provides a great help to mothers who may be left out by existing services, worried they’ll be criminalised for their addiction, or have a difficulty accessing social services.

“PPS reaches out to mothers and whānau and focuses on a core goal for the service, the Government and every mother - the wellbeing of children.”

The Minister said the Government and Ministry of Health were committed to reducing child poverty and improving the wellbeing of all children, young people and their whānau, with the vision that New Zealand will be the best place in the world to be a child. PPS is another way to achieve that vision.

“PPS works across a number of health, social and justice agencies to help families experiencing multiple and complex issues related to, for example, alcohol and other drugs, stigma, mental and physical health, poverty, family violence, child neglect and abuse, custody issues, fear of involvement with child welfare agencies and criminal involvement,” he said.

“Budget 2019 set aside \$7 million over four years to expand this successful service to two new sites, with the aim those sites will each support 100 women per year.”

PPS is currently available in four other sites, through Waitemata, Tairāwhiti, Hawke’s Bay and Northland DHBs.

“Parents seen at the existing PPS sites are predominantly Māori and Pacific. PPS is an example of a service which works with populations where there are clear inequities, to ensure they get support which works for them,” said the Minister.