

Pretty as a picture - but who is she?

A team of 6 students is tackling the project of recycling Wairarapa DHBs' old xrays. It will take them around 2 weeks to 'de-sleeve' the films, separating xrays from plastic scans, and correctly disposing of all confidential reports and results. An Auckland company recycles the xrays, extracting the silver nitrate that was used to 'fix' the images. They will supply around 100 wheelie bins for the xray films over the course of the project, which will also require 30 confidential waste bins and 70 general rubbish bags.

"Last year we completed an advertising campaign so that anyone wanting to retain their film could do so," says Radiology Manager Kim Drysdale. "All the xrays are more than 10 years old, and some a very old indeed. All our records are now stored digitally, which is a huge space saver and means xray staff are no longer exposed to all the developing chemicals."

"The DHB has 4 rooms of old xrays, with about 170 linear metres of films stacked in them," says Project Manager Jill Stringer. "To dispose of them as 'confidential waste' would have been enormously expensive, as they literally weigh tons. The students are required to wear protective equipment when handling the old xrays and have set up their processing area so that they can work in the most efficient way. There are 203 'bays' of xrays to be disposed of, and each bay takes the students around 20 minutes to retrieve, de-sleeve and process."

One of the students found this delightful old photo of a young girl, in an xray sleeve. "We tracked down the person named on the sleeve, but regrettably they know nothing about it, so we are appealing to the public through the Wairarapa News, to see if we can find out who she is. The photo is such a delight – the girl is brimming with excitement in her lovely new dress – she looks like she may be preparing to be a bridesmaid" says Jill. "We'd love to be able to return it to the owner or their descendants. It looks like it comes from the 1940's but could be a decade either side of that."

Anyone recognising the photo is asked to contact Jill at Wairarapa DHB.

For more information:

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