

Blog:22.06.2025

I keep promising to update my blogs especially with the changes around the surgery, but the weekends seem so short! There is so much to do, and a nervous new Tonkinese kitten named Lovey is a great distraction too. We have our annual midwinter staff dinner out at my place past Clevedon next weekend and I plan to decorate today as well as start some of the preparations. Sir Haare Williams will join us to talk with staff about Matariki, show us how to find it in the night sky unless there is cloud cover, and what it means to all of us as New Zealanders. At least I made the Christmas pudding yesterday...

Most of you will have now met Jan, our wonderful nurse prescriber, who joined us last year, and will be pleased to learn Paulette is coming back to us July 22nd, They, will make a great team together. Claire Zhang who has been with us for nearly 2 years, has left to study fulltime for the recently opened up pathway to be accepted as a doctor here. She is a medical graduate from a northern Chinese Medical School and being with us has acquired a lot of knowledge of how the NZ medical system works, the work we do, and all the medical jargon's English names! We are hoping that she can get a house surgeon job at Middlemore for at least a year before coming back to us to practice which will complete her orientation. As Claire says, their system works very differently to ours.

Dr Taua will be away for three weeks on a long planned and anticipated trip but Dr Dom and I with help from Dr Ranche on Fridays should be able to cover the time away. Unfortunately, locums are very difficult to find, and also wildly expensive if available. When she comes back she will continue to attend Medical School on Wednesdays right through to January 2026 when we expect to have another young doctor join us. As of February 2026, she will be working 4.5 days a week with us.

We have got DermEngine up and running: it was harder to sort than we thought, but is a welcome addition to the range of services we offer. Dr Dom has pioneered AI note taking into the practice and has the program Heidi going well. I just have to find room on the top of my desk for a second screen. Getting Heidi going for me is my next thing to do at the practice. It can help with better notetaking which I know I need, and maybe free up time talking to the computer instead of talking with patients!

Our big Rotorua conference a fortnight ago we as information packed and as valuable as ever: Dr Dom, myself, Meriana [Practice manager] and Paulette attended. It had barely half the attendees that 2019 had as the shortage of doctors meant fewer GPs could leave their practices even for such intensely concentrated fast sessions on offer. I got some great new knowledge about such diverse areas as what can go wrong [and how to manage] with weight loss surgery, ketamine in treatment resistant depression, met a fantastic Maori virology researcher [Dr Natalie Nezler] who finally is looking into different ethnic responses and is a mine of knowledge in that area, and lots more.

Jan is flying into the Christchurch conference mid August- similar 3 day format but with specialists mainly drawn from around Te Wai Pounamu. It is an opportunity to catch up with her kids too. I'm going to that one also as there is a large main session on AI in medicine, a good chance to hear of the experiences of other practices and hopefully avoid the pitfalls implementing it for us.

At least today we have turned the corner on long dark and cold nights and in six weeks it will start getting noticeably lighter in the mornings. I don't like this getting up in the dark and coming home in the dark. I hope everyone is warm and snug, and enjoying these bursts of fine weather like today's.

Ma te wa, Jacqueline and the team at Tiakina Te Ora