

Media release

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Carterton baby first to receive new Wairarapa DHB wahakura safe sleep baby beds

The first of Wairarapa DHB's wahakura safe sleep baby beds is about to go home with its tiny owner.

Carterton baby Millie-Rose Edge and her whānau have been gifted the wahakura, which is designed to provide a safe sleep space for premature or vulnerable babies, including those with a low birth weight.

The woven harakeke (flax) bassinets for infants up to six months of age are based on the traditional Māori way of sleeping babies. As well as providing a natural alternative to plastic pepi-pods to reduce the risk of SUDI (Sudden Unexpected Death of an Infant), the harakeke used to weave wahakura has healing properties.

Millie-Rose was born at 34 weeks in Wellington and was transferred to the Special Care Baby Unit at Wairarapa Hospital when she was nine days old.

Her parents Killarney Joyce and Justin Edge said it was "magic" to be offered the wahakura for their new baby.

"It was awesome to be given the wahakura, particularly as we didn't have anything set up at home for such a little baby. It means we can have Millie-Rose next to us but she has her own space," the couple said.

The DHB's wahakura are produced by Wairarapa weaver Whaea Edith Rolls using local harakeke, and come with linen and education on preventing SUDI.

"It's really special that someone local has crafted the wahakura to help keep our baby safe," said Mr Edge. "We like that it's natural and is something we can keep and hand on."

Wairarapa DHB Lactation Consultant and Safe Sleep Coordinator Julie Foley said it was wonderful to now have wahakura available for local families.

"It's exciting to provide another option to the pepi-pods for our new parents. We're looking forward to having more available to offer to our Māori whānau, and to other families that are interested in having one."

Whaea Edith Rolls also runs community-based wananga where whānau can weave their own wahakura.

Photo caption: Carterton couple Justin Edge and Killarney Joyce with baby Millie-Rose Edge in one of the new wahakura flax safe sleep baby beds.

More information

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