



Western Bay of Plenty
Primary Health Organisation

TŪNGIA TE URURUA KIA TUPU
WHAKARITORITO TE TUPU
O TE HARAKEKE

Te Rerenga

NEWSLETTER | JUNE 2025

Issue Highlights

How new roles in general practice
are improving access to care 6

Kai & Kōrero visits focus on
connecting and collaborating 7

New training equips non-clinical
staff for cancer screening kōrero 9



Putting people at the centre

Backed by the Workforce Development Fund, Western Bay of Plenty counsellor embraces the mission to strengthen the mental health workforce from within.

When it comes to mental health and addiction (MH&A) work, supporting others is at the centre – and for Western Bay of Plenty (WBOP) counsellor and consultant Laura Tongalea-Nolan, that support extends out to both those giving and those receiving MH&A support.

"I'm a first-generation Kiwi with Niuean heritage, and a proud mum to four amazing kids," shares the recipient of a Round Two Workforce Development Fund grant. "I first entered the MH&A space at just 19, inspired by my mum, Sameli Tongalea, who worked in the sector. Hearing her stories growing up definitely lit the spark for me."

Sixteen years later, that spark has become a blazing career. Now the founder of her own consultancy, Here Today, Laura contracts as a counsellor to Western Bay of Plenty Primary Health Organisation (WBOP PHO) and Ngā Mataapuna Oranga (NMO), while also supporting other professionals through private supervision.

"My role is a bit of a patchwork, but it all connects back to supporting others," she explains. "I work with organisations to embed best practice in addiction services – especially with Māori and Pasifika providers – and provide supervision to over 20 practitioners every month."

Wellness with purpose: Care for the carers

"Our MH&A workers often don't see themselves as a priority," she says. "There are cost pressures on providers, limited time, and constant emotional load. I saw the fund as an opportunity to break through that – to give frontline MH&A kaimahi the space to rest, reflect, and reset."

With support from WBOP PHO's Equity Programme Lead, Sēnae Mitchell, she successfully submitted a group application to run a Wellbeing

Continued on pages – 2 & 3

Putting people at the centre – continued

Restoration Retreat for MH&A practitioners. The one-day event took place on 9 April 2025 at Hauora Sanctuary in Tauranga and was attended by nine kaimahi – eight of whom were supported through the WFD.



Attendees represented a wide cross-section of the sector, including kaupapa Māori providers, mainstream NGOs, and private practice. The retreat intentionally wove together whakawhanaungatanga, wānanga, and talanoa, with a strong cultural and spiritual foundation guided by karakia and liogi (Samoan for prayer).

Activities included massage, contrast therapy, breathwork, professional workshops on resilience and stress management, peer-led discussions, and outdoor grounding sessions – all designed to support deep rest and somatic healing.

Real impact for real people

The feedback was overwhelming. All participants rated the retreat as “Excellent,” with 100% reporting increased connection to their wellbeing and a renewed commitment to self-care.

One participant shared that “The retreat created a safe space to be around like-minded people and be vulnerable. I left feeling relaxed, connected, and reminded of why I do this mahi. Another said,

“It exceeded all my expectations. I’ve started yoga again and feel more grounded in my cultural practice.”

These results underscore the real and lasting value of investing in kaimahi wellbeing. “If our workforce isn’t well, we can’t expect them to do healing, transformative work with others,” she explains. “When kaimahi feel supported, it flows directly into the care they provide.”

Sustaining a culture of care

While the retreat was a one-day event, its ripple effects are ongoing. Laura now plans to advocate for quarterly or biannual retreats, expanding offerings with a continued focus on building wellness practices into supervision and everyday mahi.

“I want to normalise wellbeing as part of our professional development – not an afterthought, but an expectation,” she says. “This isn’t a one-off – it’s the beginning of a movement toward collective care.”

Workforce Development Fund helps local health workers thrive

Applications for Round Two of the Western Bay of Plenty (WBOP) Health Workforce Development Fund closed in March 2025 with an overwhelming response. Over \$85,000 has been allocated to support 59 dedicated kaimahi across our primary and community health sectors, helping them upskill and develop professionally.

This follows the success of Round One in October 2024, which saw 33 applicants receive a total of \$43,179 in funding. The rapid growth in interest highlights the strong demand for workforce development support in our region.

Managed locally by WBOP Primary Health Organisation (PHO), this fund provides a crucial boost for those looking to upskill, pursue postgraduate study, or access mentoring and support. Whether it’s formal training, practical professional

development, or wellbeing initiatives, the fund is designed to strengthen the capability and confidence of those working on the frontlines of our healthcare system.

“The workshop aims to create a retreat of professional development activities,” shared one mental health and addiction worker who received funding. “We want to provide practical self-management strategies that help kaimahi cope with the stress of our environment. This will not only support us professionally but also improve our whānau relationships as well as our own wellbeing.”

Another recipient, working in emergency care, reflected on the broader impact of cultural training for them, “Ambulance service workers can have a huge influence on vulnerable and disadvantaged patients.

This funding will help me reflect on my own biases and deliver culturally safe, patient-centred care.”

With an average grant of just over \$1,400 per applicant, the fund represents a modest investment delivering wide-reaching benefits.

The WBOP Health Workforce Development Fund forms part of Te Whatu Ora’s broader commitment to building a strong, skilled, and sustainable health workforce, as outlined in the interim New Zealand Health Plan, Te Pae Tata. While WBOP PHO administers funding for the primary and community care workforce, a parallel initiative supporting Hauora Māori providers is delivered by the Poutiri Wellness Centre.

Together, these efforts are helping to grow a skilled, supported, and confident health workforce, right here in the Bay.

INTERVIEW: LAURA TONGALEA-NOLAN

Championing wellness across mental health and addictions



"I always say – the hardest part is often just walking through the door. So, as professionals, we need to treat that moment with care and respect."

Can you tell us a little about your background and how you first got involved in the mental health and addiction support field?

I'm a first-generation Kiwi with Niuean heritage, and a proud mum to four amazing kids aged 1, 3, 9, and 12. I first entered the mental health and addictions (MH&A) space at just 19, inspired by my mum, Sameli Tongalea, who has worked in this field for many years. Hearing her stories growing up definitely lit the spark for me.

Now, after 16 years in the sector – mainly in drug and alcohol services – I run my own consultancy, Here Today. I contract as a counsellor to the Western Bay of Plenty PHO and Ngā Mataapuna Oranga (NMO) and also provide private clinical supervision to other practitioners. Being self-employed gives me the flexibility to balance my mahi with family life, which is really important to me.

What does your current role involve?

It's a bit of a patchwork, but all of it connects back to supporting others. I help organisations with best practice in addiction services, sharing resources and guiding them toward culturally appropriate care – especially with Māori and Pasifika-focused providers. I also provide supervision to around 23 practitioners across the month and work

as a contracted counsellor in primary care settings, including programmes like CPO and Whāriki (under Te Pou).

I'm proud to serve on several national bodies, including the Drug Foundation board, the NCAT committee, and as co-chair of the Drua Pasifika Addiction Network. I'm DAPAANZ-certified and passionate about growing a well-supported, culturally safe workforce.

Mental health and addiction can be heavily stigmatised. How do you approach this in your work?

I always say – the hardest part is often just walking through the door. So, as professionals, we need to treat that moment with care and respect. Whether you are a receptionist at a GP clinic or a frontline clinician, our response can make or break someone's willingness to continue seeking help.

That means using validating, non-judgmental language, being mindful of what can be overheard, and creating a space that feels safe and inclusive. Everyone – not just MH&A workers – has a role to play in breaking down stigma and creating positive experiences for whāiaora and whānau.

This kind of work can take an emotional toll. How do you take care of your own wellbeing and support kaimahi with that too?

There are a few strategies that I follow and suggest to those under my supervision, with 4 in particular. One is to have a bit of grace for yourself. Feeling deeply is part of the work, but we need to manage it well. Give yourself space and kindness. Another is debriefing, particularly when you have had a particularly tough session and need to share the heaviness of what you heard or what it has brought up for you personally. The third suggestion is Supervision, these mentoring sessions are great for working through challenging situations, so you can process and reset.

A daily ritual helps me symbolically close the day at work before going home.

I carry a mauri stone or pounamu during the day, and then I leave it in my workspace before going home. It's my way of saying goodbye to the day and protecting my own space. I often suggest this as a strategy, adapting to your own style, I know people who simply say 'goodbye' to their workstation or water a plant as their ritual at the end of the day – you choose what works for you.

What motivated you to apply for the Workforce Development Fund, and how did you hear about it?

I first heard about the fund while working at AvaNiu Pasifika when the PHO team came to talk about cancer screening and shared about the opportunity. Later, my partner, who works in planning and funding, reminded me about it, and I saw a forwarded email that made me think, "this could really work."

I already had an idea brewing to support MH&A workers through a wellness-focused professional development retreat. I knew there were barriers – people not seeing themselves as a priority, cost pressures on providers, and limited time for self-care. This fund felt like the perfect way to remove some of those barriers and give back to the workforce.

What was the experience of applying like?

Honestly, amazing. I reached out to Sēnae Mitchell, Equity Programme Lead at the WBOP PHO, and she completely supported the vision – thinking outside the box and helping us put through a group application, which isn't always typical. Her approach made the process so much more accessible and equitable, especially for providers and workers from minority communities. Without that kind of support, I'm not sure it would've happened. ▲

Tāpiri Mai makes national news following international debut

A closer look to Matakana Island's model of care blending telehealth and trusted relationships.



After being showcased on the world stage in Lisbon, Portugal, on 15 May, the Tāpiri Mai project has now received national attention, with a feature on TVNZ's 1News highlighting the impact of this community-led healthcare model.

Reporter Jordyn Rudd travelled to Matakana Island to see firsthand how the project is transforming access to healthcare for rural communities through a blend of digital technology and trusted, face-to-face care. The story aired during the 6pm news bulletin on Saturday 25 May.

Tāpiri Mai is a collaboration between Te Awanui Hauora, Ngāti Kahu Hauora, and the Western Bay of Plenty Primary Health Organisation. The model was co-designed with whānau from Matakana and Mōtītī Islands in response to long-standing barriers to care, which became even more pronounced during the COVID-19 pandemic.

By combining telehealth tools such as Starlink internet with mobile outreach led by a local nurse, the project supports

"Tāpiri Mai is about coming together, bringing people, tools, and support closer to where they're needed."

patients to connect with their GP without the cost and time involved in travelling to the mainland. For many residents, it's meant earlier access to care and a renewed sense of connection to services that once was too distant.

In the 1News segment, Te Awanui Hauora's Hera Murray (Community Nurse Lead) and Te Uta Roretana (Chief Operations Officer) shared how the service works in practice and the impact it's having on local lives. Community members also spoke about the difference the service has made, from convenience to improved continuity of care.

"It's a game-changer really, for the community," said Murray. "People are accessing their doctor earlier instead of waiting until it's too late."

"I'm fortunate to have direct contact with the people that are important to me to keep me healthy," shared Matakana resident Te Kira Toma.

Just one week earlier, Tāpiri Mai was featured at the International Conference on Integrated Care (ICIC25) in Portugal, where Hera Murray and Kiri Peita, WBOP PHO's General Manager Māori, Population Health & Equity, represented the project on the global stage.

"Tāpiri Mai is about coming together, bringing people, tools, and support closer to where they're needed," says Peita. "It's about partnership and equity in action." ▲

Watch the 1News feature



Kiri's Kōrero

*Gratitude from the front:
Acknowledging the power
behind the scenes.*

I recently had the privilege of presenting at the Integrated Care International Conference (ICIC) 2025 in Lisbon, Portugal, alongside Hera Murray, Registered Nurse at Te Awanui Hauora (Matakana Island). We shared our journey of Tāpiri Mai, a kaupapa focused on equitable distance healthcare for the island

communities of Mōtītī and Matakana Islands. Through models like telehealth and mobile services, we've helped rural whānau access timely, culturally safe care without leaving their communities.

While I was one of the people presenting, this achievement was made possible by many hands and hearts behind the scenes.

The whakataukī "Ka pai ā muri, ka pai ā mua" - "If the back is good, the front is good" reminds us that success at the front depends on the strength and support at the back.

A huge thank you to our Marketing and Communications Team for shaping and strengthening our messages, our tenacious and incredible Tāpiri Mai

project whānau; Te Awanui Hauora, Ngāti Kahu Hauora, Project Manager and Champions. To the whānau of Mōtītī and Matakana Islands, their resilience, trust, and commitment are the heart of Tāpiri Mai. This kaupapa exists because of you, and it is your voice and needs that guide every step we take.

To the Ahi kā, those who kept the home fires burning while we were away: Obrigada!

I may have stood at the front, but I carried all of your work with me. This was our shared success.

Ngā mihi nui – thank you all.

**Kiri Peita – GM: Māori,
Population Health & Equity.**

Coming together for stronger primary care across Te Manawa Taki



Western Bay of Plenty Primary Health Organisation (WBOP PHO) was proud to host the latest Te Manawa Taki PHO Forum on 7 May 2025. It was a valuable opportunity for PHO leaders across the region to reflect, share, and align on the key priorities for 2025/2026.

Led by Te Whatu Ora | Health New Zealand, the forum opened

with acknowledgements of progress made, recognition of ongoing system-wide challenges, and a call to keep momentum despite uncertainty. The morning focused on sharing outcomes and initiatives, particularly around childhood immunisation.

It was a space to openly discuss both achievements and barriers, from

workforce shortages and funding clarity to rural access and broader public health pressures. What stood out was the strong sense of commitment to collaboration, innovation, and keeping communities at the centre of everything we do.

Looking ahead, working groups focused on identifying shared priorities for regional collaboration, centred on:

- ✓ Lifting childhood immunisation
- ✓ Reducing avoidable hospital admissions for children
- ✓ Expanding access to primary care

"It was an energising day of learning, connection and planning. Hearing about the mahi across our region, the innovation, and the deep community focus was truly inspiring. Despite the challenges in the health sector, we're not standing still. We have a motivated, resilient workforce leading the way to better health outcomes," said Lindsey Webber, CEO of WBOP PHO.

The forum was a powerful reminder that we are stronger together, and that positive change happens when the sector leads with purpose, trust, and shared direction. ▲

How new roles in general practice are improving access to healthcare

Local success stories show the value of extended primary care teams in the Western Bay and across NZ.

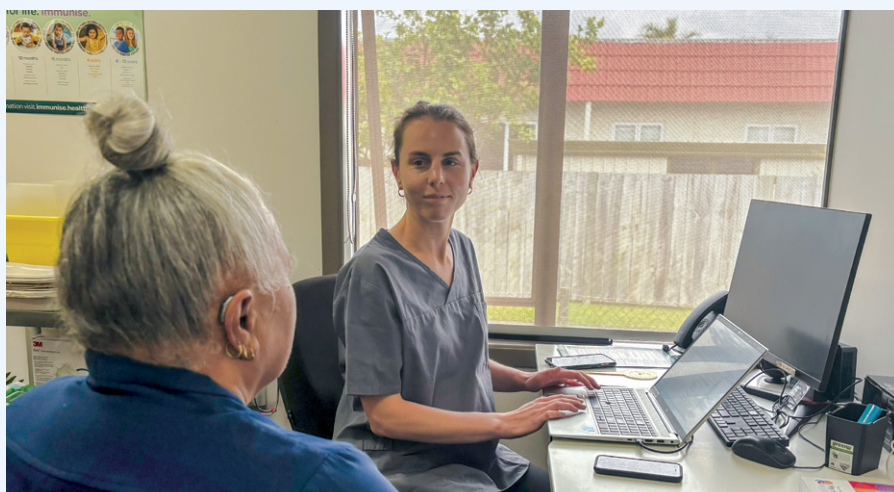
A recent report from general practice New Zealand (GPNZ) shows how extended primary care teams are improving access to care across Aotearoa. The document gathered real-life stories and highlights the success of the Comprehensive Primary and Community Teams (CPCT) initiative, which has helped general practices bring in new roles such as physiotherapists, clinical pharmacists and paramedics.

The 36-page document offered a detailed snapshot of the programme, bringing together data, insights, seven case studies, and real-life examples. The findings show that these teams have helped reduce hospital admissions and ED visits, shortened wait times for appointments, and made care more personalised and connected.

One of the seven stories featured in the GPNZ report, came from our rohe, and highlighted the early impact of integrating physiotherapy to general practice. WBOP PHO began implementing CPCT in 2024, and physiotherapist Harriet Ferguson (Ngāti Porou) was the first to join the team in October. After years working in hospitals in Australia, the UK, and New Zealand, she now works across Ngāti Kahu Hauora, Gate Pā Medical Centre, and Rangiora Health Hub, all in Tauranga.

"I've always worked in hospitals. In primary care you have a whole different sense of community, continuity, and often the chance to see people before their problems escalate," says Harriet. A case that stands out for her was a home visit to an elderly man, recently discharged from hospital. He had experienced several falls, and his wife was at risk of injury from helping him at home.

"I could go in much faster than the usual hospital-based follow-up. We looked at what equipment would help, we talked about safe mobility, and I gave his wife tips on manual handling so she wouldn't continue to hurt herself."



"One lady with advanced osteoarthritis was using a child's pram to move around her home. When I got her a proper walking frame, she called it 'the best Christmas present ever.'"

— Harriet Ferguson (Ngāti Porou), WBOP PHO CPCT Physiotherapist.

Sarah Stevenson, General Manager of Community Services at WBOP PHO and contract manager for CPCT, sees a clear link between Harriet's work and the wider value of the programme.

"When patients can access early intervention, they're less likely to have things get worse for them. We catch things early and manage them in the community, which, let's face it, is where people want to be."

A more connected system

In her first few months, Harriet has also worked closely with Health Improvement Practitioners (HIPs) and health coaches to help people get the right equipment quickly and safely.

"With me on the team, it has been a lot easier than the route they would have otherwise gone down to access necessary and simple things, like a walking frame to keep someone safe from falls."

"One lady with advanced osteoarthritis was using a child's pram to move around her home. When I got her a proper

walking frame, she called it 'the best Christmas present ever.'"

Sarah says these small changes make a big difference. "The 'other route' Harriet politely describes involves multiple referrals, waiting a month or more, and having to tell your story again to someone new. Even with a health coach walking alongside a person, empowering them with health literacy and supporting them to make their own decisions, it all can feel too long, too hard."

Harriet's strong hospital connections have also created new ways to collaborate. She and the hospital team have reviewed waiting lists and identified patients who could be seen in the community instead. This means faster care for patients and less pressure on hospital services.

"Harriet has helped countless people find new mobility, avoid hospital admission and return to work faster. Her role is more than a nice convenience. It is a lifeline, and a vision of how primary care can evolve to meet New Zealand's health challenges head-on," concludes Sarah.

WBOP PHO CPCT Team

Following the start of the programme, the second professional to join WBOP PHO CPCT team was Extended Care Paramedic Jenny Ainsley, in January 2025.



Based at Thrive, in Whakatāne, Jenny brings years of emergency response experience and strong local insight from growing up in the Eastern Bay. Her role focuses on delivering hands-on care, triage support, and improving outcomes through timely response.



Also starting in January was Clinical Pharmacist Patrick Cutrupi, based at Katikati Medical Centre and MedWise. Patrick brings hospital experience from across Aotearoa and specialist skills in medication safety, medicines reconciliation, and team-based care. He quickly became a key clinical support in the practice, working closely with doctors and nurses. ▲

KAI & KÖRERO

Listening, sharing and moving forward

With so much change happening in the health sector, it's more important than ever to stay connected. That's why Western Bay of Plenty Primary Health Organisation (WBOP PHO) launched Kai & Kōrero, a series of visits to general practices across our region to meet kanohi ki te kanohi, share updates, and hear directly from our network.

Led by WBOP PHO CEO Lindsey Webber and supported by team members from across the organisation, these visits are a chance to strengthen relationships and acknowledge the everyday work of general practice teams.

One topic that has sparked strong interest during these sessions is the upcoming relaunch of open benchmarking. While practices already access their own performance data, this initiative will enable practices to see how they compare across key targets such as immunisation, diabetes checks, cervical screening, smoking cessation, and CVD risk assessments.

"Open benchmarking provides opportunities for network discussion and collective improvement," says Lindsey. "We know there's a strong appetite among practices to work together, learn from each other, and keep raising the bar. These visits are a powerful reminder of the commitment already happening on the ground, and sharing positive stories really encourages innovation."

"We know there's a strong appetite among practices to work together, learn from each other, and keep raising the bar..."

— Lindsey Webber.

Kai & Kōrero is another way WBOP PHO connects with our network, alongside our regular Network Liaison visits, Provider Forums, and meetings with general practice leaders in clinical care, nursing, equity, immunisation, and management.

A huge thank you to all the staff who took the time to kōrero with us, and to each practice for the warm welcome. We're looking forward to keeping the conversations going. ▲



— Great kōrero and warm welcomes at Papāmoa Pines Medical Centre, Girven Family Practice and HealthCare on Fifteenth.

HEALTH PROMOTION

Smokefree May: Community action across the Western Bay



WBOP PHO took part in a wide range of activities during Smokefree May, working with partners and providers to encourage and support smokefree journeys across our region.

At Tauranga Hospital, the Western Bay of Plenty Smokefree Coalition hosted a month-long display in the main corridor. The display provided information about quitting smoking and the support available.



A remembrance tree gave visitors a chance to tie yellow ribbons to honour loved ones or celebrate their own quit milestones. For a week, members of the coalition, including WBOP PHO staff, were on site each morning to kōrero with whānau and offer guidance.

The coalition also supported Smokefree May at the Tauranga Netball Centre, engaging with players, supporters, and tamariki. Alongside sharing information

and advice, the team gathered insights on vaping behaviour and received new referrals to the Hāpainga Stop Smoking Service.

Throughout the month, WBOP PHO led a digital campaign sharing stories from people in our community who have quit smoking or are on their journey to becoming smokefree. Their stories were shared alongside practical information on how to access support through Hāpainga or via general practice.

“Every story shared this month has reminded us just how powerful it is when people see someone like them taking that first step. It’s been a privilege to support this kaupapa in the community,” said Emma Walker, Smoke Free Quit Coach, WBOP PHO.

Our provider network also joined in, with practices referring patients and encouraging conversations about quitting. A friendly internal competition between practices helped lift awareness of the service and increased referrals across the region.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to Smokefree May, whether through kōrero, referrals, or simply taking time to reflect. Together, we are supporting more people to take that important first step toward a smokefree life.

Free cervical screening clinics increase access

WBOP PHO has been running free cervical screening clinics in community spaces throughout the rohe, helping make screening easier and more accessible across the Bay of Plenty. The clinics offer quick self-tests in a private space with nurse support available if needed.

Clinics are available until the end of June in Mount Maunganui, Tauranga, Whakatāne, Kawerau, Te Puke, Ōpōtiki, Te Teko and Tāneatua, including after-hours options. These are drop-in clinics, and general practices are welcome to refer eligible patients directly.

Check the full schedule and eligibility criteria by scanning the QR code below or visiting www.wboppho.org.nz.





A day of connection and care in Katikati

The sun came out just in time for AvaNui Pasifika's Kilikiti Cricket Day on 5 April at Moore Park, and so did the community! Our WBOP PHO team was on site sharing health kōrero and support, with Gemma Pearson (Support to Screening Nurse), Tiana Bennet (Health Promotion Coordinator), Emma Walker (Smoke Free Quit Coach, Hāpainga Stop Smoking Service), and Sarah Dykstra (Health Coach) all representing different parts of our service. ▲

It was great to see the collaboration alongside other health providers including Sport BOP, Prostate Cancer Foundation NZ, Time to Screen, and the Hearing Association. A big thanks to AvaNui Pasifika for hosting such a warm, vibrant day of connection and care. ▲

New training equips non-clinical kaimahi for cancer screening kōrero

A new co-designed training programme will launch in July to help non-clinical kaimahi from general practices, community providers, and PHO staff have more effective, meaningful conversations about cancer screening with Māori and Pacific Peoples. The Western Bay of Plenty Primary Health Organisation (WBOP PHO) has partnered with AvaNui Pasifika, Breast Screen Aotearoa, the Cancer Society, Te Manawa Taki Health NZ, Wairiki Whānau, and the Pacific Island Community Trust (PICT) to develop and deliver this kaupapa.

The training focuses on building confidence, cultural understanding, and screening knowledge. It includes

lived experience stories to support whānau engagement in breast, cervical, bowel, and other cancer screening programmes. The full day in-person session will take place at Tāne-nui-a-rangi Wharenui at Mount Maunganui College, 23 July.

Recorded online sessions might be available in the future. ▲

Scan QR code to learn more and register



Symposium on Paediatrics

A group of 40 healthcare professionals from across our network joined WBOP PHO CME/ CNE Symposium on Paediatrics, held at the WBOP PHO offices, on 28 May. The evening featured presentations from Tauranga

Hospital's Paediatrics Team on allergy, ADHD, and diabetes, along with clinical updates from our Clinical Advisory Team. It was a valuable opportunity for learning, connection, and discussion focused on improving care for tamariki across our region. ▲

Acknowledging the dedication and mahi of nurses and family doctors

In May, we took a moment to celebrate two vital pillars of the health system: our nurses and family doctors, with short video tributes recognising their impact across the rohe.

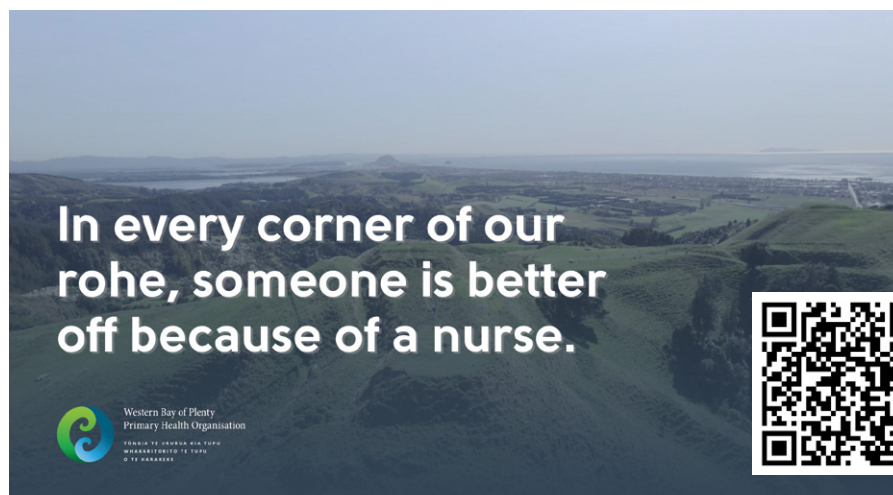
International Nurses Day (12 May) was an opportunity to acknowledge the care, skill, and heart that nurses bring to their work every day. Our video paid tribute to nurses working in general practices, outreach services, schools, and PHO-led programmes. It was a message of thanks for their dedication to patients, whānau, and communities.

A week later, on World Family Doctor Day (19 May), we turned our attention to the many GPs across the region who show up, listen, and provide trusted care through every stage of life. Especially in times of change and pressure, their contribution is essential to the well-being of our communities.

If you haven't seen the videos yet, we invite you to watch and share them with the special nurses and doctors in your life. Though created for specific days, their messages are timeless.

To all the nurses and doctors in our network: thank you for the difference you make, every day! ▲

Watch the videos now!



Tauranga GP named new College President

WBOP PHO is proud to congratulate Dr Luke Bradford on his appointment as the next President of The Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners.

A long-time GP at Fifth Avenue Family Practice in Tauranga and a current member of the WBOP PHO Board, Dr Bradford has also served as our Board Co-Chair in the past. He officially takes up the presidency on 26 July 2025.

Dr Bradford has been a strong voice for general practice throughout his career, with experience in urgent care, hauora Māori services, and health governance. Before becoming the College's Medical Director in 2023, he also served as Chief Medical Officer at the former Bay of Plenty DHB.

We're proud to see one of our own representing general practice on the



national stage and look forward to continuing to work alongside him to support high-quality, equitable care across our region. ▲

Snippets & Highlights



NZSL Week

For this year's New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) Week (5 to 11 May), WBOP PHO embraced the theme of connection and inclusion, guided by General Manager of Network Services Wendy Dillon. With her deep personal connection to the kaupapa, Wendy inspired our team to engage more meaningfully with Aotearoa's third official language, encouraging everyone to learn how to sign their name in NZSL by the end of the week.

A highlight was Wendy signing the waiata during the opening of the Te Manawa Taki PHO Forum, held at our office on 7 May, a powerful moment that reflected the importance of inclusive communication. ▲

Scan QR code to watch video



Upcoming Events

June

- 20** Matariki (Māori New Year)
- 20** World Refugee Day
- 26** International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking

July

- 28** World Hepatitis Awareness Day

August

- 1 - 7** World Breastfeeding Week
- 9** International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples
- 12** International Youth Day

There are too many events to list, so this list is not comprehensive.

Standing up for housing and health

Western Bay of Plenty Primary Health Organisation (WBOP PHO) was proud to contribute to the Aotearoa Homelessness Summit 2025, held in Tauranga on 16 April.

Project managers Laura Penny and James Schofield presented in the prevention stream, sharing the WBOP PHO outreach health service proposal.

They were joined by members of our Community Services team, including Health Coaches, Health Improvement Practitioners, Social Workers, and other kaimahi, who attended sessions, shared insights, and connected with others across the sector.

The summit highlighted the impact of rangatahi-led services such as Kick Back in Tāmaki Makaurau, the importance of addressing legislative barriers to housing transitions, and the need for fresh thinking, strong local leadership, and genuine collaboration as demand increases and resources tighten.

The kōrero reinforced the vital role health services play in addressing homelessness. WBOP PHO is actively involved in the Kāinga Tupu Growing Homes Taskforce, which leads the Western Bay of Plenty's Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan. Our CEO, Lindsey Webber, co-chairs this cross-sector initiative, working alongside others to support long-term, community-led change.



Sharing our diversity journey

On 8 April, WBOP PHO welcomed People and Culture leaders from the Employers and Manufacturers Association (EMA) into our whare. They came to hear about our Diversity Awards journey and the

continued mahi to support diversity, equity, and inclusion. The feedback was heartening. Many spoke of the uplifting energy in our space and said they felt genuinely welcomed and inspired by our approach.

Matariki: Reflect and look ahead

Matariki marks the Māori New Year. It is a time to remember those who came before us, gather with whānau and friends, and set intentions for the year ahead. This year's theme, Matariki mā Puanga, honours the diverse ways iwi across Aotearoa celebrate the new year, recognising different stars, traditions, and tikanga.

In our region, Matariki is being celebrated from 28 May to 22 June 2025 through the Matariki Te Tauranga o ngā Waka event series. From Athenree to Ōtamarākau near Maketu, the programme includes performances, exhibitions, workshops, and family-friendly activities.

The 2025 focus is on the whetū Waipuna-ā-rangi, associated with rain and renewal. Events across the region reflect this theme, with an emphasis on replenishment, wellbeing, and collective reflection.

To find out more, visit [My Tauranga website](#) or pick up a printed event guide at Tauranga City Libraries. ▲

New faces in the whare



– **Kimmy Du Bois**

Network Support Coordinator

Growing up, and still today, I'd rather play outside than read or watch movies. I was the family 'Tom Girl': light on my feet as a ballerina, but also the girl climbing trees just to see how high I could get.



– **Ruth Mclean**

Youth Services Team Lead

I spent 7 months in Delhi (India) as a volunteer nurse. I even rode a yak! The photo shows my husband and me outside the Ashram with some patients.



– **Gemma Hanna**

Social Work Student

I got married at 20. This photo is from the big day. I also collect pears made from all sorts of materials. No real purpose yet, but they make a subtle home decor.



– **Teresa Conner**

Health Improvement Practitioner

I met my husband while I was doing an apprenticeship in car painting. He is a panel beater. And no, we are not going to fix your vehicle.



– **Georgia Courtney**

Receptionist

I spent two years overseas working as a stewardess on a superyacht.



Western Bay of Plenty
Primary Health Organisation

TŪNGIA TE URURUA KIA TUPU
WHAKARITORITO TE TUPU
O TE HARAKEKE



SIGN UP NOW TO RECEIVE TE RERENGA

Scan the QR code now and sign up to receive
Te Rerenga directly in your email!



87 FIRST AVENUE, TAURANGA 3110 | PO BOX 13225, TAURANGA 3141 | TEL 07 577 3190