

NEWS RELEASE

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National Burn Centre- Facility Opening 16 June

Middlemore's state-of-the art National Burn Centre is set to open on June 16th. The facility, once fully operational, will provide treatment and rehabilitation for some of New Zealand's most severe burn patients.

"The formal opening of the facility is about celebrating the hard work of all those who have over the years tirelessly lobbied and supported the establishment of a National Burn Centre at Middlemore. It is a wonderful achievement," says Chris Fleming, General Manager Surgical and Ambulatory Care.

Mr Fleming says the completion of the facility is just the first step in establishing and delivering a sustainable national burn service. "There is still a lot of work that needs to be done. The Centre will not be totally complete until 2008, when the Intensive Care Unit is co-located".

Located on the first floor of the Adult Medical Centre at Middlemore Hospital, the National Burn Centre is directly above the Emergency Department and flanked by the KidzFirst Children's Hospital, acute theatres and the planned Intensive Care Unit (ICU).

The facility will be utilised in the interim, however the ability to deliver a comprehensive national service will be limited by staffing resources. "We currently have only two members of the Department of Plastic Surgery with a sub-specialty interest in burns. From December 2006, the surgeons will be joined by Dr Joel Fish, an eminent Burn Surgeon from Canada, for an 8 month sabbatical. Active recruitment for Burn Surgeons is ongoing, to ensure the service will be sustainable in the long term," says Mr Fleming.

The National Burns Centre is part of a larger burn care network with existing regional burn treatment facilities in Christchurch, Hutt Valley and Waikato. Staff will be working closely with these units to manage referrals, while Middlemore continues to provide a Regional Burn Service to the Northern Region.

In addition to the financial support received from the Ministry of Health (circa \$4.7m) for the capital build, the South Auckland Health Foundation has been instrumental in obtaining a substantial amount of financial support from the public and have raised \$2.5m for the facility and equipment.

About the National Burn Centre

A complex burn injury is one of the most severe forms of trauma. A burns patient has unique requirements in terms of wound management, infection control and rehabilitation, which make caring for them on a general ward unsatisfactory.

The National Burn Centre will eventually provide inpatient care for the highest level of burn injury and will be staffed with burns surgeons, nurses and other health professionals with specialist training and experience in burn care.

The Burn Centre includes a total of 12 burn beds (6 single isolation rooms in the NBC) with two burn isolation rooms in ICU. It is designed to encompass all phases of burn treatment which integrates acute, rehabilitation, reconstructive and outpatient follow-up services into one purpose designed facility.

The Centre includes a rehabilitation gymnasium for both inpatients and outpatients, a kitchen and bathroom specifically designed for rehabilitation purposes, a patient lounge to assist with rehabilitation and socialisation for long-stay patients, and a separate outpatient area with four consulting rooms as well as a room for patient splinting.

All rooms have been designed to minimise the impact of painful procedures through distraction therapy, while taking into account the need for the highest infection control standards.

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For further information please contact Lauren Young on 3788 433 or 027 243 9900.