

Waikato Public Health Bulletin

Public Health Service - Waikato

Kohitātea / Huitānguru 2026 | January/February 2026

Tēnā koutou katoa. We hope you enjoy this edition of the Waikato Public Health Bulletin and we welcome your feedback. The bulletin is written for GPs and colleagues in primary & community care.

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Reminder: STI notifications

It is important that sexually transmitted infection (STI) notifications for syphilis, gonorrhoea, AIDS, HIV infections are made using the correct process. **Please go to the PHF Science website: [Infectious disease intelligence & surveillance](#) for instructions on how to report these notifiable diseases. Please use the appropriate notification forms and follow the relevant instructions.**

Notification must be made through the above process and cannot be made by phone. These notifications must be made using non-identifiable data. Please note that these STI notifiable diseases **should not be** reported to the Public Health Service.

New Vaccinator Training and Authorisation Pathways

Vaccinator training and authorisation is changing.

There are changes to the training and authorisation of authorised vaccinators. Training and authorisation pathways are being streamlined and simplified, making them consistent across the motu and creating more opportunity for vaccinators to be trained and authorised to give childhood vaccinations.

From **11 February 2026**, all Te Manawa Taki authorised vaccinators (new and renewals) and BCG endorsements (new and renewals) will be submitted and processed through the Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora [Workforce Requests Portal](#) (the portal). Vaccinator authorisations will no longer be submitted locally.

Vaccinators can now apply for authorisation after the completion of training. This means they can vaccinate under supervision, without the need for a vaccine standing order or prescription, while they complete their workbook and clinical assessment. (Note: for standing order requirements for adrenaline refer to the Immunisation Handbook.)

More information

Information on all the new training and authorisation pathways can be found at <https://www.tewhatauora.govt.nz/vaccinating-workforce>

If you have any questions or need help, please contact vaccinatorauthorisations@healthnz.govt.nz

Cyanobacteria and Recreational Water Quality

Cyanobacteria in waterbodies mostly flourish in warmer weather. They are commonly referred to as being blue-green algae, this is due to their colour in water as they can display a green/blue tinge, particularly lakes or reservoirs. Most varieties are harmless, however certain species of cyanobacteria can be extremely toxic if it enters the body.

When visiting any body of water, exercise your own judgement; check the waters for local health warnings, signage, and any visible signs of blue-green algae in the water. Even if there are no signs around, if the water doesn't look right (has a greenish colour to it like pea soup), it's best to stay out and choose another place to swim/paddle. Please avoid swimming after the rain, particularly 48 hours after heavy rain.

If you have been in the water:

- shower off with soap and lots of water as soon as possible (even without symptoms)
- change out of wet clothing immediately
- clean paddles, waka/kayaks and life jackets with fresh water (not lake water)

Signs of cyanobacteria poisoning can include rash, skin and eye irritation, allergy symptoms, and gastrointestinal upset.

Dog owners should also prevent their dogs from drinking or swimming in the water or eating algal bloom scum as dogs are particularly sensitive to cyanobacteria and could become seriously ill.

For the most up-to-date information about cyanobacterial concentrations, other environmental measures, and to check if recreational water spots near you are safe for swimming and playing in, visit the Land Water Air Aotearoa (LAWA) website: www.lawa.org.nz.



ConneXu Achieves Gold Standard WorkWell Accreditation

ConneXu has recently gained Gold Standard WorkWell accreditation for their workplace wellbeing programme. The organisation is a disability support service that works alongside individuals with intellectual, physical, cognitive, and sensory disabilities, as well as those with traumatic brain injuries and chronic health conditions, helping them live fulfilling lives in their communities.

ConneXu has been involved in the WorkWell programme since 2020, achieving Bronze Standard accreditation in 2021 and Silver Standard in 2023. Along the way, they have navigated challenges such as COVID-19 disruptions and leadership changes yet have maintained an unwavering commitment to staff wellbeing and the WorkWell process.

The organisation has demonstrated exceptional dedication, consistency, and collaboration across all levels. Their Gold achievement reflects strong leadership support, robust health and wellbeing initiatives, and a continued focus on creating a workplace where staff feel valued, supported, and empowered. As part of their Gold-level initiatives, ConneXu has adopted a comprehensive health and wellbeing policy that benefits not only staff but also the 200+ members of the disabled community they serve. This milestone highlights their long-term investment in a healthy workplace culture and commitment to continuous improvement.

The Gold certificate was presented by WorkWell Advisor Harry Luteru, recognising ConneXu's success in embedding and sustaining a comprehensive workplace wellbeing programme. If you would like to know more about the WorkWell programme, you can contact Louise West on louise.west@tewhatauora.govt.nz.



Photo: ConneXu awarded WorkWell Gold certificate

Miles of smiles for former refugee

A former refugee now living in Hamilton is pain free and has a dazzling smile thanks to support from Braemar Charitable Trust.

Husein Omar, 46, arrived in Hamilton in early 2025 with his wife and four children after 19 years as a refugee in South Africa, having been forced to leave Somalia.

His access to dental care had been very limited over that time, and his teeth, already decaying, became so bad he was left with only small, black stumps. As a refugee, having all his teeth extracted and getting dentures was well beyond his financial means. He was in significant pain and would never smile in social situations as he was so self-conscious.

The past few months have turned all this around for Husein, who has been looked after by Tui Dental owner Dr Fiona Koshy and Dr Fiona Dong, with ongoing support from Te Whatu Ora's Refugee Health unit.

Husein has now had all his teeth removed and has had upper and lower dentures fitted. During the process he said he was most looking forward to being pain-free, eating foods he enjoyed, and treating people to his new smile.

Husein now has a huge smile and says: "I feel very, very good." His wife, Halimo, says her husband is happier – and younger looking!

Braemar Charitable Trust, using some funding from the Glenice and John Gallagher Foundation, partnered with Tui Dental in Hamilton, to provide the dental treatment and dentures.



Photo: Husein Omar and his daughter

FASD: Nurture the Future Within

In Aotearoa New Zealand, generations of people see drinking alcohol as a normal part of life. However, alcohol can have long-term harmful effects on the health and wellbeing of ourselves, our whānau and our children.

That's why it's important that we all work together to support healthy, alcohol-free pregnancies to prevent the life-long impacts of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD).

Nurture the Future Within by Health NZ – Te Whatu Ora is a Kaupapa that highlights the importance of alcohol-free pregnancies and our collective responsibility to protect future generations. January's campaign centered on meaningful conversations alongside intentional, curated activities designed to empower whānau to make informed and healthy alcohol-related decisions now, for the benefit of generations to come.



Photo: Nurture the Future Within campaign tent at Waka Ama Sprint Nationals 2026

The Health Promotion and Kaihāpai Oranga teams from NPHS Community and Whānau Wellbeing (CWW) Waikato/Taupō team collaborated with Curative NZ to deliver this engaging and impactful campaign at this year's Waka Ama Sprint Nationals held at Lake Karapiro. Curative NZ will continue this kaupapa, taking the campaign north as part of the Waitangi Day celebrations in 2026.

FASD educational seminars and planning workshops delivered by Curative NZ in late 2025 strengthened the capability of the CWW Waikato/Taupō team, enabling them to engage with whānau confidently and passionately throughout the week-long health promotion event.

Visit **Nurture the Future Within** for information and resources from the campaign to support kōrero around the prevention of FASD. For more information and resources, visit the **FASD webpage** by Health NZ – Te Whatu Ora.

Coming up! Taumarunui Hapori Hauora Day 2026

Taumarunui Hapori Hauora Day is about bringing Hauora to the people especially our rural whānau who often face barriers to accessing timely, specialist care.

Our goal is simple but powerful: make health services accessible, connected, and community led.

What sets this Kaupapa apart is the presence of specialist clinicians from Braemar Charitable Trust, delivering services rarely available locally, including gynaecology, gastroenterology consults clinics, general and colorectal surgery specialists, and a skin lesion clinic.

With over 32 confirmed services attending, this day is a one-stop hub of care, kōrero, and connection.

This kaupapa is the epitome of integration and collaboration a collective effort made possible by working alongside community organisations who share the same vision for hauora equity.

Huge thank you to NPHS Community and Whānau Wellbeing team, Ruapehu District Council, King Country Lee Gar, Central King Country REAP, Taumarunui Community Kōkiri Trust, and Bowel Screening Waikato for helping bring this Kaupapa to fruition.

Together, we are proving what is possible when communities lead and services come together.



Saturday 28 February 2026

10am to 3pm at Taumarunui Hospital, 63 Kururau Road

FREE

- Cancer screening
- Immunisations
- Tamariki dental checks
- Diabetes checks
- Vision and hearing checks
- Heart checks

AND MORE!

- Kai to purchase
- Activities for tamariki
- Prizes to be won
- Event updates on Facebook

Staff News

Shiwani Prasad is leaving from her role as Health Protection Officer Trainee. We thank Shiwani for her valuable contributions to our service during her time with us. We wish Shiwani all the best in her new endeavours and continued success in her career.

Dr Elliott Jia has completed his PGY2 House Officer rotation at the Public Health Service and has moved back to the hospital for the next quarter. Elliot has been an excellent member of the clinical team, contributing well to all areas. We wish Elliot all the best for the rest of his career!



Photo: Ava Dillon

Dr Vinay Patel has finished his time as Public Health Registrar at NPHS Waikato and has joined NPHS Bay of Plenty and Lakes in the same role. We thank him for his excellent mahi and contribution to the TB and Hepatitis C mahi. We wish him all the best for the rest of his public health medicine training.

Priyanka Mistry has joined NPHS Waikato as a Trainee Health Protection Officer. Priyanka's interests lie in public health protection, disease prevention, and working with communities. She is looking forward to learning from the team and contributing to protecting and improving public health across the region.

Ava Dillon is our new Health Promotion Advisor in the Community and Whānau Wellbeing team.



Photo:
Dr Katherine Sung

Janice Watson is our new Registered Nurse, joining the Public Health Service in the Compliance and Health Protection team and will be working alongside our Clinical Nurse Specialists.

Dr Katherine Sung has returned and re-joined the service in the role as Public Health Registrar after completing her Master of Public Health. She looks forward to developing skills and knowledge and working with everyone.

Dr Cindy Pieterse is joining the service for PGY1 House Officer rotation.

Medical Officers of Health (MOoH)

Dr Felicity Dumble, Dr Kate Meerkerk, Dr Richard Wall, Dr Kaitlin Greenway, Dr Geoff Cramp

After Hours:

MOoH: 021 359 650 HPO: 021 999 521

If there is no answer, please contact Waikato Hospital's switchboard 07 839 8899 and ask for the on-call MOoH.

During Office Hours:

Public Health (MOoH or HPO): (07) 838 2569 Notifications: 07 838 2569 ext. 22041 or 22020

Notifications outside Hamilton: 0800 800 977 Fax: 07 838 2382

Email: WK-Nphsnotifiablediseases@TeWhatuora.govt.nz

Notifiable Diseases – Trends

Please note: The numbers for “cases per month” include those under investigation at the time this report is generated. These may or may not eventually become a confirmed case of the notifiable disease.

Notifiable diseases (Waikato District) - period to: February 2026

*Stats NZ estimated 8.69% of the population resided in Waikato in 2021

Disease name	Waikato cases per month			Cases per month over the last year (mean)		
	December	January	Trend	Waikato	National	% Waikato*
Botulism	0	0	-	0.0	0.0	-
Bruceellosis	0	0	-	0.0	0.1	0
Campylobacteriosis	70	60	▼	49.2	470.0	10
COVID-19	89	102	▲	164.3	1,968.5	8
Cryptosporidiosis	1	2	▲	10.6	72.1	15
Decompression sickness	0	0	-	0.0	0.2	0
Dengue fever	4	7	▲	2.8	44.3	6
Diphtheria	0	2	▲	0.2	0.5	40
Gastroenteritis - unknown cause	2	1	▼	2.2	19.9	11
Gastroenteritis / foodborne intoxication	9	10	▲	7.0	20.8	34
Giardiasis	5	12	▲	9.8	70.7	14
Haemophilus influenzae type b	0	0	-	0.0	0.2	0
Hepatitis A	0	0	-	0.6	4.6	13
Hepatitis B	0	2	▲	0.3	1.9	16
Hepatitis C	2	7	▲	1.0	3.3	30
Hepatitis NOS	0	0	-	0.0	0.2	0
Hydatid disease	0	0	-	0.0	0.4	0
Invasive group A streptococcal infection	5	14	▲	5.3	53.9	10
Invasive pneumococcal disease	3	8	▲	5.8	57.7	10
Latent tuberculosis infection	4	3	▼	2.3	7.5	31
Legionellosis	5	1	▼	1.7	13.5	13
Leprosy	0	0	-	0.0	0.3	0
Leptospirosis	1	1	-	1.3	7.4	18
Listeriosis	0	0	-	0.1	3.1	3
Listeriosis - perinatal	0	0	-	0.0	0.0	-
Malaria	0	0	-	0.3	3.7	8
Measles	1	0	▼	0.1	4.9	2
Meningococcal disease	0	0	-	0.2	3.7	5
Mumps	0	0	-	0.2	1.0	20
Murine Typhus	0	0	-	0.0	0.3	0
Pertussis	23	38	▲	16.3	209.5	8
Q fever	0	0	-	0.0	0.0	-
Rheumatic fever - initial attack	0	0	-	0.0	0.0	-
Rheumatic fever - recurrent attack	0	0	-	0.0	0.0	-
Salmonellosis	14	6	▼	7.5	92.3	8
Shigellosis	1	1	-	0.8	15.9	5
Taeniasis	0	0	-	0.0	0.3	0
Tetanus	0	0	-	0.0	0.0	-
Tuberculosis disease - new case	5	5	-	4.0	32.6	12
Tuberculosis disease - relapse or reactivation	0	0	-	0.1	1.0	10
Tuberculosis infection - on preventive treatment	2	1	▼	0.3	0.3	100
Typhoid fever	0	0	-	0.6	4.4	14
VTEC/STEC infection	13	11	▼	15.0	100.1	15
Yersiniosis	5	9	▲	6.3	92.5	7

We will make changes to this table from the April newsletter. If you depend on this for reporting purposes, please email katherine.sung@tewhatauora.health.nz