

# New state-of-the-art care home redefines aged care in Northland

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**Metlifecare's brand-new Oakridge Care Home in Kerikeri meets a crucial need for high-quality aged care in the region. The Care Home offers rest home and hospital levels of care, including secure dementia care, all thoughtfully designed to provide exceptional care in a modern, welcoming environment.**

Since opening its doors on 16 September, the care home has already welcomed several residents and demand is growing fast, according to Nurse Manager, Mandy Beazley.

"We receive enquiries daily from locals and people from right across the country," says Mandy. "Some are planning for the future, while others have mistaken the building for luxury apartments. It really speaks to the quality and appeal of what we've created here."

The facility, designed by Foley Group architects, perfectly blends modern elegance with a warmth that feels like home. Spanning two levels, it provides rest home and hospital-level care, featuring light-filled dining areas, cosy lounges, a library, and activity spaces. The secure dementia care suites offer similar amenities, including access to a 'memory garden' as part of a tranquil walking loop. Adding to the sense of community is an on-site café, open to residents, families, and friends, serving as a social hub for everyone.

"It's such an inviting space that residents from our independent living villas love the facilities too, which is fantastic because we're all part of the same village," says Mandy. Each care suite has been designed to the highest standard, with comfort and convenience in mind. They feature an ensuite bathroom, kitchenette with a tea/coffee making area and small fridge, and private balcony or patio. In addition, residents are encouraged to make their suites their own by adding any personal touches or small furnishings. There are also rooms large enough to accommodate couples, allowing partners to stay together if one requires a higher level of care.

Unlike the traditional funding method for premium care accommodation, care suites at Oakridge Care Home are funded with the purchase of an Occupation Right Agreement (ORA). "It gives peace of mind," Mandy explains. "You know exactly what you're paying upfront, and you have the security of knowing you can stay here long-term. If you change from rest home to hospital care, you don't have to move - we bring the care to you."

For current residents of Oakridge Villas, the new care home also offers the comfort of knowing they can stay in the community they love, even if their needs evolve.

"I've been the Village Manager for 14 years, and during that time, I've seen residents have to move, sometimes far away, to get the care they need," says Oakridge Villas Manager, Craig White. "Now, we can provide a comprehensive range of care from rest home and hospital-level, right through to secure dementia care right here. And for couples, it means if their loved one needs care, they're still able to visit them whenever they like within the same village."

Sustainability is also at the heart of the new care home. Oakridge Care Home is the second Metlifecare care facility



Oakridge Care Home boasts warm and welcoming facilities, including a light-filled café and dining spaces.



Oakridge Villas resident Muriel Dodd, with Nurse Manager, Mandy Beazley

to receive a world-leading 6 Green Star Design certification. The building was designed to minimise energy consumption, water usage, waste generation and harmful emissions, creating a healthier environment for residents and staff. It was also built smarter, faster, and more efficiently than traditional construction, and includes features like improved ventilation, optimised natural lighting, and soundproofing to enhance residents' daily experiences.

"The feedback from care residents and their families has been overwhelmingly positive. They're not just impressed with the beautiful building and all its features, but also with our wonderful care team, who are so passionate about what they do," says Craig.

In addressing the nationwide shortage of aged care, the team at Oakridge Care Home is proud to offer a much-needed solution for their community.

"We're providing something quite unique for the area," says Mandy. "These days, people expect more than just a bed - they want quality care in a warm and inviting environment that feels like home. We're so proud to make that a reality for our residents."

This sentiment was echoed by Health Minister Shane Reti, who praised the care home during a recent visit and emphasised the need for more facilities like it, especially in Northland.

"We know the region struggles with aged care beds, particularly secure dementia. So, I'm particularly pleased to have that offering in Kerikeri and Northland."