

Wednesday 6th July 2022

I have terrible news. Today (Wednesday) Dr Mick passed away.

Less than two weeks ago on the Sunday of Matariki I spoke with him. He was up at Opononi at his very modest garage converted to a bach place and chipper as usual. He was delighted he had just been for a swim [!] and was planning on coming back for another at high tide [!!], and planned on bringing out the deck chairs and sitting there on the beach with Hillary his wife, listening to the waves, admiring the Hokianga harbour with it's Mitimiti sandhills across the water and chatting to the very occasional passerby. He loved it there. Afterall their family had been there to stay all weekend, all of the three kids, partners and very young grandchildren. All had just left to return to Auckland, and he was in fine spirits. Yet a few days later he felt unwell and went into Auckland Hospital.

He had an infection in the portacath inserted for his red blood cell transfusions, as he recovered from the way the chemotherapy which had nuked his bone marrow and incidentally nuked his red blood cell predecessors when going after the cancerous white blood cells. The new and perfect white blood cells had grown back fine but the red blood cells were slow at recovering and he was needing regular blood transfusions while this got sorted out. Hence the portacath to put the transfusions in.

Despite all the antibiotics pumped into him, he deteriorated and went into the Department of Critical Care on life support. While he briefly woke overnight last Sunday he deteriorated further and yesterday the decision was made by the family- with advice from the doctors looking after him -to not prolong his suffering, to take him off the ventilator and dialysis and he died today at 1pm.

Moe moe ra Mick, Haere ki tou tupuna, Haere ki te Hawaiki.

I will let people know of funeral arrangements as soon as I know. Watch this space. In the meantime I am reminded of what Dr Mick wanted. He wanted any replacement to love his patients as he did, and do excellent medicine for them. I don't think I will find a replacement quite like him but Dr Dominic is already striving to fill his shoes. Dr Dom has what it takes: he really likes people, cares and works hard to learn the trade.

Ma te wa, Jacqueline, Dr Dominic, Dr Ranche, Practice Manager Meriana, nurses Paulette, Rachael, Kay and Kathy, receptionists Ana, Jamie and Jane.