

MEDIA RELEASE

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**PRIME MINISTER OPENS NEW ZEALAND'S FIRST PRIVATE RADIATION THERAPY  
TREATMENT CENTRE IN AUCKLAND**

Prime Minister John Key officially opened New Zealand's first private radiation therapy centre, Auckland Radiation Oncology (ARO), in Auckland today. During the opening Mr Key unveiled a plaque to mark the occasion and was given a tour of the centre before meeting patients and staff.

ARO is a joint venture between MercyAscot and Southern Cross Hospitals. The centre, which opened for business last November, provides a private treatment option for cancer patients requiring radiation therapy, and complements the existing public system. Around 125 patients have already received treatment at the centre.

"We have already had strong demand for the service and have been building up treatment numbers gradually to ensure the centre works smoothly," comments ARO chairman Dr Andrew Wong.

Dr Wong says that patients have said they are very satisfied with the service ARO provides. The centre expects to treat approximately 500 patients a year initially, rising over time.

The new facility is close to services treating cancer including radiology, laboratory, consulting suites, chemotherapy and pharmacy, and has ample parking for patients.

The new 1,000 sq m, two-level, purpose-built facility at MercyAscot's Mountain Road, Epsom site operates two linear accelerators (radiation therapy machines) currently, with space for a further two machines later depending on demand. ARO has ten radiation therapists on staff.

Dr Wong says the new ARO centre will treat mainly prostate and breast cancers.

He says ARO has the most modern equipment of its type in New Zealand. ARO has installed a new Elekta Synergy® radiation therapy system with MOSAIQ™ electronic medical records – the first such system in New Zealand.

For more information go to [aro.co.nz](http://aro.co.nz)

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**Media contact:**

ARO, Brenda Saunders – 021 777 171

**Additional information:**

Auckland Radiation Oncology is a joint venture owned and operated by MercyAscot and Southern Cross Hospitals. ARO is located on the MercyAscot Epsom site.