

Creating a NSW first

As part of Blacktown Hospital's Expansion Project 40 unique carer zones were commissioned in single rooms across the new facility. These carer zones were created directly in response to consumer feedback to provide comfortable accommodation for carers staying overnight with patients.

Why patients want carers to stay overnight

Patients may need their carer to stay overnight for many reasons. Communicating in English may be difficult, they might be confused or they might need the reassurance of a familiar person with them during a health crisis.

Before carer zones

Staying overnight for carers meant an uncomfortable night in a chair by the patient's bed. By the time the patient was discharged carers would be exhausted and sore. Some wards did not allow carers to stay overnight at all causing a variance in carer and patient experience.

Making carer zones work

Beyond the built facility, carers staying over night are provided with a fact sheet and carer card to access discount parking. Staff receive educational resources and procedure documents to help support everyone's comfort and safety. Both carers and staff are able to provide feedback that ensures continued improvement for the patient experience.

Outcomes of carers staying overnight

Evaluation from patients and carers told us they found improvement in the following

- comfort and reduced anxiety
- communication support
- support in personal care activities

Staff found improvement in:

- The communication between staff, carers and patients
- The provision of patient centred care
- Staff workload
- Increased opportunity to provide carer education and resources in patient support

Welcoming carers stay overnight gives validation to the importance of the caring role and reduces variation in the carer experience.

Next Steps

Since its launch in April 2016, carer zones have attracted the attention of other local health districts. Carer zones are being considered in the Westmead Redevelopment plans.

A Carer's Story: Ruta and Vela Aged Care Unit Blacktown Hospital

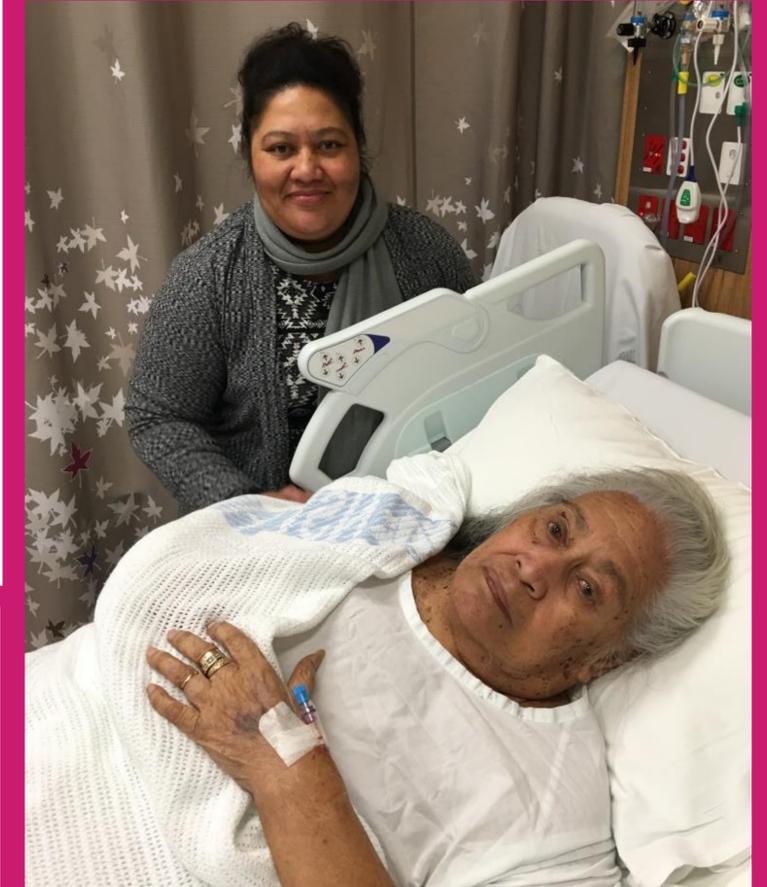
"I was able to stay overnight with my mum and I am so overwhelmed by the ideas that they created.

It's so brilliant. It's great for the carer who wants to stay overnight with their parents... so last night I had a great, great sleep on a bed.

Every time I come here to the hospital I have to sleep on a chair but thank God for whoever created this idea because last night I actually slept on a bed and I had a great, great sleep.

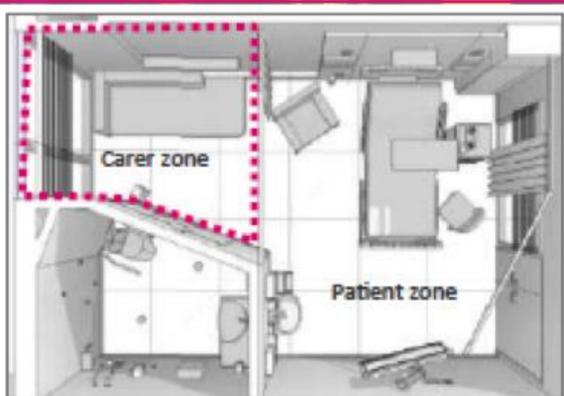
Thank you very, very much."

- Ruta Vatau



Right: Ruta Vatau from Blackett and her 84-year old mum Vela Fiti.

Ruta was the first carer to stay overnight in one of our new carer zones with lounges that convert to overnight beds so a friend or family member can stay overnight with an adult patient. Scan the QR code to see Ruta's interview.



The carer zone concept conceived by consumers, architects and the planning team.



The completed patient room with carer zone.



Enrolled nurse Bettina welcomes Ruta and provides a welcome pack.. Drawing the curtain separates the carer zone from the nursing zone.



Nurse Azizeh makes up the bed for an overnight stay.

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