

Whanau Link

Whanau Link is project providing people receiving care at hospices with free access to the Internet using wireless-based laptops. Its sole purpose is to enable them to communicate online with members of their whanau (extended family) and friends, and resolve business and personal matters. The service is available for visiting family members as well. Video calling via Skype is an important component of Whanau Link's services.

Dealing with terminal illness is a very traumatic experience for all involved, including the patient, their partner, their family and friends. Whanau Link is designed to assist people in this situation by providing wireless-based laptops so that Hospice patients and their immediate family can communicate via the Internet with other members of their Whanau, with friends, with extended family, and resolve business and personal matters.

The Whanau Link project picks up on this clear need and a pilot project was established at the Mary Potter Hospice in March 2005 with the full and active support of the project partners.

The response to the year long trial (Phases One and Two) was overwhelmingly positive.

In 2006 funding from the Digital Strategy Fund enabled us to build on the success of the Mary Potter Hospice Pilot by establishing similar facilities in a selected number of hospices throughout the Wellington, and Lower North Island region (Phase Three). This phase was completed in November 2008 when the service was extended to include Te Rangimarie's outreach facility in Hawera.

Planning is now under way for a preliminary scoping exercise for extending the service to all hospices in New Zealand (Phase Four).

Whanau Link has been the subject of several newspaper stories:

- WL - P3 Launch (Hutt News) (884.24 kB) [PDF]
- Hospice Wanganui [JPG]
- WL - Te Rangimarie NP (919.45 kB) [JPG]
- WL - P2 Launch (Wellingtonian) (346.06 kB) [JPG]

There is also a video 'story' about Whanau Link.

Wellington ICT recently received approval to assign unspent funding from Phase Three to the following tasks:

- Extend Phase Three to include the small outreach facility in Hawera.
- Carry out a comprehensive assessment and scope out the requirement for Phase Four (nationwide rollout to all hospice centres in New Zealand).