

HEALTH RESEARCH EDUCATION FACILITY

Media Release

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Ceremony marks ground breaking health research and education initiative

A unique and collaborative workspace for health aligned sectors in the city was celebrated in Christchurch today with the launch of the Health Research Education Facility (HREF). This is the first private sector building to be constructed in the Health Precinct.

The partners involved in the HREF blessed the land and turned the soil to mark the beginning of construction of the new building, and symbolically signal the start of an innovative future in healthcare collaboration.

The HREF is a state-of-the-art, purpose-built facility designed to house health education, professional development and research activities. It will provide the partner organisations, Canterbury District Health Board, Ara Institute of Canterbury and University of Canterbury opportunities for collaboration and innovation.

CDHB and Ara will be joint tenants in the building, which is being built by Huadu International and NewUrban Group – a Chinese/Canterbury business partnership led by former Christchurch Mayor Sir Bob Parker.

“The trends are indisputable,” says Canterbury DHB CEO David Meates. “We have an ageing population and ageing workforce and we need to find innovative ways to address these issues. Collaborative efforts can lead to novel approaches to processes that will help meet these challenges.”

Mr Meates says the HREF will be a huge asset in terms of building our future workforce. “It’s fantastic to see this project underway. I’m confident it will grow to become Canterbury’s centre of health innovation, research and education, with all the key players in one location, close to the Christchurch Hospital campus, and as a cornerstone facility in the Health Precinct.”

The HREF building will be the new home for more than 2,000 Ara nursing, midwifery and medical imaging students, as well as to Canterbury DHB education and development staff. The University of Canterbury will also have a presence in the building.

“This has been a significant undertaking,” says Stella Ward, CDHB Executive Director of Allied Health. “It’s not just about services co-locating in a building. It’s about creating and sustaining a culture of collaboration. Inter-professional learning will improve inter-professional practice, which in turn contributes to improved patient outcomes.”

“This will also help reduce fragmentation among services, create a more integrated interprofessional approach to training, and reduce costs through more effective utilisation of resources.”

Locating the Health Research Education Facility close to Christchurch Hospital means duty staff attending research or education sessions can quickly return to the hospital if anything urgent crops up. Being located close to clinical areas will enable clinicians, researchers and students to flow freely in a campus setting between the hospital and education/research space and ensure knowledge translation occurs from and into clinical settings.

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Ara Institute of Canterbury Chief Executive Kay Giles says Ara is excited about the finalisation of the development arrangements for the HREF. “This outcome has been achieved through negotiations with the partnering organisations and with the support of many agencies operating in Christchurch. Ara is confident that the Facility will deliver on the promise of improving health and wellbeing through collaboration between the health delivery, education and research partners creating benefit for our students, our community and for Christchurch.”

University of Canterbury’s representative on the Health Precinct Advisory Council and Pro Vice Chancellor, Professor Gail Gillon, says the HREF will provide excellent opportunities to enhance the University of Canterbury’s collaborative research and teaching initiatives with CDHB, Ara, Otago and Ngāi Tahu.

“In particular, we are looking to advance initiatives in postgraduate health sciences, leadership and management and postgraduate nursing through the central city health precinct location. Our University Council has approved the strategic business case for our presence in the new building and we are now working through costing details.”

Dean of the University of Otago Christchurch, Professor David Murdoch, says the announcement of the HREF building is an exciting development that will facilitate new partnerships and consolidate existing collaborations, and ultimately lead to improved health outcomes.

“The University of Otago, Christchurch has many existing collaborations with local partners such as the Canterbury DHB, Canterbury Health Laboratories and the University of Canterbury. These partnerships play a vital role in our ability to produce meaningful applied health research and to train the highest calibre of health professionals.”

Ian Town, Chair of the Health Precinct Advisory Council says, ‘The Health Precinct Advisory Council acknowledges the significant commitment and achievement of all the partners in reaching the HREF development agreement. We are delighted that Huadu International and New Urban Group have joined with us to enable our vision for collaboration and innovation. The HREF will provide a unique stage where new ways of learning, working and researching together will ultimately lead to improved health and economic outcomes for our community.’

The partner organisations will be able to share a systems approach, including shared IT platforms, common quality and audit processes, and workforce data collection. The environment also supports the more rapid adoption of new technologies.

For more information, contact:

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