

Taranaki firm wins major hospital deal

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TOP of the range Taranaki beds are to be rolled out across Waikato's public hospitals in a deal worth nearly \$3 million.

Specialist hospital bed manufacturer, Howard Wright Ltd, of Bell Block, has won the first \$2.9m tender for 800 hospital beds.

The prize-winning company won the tender from stiff international competition and after rigorous clinical trials.

The Waikato DHB had realised it was up for a big bill when a survey two years ago found most of its ageing beds were in a sorry state.

The Waikato DHB can now gradually scrap its condemned and out-of-date models and wheel in the sparkling new all-electric beds worth nearly \$4000 each.

First to benefit will be the smaller Waikato hospitals in Taumarunui, Te Kuiti, Tokoroa and Thames, Waikato Health chief operating officer Jan Adams said yesterday.

Waikato Hospital, a 600-bed tertiary hospital which many Taranaki patients are referred to, will be the next.

The initial project, which also includes about 80 hospital beds for Hawke's Bay and Lakes DHB's, should be completed by the middle of next year.

Intensive care beds, cots and emergency department beds were still to be purchased as part of the \$3.3m replacement.

Ms Adams said Howard Wright has a good track history and it was pleasing that the money was staying in New Zealand and within the Midland region.



Bruce Moller

The replacement of the beds within the large busy hospital at Hamilton would have to be run like a military operation.

"It is a very large project. We will start the rollout in December." It was an unusual situation to replace all the beds at the one time, she said.

"We had an audit a couple of years ago and we found that 55 per cent were in very poor condition and another 20 per cent had a limited life."

"We decided to go large and replace them in a rollout programme."

The hi-tech beds would decrease back injuries for nurses and accidents with beds, she said.

Howard Wright chief executive Bruce Moller said the contract was good news for the 32-strong team at Bell Block, especially as they had been up against all the major international companies.

"It was quite a process to go through and it was good to cross the line in the end. It gives you confidence that you can compete." He described the beds as general ward fully electric hospital beds.

The work would make up 25 per cent of their business for the next 10-12 months, he said.

Howard Wright won several prizes at last year's Taranaki business awards, including runner-up in the supreme business award, the large business award and the Capenz Engineering Award.