

Newsletter

Volume 1 – March 2009



ST GEORGE'S CANCER INSTITUTE

Introduction

Welcome to the first of what will be a series of newsletters to keep you informed of the progress being made on the St George's Cancer Care Centre.

Since mid 2008 when construction first began, significant progress has been made and within 3-4 weeks the basement area for the proposed linear accelerators will be fully enclosed.

Fundraising for the machines commenced in November last year and to date through the generous support of many individuals \$2.6m of the \$7.0m needed by the Cancer Institute to purchase the two machines has been raised. Discussions are taking place with several other benefactors that will hopefully see the funds raised to date grow to approximately \$3.5m.

World Class Building underway

Tony Hunter, St George's Hospital Chief Executive Officer says "the Oncology building is on track to be completed later this year in time for the two linear accelerators to be installed." The building is on three levels, one below ground and two above. The lower level or basement will house the two radiotherapy machines, which is the focus of the \$7.0 million fundraising effort.

The Hospital was committed to the project early in 2008 and engaged Trengrove & Blunt Architects to carry out the design. Following the consent process Higgs Builders Limited were engaged to complete the construction.



While the building is quite unique because of the complex regulations surrounding the building of the bunkers the décor will be equally as complex. Tony Hunter says "a specialist interior designer has been engaged to create an experience for patients who will attend for treatments."

Features in the design include very specialised lighting to create a theme, a major saltwater fish tank to provide a focal point within the ground floor entrance and a multitude of flat screen TV panels through which entertainment will be programmed. The visual entertainment mood lighting and integrated sound through the key waiting areas will collectively provide a stimulating, uplifting experience for patients attending the facility. It will be a New Zealand first and possibly be a world first for an oncology facility



Higgs Construction develops new ways to meet the challenges of the bunker build

Because the concrete for the bunker to house the new Linear Accelerator machines is between 1 and 2 metres thick, this presented challenges to the builders in controlling the core temperature, and thus the expansion of the concrete as it cures. Although this in itself is not new, the recipe used in the concrete has been specifically developed for this job. Probes into the concrete show the concrete at the core is remaining at around 50°C well below the 70°C it could have reached otherwise.

As well as this, the floor of the bunker is 2.5 metres below the water table, requiring high specification linings on the bottom of the floor and up the walls, and pumping water 24/7. The pumps have been running since around the end of October 2008 and will continue well into April 2009.

Stage 1 - the basement walls are under control, and looking towards the ground floor slab – itself 2 metres thick in places. Dave Freeman of Higgs Construction expects to hand the bunker over for fitout of the Linear Accelerators on 14 August 2009.

Dave contributes the fact that the building has gone to plan and to time to the huge amount of preplanning by everyone involved that went into the project.

Linear Accelerators world best



The linear accelerators chosen for the facility are Elekta and include extremely sophisticated application software to run the machines. The software also includes a fully integrated patient management component.

Oncologists, Dr Chris Atkinson and Dr Chris Wynne note “the package of machinery and software will be a New Zealand first and enables treatments on cancers such as prostate, head, neck, and brain tumours that couldn’t be treated by radiotherapy previously. The benefits to patients will include: not having to travel away from the South Island as is now the case, and focusing on the patient as whole with programmes such as supporting the mental adaptation to having cancer; assistance to families in hardship, and a volunteer network to assist patients and families.. It is a very exciting development for cancer care in the South Island and New Zealand.”

Medical Oncology and Chemotherapy service starts 16 March 2009

In advance of the opening of the comprehensive St George’s Cancer Care Centre later this year, we will begin our private Medical Oncology service, which includes Medical Oncology Consultancy and Chemotherapy Administration on 16 March 2009.

The temporary Medical Oncology and Chemotherapy service will be located in the Charlotte Jane Ward at St George’s Hospital. It is situated in a private and quiet part of the Hospital offering a relaxed and comfortable environment where patients can enjoy television and broadband Internet connection during treatment.

Dr David Gibbs, Specialist Medical Oncologist, will lead the chemotherapy service, with the support of Bronwyn Ward – Clinical Nurse Manager, and Gary Ng – Business Manager.

The start-up of the private Chemotherapy Service is an exciting development, which will provide patients in the South Island with a choice and an opportunity to receive private chemotherapy treatments. This may be in addition to or as an alternative to the Public Hospital System, through either personal funding or private health insurance cover.

Gary Ng is our Business Manager and is responsible for the administration of St George’s Hospital Joint Ventures with Clinicians. Gary will co-ordinate the business start-up, the implementation of the Mosaic Medical Oncology application, and the on-going business administration of the St George’s Cancer Care Centre.



Newly appointed Medical Oncologist, David Gibbs and Clinical Nurse Manager, Bronwyn Ward

Dr David Gibbs is our Specialist Medical Oncologist. He is a graduate of the University of Otago (1990) and has a PhD in drug development from the University of London. He is a Consultant Medical Oncologist at Christchurch Hospital with special interest in gastrointestinal, lung and gynaecologic cancers. David is the current Chair of the New Zealand Association of Cancer Specialists, and the Medical Director of the Christchurch Oncology Research Unit.

Bronwyn Ward will be our Clinical Nurse Manager for the Chemotherapy service. She was most recently the Clinical Nurse Manager – Oncology Outpatients at Waikato Hospital. In that position she managed the nursing care of Medical, Oncology, Haematology, and Palliative services to cancer patients. Bronwyn specialises in Chemotherapy and has been a representative on the New Zealand Medical Oncology Advisory Committee and an advisor for Oncology Services to a number of District Health Boards.

DONATION CARD

To support St George’s Cancer Care Centre, please fill out the form, including your cheque or credit card details, and post to: **St George’s Cancer Institute, Private Bag 4737, Christchurch 8140.**

I will be paying by (tick appropriate)

Visa MasterCard Cheque Internet Banking

Card no _____ Expiry Date _____

Amount NZ\$ _____ Signature _____

Internet banking to St George’s Cancer Institute, Account no 06-0801-0643073-00

First Name: _____ Mr/Mrs/Miss/other

Surname: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ email: _____

A receipt quoting the St George’s Cancer Institute number CC26864 will be posted to the above address.

The Trust is registered under the Charities Act 2005 No CC26864

Thank you