

20/12/84

Ownership of Iona Hospital transferred

Ownership of New Plymouth's Iona Hospital has been transferred to the Southern Cross Hospital Trust, it was announced today.

The transfer will result in an increase in the number of surgical beds at the hospital as well as an upgrading of existing facilities. It is expected these developments will begin within 12 months.

Announcement of the transfer was made in a joint statement by the Iona Trust Hospital Board and the Southern Cross Hospital Trust. The transfer will be effective from March 1.

Iona Board of Trustees

chairman Mr Victor A. Hadlow, New Plymouth, said his board had completed an extensive study of the hospital to seek the best way of ensuring first-class private hospital facilities continued to remain available to the people of Taranaki in the long term.

With the ever-increasing costs of administration, building and equipment replacements, the study showed conclusively this aim would best be met by

Southern Cross assuming responsibility for the future operation of Iona.

Mr Hadlow said the present trust board wished to place on record its appreciation of the unstinting devotion to duty shown by its nursing and other staff members and of the goodwill shown to it by so many ex-patients and well-wishers in the Taranaki district.

While Southern Cross

will assume responsibility for the hospital all current staff are being retained, Mr Hadlow said.

Mr Peter A. Smith, Auckland Southern Cross Chief Executive, said the Southern Cross Hospital Trust was a charitable trust and an associate organisation of the Southern Cross Medical Care Society, New Zealand's largest health insurer, with a membership of 900,000 people.

"It is the largest private surgical hospital organisation in New Zealand, handling more than 12,000 operations per year.

Hospitals

"Southern Cross runs other hospitals — in Auckland (2), Rotorua, Palmerston North and Christchurch — and next month will open a new \$3 million hospital in Tauranga," he said.

Mr Smith added: "We recognise the need for good private hospital facilities in New Plymouth and up to the present these have been provided by Iona, and with the very large Southern Cross membership in the area and the growth of Taranaki we look forward to some exciting developments including plans to increase the number of surgical beds and to upgrade the existing facilities.

"It is expected that these developments will commence within 12 months.

"For several years Southern Cross has given support to Iona and we are very proud indeed to have the hospital join our group," he said.