



What the people said...

The BOPDHB surveyed people in the Eastern Bay of Plenty on what services a new-look Whakatane Hospital should deliver. Here's the results:

Q. Do you think we should increase the provision of outpatient and day patient services at Whakatane Hospital?

A. Yes 353, No 10, Unknown 18

Comments included: "More specialist services should be provided so fewer patients have to travel out of town," "Increasing staff and upgrading facilities will help curb waiting lists," "A better transport system for the elderly should also be considered," "Yes, but not at the expense of other services."

Q. Do you think we should strengthen community-based care?

A. Yes 338, No 19, Unknown 24

Comments included: "A dietitian/diabetic service would be helpful," "There should be in-home care assistance - especially for elderly with chronic illness," "Rehabilitation services are critical," "Localised, accessible services are necessary as many patients can't afford to travel to doctors,"

"We need more well-trained staff available," "More teen and adult mobile healthcare and information is needed," "24/7 GP care should be available," "Community care should be strengthened, but not at the expense of secondary services."

Q. What services do you think particularly need strengthening?

District nursing, Cardiology, Oncology, Hospice care, Rehabilitation, Geriatrics, Diabetes, Outpatients and daystay, Women's health, Dental services, Gynaecology, Audiology, Radiology, Psychology, More child services, Palliative care, Mental health, Dermatology, Ear Nose and Throat (ENT) and Dialysis. All these were listed. Some people felt increased money for GP subsidies and increased nurse practitioner clinics would be helpful.

Q. Should we continue to provide 24 hour obstetric specialist care in Whakatane?

A. Yes 367, No 5, Unknown 9

Being able to have babies in Whakatane 24/7 is a key service at Whakatane Hospital and the community is keen to see it continue. As one respondent pointed out, Whakatane Hospital serves a wide area and it would be inconvenient and even risky at times if mums had to travel to main centres for specialist care. Comments included: "Tauranga is too far away if there is an emergency," "Obstetric patients need ICU (Intensive care) back up," "Experienced, trained staff are essential," "The 'whanau' room needs to be upgraded," "We need to ensure we retain specialists."

Q. Do you think we should strengthen community-based services for mental health crisis and addiction services?

A. Yes 322, No 23, Unknown 36

Comments included: "Increased day patient programmes would be good," "Not at the expense of hospital-based mental health services," "More youth suicide support and counselling services are needed," "More funding and services for home visits is needed," "We need crisis staff and support," "A strong link to the emergency department is essential," "Rural areas need to be included," "Current services need upgrading."

Q. Does Whakatane need a 24 hour, seven day emergency care?

A. Yes 373, No 1, Unknown 7

A very strong YES message from the community on ED care. Comments included: "People do not just get sick between 8am and 4pm," "This will ensure continued prompt, local emergency cover throughout the Eastern Bay."

Q: Should Whakatane continue to offer a full range of secondary surgical services?

A. Yes 348, No 2, Unknown 31

Comments included: "It is difficult for patients and families to travel if service is not available here," "Don't reduce the current services," "These services give residents a sense of security," "We need well trained staff," "We need diagnostics-blood transfusion services," "We need dental services," "Surgical services will be the backbone for the clinical school."

Q. Should Whakatane Hospital continue to provide medical and assessment, treatment and rehabilitation services?

A. Yes 362, No 0, Unknown 19

The message in this response is clear - do not reduce medical and assessment, treatment and rehabilitation services.

Q. Do you think there should be increasing linkages into the community?

A. Yes 268, No 17, Unknown 96

Comments included: "So long as community services are well staffed and funded," "We need to ensure the hospital is available as a back up," "The transition from hospital is hindered by a lack of funding and resources to support people," "More beds are needed in community facilities," "An increase in the child development/ Plunket type services would be useful," "We need rest homes and more care for the elderly," "Improvements in post-surgery follow-ups would be good."

Q. Do you think we should develop community birthing units run by midwives and GPs in Whakatane?

A. Yes 180, No 115, Unknown 86

Responses to this question were ambivalent and some people were concerned that hospital (secondary) services would be undermined. Comments included: "What is wrong with the current reasonably new unit?," "GPs need to have specialist back-up for any complications," "It could be dangerous," "The one available in Opotiki and Murupara is rarely used," "GPs don't have the time."

Q. Do you think we should develop a clinical school at Whakatane?

A. Yes 315, No 17, Unknown 49

Comments: "It will bring people to Whakatane and add value to the community," "As long as it doesn't impact other areas," "If it helps retain the expertise in the area," "There would be economic benefits to the wider community," "It will enhance our ability to deliver the best care," "It will encourage research, best practice, and attract clinical staff" "A tremendous initiative."

Unfortunately a final question was omitted accidentally from the first printings of the survey, and very few responses were received as a result. However a further survey will be undertaken to ensure the community gets an appropriate opportunity to comment on this service. The question was:

Q. Should Whakatane Hospital have an Inpatient Mental Health Unit? Is yes, should it offer the same or different levels of service?

A. Yes 26, No 0, Unknown 7

Comments received included: "The service currently offered should remain with the addition of new services," "It needs to be a restful place where patients can recover," "Service levels can only depend on the safety of patients and staff and security offered," "It must be a well managed and controlled environment with controlled family access, community-based activities and counselling," "Upskilling of staff is required," "People need nurturing in a positive, supportive environment."

Whakatane votes Yes to hospital services

Eastern Bay of Plenty people have voted resoundingly positively to retaining and strengthening services at Whakatane Hospital.

The community consultation by the Bay of Plenty District Health Board (BOPDHB) over the past month included public meetings and a survey which asked the community for views on what Whakatane Hospital should offer.

Key local people took up the challenge to raise awareness of the survey and almost 1000 surveys were distributed, of which 40 per cent were returned.

"It was encouraging that so many people took the time to let us know what they want from their hospital," says Chief Executive Phil Cammish.

"For most it was a matter of endorsing what we were proposing, which is to strengthen the health services in the region."

The public meetings were held over two weeks and right across the region in Whakatane, Opotiki, Taneatua, Kawerau, Te Teko, Matata and Te Kaha. "With the local body elections on around the same time, there was a lot of confusion about the DHB's plans for Whakatane.

The meetings were a great opportunity to front up to the public and tell them the real story," says Phil.



Whakatane Hospital staff were invited to meetings at the hospital and local media and council representatives were also advised of the DHB's proposal.

"Despite dire predictions by some,

we were pleased to make it clear to the community that Whakatane Hospital has a big future and the DHB is investing significant money in an upgrade of the campus."

DHB says thank you

BOP District Health Board chief Phil Cammish says the responses have been of genuine value to the DHB, in helping it clarify what the community believes is required of Whakatane Hospital.

"We are grateful to all the people who took the time to respond," he says.

"It was gratifying to see how many people care enough about their

hospital to make the effort to come along to a meeting or fill out the forms and send them back."

The responses have been collated and are currently under consideration by the Board.

They will serve to assist with future planning at Whakatane Hospital, and have reinforced the DHB's commitment to health care in the region.



By PHIL CAMMISH, CEO

What's it all about?

Q: Why do we need to upgrade Whakatane Hospital?

A: The 2005 seismic report on Whakatane Hospital found the medical services (main) block is not compliant with the new Building Act. A number of other buildings and infrastructure on the hospital site also require significant upgrades.

Q: How will the new development be funded?

A: Like a new home owner, the DHB has to fund a significant part of the building project from its own resources then has to apply to borrow the rest of the funds from the Crown Health Funding Agency and pay interest on those borrowings. What we can afford to borrow will have an impact on what we can ultimately build. The DHB is currently in a positive financial position but will require the Whakatane redevelopment to contribute to the cost of borrowing.

Q: Will surgical services be available at Whakatane Hospital?

A: We plan to continue offering all the surgical services currently available at Whakatane Hospital.

Q: Will I be able to deliver my baby in Whakatane if I need specialist care?

A: Yes. We plan to continue specialist maternity services in Whakatane with

other DHBs is planned, does this mean we may have to go out of Whakatane for some services?

A: Not necessarily. It's more about sharing resources (for example, a cardiologist may be employed by two DHBs so will be shared between sites).

Q: Will there still be 24 hour emergency care available?

A: Yes. Whakatane Hospital will continue to offer 24 hour, 7 day emergency care.

Q: What does it mean by 'review of mental health services'?

A: We are aware that a number of people admitted to hospital could often be as effectively cared for in the community with the right support.

Q: Where in the community will mental health patients be cared for?

A: This will be determined once we have a clearer idea of the needs of the community.

Q: What will be the impact of this on other health providers?

A: We will be working with current and potential providers to establish the impact and determine how we can strengthen services available.

Q: What is the clinical school?

A: The clinical school will offer clinical education for students of many disciplines including doctors, nurses and allied health professionals

such as physiotherapists and occupational therapists. In 2009 this will include rural immersion with GPs in the Eastern Bay of Plenty for medical students from Auckland.

Q: Didn't we just tell you what we wanted in the consultation last year with Grafton Group?

A: The Grafton Group consultation was about finding out what community-based (primary) services the community wanted. This consultation was focused on hospital-based services but links strongly to the community feedback from the Grafton Group work.

Q: Will what happens in Whakatane affect further building projects at Tauranga Hospital?

A: No. The Whakatane business case and funding application is independent of the Tauranga project (Project LEO) which is already fully funded and approved.

Q: What will happen to the feedback received from this consultation?

A: The information received will be analysed and carefully considered by the Board and Runanga with the outcome fed back to you. Then a full business case will be prepared for the Ministry of Health for the development of facilities suitable to deliver the services required.