

August 2025

Hon Tama Potaka - MP for Hamilton West

“It’s a proud moment for Hamilton – and a significant step forward for our region – with Cabinet officially approving the establishment of New Zealand’s third medical school right here at the University of Waikato.

This new graduate-entry programme will train 120 new doctors each year from 2028, with a strong focus on rural health and primary care. It creates a flexible pathway into medicine and reflects the growing strength of our city as a hub for education, research, and healthcare.

I want to acknowledge the long-standing efforts of former Hamilton MPs David Bennett and Tim Macindoe, and current MP for Taupō, Louise Upston, who championed this cause for years. It’s fantastic to see that advocacy now delivering real results. This investment will give more students from Hamilton and the wider Waikato the opportunity to pursue medicine close to home – and contribute directly to the communities they come from.

This announcement also reinforces the wider economic and social momentum we’re seeing across Hamilton.

In my role as MP, I am privileged to be visiting many Hamilton City and Waikato businesses who are managing these challenging times through careful and prudent management. Some are newly established enterprises and some long-standing businesses which have contributed considerably to our community and provided employment opportunities. Thank you to all those companies who manage the risks and pitfalls of the current economic circumstances and who adapt to such challenges. We may be heartened by the positive outcomes which keep essential industries functioning.

Despite global challenges, the Government is staying the course by focusing on what we can control to support investment, create jobs and grow the economy. There has been positive feedback from Hamilton businesses with regard to the investment boost provision to immediately deduct 20% of the cost of a new asset, on top of depreciation.

For the first time in 13 years, international flights are back at Hamilton Airport. The first flight from Sydney touched down to a buzzing terminal. This is great news for our city with around 100,000 more passengers a year and \$45 million into the local economy.

Our city's growth is also reflected in the education sector. Erica Stanford recently visited several local schools, including Hamilton East Primary School and Mangakōtukutuku College. The Minister announced the construction of four new classrooms for Hamilton East and new classrooms for schools in other regions. Since then, she has announced further new classrooms in other parts of the country, a response to the increased population growth. At Mangakōtukutuku College the Minister met with the leadership team, teachers and students to hear firsthand about the challenges they are facing and the opportunities ahead.

It was especially fitting that Mangakōtukutuku College was part of the visit, with head student Nydius Wilson going on to represent Hamilton West at this year's Youth Parliament. He was joined by Arden Morunga from St John's College, who represented Hamilton East – a proud moment for both electorates and a clear example of the leadership emerging from our local schools.

Our growing population means we also need a strong and responsive health system – and that's where we're seeing real progress. Over the next year more than 215,000 elective procedures will be delivered – 21,000 more than previously planned. This undertaking includes surgery for those needing knee or hip replacements, cataracts and other procedures. 180 overseas-trained doctors have shown interest in a new Government-funded training programme, with the first 10 starting in the Waikato this month.

A new air ambulance helicopter is boosting emergency response across Auckland, Northland and Waikato. It is one of nine new aircraft being added to the national fleet.

Further positive news is that Hamilton Kirikiriroa is no longer the ram raid capital of New Zealand. In the Waikato ram raids have dropped from 138 in 2022 to just one in April this year. There is less violent crime and serious assaults and there are more Police on the beat.

As a result of a focused effort to support whānau and families in emergency housing, fewer households are living in emergency housing. MSD has worked hard with these families which has resulted in a better outcome for tamariki. Proper housing means a world of difference for whānau in terms of improved health, stable education and regular employment. This positive outcome has resulted in Ulster Street coming back to life.

Authorised by Tama Potaka MP, Hamilton West.