

# Memories of Lincoln Maternity

Opened in 1927, Lincoln Maternity Hospital is around 25 minutes from the centre of Christchurch and operated as a Primary Birthing Unit.

Primary Birthing Units provide a relaxed homely environment, enabling uninterrupted birth and adjustment to parenthood, as well as supporting māmā and pēpi during breastfeeding.

In its 95 years of operation, Lincoln Maternity saw the birth and care of thousands of babies. Some of those babies have grown up and returned to have their own pēpi at Lincoln, with as many as four generations of a single family being born here.

The staff have supported and advised countless parents and whānau. Preparing freshly cooked meals with produce from the garden and the best hot chocolates and ice-cold Milo drinks, the staff at Lincoln created a homelike atmosphere for the families.

In May 2022, the Lincoln Maternity unit closed and the facilities transferred to Oromairaki in the new Toka Hāpai (Selwyn Health Hub). It was the end of an era, but the dawn of a new one. The warm, calm and attentive care that Lincoln was so famous for will continue in the new modern facility.



*Lincoln Community Maternity Unit – photo courtesy of the New Zealand College of Midwives*



## Introduction

Lincoln Maternity holds a very special place in many people's hearts. It has stood proud in its place within the community and for so many it was with sadness that this will no longer be the case. For a health system which is there to ensure our babies/pēpi are born safe and well, the actual building had outlasted her days as a maternity unit.

For me, I recall some of my happiest professional times working as a member of the team at Lincoln, including going there with hapū māmā when I was an LMC midwife. The beauty of Lincoln did not come from the building, but from the wonderful team of midwives and other staff who looked after our whānau who used the unit. It is always hard to transfer culture and morale into new space, but I know that the wise midwives and staff will do so as they transition to their new unit.



*Norma Campbell*

This facility has done us proud and the memories in this booklet and the response we have had from our community showed us how much the work, love and care provided in this building has meant to so many. It is time for this building to take a rest but the work, love and care from our team will move with them to Oromairaki and future generations will be able to experience much that was so special about Lincoln.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Norma Campbell".

Norma Campbell  
Executive Director of Midwifery & Maternity  
Canterbury and West Coast District Health Board

In January 2022 Canterbury DHB, with the assistance of Selwyn District Council, made a call-out for memories of the Lincoln Maternity Unit. We asked parents, staff (past and present) and residents to share their thoughts, stories, photos and messages.

The response was overwhelming, and we share some of what we received, below.

*I have great memories from there. I am 72 (in my 73rd year) and was born at Lincoln Maternity in December 1948. These were the days of Sister Day, Sister Smith, Sister Miles and others that slip my memory at present.*

*There were three generations birthed there in my family. Me, my son and two daughters and then one of my daughters had her son there.*

## Like mother, like daughter . . .

By TRACEY CHATTERTON

Jill Webb, her daughter Shelley and her newest grandson Grayson have all started life the same way — at Lincoln Hospital.

Shelley Webb and her partner Mike Davis welcomed their first child Grayson Tangaroa Davis into the world on July 10.

Little Grayson was born at 7pm weighing a healthy 7 lb 9 oz. Ms Webb had planned to give birth at Lincoln Hospital because of her family ties to the place.

She was born at Lincoln Hospital in March, 1976, while her mother was born there in December, 1948.

Jill Webb had all of her three children, including Shelley, at Lincoln. "I enjoyed my three stays there," she said.

At that time, most women went to their closest hospital to give birth unless there were complications.

Mrs Webb was proud to visit her second grandson in the hospital that had played such an important part in her life. Surprisingly, she said the homely, hospital hadn't changed that much over the years.

Mrs Webb was looking forward to helping out her daughter by offering to babysit their new bundle of joy.



Shelley Webb, 35, with her son Grayson and mother Jill.

*In the days when I had my children, you stayed in hospital for at least five days, enjoying peace and quiet, learning to manage and care for baby. The food was a real treat also, home cooked and plenty of baked goods. It was great to be in the company of other mothers and form friendships for life also.*

*When you had trouble feeding baby Sister Day would have no part of the bottle feeds. She was very persistent and would spend a long time getting baby latched on.*

*Doctors in those days delivered the child. My third came quickly and Dr Irwin was painting his house when he was called to deliver Shelley. He arrived in his painting clothes, and I had just had a check up with him that morning and he had told me he would see me in his rooms for another check the following week.*

*My husband reminded me of Sister Day saying when he came to pick me and baby up - she said the car had to be well cleaned or I wasn't going anywhere!*

*Those are a few of my memories. Thank you for asking for them.*

– Marilyn Jill Webb (nee Dreaver)



*Experienced a brilliant aftercare service here in both 2019 and 2021, the meals were always so good, and all the nurses and midwives were so caring.*

– Nicky



*I was lucky enough to be able to have my four children at Lincoln between 1987 and 1993, it was a warm and friendly home-like environment.*

*Staff were very professional and caring, even baking fresh shortbread through the night so you had something when up feeding your baby.*

*They educated me about the value of the cabbage leaves from their veggie garden that had been placed in the cooler to give much needed relief when placed on your engorged breasts.*

*They were so caring - also babysitting your child so you could either walk to the local shops or go for a romantic meal with your husband.*

*I am so glad I was fortunate enough to have utilised this wonderful place and feel sad that it is closing.*

– Elizabeth



*I was going to have my first there, but she came early, and I ended up there for bed rest with her. I had my second there and both times I loved it. The food was awesome, and I loved the unrushed feeling of the place.*

– Sandra

*We transferred there after the birth of my second son Isaac in 2017. Staff were so welcoming, and I got my own room. It was a lovely setting to welcome and get to know your new baby.*

– Victoria



*A curious big brother*

*The Miriams were the absolute best!!! When one recognises you in the street more than five years later and still remembers your name, your husband's, and your four kids' names, that says it all.*

– Victoria

*Fantastic hospital. My rather large baby was born there (10lbs 15 oz) in October 1975. Had the best treatment from Dr. Irwin and Dr. Austin. Great memories.*

– Carla

*I had my second daughter there in December 1988. Loved it. Got the best care and nothing was a problem for the midwives and staff. Relaxed atmosphere, great meals prepared with veges from their own garden.*

– Sue

*It was a beautiful spring day in September when I was in labour with my first born. We were living in Doyleston at the time and were excited to meet our son.*

*We arrived at Lincoln Maternity Unit on Saturday afternoon, and immediately felt welcome, running the large bath in the suite and relaxing with music and lavender in the diffuser.*

*After a long labour our very patient midwives helped us welcome our son into the world on the Sunday afternoon. He is now two years-old and is a big brother to his sister. Memories we will never forget.*

– Georgia



Georgia and Martin welcome baby Leo

*I was born there 40 years ago, and both my son and daughter were born there in September 2019 and September 2021. I also had my antenatal classes there as well.*

– Monique

*The care, the warmth, the feeling of being looked after, the food, the friendliest nurses, the help, the relaxed atmosphere, the cleanliness, the willingness, the best place ever.*

*Thank you for being there for us twice.*

– Jack

*I was born at Lincoln Maternity Hospital in 1991. In high school, I photographed the newborns (and sometimes the always-beaming parents) of Lincoln Maternity for the local paper's birth announcements – a full circle experience!*

– Tessa

*Transferred here after all three of my babies.*

*The staff and the meals provided were absolutely amazing.*

– Pip



*Here are some photos from March 1985 at Lincoln Maternity Hospital. It was around the time that Matron Miles retired. All in our nighties, some with babies having a last night farewell drink before bedtime! Nurse Aid Bev Birch and Sister Steffanson. I don't think this would happen these days?! Very fond memories of both my stays there and very sad to hear that it is closing.*

– Kerry



*Memories from the 1980s*

*Five years ago, I was freshly 18 and had just had my daughter, I stayed in Lincoln for three days before I went home. The nurses were AMAZING, they helped me with my breastfeeding journey and were extremely supportive of me. I'm so gutted to hear this news as I would have loved to go back out there for my next.*

– Denver

*Although I know that it has been a while coming, it is sad to see Lincoln Maternity closing its doors. What a great little homely maternity unit.*

*My first child was born at Christchurch Women's (19 May 2017), but we transferred to Lincoln within a few hours. My second was born at Lincoln Maternity (9 April 2019), and my third we planned to have at Lincoln Maternity, but she was born at home (accidentally). I was still able to stay at Lincoln Maternity for a couple of nights despite having an unplanned home birth (in Lincoln, 30 March 2021).*

– Tor

*I have happy memories of my stay at Lincoln Hospital. Bed out in the veranda with lovely view of the gardens, and desserts served decorated with flowers. Laura was my 5th child and the nurses left me to it. A home away from home.*

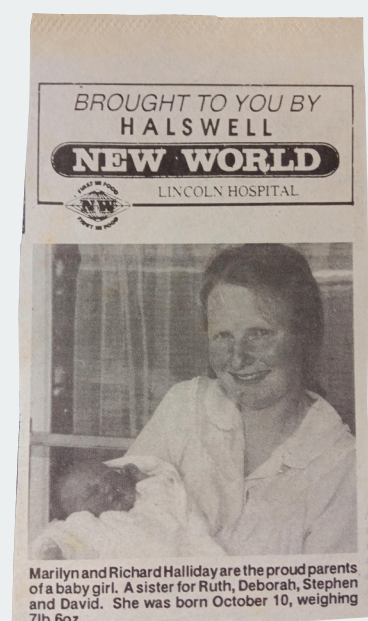
– Marilyn

*Our bonus baby Laura was born at Lincoln, 10 October 1992.*

*I remember us going to view the little country maternity home and then on the day Laura arrived in this very quiet restful country place which was part of its appeal.*

*Best wishes with the new Selwyn Unit.*

– Richard



*The birth announcement for Marilyn and Richard's 'bonus baby', Laura*



*My first experience of Lincoln Maternity Hospital was as a 9-year-old. It was 1966 and my youngest brother had just been born. Children were not allowed in to visit, but that didn't stop me and my 6-year-old brother standing outside the window before and after school calling to mum with a list of requests and complaints. After three days, at matron's suggestion, we were sent to stay with friends in town.*

*Later in 1986, 1989 and 1992, I transferred out to Lincoln after delivering at Christchurch Women's. This was because my parents lived in Lincoln and kindly looked after my other children. Mum would walk with them to visit me before lunch and then take them home to nap. My husband would then go there after work, see the kids and have dinner before visiting me from 7-8pm, the 'husbands/partners only' visiting hour.*

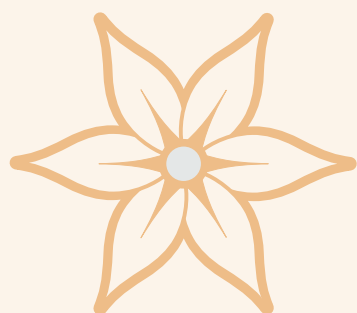
*The staff were wonderful. Babies slept in the nursery at night and were brought to you for feeding when necessary. While busy feeding the first side, the midwife on sole charge duty would go and make you a hot chocolate, then burp your baby while you drank it. You then fed the other side and afterwards, off went baby to be burped and changed by the midwife and back to sleep.*

*There was no pressure to go home before you felt ready and feeding was well established. In 1989 I had planned to go home on day seven, the night before, the weather was appalling, the midwife told my husband "if it's like this tomorrow, they won't be going home." Sure enough, it was still wet and cold the next day so I stayed another night.*

*I treasure the memories of my time at Lincoln. Everything was provided, and the home cooked meals, baking and preserves were Country Women's Institute standard. Beautiful flower gardens and amazing vege patch.*

*Two lovely midwives I particularly remember were Mrs Duncan and Mrs Townsend. Thank you to all who worked there.*

*– Sarah van Leeuwen (de Vries)*



*Went there after having my first child in December 2002; it was fantastic I could wash my birthing clothes and my Mum could pop over as she doesn't drive in the city. The Lincoln Hospital meals were delicious.*

*– Kirsty*

*My son was born at Lincoln in October 1999. I had the two Mariams – such lovely ladies and such a beautiful place to be after having him. Thank you for the wonderful memories of such a lovely place.*

*– Shona*

*Went there for aftercare after my first, amazing food, lovely midwives and frozen pads! I had the whole place to myself and was in the huge sunroom.*

*Great experience for a first timer.*

*– Charlotte*

*My dad Max Gallagher was the first boy born there in 1928.*

*A few years ago, they held a reunion and dad was invited to march through Lincoln with Winston Peters and Tim Shadbolt...he thought he was famous!*

*I was also born there in 1958...the days when the dads had to wait outside until after the birth.*

*– Ellen*

*When my daughter decided to come into this world she gave us a fright and was born via C-section at Christchurch women's. Being our first baby (and by C-section at that) we were in shock and didn't have a clue what to do, so we transferred out to Lincoln Maternity for some guidance. This was the best thing we could have ever done. The people there were amazing at helping with any questions we had. The environment was so calming and quiet, from the first garden stroll my husband took my baby girl on, to the day we carried her out to the car to go home. Those four days were the pinnacle to the start of her life that I will forever be grateful for.*

– Emma



Baby Maya-Rose



Proud Dad Alex taking Maya-Rose on her first walk in the Lincoln Maternity Hospital garden

*I had both my boys there. One in 1976 and one 1979. Lovely friendly small hospital, and the food was great. We were able to sit outside in the sun in the garden.*

– Carol

*I did my antenatal classes there. Also went there both times for after-care for my girls. Amazing meals and staff. Really sorry to see it go. It is quiet and peaceful out there.*

Sonya

*My daughter was born there - we couldn't make it to town as it was a one-hour labour. They were great for a new mum. They helped me name my daughter as they said they could only call her 'baby possum' for a couple of days. They wanted to write her name on the cradle, so they had a lovely sense of humour and respect. I still have a couple of gum nuts I took from the trees when I got to walk around the garden.*

– Michelle

*Definitely an amazing hospital. I transferred there with my first and was looked after so well I felt like I was at a relative's house. Delivered my second there after a long labour.*

*Two ambulances came but my midwife and the midwives there helped me through and stayed there to finish the delivery as was my birth plan.*

*Lovely place.*

– Fiona

*My mum, dad, sister, niece and I were all born here dating back to 1940 through to 1988 so lots of history here for our family.*

– Wendy



*My mum was born there. Myself, my brother and sister were born there and my eldest was born there.*

– Shelley

*Sad to see Lincoln close, I had the most peaceful water birthday there on 26th April 2016 to deliver my beautiful girl Jessica. The midwives were amazing.*

*Thank you, Lincoln Maternity, for the forever cherished memories!*

– Suzie



Suzie and baby Jessica



Zara meeting Jessica

*I was born there 74 years ago, then worked there as a nurse aid and later was the cook. Had my own two babies there as well, and a grandchild.*

– Eleanor

*Oh my gosh the food was sooooo good!!! Such lovely care there after transferring from an emergency C-section at Christchurch Women's. Staff were fabulous, I didn't want to leave!*

– Kimberley

*It will not be the same! The homely feel of Lincoln is what makes it special. The nice setting with the garden, big kitchen where you can make a cuppa and some toast, and the lovely staff. It's going to be a sad day when it closes!*

– Jess

*I so loved having my three babies there. After my first baby, I would very much look forward to my stay there and the food was a massive highlight!! Very fond memories! My midwife Miriam Hughes was extremely wonderful!*

– Greer

*Had a lovely stay there after delivering my first. Loved my stay in the sunroom!*

*Caring midwives, amazing food, wonderful support and guidance for those early days.*

– Sue

*My youngest was born there over 40 years ago... I loved my stay there! My granddaughter was transferred there two years ago, she wouldn't stay - reckoned it was haunted!*

– Mary



Mike, Amy and baby Indiana



Baby Austin

*I thoroughly enjoyed our time at Lincoln Maternity Hospital. I gave birth to two of my three babies at Lincoln; my eldest in 2012 and my youngest just last year in 2021. We were so grateful to have the knowledge and patience from the midwives with our first and being able to stay there for a few nights was something I wish every mum could have. I had help with breastfeeding and they helped me give my daughter her first bath before we went home. With my third baby (second born at Lincoln) it was a different time. In the middle of an RSV outbreak, and 10 days before we went into a level 4 lockdown, which meant my husband couldn't stay with our son and me. I was still looked after well and the icy cold milos were so delicious.*

*I will never forget our time at Lincoln but am very excited to see my future nieces and nephews born at Rolleston and create new memories and experiences.*

– Amy

*I had both babies here. I had Nora at 12.31am on 1/1/17 and Stuff came and interviewed us the next day. I love this maternity ward – the food and spacious rooms, the nurses who stayed up all night with crying babies walking them around so the mums could get sleep.*

*I recommended it highly to anyone.*

– Niki

*I had my son there, a water birth – July 2019. A lovely place, amazing staff and good food! Nothing but fond memories.*

– Danielle

*Transferred there in January 1998, after having my daughter, such a beautiful hospital.*

– Lisa

*The cold Milos were too good!*

– Malinda

*I was born there and had my second son there. Great place, great staff and best food.*

– Leanne

*So sad to see this facility closing!*

*My husband was born there in 1986 and we have 3 boys. The plan was to birth all 3 there but unfortunately the boys had other plans!*

*I laboured there for over 12 hours with my first son in 2014, but unfortunately, he was stuck so we got transferred to Woman's. We came straight back for three nights of aftercare.*

*My second son was induced at 42 weeks in 2017 so he also was not born there, but we transferred ASAP for three nights again of aftercare.*

*Finally, in 2020, I got my dream water birth at Lincoln Maternity with my third son followed by a blissful three nights of aftercare.*

*All of my stays were comfortable, the food was delicious, and it really has a nice homely feel to it.*

*The older picture is my mother in law with my husband.*

*The second picture is my husband with our third born son.*

*Both pictures were taken in the Maternity Hospital.*

*Thinking of all the staff from this facility at this time.*

*– Adrienne*



*Adrienne's husband, Ryan, as a baby in Lincoln Maternity*



*Ryan holding baby Ollie, also born at Lincoln*



*Absolutely the best place to have a baby. Thank you.*

*– Tracy*

*Had both at Lincoln and worked there for a while too.*

*Great place and really relaxing too.*

*– Rowena*

*My husband was born there in room three almost 40 years ago and we have been so lucky to be in room three with two out of our three daughters after giving birth to them.*

*Such a wonderful place full of so many special memories for so many people. And man, the food was good!*

*The midwives were lovely and helpful, especially at 2am when you needed to have a wee sleep!*

*– Deirdre*

*LOVED it. I remember it was mega hot and sitting in the gardens with visitors was bliss. Was gutted I didn't get to go there with number 2.*

*– Kelly*

*Was lucky to stay two nights at Lincoln with each of my babies and it was such a precious time in a beautiful building with amazing staff.*

*– Kate*



*Just loved it! Eating lasagne with my hubby and the gentle help from the midwife there.*

– Rebecca



November 1985. Matron, Robin Smith and Francie Smith (now Ryder) with baby Leisha.

*I did aiding there casually in the 70s. The matron at that time absolutely had the mother and babies' welfare at heart. She would suggest to the fathers to organise a meal out together a night or two before the mums went home. She would look after the baby.*

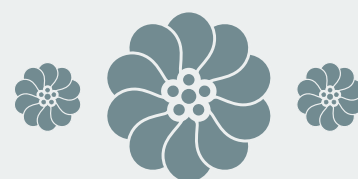
*Many mums later said how important and valuable they found having this time just with their partner. The matron was absolutely hands on, even in the kitchen where the fabulous cook Viv would be preserving the goodies from the extensive garden. Nothing was wasted.*

*The mums got the best care and support along with delicious and nutritious food. A pleasure to be part of those times.*

– Sharron

*I had my daughter at Lincoln Maternity and the staff worked so hard. There was a genuine care and love for what they did that really shone through. I had such a wonderful experience there. When a medical emergency happened to my daughter, they saved her life while staying calm and moving very quickly. I'll be forever grateful. Their dedication and hard work has certainly given a reputation that isn't easily given in this day and age. Thank you for all your hard work.*

– Joanna



*I stayed there after my daughter was born. Amazing place. Lovely midwives. The food was amazing and big portions. Would go back just for the food. My sister-in-law is there at the moment with her second child.*

– Sophie

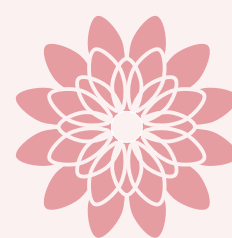
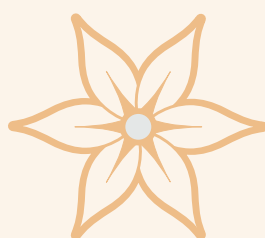
*My eldest, now 18, was born here. I couldn't have asked for a more caring or homelier place to give birth since I was a young mum away from family.*

– Kerry

## The last Lincoln baby

The last baby to be born at Lincoln Maternity Hospital entered the world at 6am on Tuesday 31 May, 2022. Weighing 3.945kg, little Micah is the second son for Rhiannon and Shayden and baby brother to two year old Beauden.

Soon after his birth, the family transferred to Oromairaki, the maternity unit in the new Toka Hāpai (Selwyn Health Hub). Rhiannon described the birth as “the best of both worlds” because she was able to deliver Micah in the homely setting of Lincoln before enjoying a night in the brand new Oromairaki.





## A new era - Oromairaki



*Toka Hāpai - the Selwyn Health Hub*



*One of two calm and comfortable birthing suites*



*The whānau room in Oromairaki*



*A bright and sunny post-natal room*

