

Transforming the quality of cancer care

The Kathleen Kilgour Centre's location on the Tauranga Hospital campus enables it to offer a multidisciplinary approach to care.

It means radiotherapy and chemotherapy experts, registrars and oncologists – including those who work next door at the DHB – can come together and discuss patient treatments.

This fits better with today's healthcare model, as these days complicated cancers need to be discussed across various specialties, says founder and director Mark Fraundorfer. Before the Kathleen Kilgour Centre was established, these multidisciplinary meetings "just didn't happen", says Mark, also a consultant urologist at Tauranga's Urology Bay of Plenty.



Mark Fraundorfer

A point-of-difference for the centre

A Southern Cross Affiliated Provider for radiotherapy services, the Centre provides publicly and privately funded comprehensive radiotherapy services for all tumour streams.



Elekta Versa HD Linear Accelerator

A point of difference is it has commissioned two beam matched Versa HD Linear accelerators. This provides a safety backup because if one machine fails, specialists can switch the patient to the next. The Kathleen Kilgour Centre is also one of just two facilities to offer ABC technology to protect the heart during breast cancer treatment.

As for future plans for the Centre, Mark will focus on three areas: keeping staff abreast of all new technologies; training young graduates as radiation therapists, physicists and oncologists; and equipping the Centre with the best gear.

"If we have great staff, are teaching people and have the best equipment, we can provide the best care," Mark says.

An award-winning interior

The Centre has also won many awards for its physical design, including the "public architecture award" at the NZ Architecture Awards 2015 and the "excellence award" at the Property Council of NZ national contest 2015.

A paddle features as a recurring motif throughout the interior, which Mark says symbolises Tauranga harbour and the company's mission statement, "the patient journey".

Kathleen Kilgour Centre is also environmentally friendly, with a solar panel roof enabling the Centre to generate much of its own electricity. The company's website says the original vision for the centre was to make a difference to the lives of people with cancer. Asked if he has achieved this, Mark's reply is yes.

His original career plan had been marine biology, however this changed when his mother Kathleen (who gave the Centre its name) was diagnosed with advanced bowel cancer. Experts had advised Kathleen to restrict treatment to palliative care, but she pushed to have chemotherapy and radiotherapy so she could complete her thesis in English Literature. They agreed, and she fulfilled on her dream before she passed in 1975.

Mark believes his mother would have been proud. However: "It's not about our mother – it's about all people who have gone on this journey."

Affiliated Provider programme attractive for certainty and simplicity

More certainty over what a patient would have to pay and a simplified process for patients (who are Southern Cross members) are core reasons underpinning the Kathleen Kilgour Centre team's decision to become a Southern Cross Affiliated Provider for radiotherapy services.

"It de-risks the situation for the poor patient," Mark says, "so there's no uncertainty around what the patient would be paying."

It's dealt with between the provider and Southern Cross. Southern Cross puts the money straight into the Affiliated Provider's bank account so the Affiliated Provider doesn't need to chase patients for payment, he adds.

"It's absolutely great to be able to consult with patients, where no money changes hands. It's very simple for all involved." Overall, Mark says, becoming an Affiliated Provider for radiotherapy treatment has benefited patients most.

"Patients love it, and if patients love it then we love it."



Kathleen Kilgour Centre waiting room