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**Chair’s Report**

**2019-2020**

The annual update from the Chair of the Waiheke Health Trust (WHT) has, in past years, been a summary of the excellent work been done by the Trust and its employees to support and improve the health of the people of Waiheke Island.

This past year has been like no other. Those of us who work in healthcare could never have predicted the challenges of COVID-19 that we would face and the extreme efforts by our Board and staff to ensure that our same high level of care was provided uninterrupted.

The General Manager’s Report will provide details of our activities over the past year. I would like to highlight a few key areas that both impacted us during the last year and have prepared us for the future.

The impact of COVID-19 was felt throughout the New Zealand health care system and primary care and community healthcare services were no exception. The impact was felt operationally and financially. New ways of working had to be developed literally overnight including the shift to virtual visits for many of our services. Thanks to the careful preparation for just such an event, staff were able to implement the full range of required infection control procedures for both OMC and for care provided in the community.

We can be very thankful that the health care system on Waiheke was well prepared for this type of event and has proven to be very resilient in the presence of change. As an example, WHT and OMC developed the policies and protocols to provide flu shots to all of Waiheke in a safe and convenient manner.

As a not for profit charitable trust, WHT and OMC were only able to cover the large financial burden of increased costs and reduced revenue through the generous support of Waiheke residents.

We also can be proud that even during this COVID era, WHT continued to make progress in multiple areas to improve access to care and ensure the highest quality of care is provided.

The Ostend Medical Centre (OMC) made the decision in late 2019 to change the Primary Health Organisation (PHO) it is affiliated with. Following an extensive assessment of the options available, OMC as of 1 July, is now part of ProCare PHO. This shift brings OMC, and its patients access to additional services and supports not previously available on Waiheke.

OMC also welcomed two additional general practitioners to serve its growing number of patients. Shelley Stansfield joined us from Wellington and Zoe Douglas joined us from the UK. In addition, Dermot Hurley has now become full time at OMC. The addition of these highly qualified doctors to our existing staff provides Waiheke residents and visitors access to a range of medical services equal to any medical practice.

WHT continues to provide the full range of home support services, specialist community nursing, radiology services, a range of therapies, dietician services and well child care. In response to COVID-19, the staff providing these services quickly and safely modified the way care was delivered and routinely went above and beyond to ensure that our most vulnerable residents were provided all services during this critical period.

We go into the coming year knowing that we have done our best for Waiheke. We cannot predict the challenges yet to come but we know that we are prepared and committed to continue our proud traditions of exemplary care provided with kindness and compassion.

Tom Schaefer

Chair, Waiheke Health Trust