



Media information, 24 August 2017

Community building transformed into modern health centre

A community-owned property that a year ago was at risk of demolition, has been transformed into a modern health centre as the new home of Whaiora, Wairarapa's Māori health service.

More than 100 people attended today's dawn blessing of Whaiora's new premises at 394 Queen Street, owned by the community through the Masterton Trust Lands Trust.

Named Te Pūtahi Manawa o Whaiora, which translates to the 'heart flow of health', the former Cosmopolitan Club building occupies land owned by the trust since the 1870s. The building was purchased by MTLT last year.

"We are thrilled to have Whaiora as a tenant and for the building to have a new community use," Masterton Trust Lands Trust chairperson Leanne Southey said. "The adaptive reuse of the building was an ideal opportunity for our two community organisations to work together."

The redevelopment of more than half of the 1,950 square metre building was completed in under five months to a tight programme. It has been upgraded to meet modern structural requirements and features a modern medical centre at the front, the community outreach service located towards the back with a staff room in the central atrium area.

Whaiora General Manager Triny Ruhe said the redevelopment process had been 'exciting' and produced a facility that would meet the current and future needs of Whaiora's 45 staff and growing client base.

"The building design provides substantially more space, better workflow, more patient privacy and the opportunity for future growth. The location in central Masterton and plenty of on-site car parks makes us much more accessible to clients and staff."

The medical centre features ten individual consulting rooms for use by GPs and nurses, three treatment bays and ambulance access. Reception, medical administration and a nurse's station are close by and a waiting room will open out onto a deck in fine weather.

"The number of dedicated spaces for GP and nurse consultations, education, whānau, and staff has increased from 12 to 19, with additional bathrooms and storage," Triny Ruhe said.

"We will be exploring opportunities to recruit more GPs. In the meantime, we are not enrolling any new clients for the medical centre, but will be able to increase enrolment of patients when we have more GPs."

Whaiora started relocating to the new site today, and will be closed on Friday 25 August. It is set to reopen there on the morning of Monday 28 August.

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Background

Masterton Trust Lands Trust

Masterton Trust Lands Trust is a 144-year-old public lands trust formed to own and manage surplus land not sold to Masterton's working-class settlers.

Income from the trust's property investments is distributed in the form of grants to assist educational, cultural and community activities within Masterton.

The original 165-pound value of the trust lands has now grown into an asset base of \$71 million. This concept has played a key role in the evolution of the town since 1872 and continues to do so today.

Whaiora

Established in 2001, Whaiora improves health and social outcomes so Māori are able to fulfil their potential and aspirations for whānau ora. Whaiora provides a comprehensive range of health and social support programmes at no or low cost to the community, with a focus on vulnerable communities.

Whaiora employs 45 staff who look after 3,800 patients. Staff consist of two GPs and a nurse practitioner, practice nurses, WellChild/Tamariki Ora nurses, social workers, stop smoking coaches, community health workers, reception, administration.

Community outreach teams support about 1,100 people covering an area from Pukaha Mount Bruce to Cape Palliser.