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# History of National Women's Hospital

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Auckland District  
Health Board

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Women's Health Information  
Service (ADHB)

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## History of National Women's

This chronology documents notable events in the history of National Women's. As the Auckland St Helen's Hospital service was transferred to National Women's in 1990, efforts have been made to also include notable St Helen's events as well.

The information has been compiled following assistance from Gary Henry, Sandra Budd, Dr Tony Baird, Miss Ann Nightingale, Dorothy and Rona McAleer, Glenda Stimpson, Moira Tretheway, Sandra Coney, Pam Hayward, Maureen Walker and Philip Roxborough.



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## 1906 - 1960

### 1906

The first Auckland St Helen's Hospital opens in Pitt Street, opposite the Central Fire Station. The hospital is a two storey wooden building which had originally been the home of Auckland Medical Officer of Health, Dr AG Purchas. The Department of Health was responsible for the hospital when it opened in 1906 until 1966 when the Auckland Hospital Board took over. Early documents from St Helen's are held by the Auckland branch of the National Archives of New Zealand.

Although midwives travel for some years from the new staff residence on the Mt Albert site to Pitt Street, the hospital finally closes when the new St Helen's Hospital opens in 1968. The Pitt Street buildings are taken over by the periodic detention service.

The Auckland hospital was one of a number of St Helen's Hospitals which were founded and named by Prime Minister, Rt Hon Richard J Seddon who was born in the English town of St Helen's. The hospitals were established when Seddon was Prime Minister to provide quality maternity care to the wives of working men and for training midwives. The first of the St Helen's Hospitals opened in Wellington and Dunedin, followed by Auckland the following year. Richard Seddon was unable to open the Auckland Hospital as planned as he died shortly before the opening.



Situated at the front of National Women's, the statue seen here on the left is the work of American sculptor Pierce Frank Connelly and formerly stood in the grounds of a villa in Florence. It was bought by Cornwall Park Trustees at the request of the late Sir John Logan Campbell in 1909. The statue stood in Cornwall Park near the kiosk before being moved to

National Women's.

### 1922

A new purpose built concrete St Helen's Hospital is built on the Pitt Street site next to the original wooden building which becomes the nurse's home. The matron's flat is situated on the ground floor of the old hospital.

### 1945 (NZ Nursing Journal)

A public appeal is instigated by Dr Doris Gordon for funds to help finance a chair of Obstetrics and Gynaecology. This appeal closed in 1947 having successfully raised £101,203.

It was also in this year that discussion began regarding a suitable site for a large new maternity hospital. A number of sites were considered until the present site behind Greenlane Hospital 3 was finally approved.

The obstetric endowment fund which led to the building of National Women's was set up by Dr Doris Gordon. She was one of the first two women to graduate in medicine in this country and in 1937 she co-founded the Obstetrics' Society with her husband Bill, also a doctor. She also established two post-graduate schools of obstetrics and gynaecology in Dunedin and Auckland. Doris was a prime mover in the fight for publicly funded maternity care for all women. In 1938, as a result of her efforts New Zealand became the first country in the Commonwealth to fully fund 14 days rest in hospital following the birth of a baby, as well as the cost of the medical, midwifery and anaesthetic care. Her son Peter Gordon later became a Minister of Labour.

### 9 June 1946

The first baby is born at Cornwall Hospital, the 'original National Women's hospital' situated in Cornwall Park next door to the present Claude Road site. National Women's was known by its present name from 1955 onwards. Prior to this, it was called the Obstetrical and Gynaecological Hospital, situated at Green lane West. Earlier, there was an obstetric and gynaecological unit at Cornwall Hospital.

### 1958

Construction of the new National Women's Hospital commences. As well as the hospital, 2 nurse's homes are also to be built, one for National Women's and the other for Greenlane Hospital. The hospital is described in a 1964 NZ Nursing Journal as setting a skyscraper trend being 12 storeys high from the sub-basement to the top floor. It is to have 162 obstetric beds, 74 gynaecological beds, facilities for 54 premature babies, and an isolation block.



The National Women's nurse's home is to contain 4 flats, 4 bed-sitting rooms, 240 nurse's bedrooms and a lounge on each floor. The 2 top floors will be the Central School of Nursing for the Auckland Hospital Board. Each nurses home will also have living-out staff facilities and lounges, and a large cafeteria and lounge common to both.

## 1960 - 1970

### Oct 1961 (ASB)

A gift of a 23inch TV is made to National Women's from the estate of the late Mrs Ethel Ross Gregson.

### 1962

Cornwall Hospital reaches 4,200 births since it started providing maternity care in 1946.

### March 1962

The hospital announces the intention to retain the National Women's name for the new hospital presently under construction behind Greenlane Hospital. A statement is made that when opened, the new hospital will make a significant contribution to NZs maternity service.

### 4 July 1962 (Tamaki Times-Pictorial)



The new National Women's Hospital on the Greenlane site is nearing completion. Costing nearly £3.3 million, it includes an isolation block for infectious obstetrical and gynaecological patients. A large unit for premature babies, run by skilled staff, is to serve a wide area in the Auckland Hospital Board's district. As the hospital is also recognised as being substantially

a national obstetrical and gynaecological institution, the Government agrees to contribute two-thirds (approximately £2 million) towards the cost.

This article explains that the pattern of maternity services in NZ was set in the 1920s with the establishment of free antenatal clinics and public maternity hospitals and a stated policy of attaining 'an aseptic technique for midwifery that would be accepted as the standard by the medical professions generally'. These three developments are reported as being due to more mothers having their babies in hospital. In 1927, the proportion of women having a baby in a hospital was less than 59%. By 1962 99% of women were giving birth in hospital. In 1927 when local rates and patient's fees were the main sources of revenue for hospital boards, the Government's contribution to Board's was reported to be £705,000 each year. By 1962, hospital boards were totally financed by the Government. Expenditure for the year

ending March 31 1962 from the Consolidated and Social Security Funds for public hospitals amounted to £27,401,039.

## July 1962

Professor Carey announces his resignation as the Head of the Postgraduate School of Obstetrics and Gynaecology attached to National Women's (to take effect from 31 Jan 1963). He publicly criticises the Auckland Hospital Board as well as the University of Auckland for allowing the present system of dual control of the hospital by the Medical Superintendent and the profession to arise. A number of articles refuting this criticism appear in the NZ Herald 18.9.62 and 22.9.62 as well as the 21.8.62 Auckland Star.

## December 1962

National Women's makes international headlines as the first successful pre-birth transfusion in the world is carried out by Sir William Liley on unborn baby Grant McLeod. This technique of intra-uterine blood transfusions of Rh negative blood to Rh positive babies with Rh negative mothers soon became used worldwide.

## 12 March 1963

The Cornwall Park Trustees give the 'Spirit of Peace' statue to be erected at the new National Women's Hospital.


The trustees had originally proposed that the statue be placed at the main entrance but agreed for it to be located elsewhere in the grounds after a 6-man panel felt that the statue was incompatible with the modern architectural features of the new building.



The statue is the work of British sculptor Pearce Frank Connelly, and formerly stood in the grounds of a villa in Florence. It was bought by the Cornwall Park Trustees at the request of the late Sir John Logan Campbell in 1909. The statue stood in Cornwall Park near the kiosk before being moved to National Women's.

## April 1963

National Women's announces the arrival of the 50,000<sup>th</sup> baby since the hospital started delivering babies on the Cornwall Park site in 1946.



## **April 1963**

The hospital architects donate a pool, seat and paving work for the entrance. The plans for a commissioned sculpture are abandoned due to lack of public interest.

## **August 1963**

International acclaim for research carried out at National Women's that perfects pre-birth blood transfusion techniques and saves the life of a baby boy. This is believed to be the first time this procedure has ever been successfully carried out.

## **National Women's opening ceremony, 14th February 1964**

### **2 February 1964 (NZH)**

The blessing of the new National Women's Hospital took place on the afternoon of 2.2.64 in the presence of the Auckland Hospital Board Chairman Mr THC Caughey, Board members and officials. The hospital was dedicated and blessed by the Bishop of Auckland, the Rt Rev. E.A. Gowing with the assistance of the Rev OT Baragwanath, Minister of St David's Church.

### **6 February 1964**


The Herald reports on the commissioning of a £150 gold cup to mark the opening of National Women's. The cup is to be known as the Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother Cup and is to be presented for nurse training awards. (The Queen Mother was to have opened the new hospital but is unable to due to an attack of appendicitis.) The cup is a gift from the hospital architects, Thorpe, Cutter, Pickmere, Douglas and Partners, and is to be handed to the Governor-General Sir Bernard Fergusson, at the opening ceremony.

### **14 February 1964 (ASB, NZ Nursing Journal, NZ Herald)**

The Ceremonial Opening of the new National Women's Hospital is held on Friday at 3pm. 1,000 people attend the ceremony. The hospital is officially opened by His Excellency the Governor-General of New Zealand, Brigadier Sir Bernard Fergusson who is accompanied by Lady Fergusson.

Their excellencies are met within the courtyard of the hospital by the Chairman of the Auckland Hospital Board, Mr THC Caughey and Mrs Caughey. The official party were then presented to their Excellencies. The band of the Royal Regiment of New Zealand Artillery, Northern Military District, then played the National Anthem. Miss Margaret Miller, the





Matron at the time of the move from the Cornwall site to the new hospital presented Lady Fergusson with a bouquet of flowers.

Addresses followed from Mr Caughey; the Honourable DN McKay, Minister of Health; Sir Douglas Robb, Chancellor, University of Auckland and His Excellency, the Governor-General.

Sir Bernard Fergusson tells those present for the ceremony that the establishment of the new hospital is an important step in the medical progress of New Zealand. He acknowledged that voluntary societies, the Government and administrators of the medical profession had worked together to build up a structure of medical care of which National Women's was the latest and proudest example. He acknowledged the work of the Hospital Board chairman, Mr THC Caughey and the medical superintendent-in-chief of the board, Dr WE Henley. The Minister of Health, Mr McKay, said that great credit must go to the staff who worked in the temporary facilities established soon after the end of the Second World War.

The Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother gold cup was then presented by Mr KW Douglas on behalf of the architects, to his Excellency in the absence of the Queen Mother.

The official party then moved through the main doors of the hospital. Sir Bernard Fergusson unveiled the commemorative plaque, and he and Lady Fergusson sign the visitor's book. They then make a tour of the hospital and spend a considerable time looking at various sections of the hospital. During the tour, Dr AW Liley, Mrs R McLeod and her son Grant Liley McLeod, the first baby to be given a successful pre-birth (intra-uterine) blood transfusion are presented to the Governor-General and Lady Fergusson. At the completion of the tour, afternoon tea is served in the Nurses Home Cafeteria.

## **26 February 1964**

The Weekly News publishes a photographic display of the new National Women's announcing that the new hospital combines an essential health service with facilities for medical study and research in obstetrics and gynaecology. The very active research unit is housed at the hospital in conjunction with the Post-Graduate School of Obstetrics and Gynaecology.

Mary Wallace is the First Assistant and Miss Sharman the Second Assistant. Dr Robertson was the Paediatrician in charge of the newborn service. The 56 babies in the newborn service were the first to move into the new hospital. Their mothers and the maternity service moved over the following day.

The first child born at the new hospital was Jeffrey Vollebregt and the first twins were Dean and Shane Osborne. (ASB)



## **10 June 1964 (NZH)**

Plans announced for a new Cytology Department block to be built at National Women's. The Auckland Hospital Board accepts a tender for the construction of the building for £31,999 from Gibson and O'Connor Ltd.

## **30 June 1964 (Auckland Star)**

The Auckland Hospital Board decides that the Professorial Research Block will now be built on top of the isolation block, at present under construction, instead of as a separate building as originally planned. The Board seeks ministerial authority to prepare sketch plans for the block which will be nearly 13,000 square feet in area.

## **October 1964**

The £372,000 isolation block at National Women's is ready for use.

## **27 July 1965**

Ann and Sam Lawson of Auckland have quintuplets at 33 weeks. The quins are only the 5<sup>th</sup> surviving set of quins in the world and the first to be born in New Zealand.

## **November 1966**

A foetal pulse monitor which can confirm pregnancy within 3 months is purchased for the hospital.

## **November 1966**

National Women's accepts community nurses for training for the first time.

## **September 1967**

Mrs Jean Alexander of Auckland gives birth to identical Quadruplets at National Women's. The 1st set of identical quadruplets in New Zealand.

## **15 February 1968**

Official opening ceremony for the new St Helen's Hospital in Linwood Ave, Mt Albert. Joan Coles transfers from the Pitt Street site as the first Matron of the new hospital. There will only be a total of 3 Matrons at the new hospital before it is closed in 1990. Joan Coles was followed by Win Perkinson and the Matron when the hospital closed was Ann Nightingale.

## March 1968

The new centre for the Auckland University Post-Graduate School of Obstetrics and Gynaecology opens at National Women's. This replaces the existing quarters which are described as cramped. The three wings added to the hospital to house the Post-Graduate School cost £404,000.

## March 1968

Red Cross volunteers offer beauty care to women who are patients at National Women's.

## June 1968

A new serum is discovered to help rh negative mothers who have an rh positive baby. The first serum processed in Auckland has already been injected into rh negative women at National Women's who are pregnant with an rh positive baby.

## 1968/9

Mary Wallace becomes Matron at National Women's when Margaret Miller leaves to take up a position at Auckland Hospital.

## March 1969 (ASB)

The new research centre for the Auckland University Post-graduate School of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at National Women's is officially opened.

## November 1969



A table mat made by Crimean War soldiers for Florence Nightingale is presented to the hospital in accordance with the wishes of the late Mrs J Searle.



## **1970 - 1980**

### **1970**

Verna Murray is appointed as principal nurse at NWH. She did her midwifery training at St Helen's Hospital in 1950 when women stayed in the hospital for 14 days after the birth and were confined to bed for the first five. Up until she retired in 1983/4 she was the only principal nurse in Auckland still wearing the traditional matron's veil and 'her' nurses were the only ones still wearing caps. At this time the average hospital stay was down to six and a half days following a birth.

### **23 December 1971 (Herald)**

An Obstetric Flying Squad of doctors, nurses, and anaesthetists based at National Women's to cover the entire Auckland province is established.

### **1972**

Dr Liggins and Dr Howie carry out a randomised controlled trial at National Women's which demonstrates the effectiveness of giving steroids to women in premature labour for reducing deaths, respiratory distress and other adverse effects in their premature infants.


### **April 1974**

For the first time in New Zealand, a qualified doctor, Dr A.W Cooper, is appointed as a medical social worker for National Women's.

### **23 February 1976**

The NZ Women's Weekly publishes a major article about the leading international research being carried out by the National Women's neonatal and obstetric team since 1969 which indicates the possibility of avoiding one of the newborn's greatest hazards - respiratory distress syndrome (RDS). The hospital team is given a grant from the World Health Organisation to follow up the first 300 children born after their mothers received steroid drug therapy during preterm labour. This is to involve regular psychological, IQ, sight and hearing testing until the children start school.

### **August 1977**



Dr RA Warren retires from the position of Medical Superintendent. Dr I.L.G. Hutchison is appointed as his successor.

### **3rd April 1978**

The National Women's application for the first licence to provide a termination of pregnancy service is lodged with tribunals division of the Dept of Justice.

### **31st May 1978**

Epsom Day Hospital is granted a licence for 5 Warborough Avenue Epsom for the purposes of providing an abortion service. Warborough Avenue house was also known as St Margaret's Clinic. There was a dermatologist based at the clinic as well.

### **December 1978 (ASB)**

National Women's announces plans to renovate 4 gynaecology operating theatres.

### **1978 (Auckland Star)**

National Women's statistics for the 1978 year included an average of 10.7 specialist and academic staff, 27 registrars, senior house officers and house surgeons and 134.5 occupied clinic beds. St Helen's had 64 beds, 3.3 specialist and academic staff and 8 registrars, senior house officers and house surgeons.

At this stage there was no obstetric service in Waitakere so many women from this area travelled to St. Helen's for the birth and 24-48 hours later were transferred by ambulance back to Waitakere. Only women with GPs and no complications could have their babies at Waitakere Hospital. The reason given for the lack of a Waitakere obstetric service was the lack of appropriate staff. The Hospital Board considered it impractical to send a registrar from St Helen's and felt the provision of an on call system would mean a lack of job satisfaction for doctors. This situation was also the case for North Shore Hospital where there was no resident obstetric registrar or on call system.

St Helen's provided a Level 2 obstetric and neonatal intensive care service. Services provided at the hospital included antenatal, postnatal and paediatric clinics, antenatal classes, physiotherapy, laboratory, social workers plus x-ray and ultrasound. The hospital's kitchen also provided 60 meals on wheels each day. An antenatal outreach clinic was run at Waitakere Hospital and women and babies with complications were transferred to St Helen's from the North Shore, Helensville and Warkworth.



## **March 1979 (Auckland Star & NZH)**

The Auckland Hospital Board Chairman, Dr Frank Rutter publicly criticised Auckland women for pressing for free access to National Women's for those receiving care from a private obstetrician or GP. He claimed that this would mean insufficient teaching material for the post-graduate school and that beds should be reserved for clinic patients to whom students have free access. He told women that they had a moral obligation to assist with medical teaching programmes and to allow their bodies to be used for teaching purposes. He also said that women owe it to their grand-daughters to use the clinic system.

Meetings with doctors at National Women's resulted in an announcement from Dr Peter Jackson, Acting Superintendent, that senior doctors at the hospital had agreed to lift restrictions on the number of births private doctors could attend, providing the teaching nature of the hospital be maintained. The quota at this time was for no more than 30 private beds per day. Staff specialists were able to attend 4 private births per month, GPs with a diploma of obstetrics could attend 2 and GPs without the diploma could attend 1 birth per month. Dr Jackson stated that preference would be given to those patients who agreed to participate in the teaching programme. There was an outcry from women who felt they should not have to be part of medical teaching.


## **April 1979 (Auckland Star)**

Prime Minister Robert Muldoon announces that private maternity hospitals are a thing of the past. This followed the closing of all the private Auckland maternity hospitals in the interests of the post-graduate school so that National Women's beds would be full. The last to close was the Mater Misericordiae Maternity Unit which meant an additional 600 women a year would be having babies at National Women's.

## **15 May 1979**

Margaret Martin has a baby daughter at National Women's following a hysterectomy. The baby, Shannon, was born at 36 weeks gestation by laparotomy and the placenta, which was attached to the mother's bowel was left in place for the body to absorb. This miraculous pregnancy was discovered when Margaret was booked in for surgery to remove what was thought to be an ovarian cyst. To everyone's surprise, she was found to be 26 weeks pregnant.

Dr Peter Jackson, the full time consultant at National Women's caring for Mrs Martin was contacted by numerous overseas journalists and doctors as this case made international headlines. He was even contacted by 2 gay men from South America who were excited by



the possibility this offered men wanting to have children! The BBC made several documentaries about the case which included Mrs Martin being flown to the UK following Dr Jackson's return to Leeds, UK in July 1987. Her story was also published on the front pages of London newspapers.

### **14 August 1979**

A hospital directive is issued stating that 'If husbands are present at delivery they must be placed on a stool on the mother's right, at the head of the table. They must not be standing or walking around the theatre.'

### **21 November 1979**

The Neonatal Parent Support Group is formed to provide support to parents with babies in a neonatal unit at National Women's and to raise money to purchase equipment needed in the unit.

### **1979**

The St Helen's School of Midwifery closes. 1445 students had qualified as midwives.

## **1980 - 1990**

### **March 1980**

Rev Nora Calvert is appointed by the Presbyterian Social Services Association as hospital chaplain at National Women's.

### **March 1980**

There is a public outcry following the government's decision to not pay the Auckland Hospital Board the \$110,000 required to run the Mothercraft Unit at National Women. The Board announces the Unit is to close as it has outlived its usefulness. This Unit provided a 24 hour service and was available to both out-of-town and local women. The Unit was set up following the closure of the Auckland Karitane Hospital in 1978.

### **June 1980**

The Asiata quads are born at National Women's.

### **1981**

St Helen's celebrates its 75<sup>th</sup> birthday with 75<sup>th</sup> Jubilee Celebrations. Staff organise various fundraising activities, including a fair and a summer house is built in the garden for women using the hospital and their families.

### **June 1982**

Barry Twyde is the first male midwife to work at National Women's. He had to go to Scotland to be accepted for midwifery training.

### **30 April 1983 (NZ Listener)**

Dr Richard Fisher, Acting Medical Superintendent announces plans at National Women's for a family birthing room with ordinary furnishings and tea and coffee making facilities. He states that 'the attitude at National Women's was that anyone with a normal pregnancy should have a normal birth'.

### **27 May 1983(Report to Hospital Board)**

Nine nurses completed the first basic course in Neonatal Nursing offered by the Auckland Hospital Board. Three of the graduates were from St Helen's.



## **25 June 1983 (NZ Listener)**

A feature article highlights infertility issues and describes how NZ couples wanting IVF treatment spend \$5000 (including the air fare ) to go to Australia - the nearest treatment centre offering this technique. At this time the service had an 18-month waiting list and was described as being for the `stoic and affluent'. In May 1983 (Herald May 24 1983) the Auckland Hospital Board agreed to investigate the cost of setting up an Auckland-based IVF service. However, the board's superintendent-in-chief, Leslie Honeyman said it was not a priority and that there were ethical questions to be faced in relation to `manipulating life in a test tube'.

## **27 July 1983 (Auckland Star)**

Auckland obstetrician and gynaecologist Professor Colin Mantell, criticises the Auckland Hospital Board for being unable to find \$100,000 for an IVF service. He suggests the board transfer the salary of one of the Epsom Day Hospital staff to an IVF service.

## **1983 (NZH)**

Full-time specialist in obstetrics and gynaecology at National Women's Dr Richard Fisher describes a `near-perfect pain-killer' for women in labour. The technique, a para-cervical block, was first used in the 1930s but the technique used affected the baby's heart rate. However, NWH has been lent a \$1900 gas-operated jet injector, resembling a miniature grease-gun so much lower safer doses (.25ml) could be given than in the 1930s (10-20ml). At this time, epidurals were used by about 35% of women in labour. Dr Fisher stated that the new technique stops pain from the uterus but unlike epidurals, this approach does not affect the woman's ability to move around or to effectively push her baby out. It can also be administered by an obstetrician so an anaesthetist doesn't have to be present.


## **5 July 1983 (Auckland Star)**

National Women's announces plans to purchase a programmed biological freezing system for preserving semen as an aid to infertile couples.

## **10 August 1983 (Herald)**

Doctors at National Women's use IVF for the first time in New Zealand

## **16 August 1983 (Auckland Star)**



Doctors at National Women's announce the discovery of an effective treatment for unborn babies whose mothers blood contains lupus anti-coagulant.

### **Oct 1983**

National Women's Principal Nurse, Miss Verna Murray retires. Edna Davies is employed as her replacement.

### **Oct 1983 (Report to Hospital Board)**

Students from the New Zealand Bible College now include experience at St Helen's in their counselling course.

### **February 1984 (ASB)**

The Auckland Infertility Society presents a carbon dioxide incubator to the National Women's fertility clinic.

### **February 1984 (ASB)**

The hospital announces that women giving birth at National Women's can now have babies in the home-like comfort of a birthing room.

### **February 1984 (Report to Hospital Board)**

The senior medical staff at St Helen's set up the Mortality and Morbidity Committee to review all serious cases prior to Perinatal Mortality Conferences. The first meeting is held on 22 February.


## **1984**

An arson attack caused major damage to the abortion clinic at Warborough Ave. The abortion service was relocated to Ward 7 at National Women's for 3 months while repairs were carried out.

### **18 October 1984 (Auckland Star)**

Luke Hayes becomes the most premature baby at National Women's to survive.

### **8 December 1984 (Auckland Star)**



Professor Graham Liggins, Associate Professor Ross Howie and David Knight announce a significant discovery which could substantially reduce the death rates of premature babies suffering from lung disease (RDS). This follows research carried out at National Women's

### **February 1985 (ASB)**

The Auckland Savings Bank donates a \$60,000 laser machine to National Women's for the treatment of infertile women and those with cervical cancer,

### **February 1985 (ASB)**

Samoan grandmother, Tui Faliolofa is ordained a minister of the Presbyterian church. She takes up a position as chaplain at National Women's in conjunction with being the minister at the Pacific Island's church in Newton.

### **June 1985**

Mrs Wailin Elliott's sculpture of Mother and Child, purchased with the remainder of the 75th Jubilee money was received at St Helen's in time for the 79th anniversary. (This sculpture is presently located in the atrium area ( walkway between new and support building) at National Women's on level 9.

### **19 September 1985**

Open Day for the public at National Women's Hospital to celebrate the hospital's 21<sup>st</sup> birthday. Ann Marie Edge, the first baby born at the new hospital attends the celebration. She is now a teacher.

### **21 September 1985 (Listener)**

Dr Gabrielle Collison, the recently appointed Medical Superintendent talks publicly about her job at National Women's.

### **18 February 1986**

Teen Clinics are set up on Fridays in the National Women's antenatal clinic.

### **6 August 1986 (NZH)**

Canadian nurse, Lynn Litwinowich is appointed to control the new neonatal nursing course at the hospital.



## **7 April 1987**

National Women's enters the national grid for patient numbers.

## **14 July 1987**

Establishment of the position for a part time diabetic nurse educator.

## **June 1987 (Metro)**

Article published by Sandra Coney and Phillida Bunkle which instigated the Inquiry into the treatment of cervical cancer at national Women's. The article describes the approach and treatment used by gynaecologist Herbert Green between 1966-1982.

## **1987**

The National Women's telephone exchange switches from a manual to an electronic system.

## **June 1988 (Broadsheet)**

Waireti Walters-Ratima sets up facilities for healthcare for Maori women which includes a whanau room at National Women's and the Whare Rapuora service at Glen Innes.

## **20 May 1988**

Antenatal classes at national Women's introduce the use of TENS machines for pain relief during labour.

## **5 August 1988**

The report of the Cervical Cancer Inquiry prepared by Judge Silvia Cartwright is publicly released.

## **15 September 1988**

Code of Rights and Obligations for Patients are now to be displayed in every room at National Women's.

## **4 April 1989 (Auckland Star & NZH)**

Siamese twins are born at National Women's. This is the first time. The two girls are joined at the lower chest and upper abdomen in a face-to-face position.



### **17 May 1989 (Auckland Star)**

Gynaecology services are transferred to Greenlane Hospital as part of the \$46 million cost cuts announced by the Auckland Area Health Board.

### **18 September 1989 (Western Leader)**

Lynda Williams is appointed to the position of patient advocate at National Women's Hospital.

### **1989**

A 'Save St Helen's' campaign is established in an effort to stop the closure of the hospital.

### **17 October 1989 (NZH)**

Dr Gabrielle Collison's position of National Women's Medical Superintendent is disestablished as part of restructuring.

### **November 1989 (ASB)**

A recent upgrade of National Women's refurbishes four wards and the delivery unit.



## 1990 - 2000

### April 1990

6 weeks prior to its closure, St Helen's has had a total of 105,514 mothers give birth at the hospital.

### June 1990

The Auckland Maternity Services Information System (AMSIS), a computerised patient record system is introduced. This system makes it possible to audit the clinical activities at National Women's

### 10-11 June 1990

St Helen's maternity and newborn services transfer to National Women's. The last birth at St Helen's is on June 10<sup>th</sup>.

### 12 June 1990

St Helen's Hospital is closed following a formal closing ceremony 84 years after the first Auckland St Helen's Hospital opened. Ann Nightingale is the Matron at the time.


### 1990

Staff working in the National Women's Delivery Unit raise funds from garage sales and raffles to develop the memorial garden outside the unit. The garden is developed as a memorial to the closure of St Helen's and to provide a place for the summer house to be relocated from St Helen's Hospital to National Women's. The summer house had been originally built for women having babies at St Helen's and their relatives to use in 1981 as part of the St Helen's Hospital 75<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations.

### 24 July 1991

The Epsom Day Unit moves to the Greenlane Hospital site. A tapu lifting ceremony was held at Warborough Avenue and a blessing of the Greenlane site. A Socks and Gloves party was held on 20<sup>th</sup> July to farewell Warborough Ave.

### July 1992



The First Annual Report of the National Women's Maternity and Newborn Services is presented. This includes detailed statistics of the 1991 year. This is the first annual report since 1952 when the service was situated on the Cornwall Park site.

## **1992**

The National Women's switchboard is combined with the switchboard at Greenlane Hospital.

## **15 August 1994**

The sibling playroom opens in the Newborn Service to provide free childcare when families are visiting or using a National Women's service.

## **1995**

Gary Henry leaves the Royal Women's Hospital in Melbourne, Australia to take up the position of General Manager of National Women's.

## **21 April 1996**

The new Women's Health Information Unit opens at National Women's. The Unit has been established following a clinical review of services provided at the hospital where the need for an information centre was identified.


## **March 1997**

Professor Jane Harding, the Senior Medical Officer at National Women's since 1989 is awarded a Personal Chair in Neonatology at the Auckland Medical School. Jane is the only Professor of Neonatology in New Zealand and has been involved in extensive peri-natal research. The position acknowledges neonatology as a specialty and National Women's as a centre of excellence in neonatology. Neonatology is a relatively new specialty and it has taken time for a research culture to be established.

## **5 June 1998**

National Women's is officially awarded accreditation for three years until 4 June 2001, by the New Zealand Council on Healthcare Standards following an extensive survey of every aspect of the service.

## **July 1998**



The antenatal clinics are relocated to the lower ground floor so the gynaecology outpatient and colposcopy clinics can move back to the National Women's site (from Greenlane Hospital) on the lower lower ground level.

### **19 September 1998 (Suffrage Day)**

National Women's Open Day.

### **06 July 1999**

The report of the Neonatal Chest Physiotherapy Inquiry prepared by Q.C. Helen Cull is publicly released.

### **July 1999**

The Cornwall Suite opens at National Women's Hospital. The approach to providing an alternative postnatal service which women pay for within a public hospital, generates considerable media attention and public discussion.

### **06 November 1999**

National Women's Open Day.





## **2000 - 2010**

### **31 December 2000**

Gary Henry Resigns as General Manager.

### **2000**

Auckland Healthcare Services Limited becomes the Auckland District Health Board. Board members are appointed by the Ministry of Health until the elections in September 2001. Meetings are to be held in public and the media can attend.

### **25 March 2001**

The screening of 'Clares Story' a drama based on Clare Materson and the Cartwright Inquiry prompts numerous calls about the taking of smears of babies born between 1963-1965.

### **April 2001**

Lois Harrison leaves National Women's after 29 years as the hospital's Mortician, she has made sure babies that have died are carefully looked after in the mortuary.

### **10 April 2001**

Cathy Handley is formally welcomed to the position of General Manager.

### **June 2001**

Associate professor John France retires as head of the School of Medicine's Obstetrics and Gynaecology Department. He is replaced by Professor Peter Stone.

### **July 2001**

The hospital is successful in gaining accreditation for a further 3 years.

### **August 2001**

Property developer Ken Kells of Rawson 2000 demolishes the old Pitt street St Helens Hospital. The report of a study looking at whether there is a link in a cluster of cancer cases in midwives working at National Women's is released. The study did not find a link but is strongly criticised for not including all the known cases.



## **September 2001**

A new Board is elected to the Auckland DHB following local body elections. This is the first time in over a decade that Boards have comprised elected representatives. The chairman, Wayne Brown, a former engineer and property developer is a government appointment.

## **4 December 2001**

All 7 ADHB General Managers are disestablished as part of the Integrated Change Programme (ICP) restructuring. The 7 positions are to be reduced to 4 by combining some positions. It is announced that National Women's and the Starship children's Hospital will be combined under one Manager.

## **7 December 2001**

Farewell to Cathy Handley following the disestablishment of her position. This marks the passing of the last General Manager of National Women's.

## **February 2002**

The Domestic Violence Centre gifts a position of Hospital Advocate to National Women's funded by the ADHB, the first of its kind in NZ. Dale Little is appointed to the position.

## **March 2002**

Lianna De Jong becomes the 3000th mother in the Cornwall suite. Lianna is given a gift to acknowledge the birth of baby Angeline.


## **March 2002**

National Women's staff help respond to numerous calls from the public following the media coverage about the 1300 hearts being held in the Green Lane Heart Library. By June there have been 4000 calls to the hotline.

## **29 April 2002**

Kay Hyman is appointed 0.5 National Women's and 0.5 Starship joint General Manager position.

## **April 2003**



Malcolm Battin wins the National Health Committee individual category of the Inaugural Health Innovation Award 2003 for the Neonatal Head Cooling Cap used at National Women's in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit.

### **April-May 2003**

Extensive public outcry over the proposed plan to change the hospital's names and have just Auckland City Hospital in anticipation for when the services are amalgamated on the Grafton site. Celebrities from all over the country rally to support keeping the Starship, Green Lane and National Women's names.

### **30 May 2003**

Official closing ceremony for The Cornwall Suite. This is a consequence of the new funding arrangements facilitated by the ADHB and results in a reduced number of beds at National Women's. There is a significant increase in women having their babies at National Women's (20%) transferring to the private Birthcare service in Parnell for postnatal care.

### **May 2002**

Childbirth Education classes are started for Somali women, to help them understand the New Zealand maternity service and the services provided at National Women's Health. These classes are provided for two years and discontinued at the same time that National Women's Health loses the contract for Child Birth Education Classes in 2004.


### **July 2003**

ADHB buildings and grounds are declared smokefree, with the exception of temporary patient-only designated smoking gazebos, which are made available until 1 October 2003 when no smoking will be permitted anywhere on ADHB premises.

### **September 2004**

The Memory garden was opened on September the 4th 2004. It was built in consultation with National Women's staff and interested community groups such as SANDS, Miscarriage support and Twin Loss Craig Scott from Twin Loss designed and built the garden.

### **September 24th**



National Women's closing ceremony. This is held in a marquee outside National Women's Hospital. During this time of closing there were many staff initiated activities to mark the closing of National Women's Hospital

## **Quilt**

A quilt was made in 2003/2004 by the staff of National Women's Hospital to commemorate the closing of National Women's at the Greenlane Site .



## Quilt Design

**St Helens** Made by Judy Thurtell. The lamp post on the quilt was in the grounds of the old St. Helens Hospital in Pitt Street. The hospital, founded and named by Prime Minister Rt Hon Richard J Seddon, was established to provide quality maternity care to working class women and as a training school for midwives in 1906. It was moved to Mt Albert 1966 and closed in 1990. The lamp is currently in front of NW at the Greenlane site.

The Pinnards symbolises the midwifery education given at St. Helens from 1906 to 1979 to 1445 students who qualified as midwives.

**Ward 32** Designed by the ward and made by Jayne Clark. The colours of the blankets and hats depict the three types of patients under their care. Low risk women, ADAPT women and women with psychiatric needs.

**Duty manager** Designed by the NW duty managers. In 2003 these Duty managers were Elizabeth Reid, Barbara Pearson, Moira Thretheway. The Duty Managers were responsible for the day to day running of the hospital including staff allocation, bed allocation and dealing with emergencies

**Jumble of words** Words from the past

**Ward 33** Postnatal ward. Designed and made by Kay Parrish. The flowers are all native NZ plants. The verse is by Katherine Hadley

**In House Support – Orderlies Poem** by Shane Langkilde. Embroidery by Cindy White

**Lactation Consultant** by Kay Parrish, showing a mother breast feeding her baby.

**EDU- Epsom day Unit** Made by Sharon Chow. The blocks symbolise that it is a service for woman, the candle is for hope, the flower for femininity, the sun for the sunshine in our life and the symbol of wisdom

**Ward 34 High Risk Ward.** Made by Dr Maha Haddad a consultant member of the team of doctors and midwives who gives medical and obstetric care to women and their babies.

**The Cross.** Made by the chaplains and represents the interdenominational service given by the Chaplains at NW

**Community midwives.** This block depicts the woman of many different nationalities seen by the community midwives

**High risk Obstetrics Medical Clinic.** Made by Dr Ruth Hughes a member of the team of physicians and midwives who care for the pregnant women at risk.

**Delivery Unit** Made by Judy Thurtell.

**Recovery / Theatre** Made by Wendy Johnson & Tricia Duravich

**Social Work** Butterfly painted by Sharon Chow. The butterfly was chosen in memory of Anna Weekers, a special member of the social work team.

**Scanning** Made by Christine Sharp

**Fertility Plus** Made by Wendy Overwater. This is a reproduction of Fertility Plus artwork on their pamphlet showing sperm fertilising an ovum.

**Management** designed and made by Lisa Floris and represents the National Women's Hospital at the Green lane site. The figures represent all the various staff groups at NW.

**NICU** Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. Made by Nicky Webster.

**Ward 37** Gynaecological Ward. Designed by the staff and made by Judy Thurtell. The uterus and ovaries signify the gynaecological problems seen. The black flowers are the male and female gender of the pohutukawa tree, a symbol of sexual health.

**Admitting** Made by Rosetta Taulapiu, Dannella Drummond-Hubber, Diana Millanto. This block represents the multicultural faces of the admitting staff. Top face represents Margaret Chiew-long time staff member of Admitting who died in 1999.

**Maori health.** Made by Kiri Munro - The three baskets of knowledge

**Cornwall Suite** made by Penny Brown. The Cornwall Suite was open from 1999 to May 2003. It provided paid enhanced postnatal care.

**NW- Teaching hospital** made by Judy Thurtell

**Home visiting midwives** Made by Kay Parrish. Depicts a method of weighing babies in a nappy. This service closed in 2004

**Women's Health Information Unit** Designed by Judi Strid made by Judy Thurtell. This unit opened in 1995. The unit provides information for staff and women. The statue is currently located in front of the old National Women's on the Greenlane site. It was donated to NW by Cornwall Park Trust in 1963.

**The Mortuary service.** Made by Lois Harrison who was the mortician at NW for 20 years. During her time she introduced the making of babies clothes by staff to dress the deceased babies. She also introduced the opportunity for whanau to see their baby after death which had not been the practice before 1980.

**MAU** Maternity Assessment unit made by Pauline Rawlings. It depicts a CTG (cardiotoco tracing) of a baby's heart rate and contractions the mother has in labour.

**Physiotherapy** Designed by all the staff and made by Vickie Holmes. The hand signifies the hands on treatment given by the physiotherapists and the words are all the caring things the physiotherapists do in their day.

**CBE Child Birth Education.** This service closed in 2004

**The quilt was put together by Judy Thurtell, Lisa Floris, Lucy Convery and Marjet Pot. Quilted by Donna Ward.**

## October 2004

From the 11th of October 2004 all babies are born at the new National Women's Health Labour and Birthing suite on Level 9 at Auckland City Hospital.

The move includes postnatal services and high risk outpatient services.



## March 2008

National Women's Health achieves Baby Friendly status. The award is presented by WHO representative Mrs Sadeh and the Executive Director of the NZ Breastfeeding Authority Julie Stufkens. A Baby Friendly hospital is a healthcare facility that protects, promotes and supports exclusive breastfeeding from birth.



## July 2009

Funding for maternity services provided at National Women's Health is changed from volume based funding to complexity based funding



## March 2010

National Women's Health opens a fourth operating theatre on Level 9 of Auckland City Hospital.

## June 2010

National Women's Health closes the DOMINO midwifery service. The DOMINO scheme provided ADHB-employed midwives to delivery midwifery care to women through their antenatal, labour and postnatal care.

ORDA (Operating Room Day Admission) is opened. This facility allows women to come directly to ORDA to wait for surgery, rather than be admitted to the ward first.



## Memory garden

The Garden was developed to provide a place for families to remember the women and babies who died at National Women's. As National Women's was leaving the Greenlane site it was considered important for the community groups and National Women's staff that a garden for remembrance be left behind.

The plaque also commemorates the 'the life of National Women's hospital 1964-2004, as the place where thousands of babies began their lives.

The Memory Garden is located under the large walnut tree, which is situated between Greenlane Clinical centre and old National Women's hospital.

The garden has a number of private seats with a view through Cornwall Park up to Maungakiekie.

It is bordered by the Cornwall park cricket club on the east side and the public car park on the west.

