



**Making a huge difference:** Breast surgeon Ian Campbell is a pioneer in breast cancer research in the region.

Photo: MARK TAYLOR

# Hard work pays off for surgeon

Ian Campbell's efforts have resulted in his appointment to Auckland University's School of Medicine as Associate Professor in Surgery. **Natalie Akoorie** reports.

An appointment to a top research post will free up renowned Waikato breast cancer surgeon Ian Campbell to make the difference he's always wanted.

Professor Campbell, who will continue to be based at Waikato Hospital, is a pioneer in breast cancer research in the region.

The 52-year-old, who has a proven track record in clinical research improving breast cancer outcomes, has been appointed Associate Professor in Surgery at Auckland University's School of Medicine. The post will free him up to drive the research even further.

"I've always wanted to make a difference really, especially in the breast cancer area and the only way to go forward to develop better treatments that are considered more effective and have less side effects is through research."

Prof Campbell took up a position at Waikato Hospital in 1993, having qualified as a surgeon in 1987 before working in Britain and Australia.

The main drawcard for returning to the Waikato, where he had once worked as a registrar, was because the region was one of two in the country with a pilot breast cancer screening programme set up in the early 1990s.

"I was interested to progress setting up specialist breast screening services for public (patients)," said Prof Campbell, who went on to set up a database from screening assessment onwards and got involved in the national screening advisory group, and the national breast cancer screening programme.

"We've built a bigger and better

breast cancer research programme thanks to the support of the Waikato Breast Cancer Trust."

Chair of the Waikato Breast Cancer Trust, Prof Campbell set up the charitable trust to raise funds to support that programme, about eight years ago. "That's now supporting four research nurses and three staff to run our Waikato Breast Cancer register."

During his time in Australia's Newcastle under John Forbes, professor of surgical oncology at Newcastle University and director of research for the Australia and New Zealand Breast

studies and will continue to be involved with some of the international multi-disciplinary studies of new breast cancer treatment."

Prof Campbell said his new role would involve building up general surgical research, not just in his speciality area of breast cancer.

"The bulk of my time in this position is going to continue to improve on the research programme that we're running.

"But another aspect of it is to establish an academic surgical unit at Waikato Clinical School that will help provide more opportunities for research by our medical students and registrars."

The biggest challenge would be the platform for providing more surgical research in the Waikato.

"We need to provide a good forum to encourage the medical students and registrars coming through to be able to present their concepts and ideas and give

them encouragement and advice to go forward."

Prof Campbell would continue as a breast cancer surgeon but, with support from his colleagues, has dropped some of his on-call commitments, freeing up enough time to concentrate on the extra research and teaching.

Auckland University School of Medicine Professor of Surgery John Windsor said he looked forward to working with Prof Campbell to strengthen research which was highly significant to both the local and national scene.

"He is a highly respected breast surgeon who has, largely in his own time, developed important national and international roles in breast cancer research," Prof Windsor said.



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Cancer Trials Group, Prof Campbell was introduced to clinical trials.

"It enabled me to see some of what was happening internationally in terms of opportunities to get involved with that and John has been a great mentor to me."

Up until now Prof Campbell and his team at the Waikato Breast Care Centre have been covering studies from breast cancer prevention trials through to methods of diagnosis, better surgical techniques and better drug therapies.

In his new position, he wants to expand breast cancer research and get more involved with molecular scientists, "to expand our horizons in those directions".

"I hope to do some work on our local