



Helen Mason

Healthy, thriving communities, Kia Momoho Te Hāpori Ōranga.



Above: members of the Tauranga ED team in the early hours of Christmas Day morning.

Thank you

Firstly, I wanted to wish a happy New Year to each and every one of you and to wish you all the very best for 2018.

Before we dive headlong into another busy year I wanted to recognise, and thank, all of you who worked over the Christmas and New Year period. I know how busy you were, and to sacrifice that time with your friends, family and whanau, to care for our communities, is deeply appreciated.

Our Acting Chief Operating Officer Bronwyn Anstis highlighted to me the high volume of patients (ED presentations, acute admissions and acute surgery) seen across both Tauranga and Whakatane hospitals over the holiday season and how well we coped with that demand.

I know from Bronwyn that our staff worked extremely well, and many over and above, to provide the treatment and care for these patients.

Derek Sage, Clinical Director for Emergency Medicine, said that on certain days this holiday season, we've been dealing with patient numbers that would be seen in a metropolitan/major urban ED such as Auckland on one of their average days. The fact that we are able to manage such numbers is a real testament to the superb work of our staff and all the supporting services.

Again, a heartfelt thank you for all of the care you provided to our communities over the holiday period.

Appreciation

It's always heartening to know how much the efforts of our staff are appreciated. I wanted to share a lovely piece of feedback from one patient, who was admitted through Tauranga ED and then cared for in 2C in early December.

It's wonderful to see that he received such compassionate, professional care from across the teams who supported him. They exemplified our CARE values.

"I was admitted to the Emergency Services in early December and later transferred to Ward 2C. From the outset I was treated with dignity, kindness, gentleness and understanding from every tier of those who cared for me over the following week.

"This included the orderlies, and a delightful lady who looked after my daily menu. Wonderful folks - the nurses Emergency and those on the ward - all who nursed me with such kindness and empathy and compassion, never complaining and it seemed nothing was ever too much trouble.

"I have to mention the medical team and the team of young doctors. Their attention to my many questions, the wisdom and advice and clear explanations about my condition, treatment and possible outcomes when at my most vulnerable has left a deep and marked impression on me and my whanau.

"This extends of course to those whose names I can't recall - especially the night shift staff commencing at 11pm! It also extends to Rheumatology; the teams in Ultrasound and CAT Scan departments - two delightful young women who calmed any anxieties I had about using the CAT scan machine!

continued over

"Appreciation can make a day, even change a life. Your willingness to put it into words is all that is necessary."

American author and editor Margaret Cousins (1926-2016)

“Indeed whilst it was the most disconcerting – even frightening event of my life - it was made bearable for me because of the professionalism, dedication and determination to provide a superior service. And indeed it was! Thank you so much. One hears so many negative criticisms of our health system - well I could not disagree more strongly! Indeed not at all.”

Looking out for one another

As well as looking out for our patients, it’s equally important that we continue to look out for one another. With the high demands for our services, it’s easy to inadvertently put ‘caring for the carers’ on the back burner; but checking in with our colleagues is so important.

I was thinking about this when my husband Max and I were out on a bike ride last week. He always goes in front, and leads the way, but will regularly look back over his shoulder to check if I’m ok. I get a good deal of comfort from this, knowing that he’s looking out for me, and will stop to help if I need it or slow down to my pace, if I’m falling behind. It’s the same in working relationships and looking out for our colleagues. Sometimes it can be the small gestures of simply asking how someone is doing or whether there is anything you can do to help, that can mean so much. It means you’re not alone.

Max and I were walking up the Mount recently and when going up the stairs I was struck by the number of people who offered words of encouragement along the way. One of these was a young girl wearing a flowery hat who very happily told us that we were doing well and that we were almost there. It gave us both a boost.

Again it made me think of how the same concept applies in our work. We may well get to wherever we’re going, or complete a task regardless, but it is much nicer if we do so whilst being encouraged and supported by those around us. So, with warmest wishes for the coming year, I ask for your support in looking out for one another in 2018.

Helen