

NZ tops foreign nurse list

by Grace Edwards

New Zealand tops the list of countries most reliant on foreign nurses, according to a study published in the latest edition of the international journal *Health Affairs*.

The Trends in International Nurse Migration study revealed 23% of registered nurses in New Zealand had been trained overseas, compared to 8% in Ireland and the United Kingdom and 6% in Canada.

The study appears in the May/June issue of the US-published journal.

New Zealand Nurses Organisation chief executive Geoff Annals says New Zealand's dependence on overseas-trained nurses is a result of poor planning.

"New Zealand has had a very ad hoc workforce plan. We need to forecast need and plan for it."

Annals says there is no balancing of the number of students being trained and the number of nurses needed in the workforce.

He criticises the policy of recruiting foreign nurses from mainly developing countries.

"The main problem is that it's not sustainable because there is an international shortage of nurses."

"New Zealand is actually competing with much wealthier countries when recruiting staff."

In 2001, the nurses organisa-



NEW ZEALAND REGISTERED NURSE: The sought-after badge.

tion estimated that about 2000 nurses would be needed in New Zealand.

Annals believes that figure would be much the same today — if the information was available.

The Ministry of Health would not comment on whether or not

New Zealand had a nursing shortage.

Annals says recruiting nurses from developing countries, which are experiencing shortages themselves, is not a responsible policy.

"It's not good global citizenship. Some would even say it's

immoral."

In 2001 the Ministry of Health estimated that district health boards were spending \$100 million on recruitment.

Annals would like to see an increase in spending on nursing training instead of money being spent on recruiting nurses from

overseas. But Auckland University of Technology's head of nursing, Mary MacManus does not believe there is currently a shortage of nursing graduates in New Zealand.

She says the supply of nurses coming out of training courses is meeting the demand for them.

"For some time a number of our graduates have gone to Australia in order to get new graduate places."

"Our graduates have to compete for jobs and it's not always that all of them actually get the job they want."

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MacManus says AUT is putting more nurses through the undergraduate programme now than five years ago.

AUT has about 580 undergraduate nursing students.

Geoff Annals agrees that new nurses face competition to get a job but says the shortage in New Zealand is more about a lack of experienced nurses.

"Lots of work places are busy and may not have the ability to take on a large number of new graduates. They want experienced nurses."

The face of *The Human Body* visits Auckland

by Nic Daley

Celebrity scientist Professor Lord Robert Winston was in Auckland last week as part of a fundraising event for the Liggins Institute.

Winston is a patron of the institute, a medical research unit within the University of Auckland focussing on foetal and child development.

The British scientist has presented BBC documentaries such as *The Human Body* and *The Human Mind*.

He is also a professor of fertility studies at the Imperial College, London.

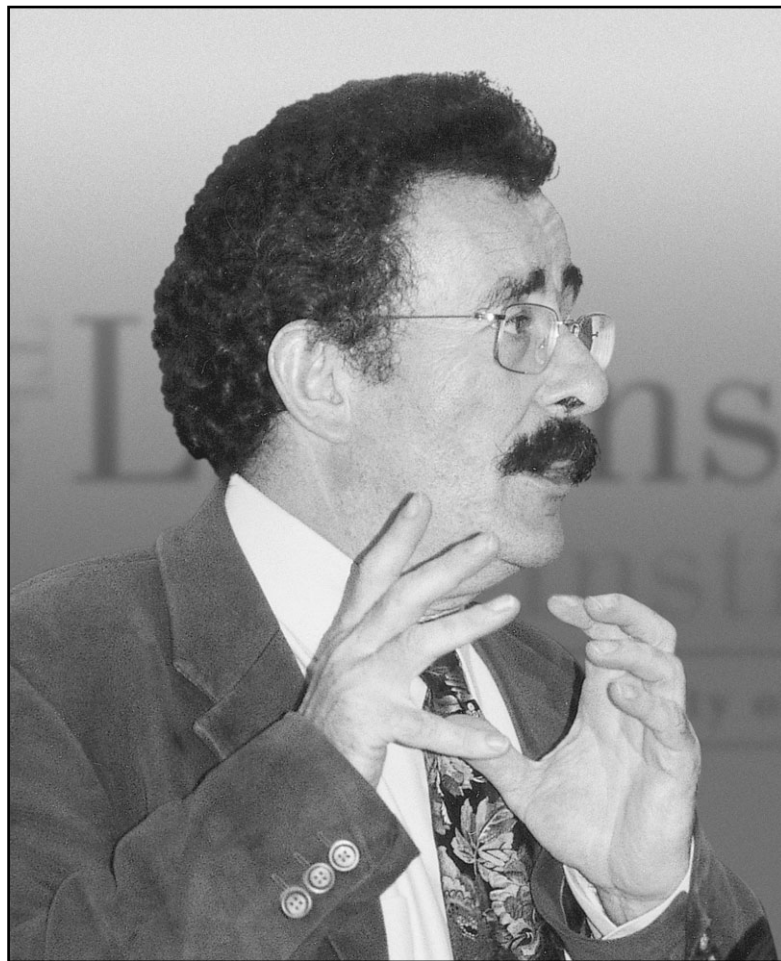
Pandora Carlyon, manager of communications and development at the institute, says Lord Winston assisted it with fundraising and worked with some of its scientists.

Winston's documentary on child development — *A Child of our Time* — has just finished screening on TV1.

It has generated a lot of interest in the science at the institute.

Carlyon says his speeches always generate interest, as he discusses subjects such as fertility and assisted reproduction.

"He always sparks debate and he has an extraordinary ability to make complex ideas accessible and understood by wide areas of the community."



PROFESSOR: Lord Robert Winston.

Winston spoke about new birth technologies, fertility, and whether the public should trust scientists.

The money raised from the

events supports current research programmes, and initiatives that are in the early stages of development at the Liggins Institute.

Ambitious drive tackles diabetes before it strikes

by Gemma Finlay

Diabetes prevention is on the road throughout the Waikato region.

A blue and white bus, decked out with medical equipment, is screening potential participants for a diabetes prevention study.

"We're going to the people," says Associate Professor Elaine Rush of AUT.

The study, Te Wai o Rona, aims to reduce new cases of Type-2 diabetes by 35%. It targets Maori, who are four times more likely to develop the disease than non-Maori.

Participants show no symptoms yet, but are at risk of developing the disease.

Screening kicked off on May 3 at Ngaruawahia and Rush, director of the Body Composition and Metabolism Research Centre at AUT, says the project brings community, health and academic organisations together to help people make lifelong, lifestyle changes.

Rush says the study aims to prevent the onset of diabetes by slowing weight gain through improved diet and activity.

"It's very ambitious."

Some 15,000 people in the Waikato will be screened at the bus. About 7000 will then participate in a programme of prescribed nutrition and physical activity for two-and-a-half years.

More than 7000 will be included in a control group, which will receive information and testing only.

Rush says she cannot go into specific details of the study but says Maori healthcare workers have been employed to work directly with participants.

Karen Bennett, communications manager at the Waikato District Health Board, says more than 1000 people have been screened so far and screening will continue until next June.

Type-2 diabetes is linked to obesity and differs from insulin dependent Type-1 diabetes which is an auto-immune disorder.

Type-2 diabetes causes an increase in the risk of heart attack, stroke, renal failure and loss of vision.

Thirty organisations are involved in the project, including the Waikato and Lakes District health boards, the University of Auckland, AUT, the Waikato Institute of Technology, and Sport Waikato.

Rush hopes the study will deliver the targeted reduction in new cases of the disease and can provide a model for the rest of the country.

