

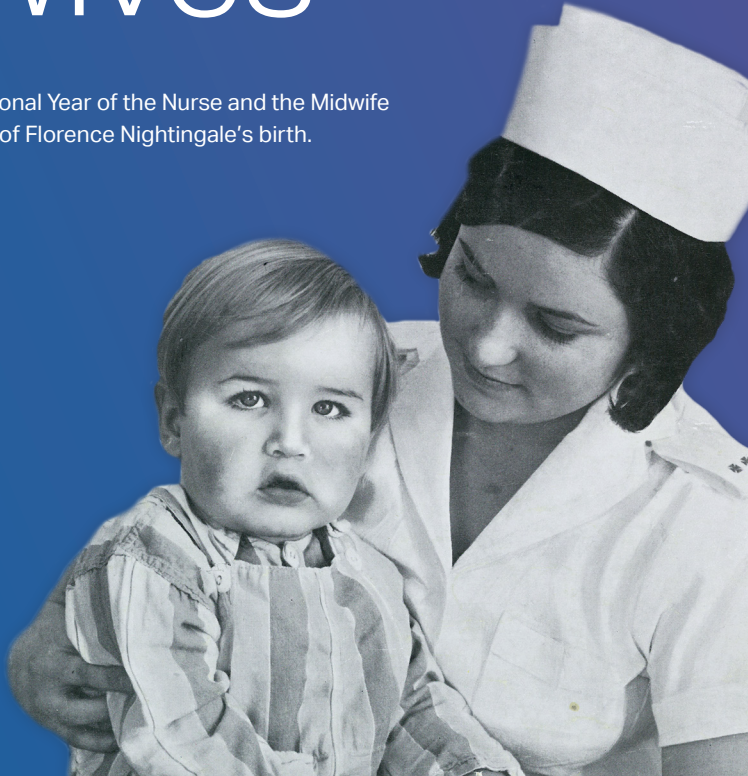


2020
INTERNATIONAL YEAR
OF THE NURSE AND
THE MIDWIFE

A selection of stories of

Hawke's Bay's Nurses and Midwives

In honour of 2020 International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife
and the 200th anniversary of Florence Nightingale's birth.





Florence Nightingale
1820-1910

2020 International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife

Nurses are pivotal to providing care to our community.

The world needs nine million more nurses and midwives if it is to achieve universal health coverage by 2030. That's why the World Health Assembly designated 2020 the 'International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife'.

Hawke's Bay District Health Board joined the call of the World Health Organization and partners including the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM), International Council of Nurses (ICN), Nursing Now and the United Nations Population Funding (UNFPA) in its year-long effort to celebrate the work and diversity of nurses and midwives.

During a year like no other, when COVID-19 impacted the globe, Hawke's Bay DHB focused its efforts on highlighting and celebrating our incredible and diverse nursing and midwifery workforce by profiling colleagues and publishing their stories via social media throughout the year.

Enclosed within this special celebratory booklet you will find profiles of nurses and midwives, from experienced to new graduates, all dedicated to their professions with a strong connection to Hawke's Bay.

We hope this first collection of stories, which are in no particular order, is the beginning of an ongoing campaign to celebrate and recognise the diversity, professionalism and passion of our nursing and midwifery colleagues.

We thank those who so openly and generously shared their stories. We know there are many more inspirational stories out there and welcome suggestions. Simply email: comms@hawkesbaydhb.govt.nz to put forward a nurse or midwife that we can celebrate in future editions.

He aha te mea nui o te ao? He tāngata, he tāngata, he tāngata.

What is the most important thing in the world?

It is people, it is people, it is people.

Ngaira Harker

Nurse Director – Māori Health
Hawke's Bay District Health Board



Ngaira Harker is passionate about growing Hawke's Bay's Māori health workforce and developing and supporting the aspirations of Māori nurses within the rohe.

The Nurse Director of Māori Health at Hawke's Bay District Health Board (HBDHB) oversees and advises on Māori health workforce initiatives, Māori nursing scholarships and networks with the many nursing groups both within the DHB and within Māori health services. She supports and offers resources in growing their workforce capability and capacity. Ngaira also works collaboratively with nurse directors at a strategic level to input and inform on Māori health and Māori workforce development.

Ngaira initiated the development of a new internship, Tuakana Teina, which saw seven university students spend their summer at HBDHB working on projects to improve Māori health outcomes.

"It was fantastic to have so many talented young Māori health students working with us and it bodes well for future recruitment." HBDHB is working towards increasing the total Māori workforce from 14 to 16 percent to deliver more effective health services.

"We have some fantastic Māori nurse leaders however we could always do with more,

so it's part of my role to mentor nurses along a leadership pathway. We are working on ensuring that we have a diverse workforce that supports the diversity that exists in our community. Having increased participation at a leadership level for Māori is essential in creating and supporting Māori models of health and ultimately improved health outcomes for our communities."

Ngaira has had a diverse nursing and education career spanning New Zealand and the United States of America. She was previously the Director of Nursing and Health Studies at Waiariki Institute of Technology and at Whakatane's Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangī. She has a Master of Health Science, and much of her study has focussed on indigenous health and education.

She is from Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairoa and has a large whānau living in Wairoa. She grew up in Maraenui, so she sees her role at HBDHB as coming full circle. ■

Rowan Plater

Nursing Manager
City Medical Napier



The Emergency Department is home to Rowan Plater because it's where he can make a difference to people when they need it most.

Rowan joined City Medical Napier in 2019 after 12 years as an ED Nursing Coordinator at Hawke's Bay Hospital.

It's a long way from his hometown of Tring, in Hertfordshire. Rowan enrolled in a nursing degree simply because he liked helping people and wanted a job with a uniform. It was either nursing or the army, he said.

Throughout his training he was set on being a district nurse - he enjoyed the autonomy and the meaningful client relationships - until an ED placement completely changed his mind.

"I had enjoyed other placements including ICU and theatre, but in ED something just clicked. Working in ED puts you in a position to help people and make a difference right when they need it most," he said.

"If it's a wound you get to close it, if it's a broken bone you get to set it and straighten it and you see immediate results. It's these sorts of things that really captured me and I decided to make ED my home."

Rowan "cut his teeth" working in ED at Hemel Hempstead Hospital gaining additional specialist qualifications and experience.

"Back then part of our role was to assist with pre-hospital trauma.

"I remember scrambling around in the rain for the remains of someone's ankle bones under a car seat.

"His seat had shot forward in a crash and almost sliced his foot off. It was a long road for that patient but he did walk again."

Rowan completed further qualifications allowing him to work as a nurse practitioner, where he could deliver care throughout a patient's journey.

When it was announced Hemel Hempstead would lose its ED to nearby Watford, Rowan decided to look for new opportunities. He and his wife moved with their young family to New Zealand after being enticed by his brother-in-law's photos from Maraetotara. After a brief stint in Tauranga, Rowan landed a job in ED at Hawke's Bay Hospital, later stepping into the "challenging" coordinator's role.

He described it like an advanced game of Tetris.

"It's about prioritising cases, having a trusting relationship with the triage nurse and making sure the right people are dealing with the right cases and ensuring patients receive comprehensive care."

It was a satisfying role but after 12 years Rowan was ready for change and accepted the nursing manager role at City Medical.

His focus lately has been to create care pathways to support the team in their decision-making and reduce the number of patients transferred to ED.

Rowan highly recommends nursing as a career; it has allowed him to travel to the other side of the world where he considers himself very fortunate to continue working in a career that he loves.

"Nursing is both rewarding and challenging. There are so many facets to what you can do, from flight nursing and emergency to renal and aged-care and all of those roles are open to any nurse to engage with — which I think is exciting." ■

Megan Peacock

District Nurse in Central Hawke's Bay
Hawke's Bay District Health Board



Marrying a Central Hawke's Bay farmer and starting a family steered Cantabrian Megan Peacock from traditional hospital-based nursing into the world of district nursing - a role she wouldn't change for the world.

"It was meant-to-be for sure. I didn't know a thing about district nursing when I initially applied for a casual role that came up while I was on maternity leave here in Central Hawke's Bay – that was 18 years ago."

Megan says district nursing opened her eyes to a whole new world of health care, one she absolutely loves and feels privileged

to be a part of by providing specialist nursing care within her own rural community.

District nurses offer assessments, clinical treatment, palliative care support and education for patients and their families.

"District nursing is so diverse and it's incredibly personal, the connections we make because we are on the road

visiting patients in their own homes are truly special.

“Our patients really value the work we do, they love knowing how we’re connected to the community and they trust us.”

Bonding with patients and family members goes hand-in-hand with the role.

“District nurses are certainly exposed to rawness and challenges some families

are faced with at times, but being there for them within our professional roles makes you feel good.

“Working with our elderly is also a particular highlight of mine, I just love hearing their stories of times past. I have nursed one patient in our farming community for the past 18 years, a retired farmer, and he has a special place in my heart.” ■

Alena Edmonds

Maternal and Smokefree Coordinator

Hawke’s Bay District Health Board



Not everyone can say they trained to become a registered nurse while still studying at high school, but that’s exactly what Hawke’s Bay DHB’s Maternal and Smokefree Coordinator Alena Edmonds did.

Born and bred in the Czech Republic, choosing a career path at the age of 14 was the norm.

“It’s just how our education system worked over there, when I was 14 I had to choose a specialty or a trade, so I decided to choose nursing.”

While the first two years of training were academic, Alena said the final two years involved practical training at the local hospital every morning for a half a day before returning to school to continue studying other mainstream high school subjects.

“I’m so pleased I chose nursing because it opened the door to becoming a trained midwife, a profession I’m so passionate about and love.

“After I arrived in New Zealand and become serious to stay here, I organised my registration as a registered midwife and have been with Hawke’s Bay DHB for just over 10 years now working in Ata Rangi, and then as a casual midwife while raising my own young family.”

These days Alena’s focus has turned to a smokefree position focusing on maternal

health and wellbeing of mama, pēpi and whānau as the DHB's Maternal and Smokefree Coordinator.

"I was yearning for something extra and I wasn't sure what that was, but I have absolutely found it with this role which I've been doing for almost two years now.

"It's important people know good support networks are in place to achieve their smokefree goals and I enjoy being that link between health professionals and whānau."

Hawke's Bay DHB works in partnership with Te Taiwhenua o Heretaunga, Te Kupenga Hauora – Ahuriri and Choices Kahungunu health services to provide a variety of free smokefree supports by qualified stop smoking practitioners through a regional stop smoking service, Te Haa Matea (easy breath) Hawke's Bay.

From 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2019, Te Haa Matea successfully supported 425 people to become smokefree. People who quit smoking save on average \$12,000 per year (based on smoking a pack of cigarettes per day).

Alena says COVID-19's Level 4 lockdown provided some additional challenges, but the team adapted and clients were still well supported through their smokefree programmes.

"Our team continued to provide phone consults and contactless deliveries of nicotine replacement therapies.

"Instead of lighting up a cigarette, light bulb moments happened. Lockdown really helped some of our clients to start thinking differently about their life and focus on how they could deal better with triggers and craving periods."

Alena says while the choice to quit will always be a personal one, it was important people knew good support networks were in place to help them achieve their smokefree goals.

"We offer this free service from Wairoa to Central Hawke's Bay. People can refer themselves via the team's Facebook page or by calling our freephone number 0800 300 377, or they can be referred by their family doctor or midwife.

"Te Haa Matea provides a whole wraparound package of support from group or one-on-one support sessions to free nicotine replacement therapy and other incentives along the way, such as free nappy packs for pregnant women who successfully give up smoking." ■

Jane O'Kane

**Clinical Nurse Specialist –
Occupational Health**
Hawke's Bay District Health Board



“Working with workers” is the role of the occupational health nurses; helping the people who make up our workforces keep well – both mentally and physically.

Jane O'Kane, a nurse of 44 years, has been looking after the 3000-plus Hawke's Bay DHB team for the past 20 years, albeit with a year off in the middle to investigate Europe with her husband.

Born and bred in Hastings, Jane trained in Palmerston North in 1976, returning to her home town as a registered general and obstetrics nurse. A six-month stint picking apples refreshed her post-study, and she headed into the wards of what was then Hastings Hospital.

Over the next near 25 years, Jane focused on hospital nursing, public and private, and started on a not inconsiderable study programme – starting with her Bachelor of Nursing.

The move into occupational health nursing did not stop the study, with post-grad papers in occupational health and safety and a diversion away from health study to take some management papers, resulting in Jane attaining her Masters. But her “most important piece of paper” is her post-grad certificate in clinical rehabilitation.

“The information I learned while completing that study has been invaluable.”

Jane calls occupational health the “hidden discipline” of nursing. “Given its highly confidential nature, we fly under the radar most of the time, and certainly cannot share the stories of what we do. Only those who we help understand what we do.”

And of course, with a team of thousands to look after, they are not exactly touting for business.

Every day is different and the skills required diverse. “You need common sense, empathy, compassion, an open mind, and the ability to switch off easily outside of work. I think you also need some life experience behind you, in order to be able to fully connect, understand and empathise with the people you are helping,” says Jane.

The service is about the whole person, assisting with rehabilitation after accidents or planned surgery, mental health, vaccinations, pre-employment screening, supporting staff members through difficult home situations, brokering discussions on health issues between staff and their managers... “It really does cover the whole person – it is a very interesting and fulfilling branch of nursing.” ■

Susan Hawken

Nurse Manager – Wairoa Health
Hawke's Bay District Health Board



Susan Hawken (right)

Emergency care, intensive care, coronary care, flight nursing, remote rural nursing, nursing management... no one can say that Susan Hawken has not made the most of the incredible possibilities that a career in nursing can provide.

Now Nurse Manager at Wairoa Health, Susan says there is limitless scope within nursing to work in a huge range of specialties in endless places across the world.

Her remote rural work has included positions in the back blocks of Australia and at Franz Josef in the South Island. Talking about her time as a flight nurse in the 1990s (long before any special flight training for medical staff), triggers a long-remembered heart-stopping (literally) moment.

"I was in a helicopter flying with a patient to Wellington Hospital when he had a cardiac arrest mid-flight. There was just me and the pilot, and I said to him,

'We're in trouble, I need to defibrillate [electric shock] – can I do that in a helicopter?'

"He said: 'I don't know; nobody has ever asked me that before – give it a go'.

That was terrifying but the pilot descended and gave me the nod to go ahead. Luckily the patient only needed one shock and we could head back up and off to Wellington, so all good!"

Susan took up her Wairoa position after 12 years at Hawke's Bay Hospital, latterly as deputy charge nurse in the Emergency Department and clinical nurse specialist working on ensuring best pathways and practices for trauma patients.

The move reflects her love of working in small communities. "It's always been a privilege for me to become a part of a small community. You are very focused on the community's needs, its differences and the way you can help.

"It's also the small team that comes with that. Our team here in Wairoa is fantastic; whatever is thrown at us, our whole team gets on and does what needs to be done to improve patient outcomes. My focus here is nursing education and leadership and the supporting of advanced nursing roles in the Wairoa community." ■

Barbara Walker

Lead Chaplain – Hawke’s Bay Hospital

Hawke’s Bay District Health Board



There won’t be too many Kiwi nurses (if any) who can say they have treated a patient bitten by a hippo – or had to treat hundreds of children dying from severe malnutrition.

Barbara Walker, best known these days for her role as lead chaplain at Hawke’s Bay Hospital, left New Zealand aged just 28 to nurse in some of the most dangerous political hot spots in the world, helping some of the world’s poorest people.

And with that came treating conditions and traumas that would never be seen in a New Zealand hospital.

Barbara knew from early on that her life’s work would be helping people. By age 13 her heart was set on becoming a missionary nurse but, with dyslexia, the road to qualification was not always easy.

Determination won out and after qualifying as a nurse and then a midwife, her next 20 years were spent helping those most in need, as the missionary nurse she always knew she would be.

[Her journey took her across the globe, including to Cambodia – working with refugees fleeing the Pol Pot regime; Vietnam – on a ship rescuing and caring](#)

[for boat people trying to escape the North Vietnamese invasion of South Vietnam; Somalia – providing health care to refugees in the war-torn countries that make up the Horn of Africa; and working on the Afghan Pakistan border as a midwife for over five years.](#)

Barbara saw horrific conditions and a great deal of death and severe illness. Often there were no doctors and few nurses to look after tens of thousands of people suffering from illness; conditions compounded by the lack of food and drinking water. But conversely, saving lives, bringing babies into the world, and supporting people at all of their life stages made it bearable and, at times, wonderful.

It was completely different to first-world nursing; treating illnesses and traumas that would never, or at most very rarely, be seen in a New Zealand hospital; among them hippo and crocodile bites, the full range of tropical diseases and parasites, cholera, anthrax and polio.

"We had babies come in with tetanus, because the midwives cut the cord with the same knife they use to cut the grass."

But she would not change it, and encouraged people wanting to nurse, even if faced with challenges, to "go for it".

"It might be a bit harder, but it is definitely possible. Do not let those challenges stop you."

To prove dyslexia does not need to get in the way of academic achievement, Barbara went on to achieve a Masters in Medical Anthropology. In 1999 she was made a Fellow of the New Zealand College of Nurses. Barbara was awarded the Queen Service Order in 2000 for her services to Nursing and Midwifery. ■

Kieran Nicholson

Registered Nurse

Central Medical Practice Napier



It was nursing's gain and firefighting's loss when Kieran Nicholson decided to make nursing his career.

The 23-year-old is now 18 months into that new career [as at May 2020], after completing his training at EIT in Hawke's Bay.

In fact, he considered a number of options while at college in Taupō, including firefighting, the military and becoming a doctor. But discussions with a high school teacher, the knowledge that he wanted to be closely involved in helping people, and tours of nursing training facilities saw the decision to become a nurse made at age 15.

Now on the front-line at Central Medical Practice in Napier, Kieran is particularly keen on working with patients to manage their long-term health conditions.

"I really like achieving goals with patients; showing them how they can make real differences to their health through exercise and diet.

"They pass what they learn to their families and friends, which means we have the opportunity to make a difference across the wider community."

Kieran is one of a rare breed; of the 240 registered nurses working in primary care in Hawke's Bay, he is one of just three men. ■

Emma Mumford



Clinical Midwife Specialist

Hawke's Bay District Health Board

Emma Mumford says she is privileged to work in the only specialist midwifery role at Hawke's Bay District Health Board.

As the Clinical Midwife Specialist, Emma works with women diagnosed with gestational diabetes (GDM) during their pregnancy. Her goal is to effectively manage their glycaemic control and enable baby to be born in the most optimal condition.

"If I do my job well and educate and support mum to manage her blood glucose levels effectively, baby is born in a stable condition and can stay with mum in the postnatal ward for that all-important close contact in the first few hours of life. It's all about keeping mum and baby together and giving baby a healthy start in life," she says.

"I love it. Women with this pregnancy complication need someone in the know to walk alongside them throughout their GDM journey."

Emma supports women and their whānau with weekly contact, either via email, telephone or home visiting where she monitors levels and administers treatment as required. All of Emma's face-to-face meetings with GDM women moved to virtual consults under the COVID-19 restrictions,

enabling women to stay safe at home, whilst having all of the usual individualised specific care provided.

"I spent lots of time in Zoom and Facetime meetings, regularly checking in with women, ensuring they are on track, have good control of their levels, have all of the supplies they need and that they are doing ok. It has been a new way of working but we made it work."

The women enjoyed meeting from the safety and comfort of their own home and many took up the opportunity to include partners and whānau in the consultations that they perhaps wouldn't normally be able to attend.

Emma says it's a unique and rewarding role.

"I'm making a positive difference to the health and wellbeing of mum and baby, and I feel very privileged to be in this role," she says. ■

Nadine King

**Associate Clinical Nurse Manager –
Mental Health Inpatient Unit**
Hawke's Bay District Health Board



Nadine King's nursing skills have taken her across Australasia, from her training in Lower Hutt, to the rural and remote parts of Western Australia, and then back to New Zealand — to Hawke's Bay.

Over that time she has become an expert multi-tasker. In her early nursing days, being married to a Kiwi shepherd saw her not only on the wards in rural Western Australian hospitals, but also heading out with the shearing gang in Australia as chief cook and bottle washer with a bit of rousing thrown in.

"At that age it was exciting to go to different places and see and do different things."

But nursing remained her foremost focus. Working in those small general rural hospitals meant no day was ever the same, with patients presenting with a full range of illnesses and conditions, from broken bones to mental health issues. Nadine gravitated towards mental health nursing.

"Out there, it was nothing to do 300 kilometres a day to go and see someone for an assessment. If they needed critical help, we organised a plane evacuation to Perth.

"That is where I saw the diversity that comes with working in mental health

and experienced the joy of walking the journey with people and seeing them recover."

In 2004, home called and Nadine and family chose Hawke's Bay because: "it's warmer than anywhere else in New Zealand".

Her journey along the mental health nursing path continued, starting with a position on the Hastings Mental Health community team.

Over the ensuing near 15 years, she worked in both the community and inpatient facilities, before taking on the role of Associate Clinical Nurse Manager in Ngā Rau Rākau (Hawke's Bay District Health mental health inpatient unit) in 2011.

Today she manages the intensive day programme, for clients from within the unit and out in the community – a programme focused on improving well-being, reducing the severity and minimising the effects of illness, and giving clients practical life skills and strategies.

"I feel privileged to help facilitate a person's journey to recovery after experiencing a period of difficulty in their mental health and enabling them to re-connect with friends, family and their support networks. Helping them to re-discover their strength, skill, mana and building resilience".

Working in mental health uses a lot of the same skills as other areas but the key to being a successful nurse is your ability to listen, to empathise and show you care – it is about treating the person (and their family/whānau) as a whole – a very holistic view to nursing. ■

Sarah Nation

**Community-based lead
maternity carer**



It's the thought of welcoming new life and seeing a family grow that gets Sarah Nation up in the middle of the night.

"I love getting to know people and their families and empowering women to welcome their new baby," the community-based lead maternity carer (LMC) says.

"Midwifery is about being 'with' women in partnership. I believe midwifery care is the foundation of health and wellbeing – giving families and babies the best start. Midwives are the first contact and link to ongoing health services and support."

Sarah always planned to move into midwifery once she finished her nursing training.

"I was on a nursing placement when I just fell in love with midwifery."

The arrival of her own children put this plan on hold, but the thought never went away.

Sarah was able to study through Wintec via satellite programme in Hawke's Bay. This meant a lot of time away from her family while becoming qualified over three years.

"It was tough but a real highlight and achievement and I've never looked back."

Sarah now runs her clinic from home and has the support of a practice partner. She has recently become the Hawke's Bay chair for the New Zealand College of Midwives which is an exciting new challenge.

"We have a fantastic group of midwives in Hawke's Bay. The challenges of COVID-19 has seen us all come together for clinical and pastoral support. I know I can call any of the midwives here and get support. We really are a united team."

Sarah believes continuity of care that midwives offer through the journey of pregnancy, birth and postnatal period is a key factor in developing a partnership of trust.

“I get to see women and families at their very best and also during their most vulnerable times. Midwifery is not just about cuddling babies.

There are many challenges for midwives and families but the midwifery relationship is a truly remarkable one,” she says.

“My daughter is training to be a midwife and it’s really important to me that midwifery care is world class and sustainable for future generations of midwives and women.” ■

Kerri Cooley

Surgical Nurse Director
Hawke’s Bay District Health Board



Surgical Nurse Director Kerri Cooley exudes warmth, intelligence, energy and passion – a combination that has served her well during her 40-odd years of nursing.

Drawn to nursing because it is a caring profession, Kerri says it wasn’t her first choice.

“I come from a family of teachers and was adamant I wanted to be a vet until a placement at Massey University when I discovered I was too attached to animals, so I chose to care for people instead.”

Turns out nursing was the perfect fit.

Kerri’s love of people and clinical passion has seen her work across many specialties

such as gerontology, surgical, paediatrics, district and public health nursing, but the machinery of the hospital environment kept drawing her back toward hospital placements – her specialty of choice being surgical nursing where she enjoyed 20 years on the shop floor before moving into more senior roles.

Progression up the ranks has been a natural one for the mother of two, where she says new opportunities have presented themselves at the right time.

A key member during contingency planning – whether that be across industrial actions, upsurge or winter planning – supporting teams and being that conduit for her team is a role, Kerri says, she feels privileged to hold.

“I enjoy the leadership roles I’ve had. I was seconded to my current role as nurse director within surgical which became permanent and I love it. There’s a great balance between keeping that clinical hands-on relationship with the ward, nurses, patients and whānau, but very much being the advocate for our nursing teams and our specialty whilst juggling the hospital system and patient flow challenges.

“I keep fit and healthy to keep up with them all here,” she quips – adding “there is always a new challenge and goal to achieve.”

While nursing has evolved over the years with new technology and higher duties, Kerri says the guts of nursing remains the same.

“I love the rapport and trust nurses are able to build with patients and their whānau, in fact I hold special memories of many patients I have nursed over the years.

The bond between nurse and patient is very special.

“We have great teams working alongside each other all aimed toward ensuring the patient journey is a timely and safe one. It’s all about our patients and even with all the extra complexity, our patients continue to get absolutely wonderful care, and that’s the heart of nursing really isn’t it.” ■

Asmitha Patchay

Nurse Director – Older Persons, Allied Health and Needs Assessment Coordination (NASC) Directorate
Hawke’s Bay District Health Board



It was the words of her mother that fuelled Asmitha Patchay’s desire to succeed with her nursing career.

She clearly recalls her first day on the job at a private hospital in Durban, South Africa.

“Back in 1994, we were taken to the basement in a white private hospital and taught basic nursing skills and after lunch

half of us were taken to the wards to start working and learning on the job. I had never seen a white person in the flesh before. Many of the nurses left within the first three months.”

Asmitha found it difficult, especially being classed as a “coloured woman” because of her Indian ethnicity, in a “white hospital” not long after apartheid ended.

“I wanted to leave but my mother encouraged me to keep going because she wanted me to have a good career.”

Asmitha persevered and studied further to become a Registered Nurse while working in a public hospital dealing with the HIV epidemic.

“HIV was rife in the community, you’d have people hiding in the rural areas in shame then they’d present at hospital on death’s door and die soon afterwards. I remember seven people dying in one night – you had to transport them to the mortuary yourself with a security guard, it was very hard.”

In 2003, she moved to New Zealand with her husband and two sons and took a position at Waikato DHB as an operating theatre nurse before shifting to primary care.

It was her work in the community that gave Asmitha another perspective of nursing in Aotearoa and the challenges that many New Zealanders face.

“Working in the operating theatre was very technical, you don’t see the patient’s world. However when you go into someone’s home, you get a better understanding of their social complexities that contribute to their health and wellbeing.

“I remember meeting a woman who lived in poverty and had chronic long term conditions. She was handed over to me as ‘non-compliant’. I realised that even though I grew up in a different environment and country, I shared many of life’s complexities with her and I needed to accept and acknowledge who I was.

“It was when I was able to accept this that I ‘connected’ with her so we worked in partnership to get the health and social outcomes for herself and whānau. She taught me how to be a better nurse and person and to understand the unconscious bias that is experienced in health.”

Asmitha continued her studies, completing a Masters in Nursing in 2014 and a Masters in Business Administration in 2020. She also took on leadership roles, including at Waikato Primary Health Organisation and Immunisation Advisory Centre. Asmitha was the Operations Manager for Community Care Coordination at Bay of Plenty DHB before accepting the Hawke’s Bay position.

Asmitha says the challenges in her career have made her a stronger person and better nurse; while her mother’s words of encouragement and the support of her husband and two sons have helped her manage the multiple challenges.

“My consistent advice to nurses is simple: Understand the meaning of equitable health, work at the top of your scope and be accountable for the care actions that you deliver because you cannot underestimate the powerful impact you have on someone’s life.” ■

Pam Winfield

Duty Manager

Hawke's Bay District Health Board



UK born Pam Winfield was at work in 1985 flicking through a nursing gazette when an advertisement asking for qualified nurses in New Zealand drew her eye.

She went home, asked her husband if he thought it was a good idea and started applying for jobs located near to beaches.

"We settled on Hastings and seven months later were on a plane to New Zealand."

Pam joined a group of 30 UK-based nurses hired by Hawke's Bay Hospital that year. She was one of the first hired from abroad to arrive and be accommodated on campus in the nurses home (now Cashmore House) where staff had converted rooms into a small flat for the couple until they found permanent accommodation.

"We were delighted with the Hawke's Bay location and lifestyle and have called it home ever since."

A specialist in mental health nursing, Pam's skills were in demand and her career with Hawke's Bay DHB spanned many years as a Charge Nurse in mental health.

She later branched out to other specialties such as with the Special Care Baby Unit and orthopaedics before falling in love with a specialist role working within the DHB's former seven-day paediatric home support nursing service.

"That role holds a special place, I just loved it so much. It was so special because we didn't just reach out and help with the care of the child, it was holistic for the whole family."

2021 will mark an incredible 50 years of nursing for Pam, the year she has decided to retire, smell the roses, play some bowls and hopefully travel often. The past ten years have been "intense, challenging yet rewarding" as Duty Manager – a member of a small team who are vital cogs within the DHB managing 24-hour staff and patient flow – clinical leadership and coordination of hospital services, as well as patient transfers.

"It's an amazing role, but you have to be solution-focussed when addressing issues and a great multi-tasker because every shift is so busy and there's always something different.

"I can honestly say that even after 50 years of nursing, I've never had a boring day in my whole career.

"As a nurse you are continually learning, it's been a privilege caring for people." She feels her life has been enriched because of her patients. ■

Angela Russell

Trauma and Flight Nurse

Hawke's Bay District Health Board



Trauma nursing is Angela Russell's life. She never thought it would be that way, in fact she thought teaching was her calling until she started taking an interest in her uncle's medical background.

Some 27 years later, standing in Hawke's Bay Hospital's Emergency Department, where she is also rostered on the flight nursing team to transfer unwell patients between hospitals, Ange's outwardly warm personality and depth of knowledge shines.

It's easy to see why her patients and staff place so much trust in her, but there are many layers to this incredibly talented nurse and the reason for her forging a career in emergency medicine lays with a special patient and her parents during an flight-transfer between Tauranga Hospital and Auckland some 15 years ago.

"We had an 18-year-old girl who was just the loveliest person come in with leukaemia and a day later needed to be transferred to Auckland City Hospital for a bone marrow transplant. I'd been nursing her and I was tasked to transfer her to Auckland.

"She was just so happy in the helicopter knowing I was looking after her, she said 'oh yay I'm so glad it's you, you're my favourite nurse'... then tragically half way

there she suffered a cardiac arrest and despite doing everything we could for her, she died," she says filling with emotion.

"To this day, when I'm up in the air flying over those ranges where it happened, I remember her, with some sadness. It was devastating and left a lasting impact on me, but it also made me realise how important the role of flight-nursing was and being the best support person you could possibly be for a patient.

"After that, I decided to forge out a career path that included flight nursing and be the best flight nurse I could be. Here in Hawke's Bay I'm rostered on for one day each week, as well as on-call," she said.

A key member of Hawke's Bay Hospital's Patient at Risk team, Ange says nursing provides great opportunities to continue to upskill on the job, particularly in the deteriorating patient. Her nursing expertise sees her spend time reviewing patient discharges in the hospital's Intensive Care Unit as well as patients of concern

in the wards. She is also a mentor to EIT nursing students while on placement in ED, showing them the ropes and giving them the opportunity to understand the scope and depth of trauma nursing as a career path.

Ange is also a part of the New Zealand Medical Assistance Team, trained by our Government to assist in natural disasters in New Zealand or overseas.

In 2020 she was deployed to Samoa to assist in the measles outbreak, based for two weeks in a small village caring for very ill babies and small children with measles.

“I absolutely love what I do, it’s the people – they put their faith into you and sometimes you have to gain their trust within seconds – it’s that connection when they know you’ve got their back and will do everything you possibly can for them.

It’s why I do what I do, seeing people get better, or keeping them comfortable in their last few hours.” ■

Kelly Douglas

Community Mental Health Nurse
Hawke’s Bay District Health Board



If you had told Kelly Douglas at the start of her nursing career in 1980, that she would find a way in which to nurse within a kaupapa Māori framework, she may not have believed you.

Nursing in mainstream organisations were embedded firmly in empirical research, a bio-medical model.

But a kaupapa Māori world-view was exactly what she found 20 years into her career, within the kaupapa Māori Mental Health Service at the Hastings hospital campus. “and I knew instantly this was where I was meant to be.”

Using a holistic interconnected approach in her work is as natural as breathing to Kelly.

From Ngāti Raukawa, Ngāti Kahungunu and Tainui on her father’s side and Rangitāne and Te Arawa on her mother’s side, Kelly was born and raised in Tokoroa amongst her iwi. Kelly’s whānau, hapū and iwi continued to live

and thrive within Te Ao Māori. Presence and connection on a regular basis to the marae was a normal part of life. Traditional healing had always been practiced by her hapū and Kelly considers herself fortunate to have been surrounded by such expert knowledge and skill.

Kelly's mother was a registered nurse, as were two of her maternal aunts. With encouragement from her mother, Kelly applied to the Hawke's Bay School of Nursing and was successful.

There was a moment mid-career, in 1996, when she almost left nursing to train as a teacher. But her charge nurse at Napier Hospital at the time convinced her to "consolidate my knowledge base" by studying at EIT to move from an enrolled nurse to a registered nurse.

As part of that training, she had a student placement with Te Puawai o Te Whānau Oranga Hinengaro kaupapa Māori services. This service was the first kaupapa Māori mental health service for HBDHB. During this time, Kelly discovered a very different world of nursing; one she could relate to and within which she could effect change.

In 2002 Kelly was working for her iwi, Rangitāne, when a friend approached her to apply for a position at HBDHB's mental health in-patient unit.

"I was very, very lucky; there were some amazing people there - clients and staff. We used a team approach that included the client; working together towards wellness. I loved working there and was taught so much by so many."

Now a member of the multi-disciplinary team covering Mental Health and Addiction Services North (Napier and Wairoa) working with tangata whaiora/clients with moderate to severe mental health and addiction issues, her main focus remains on working with tangata whaiora/clients and their whānau.

Historically, mental health has long been stigmatised. Kelly uses the analogy of mental health to other enduring illness, for example diabetes. "It can be hard to assure tangata whaiora/clients and their whānau that, like other conditions, there is a way forward, that wellbeing can be achieved and that it all starts with taking the first step on the path towards that."

"You need a goal, you need the person you are working with to think about/formulate the goal; you need them to have the head and heart space that allows them to both set the goal and be ready to work towards it."

While the work can be challenging, for Kelly the positive results and variety make it well worthwhile.

"No two days and no two tangata whaiora/clients are the same. And I'm incredibly fortunate to have found this nursing pathway that can merge so naturally within Te Ao Māori — a holistic way of working with a person on the strong foundation of Te Whare Tapa Whā, the four taha of health and wellbeing: te taha tinana (physical wellbeing), te taha whānau (family and social wellbeing), te taha hinengaro (emotional and mental wellbeing) and te taha wairua (spiritual wellbeing)." ■

Chris McKenna



Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer

Hawke's Bay District Health Board

Mention Chris McKenna and most of Hawke's Bay's nursing workforce will be able to put a face to the name.

A nursing and midwifery stalwart, Chris chose a career in nursing because she didn't want to leave home.

"It sounds ridiculous I know, but it's the truth. So I stayed in Hawke's Bay and trained to become a nurse."

Now with 40 years of nursing under her belt, the past 15 as Hawke's Bay DHB's Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer, Chris says nursing has definitely been the right fit for her.

"I've never regretted becoming a nurse and have had a fantastic career. I've seen a lot of changes, there have been hard times and really good times. I've also managed to have 4 kids during my career and am a grandmother to 10," she says proudly.

"Camaraderie within the nursing and midwifery workforce is as strong as ever.

"We look out for each other, nurses and midwives are incredibly hard working. Read any patient feedback survey and they are largely glowing with comments about the incredible nursing care they received or positive birthing experience.

"Nurses and midwives are the gateway to patient safety and wellbeing, there's no two ways about that."

A huge nursing and midwifery advocate, Chris says she is incredibly proud of the gains made to more widely recognise the value of the professions, although there is always more work to do.

"I've wanted to see things happen in my career that have become a reality, such as recognition for advance practice in nursing where Nurse Practitioners are authorised to prescribe any prescription medicine, or from a limited schedule of medicines.

"It's also great to see more formal career pathways become embedded supporting future recruitments of new grads and succession planning.

"Better utilising the right resource to meet patient demand has also seen the introduction of a new system called Care Capacity Demand Management (CCDM) which effectively saw the Board approve a nursing and midwife investment of

\$1.128 million in 2017 for the creation of 17 new fulltime equivalent roles.”

Chris says the world's your oyster if considering a nursing or midwifery career. “Nurses and midwives work right across the community and hospital setting, with a significant growth in mental health nursing and planned care.

“There are many specialist nursing choices out there, including primary care nursing who are very generalist and work so incredibly hard and very deserving of equality and recognition,” she said. ■

Mati Lakshman

Acute Surgical Nurse

Hawke's Bay District Health Board



A member of the New Zealand Pacific Medical Association team who assisted on the ground in Samoa during the measles epidemic says the experience will stay with her forever.

Grateful that nursing gave her the opportunity to help her homeland during a time of great need, Samoan born and bred Hawke's Bay DHB Acute Surgical Nurse, Mati Lakshman, always knew nursing was going to be her chosen career.

“I always wanted to be a nurse, as soon as I could train, I was there,” she said, speaking of her time learning on the job in Samoa before retraining in New Zealand through EIT to become NZ Nursing Council accredited.

“I spent many years hospice nursing and that was very special. Patients so appreciate you spending time with them and making that special connection when they are at their most vulnerable and unwell.

“You meet some amazing people with wonderful inspiring stories. I treasure that.”

Having lived in New Zealand since her mid-twenties, Mati returns home to Samoa regularly to visit family and says her recent deployment in January to offer nursing support in Samoa during the measles epidemic will have a lasting impact on her career.

“I went with an open mind, I just didn't know what to expect.

“I reconnected with a lot of people I had initially trained with in Samoa and on my first day of duty I was so shocked and overwhelmed with the conditions of the patients.

I couldn't contain my emotions... patients were so unwell and I could see the sadness on their faces.

"The local doctors and the staff were very grateful and appreciated our skills and expertise to help, but it made me realise how fortunate we are in New Zealand to have the resources at hand that we do."

Mati says patient-centred nursing is where her heart will forever be.

"I don't want to be stuck in an office or doing paperwork, I'm most happy when I'm caring for patients. It's the human contact that makes me want to jump out of bed and come to work each day - it really touches my heart.

"Nursing is not just a job, it has to come from the heart. It's a passion," she said. ■

Liz Read

Nurse Manager

Hawke's Bay District Health Board



Improving the health and wellbeing of a whole community, reducing inequities and preventing disease outbreaks was not an area of nursing accomplished Public Health Nurse Manager Liz Read knew existed until a placement with Palmerston North's public health unit during nursing training.

"Public health became my chosen career path when I realised that nursing could involve a whole-of-population approach. It's been incredibly rewarding.

"I love the broad scope of practice, combining nursing and public health knowledge and skill."

Public health nurses work within the community, including school and early childhood settings to deliver a wide

range of personal health and public health services. This includes school immunisation programmes, school clinics, communicable disease management and health promotion.

One of Hawke's Bay's most experienced public health nurses, Liz has been involved in case investigation and contact tracing for many years such as during measles outbreaks.

She says teamwork is everything.

"I work with an amazing team of dedicated public health professionals here in Hawke's Bay.

"Our unique role during disease outbreaks means we have been working around-the-clock during COVID-19 to ensure cases are well managed, their contacts traced and further spread prevented."

Liz's leadership and gold standard operational processes during the COVID-19 emergency response has gained national recognition with her appointment to the Government's COVID-19 national Contact Tracing Assurance Committee (CTAC) announced by former Health Minister David Clark.

The committee will provide on the ground and front-line information on contact tracing capability in New Zealand to help advise the committee. ■

Eileen Hall

Clinical Nurse Specialist

Hawke's Bay District Health Board



Clinical Nurse Specialist Eileen Hall always knew she wanted to be a nurse – a profession that has allowed her to relocate from the United Kingdom to New Zealand with ease.

Paediatric and intensive care nursing is where she began her career "many moons ago" but community nursing is where she truly found her niche.

Eileen heads up a small specialist team who work in the community with people who have chronic lung disease; this includes Pulmonary Rehabilitation which focuses on exercise, education and self-management techniques.

"I am very lucky to be part of a highly skilled team who provide a great support service in our community, it's truly a rewarding area to work.

"It has also allowed me the opportunity to put my hand up to work on the frontline with COVID-19 patients."

Eileen says while her family were initially worried about her frontline COVID-19 work, she had no concerns.

"I view every new situation as an opportunity to help others and COVID-19 is no different.

"We do what we can do to help and be there for people – that's what nursing is all about." ■

Leigh White

Director of Clinical Services

Elmwood and Taradale Masonic
Rest Home and Hospital



Leigh White's long and varied nursing career has been constantly fuelled by her passion to learn.

Leigh started her nursing journey at Napier Hospital and forged many friendships in the nearby nursing hostel.

Eager to begin her career in the Emergency Department, she was told to first "go and work in all the wards to get a good skills base". This advice stood her in good stead for her diverse career.

Leigh notched up 15 years as an Emergency Department nurse, both in Napier and Hastings hospitals, before seeking out change. She has also held policy and strategic roles at the DHB, worked in aged residential care and delivered primary care at Greenmeadows Family Health Centre and Hastings Health Centre.

"Every time I change I challenge myself with new learning," she says.

In 2019 Leigh returned to working at Taradale and Elmwood Masonic, this time as the Director of Clinical Services.

"I find working with older people very fulfilling, they have great values and beliefs and they always have a story to tell. You develop a strong relationship with the person in your care and you really get to know them and their whānau."

Leigh also has considerable governance experience, including former roles on the DHB clinical and consumer councils and Hawke's Bay nursing and midwifery council. She now sits on the Health Hawke's Bay Board.

Leigh played a key role in facilitating the support to local aged residential care during the COVID-19 lockdown. There was a lot of planning from having adequate PPE gear, to protecting the health of vulnerable residents and staff. She says she and the Taradale and Elmwood Masonic teams "weathered the storm" and became very handy on Skype.

"It's been wonderful watching families reconnect with their loved ones post COVID," she says. ■

Donna Te Kani O'Sullivan

Former Nurse Manager
Carlyle Medical Centre, Napier

Ko Titirangi te maunga.
Ko Turanganui a Kiwa te awa.
Ko Horouta te waka.
Ko Donna Te Kani O'Sullivan tōku ingoa.
Nō Te Tairawhiti ahau.

Nursing is all about engaging with your patients for Donna Te Kani O'Sullivan.

"It's all about establishing trust, whakapiri and whakawhanaungatanga, engagement and relationships," the Nurse Manager at Carlyle Medical says.

The patients at Carlyle Medical know Donna well – having been there more than 20 years.

"You really get to know the whānau you are working with and celebrate their joys and support them in their sadness. Our team pride ourselves on the relationships we build with our patients."

Donna was part of the first class of nursing students who graduated from what is now Eastern Institute of Technology. She worked in Waikato, at Napier Hospital until its closure, then City Medical before joining the team at Carlyle Medical.

Donna is passionate about health equity, removing barriers to access and improving



health outcomes for Māori and Pasifika. "Again it comes down to knowing your patients, making them feel comfortable and working with them to create a health plan that meets their needs," she says.

"We had a man who came in for a work medical who hadn't seen a GP for years, together we gained his confidence, we removed barriers of access cost and availability and he enrolled with our practice. He has since quit smoking, made lifestyle changes but most importantly he made these changes himself because he was supported to do so. It's positive outcomes like this that really make the job."

Donna says she is fortunate to work in a strong primary health team which includes her nurse team.

"We're a highly experienced passionate team with different areas of expertise and interests which we share and draw on to ensure our patients get the best possible care," she says.

Donna started a new role at Hawke's Bay District Health Board in 2020 as an outreach nurse focussing on immunisation, cervical screening and COVID-19. ■

Muriel Bray

Registered Nurse
Central Hawke's Bay Health Centre
Hawke's Bay District Health Board



After 40 years of nursing, highly skilled registered nurse Muriel Bray says she never stops learning.

"What I love about nursing is that even after all of these years, we continue to study to validate our clinical knowledge and we're just always learning, it's awesome."

Muriel is another Central Hawke's Bay-based nurse who married into the rural community and provides around-the-clock inpatient ward care as well as triaging after-hours emergency calls.

"Being able to look after our rural community who are up against travel and access to care is a truly rewarding position to be in.

"We support a lot of people and navigate their healthcare journeys and often because we know our patients and their families so well, this knowledge build-up over the years further helps in times of emergency situations."

Muriel always knew she wanted to be a nurse. She says nursing in a rural setting puts all skills to use.

"We offer everything from emergency assessments to in-patient care and palliative care which is very special and personal.

"We have a very cohesive team and everyone wraps around the patient and their family. It's truly a unique environment and I feel privileged to be a part of it." ■

Rochelle Robertson

Workforce Development Project Manager

Health Hawke's Bay PHO



Nursing has seen Rochelle Robertson tend to those in cyclone-ravaged countries, support war veterans visiting the frontline and help oversee a COVID-19 Community Based Assessment Centre.

She began her 30-year-plus nursing career as an enrolled nurse in the wards of Hawke's Bay Hospital. After a year, she took time out to complete her diploma so she could return to the wards as a registered nurse.

After some time in the orthopaedic ward, Rochelle took a position in the surgical wing at Napier Hospital before moving into primary care at The Doctors Hastings where she became nurse manager – all while completing her degree and starting her post-graduate education.

"Primary health care is a speciality in its own right. The breadth of primary care nursing is enormous and across the lifespan knowledge is unparalleled. I really enjoyed working in primary care, forming close relationships with whānau and making a difference where we could."

However, a newspaper article about a military nurse bringing burns victims back from the 2002 Bali bombings piqued Rochelle's interest.

"I thought that's where I want to go with my nursing."

Rochelle successfully completed an Officer Selection Board that tested her physical, mental and academic abilities and was offered a commission in the New Zealand Defence Force as a specialist nursing officer across all forces land, air and sea.

As a reservist, Rochelle split her time between the Defence Force and working as a nurse in the Hawke's Bay Hospital's Emergency Department.

Nursing in the Defence Force included surgical programmes overseas, disaster relief cyclone-hit Pacific Islands, tending to the health of officers and furthering her education and training.

It also meant training as a soldier first.

All military personnel, including nurses, must undergo basic military training, understanding military ethos, values, command, leadership - weaponry and physical fitness are all part of the package. Bringing a high level of clinical expertise is also required.

“Climbing a hill with a 20kg pack, a weapon and then dragging a colleague out of the line of fire and administering care is all in a day’s work — you get paid to have fun.”

A highlight was taking New Zealand war veterans, aged between 90 and 100 to World War II commemorations in London, Egypt, New Caledonia and Monte Cassino.

Rochelle recalled one veteran she supported on his visit back to Monte Cassino where he had lived in a cave at the bottom of the Monte Cassino hill during the bombing.

“He told me about going out during the safety of night and burying the dead. We went back to where he thought the cave was. It was a very emotional for all, and an absolute privilege to support our New Zealand veterans to re-visit places where they had lost fellow comrades.”

After ten years as a reservist, Rochelle did a three-year Regular Force stint, which meant commuting to Linton each week from her family home in Hawke’s Bay.

It was during that time that Rochelle responded to Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Relief (HADR) operations in the Pacific such as Cyclone Winston and on home soil after the Kaikōura earthquake.

At the end of 2017 Rochelle decided it was time to return to the “civilian world” and joined Health Hawke’s Bay as the Workforce Development Project Manager.

“We do a lot of training and development within the Defence Force and I thought this would be an area I could add value. I am particularly passionate about developing young nurses so that they can get the same love from the profession that I’ve had.”

Rochelle’s military skills came in handy recently when Hawke’s Bay DHB and Health Hawke’s Bay were setting up the region’s first COVID-19 Community-based Assessment Centre and she “fell into” being the operational lead.

“I was able to draw on the diverse skill set that nursing and my military experience has given me, I loved it.” ■

Margaret Jackson

Manager — Needs Assessment and Service Coordination (NASC)

Hawke's Bay District Health Board



Margaret Jackson discovered she needed a sense of purpose that involved a one-on-one connection with people if she was to enjoy working, so she handed in her notice at the Takapau Freezing Works and poured her heart and soul into nursing.

The inner-worth that nursing has given her, she has reciprocated in droves to those she has cared for and later supported through helping to transform Māori patient healthcare journeys and whānau support systems.

One of the DHB's first kaitakawaenga, Margaret's previous shop-floor experience working across both medical and orthopaedic wards positioned her well to not only support patients and whānau through their healthcare journey, but educate others on how to be more culturally responsive.

Leading change, Margaret and Māori Health colleagues also introduced the Treaty of Waitangi framework with support of the Board across all DHB specialities — work she is very proud to have been a part of.

Incredibly humble, and never one to blow her own trumpet, Margaret's ability to build special relationships with patients and staff

has seen her thrive in her current role as manager of the DHB's Needs Assessment and Service Coordination (NASC) where she manages a team of 30 across its disability, mental health and older persons support service functions.

"Over the years I have learnt from so many people, particularly in the medical ward where I would soak up their knowledge.

"Nursing is truly diverse and it opens many doors. It's really all about building rapport and using the knowledge you've gained along the way to provide the best care and support possible." ■

Kate McCrea

Nurse Director — Medical Directorate

Hawke's Bay District Health Board



Kate McCrea is proud to be a nurse and humbled by what her nursing team has achieved in a challenging year.

Kate is the Nursing Director of the Medical Directorate at Hawke's Bay District Health Board. It's a large service directorate including, but not limited to, the Emergency Department (ED), the Acute Assessment Unit, Intensive Care Unit, Radiology, Oncology, Renal, Cardiology, Gastroenterology, Acute Stroke/Neurology, Palliative Care, Respiratory, Rheumatology, the Medical Day Ward and General Medicine.

About 400 full-time-equivalent registered nurses work in the medical directorate. Seven nurse practitioners cover the Emergency Department, Renal, Cardiology and Vascular. There is also a large number of clinical nurse specialists, speciality clinical nurses and nine clinical nurse managers.

Kate says the role is about supporting the strategic development of the directorate and providing professional support and leadership for the directorate's nursing team.

Kate has 28 years of nursing behind her and was previously the clinical nurse manager in the acute stroke neurology ward at Hawke's Bay Hospital. It was a role she came home to New Zealand for after several years nursing in Western Australia where she worked in

emergency departments, as a duty manager and as a clinical nurse manager in both tertiary and general hospitals.

"I love the controlled chaos of ED nursing. It's challenging on so many levels and every day is different."

Kate trained at Southern Institute of Technology before starting on the job at Southland Hospital in her hometown of Invercargill.

"If I could offer any suggestions to young nurses it would be to get a good medical and surgical grounding before you specialise. I started off in acute medicine/Oncology before specialising as an ED nurse and it set me up well."

Kate says nurses are a "resilient, amazing group of people."

"The Year of the Nurse – what a year it's been! But as a team the nurses in this organisation have just stood up and carried on. It's very humbling." ■

Merryn Jones

Clinical Nurse Specialist

Hawke's Bay District Health Board



A thank you note by a patient left for Clinical Nurse Specialist Merryn Jones sums up why she continues in the profession. "It's not how much you know; it's how much you show you care," the note said.

For Merryn, nursing meets her compassionate needs.

"I love people. The work I do is important for me because it is about people - he tāngata, he tāngata, he tāngata."

Of Ngāti Rakaipaaka descent, Merryn's world into nursing began as a teenager after she leaned over her brother's shoulder to read his nurse training application form.

"It sounded quite good so I thought I'd apply too even though I had one year of high school left to go.

"Just three days after my seventeenth birthday, I started my nursing training at Middlemore Hospital."

A highly skilled nurse of more than 40 years, Merryn has worked in a variety of roles from renal, plastic surgery and practice nursing. However, working as a clinical nurse specialist in the DHB's transplant coordination team is where she is most widely recognised and acknowledged for her contribution far beyond her nursing role.

Merryn completed a Masters of Nursing Science in 2017 where she delved into the

many barriers patients with end stage renal disease face when finding a suitable living kidney donor. Her thesis findings revealed such disparity for Māori that she organised New Zealand's first ever transplant hui to better educate and raise awareness among Māori – it gained not only national industry attention, but drew attention of major news networks to cover the issue.

"We needed to face this head-on, to better educate and bring whānau and specialists together.

"For example Māori represent nearly 79 per cent of the dialysis population in Hawke's Bay and yet, of the 187 kidney transplants in New Zealand in 2017, only 23 (12.3%) of the recipients were Māori."

Merryn says her advice to anyone considering a career in nursing is to understand that goals are limitless.

"Nursing is so diverse – it has allowed me to raise a young family, work through my own health challenges and undertake studies that I hope will have lasting and positive impacts on our population." ■

Panu Te Whaiti

Portfolio Manager

Hawke's Bay District Health Board



For Panu Te Whaiti, nursing is a career that just keeps on giving. "Sometimes I get asked if it's stressful but I find the more you pour into your community; the more your soul is filled. It really fills your cup."

Panu's role with Totara Health means she works both in Hastings and Flaxmere, seeing a real mix of patients across age groups and ethnicities.

"I love everything about nursing: the people, the variation, the continued learning and working with our people to help keep them well."

Nursing was not her first choice of career. Panu left her Hawke's Bay home to see the world at 17, despite her mother's pleas at that time for her to consider becoming a nurse.

As a missionary in the Australian outback she worked with indigenous Australian communities before heading to America to work with that country's first peoples on reservations.

Back home after seven years away and having started her family, nursing finally appeared on her radar. "It was a combination of my mum planting the idea, that I have always loved working with and helping people, and a lightbulb moment – a time when I couldn't get help for my young child who was really ill.

"I wanted to help and I started working as a community support worker with the public health nurses and they really encouraged me to consider training to be a nurse. I did, and it was the best thing I ever did." ■

Lucy Laird

Registered Nurse

Saudi Arabia



When Lucy Laird signed up to train as a nurse after finishing school, it was more case of finding something to do than a driving desire to work in the health industry. She had no idea how much she would love it.

She puts a lot of that down to the supportive training environments provided by both EIT and Hawke's Bay Hospital.

The Hastings born and trained nurse graduated in 2014, aged 21, and after a stint in Auckland is now working at the King Faisal Specialist Hospital and Research Centre in Saudi Arabia, where she specialises in neurosurgery.

The day she knew without doubt that nursing was her passion, was the day she walked in for her first stint in theatre at Hawke's Bay Hospital.

"I liked all of my training, but in theatre it felt like my home."

The challenge, the pressure and the critical reliance on very tight teamwork were the elements she most enjoyed.

While nursing might not have been on Lucy's radar from an early age, travelling the world definitely was. So, when the opportunity came up to use her Kiwi nursing skills abroad, there was little hesitation.

Arriving in Saudi Arabia was quite a culture shock for the then 25-year-old nurse but now, almost two years on, she says there is a lot to recommend it.

Not least being in a place in the world where, at least until COVID-19 struck, travel to a whole range of countries was so easy. She has already explored parts of 13 countries so far.

"There are things that take a bit of getting used to in Saudi – like the dress code when you're out in public and being escorted everywhere – but you do get used to them. I'd advise any young nurse to think about their options, because New Zealand nurses are welcomed everywhere and it is fantastic way to see the world."

Will she come home? Lucy said that was quite hard to imagine at the moment, however she might well move closer to home, perhaps to Australia, where it won't be so far to travel to see her Hastings-based family and friends. ■

Michaela Vanderspeck

Public Health Nurse

Hawke's Bay District Health Board



Considered a 'rising star' in our public health nursing workforce, 25-year-old Michaela Vanderspeck says she knew nursing would be her following.

"Nursing was always on the cards, but I had to choose between people or animals – I chose people."

An EIT Bachelor of Nursing graduate, Michaela began her nursing career at Hastings-based Directions Youth Health Centre where she instantly felt at home, providing clinical and sexual health support and advice to young people.

"Definitely my youth has helped me to build trust and rapport easily with teen patients, but actually anyone with the right mindset who loves working with young people would be amazing in this type of role," she said.

From a family of nurses and midwives, Michaela jumped at the opportunity to join the District Health Board's population health team last September when a school-based nursing and sexual health role was advertised.

"It's absolutely fantastic, I just love it. I work in school-based settings across four days of the week and am based at the DHB's Wellesley Road sexual health clinic on the fifth day."

Michaela says youth-focussed nursing care in schools is wide-ranging, offering a clinical support services to students as well as mental health and wellbeing and growth assessments.

"Working within the school settings is fantastic because I run scheduled clinic times as well as drop-in appointments.

"Every day is different. I love the variety and I enjoy building a trusting rapport with the students."

Michaela says public health nursing is a wonderful "fit" for her.

"Our team is full of so many enthusiastic people who are truly passionate about what they do. When I first joined the DHB I was told by a colleague the environment is one I'll never want to leave because it's so supportive and inclusive. She's right. I just love it here and have already had so many opportunities to expand my knowledge, which is fantastic." ■

Hawke's Bay District Health Board Kaiāwhina, Margaret Alexander (left), and Choices Nurse, Louise Morris.



Kaiāwhina and nurse – the perfect collaboration

Not much gets past two women passionate about ensuring wāhine get their smear tests done.

Hawke's Bay District Health Board Kaiāwhina Margaret Alexander and Choices Nurse Louise Morris are a team on a mission.

For five years they have committed to working together as a team one day a week, taking smear tests in Flaxmere and Maraenui, with other health priorities filling the rest of their week. They certainly make that day count.

They sing each other's praises, saying they could not have achieved their individual successes without the other.

"Louise is an amazing smear-taker – our people love her. She is so relaxed with them. She can take a smear anywhere and it's over before they know it," says Margaret.

It is Margaret's eagle eye and willingness to tackle anyone that impresses Louise. Between them they tell a story of seeing a young woman sitting on her front step in the sun.

"We drive past and then Margaret says 'Go back; I want to have a chat'," says Louise.

Out of that chat four women in their twenties had smear tests done – and one returned a high-grade positive.

"They had no idea about smear tests, whether they should have one, or how they would get one," says Margaret.

"That sort of result, which leads to someone who might have gone on to become really ill having treatment, makes the job really worthwhile."

The trusting relationships they have between themselves and with the community are the keys.

“A lot of what we do is about health literacy – educating our whānau on how to look after themselves, get the tests they need, like smear tests, to stay healthy.”

Some Wednesdays they may only have a few tests to do, but other days it can be nearer nine, which is quite a challenge.

“That’s why our kaiāwhina-nurse partnership and the collaboration between our two organisations are so important,” says Louise. “Without Margaret living and breathing her community and nurturing relationships, getting out there and tracking these women down, we would not be reaching them.” ■

Sheryll Petrie

Duty Manager

Hawke’s Bay District Health Board



Sheryll Petrie remembers joining her parents on missionary visits in Papua New Guinea as a young child – a memory she is fond of and one which sowed the seed for her future nursing ambitions.

Those early years living in “a very primitive Papua New Guinea” saw her return to New Zealand and begin her nurse training in 1971 at Auckland Hospital.

“Come along nurse,” said the home sister, who took Sheryll to her room containing a bed, cabinet, desk and wardrobe.

“I was stunned she called me a nurse,” explains Sheryll. I was 17 years of age and had never set foot in a hospital.

“I was shy, naïve and overawed, but thus began my life’s vocation of nursing, which I continue to have pride in. I feel privileged to nurse or encourage those who need my care, skills and experience.”

Celebrating her 50th year of nursing next September and having worked across various specialties, Sheryll’s current role sits with Hawke’s Bay DHB’s highly skilled duty manager team.

She says while the nursing practice has changed over the years, the sentiment of nursing is forever engrained at the grassroots.

"I recall mercury thermometers shaken down and wiped, put into small test tubes we had previously poked small wads of cotton wool into and filled with chlorhexidine."

"Stainless steel kidney dishes, pans and bottles were all vigorously boiled in sanitisers, ECG's were done by medical registrars until we learned not to burn the paper with the stylus when the paper jammed, and those blessed breast binders all had blunt safety pins, which we ran through our hair to do some magic to get the ends through the multiple layers.

"We had no care associates to watch patients or do ward tidies, we did the lot. Wherever did the sputum mugs go to? First metal, then cardboard and all with lids, and the wearing of full protective prevention of gloves, masks and gowns to change mugs and dispose of contents.

Making warm poultices to soothe inflammation still gives me a warm memory as the aroma and mucky play was so fulfilling. Those were the days!"

Sheryll says while today's nurses are consistently managing higher acuity needs, coupled with new technology, more complex documentation and care duties, the 'people' side to the nurse/patient/whānau relationship remains special.

"Patients still need feeding, elimination, pain relief and comforting. Relatives still need our care and listening ears. Colleagues still impact on our knowledge base, keep us grounded, and support us through thick and thin.

"The five-point star signifying the hand, foot, knee, breast and head continues to be presented at graduation ceremonies and worn with pride. It is this symbolic medal that has fulfilled the dream and aspirations of an 11-year-old.

"I have been blessed and achieved many goals. As my career nears the twilight years I want to thank those who have impacted on my life, both positive and negative, encouraged me and seen me grow from a shy young woman to a mature experienced nurse." ■

Peta Rowden

**Nurse Director — Mental Health
and Addictions Directorate**
Hawke's Bay District Health Board



No one could ever say Mental Health Nurse Director Peta Rowden wasn't a driven individual. Her achievements from such a young age stem from her ambition to never quit, live by her values and a desire to understand the wider health system so she could be a better nurse and leader.

Always one to speak up and share her opinions, Peta quips she was once told by her nursing student colleagues that she should have become a politician.

"Well, leadership seems to come naturally for me. I was on the school council and would always speak up and have my say," she laughs.

Giving birth to her first child during the third and final year of her nursing degree wasn't quite what Peta had planned, but she sat her final exams, spent six months getting to grips with becoming a new mum then started accepting shifts within an aged residential care home where she would spend the first six years of her nursing career.

"I didn't think I was going to like working within aged residential care at such a young age, but you know what, I absolutely loved it and I learnt so much," she said.

Mental health nursing, however, was her first love – a nursing specialty she discovered while on nurse training

placement at Tokanui Hospital and a specialty she remains deeply committed to.

"It just clicked with me. I think that's because there was a mixture of the clinical side of nursing but also a lot of time spent with patients holistically, just talking with them, getting to know them – that was hugely important to me."

Not one to shy away from hard work or trying her hand at new things, Peta has dedicated her career to mental health and wellbeing. Very early on in her career she became a clinical nurse manager for a non-government organisation in New Plymouth under an "amazingly talented CEO who taught me a lot about the business side of health care" and later ventured into the community mental health space with strong linkages between secondary care and primary care.

After ten years as a member of Napier's Community Mental Health team, Peta was asked to fill the role of DHB's Nurse Director Mental Health on secondment to cover David Warrington while he was on annual leave.

"I was shocked, I didn't even know that David knew my name. But I worked on the mantra that if do your job well and put yourself forward in terms of service improvement, people might take notice."

Turns out Peta ended up in the role permanently when David took on a new opportunity at the DHB – a role she says she absolutely loves thanks to the daily challenges and planning, all while still being able to keep her finger on the pulse in terms of patient care and wellbeing, and quality improvement.

Peta says hard work is what she has tried to instil in her four children — yes, she has raised four children as a working mother, and somehow found the time to take on higher education studies, graduating from Victoria University (Wellington) with a Masters of Nursing in 2012.

"My husband and I are incredibly blessed, we have such a supportive family and we have been very lucky to have that support around us.

"There is also so much flexibility in nursing and shifts – it's a wonderful career that can take you anywhere around the world or into roles you never dreamed of," she says, having recently filled in for the Chief Nurse and Midwifery Officer who was on holiday.

Peta's ambition to be an even better leader is strong and with the support of colleagues and family behind her, she says she is considering undertaking more study, a Master of Business Administration (MBA), in the future.

"I've always been ambitious, thinking about opportunities and my next steps, and I think I'd like to grow my business knowledge and one day work at a national level" she said.

"I have four healthy children, an incredibly supportive husband and a career I am so passionate about. I feel incredibly blessed." ■

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Ngā mihi nui ki a koutou katoa.
Thank you to all our nurses
and midwives, past and present.



