

Waikato Hospital's burns ward gets new equipment

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CHRISTEL YARDLEY/FAIRFAX NZ

Donna Gregory-Marshall suffered third-degree burns to 60 per cent of her body after an accident as an 11-month-old.

For almost 50 years, Donna Gregory-Marshall's story lay hidden underneath layers of clothes.

Every time she found herself in a new place or situation, a familiar question would fill her mind: Will people stare?

"It's only been in the last four years that I've found the courage to wear tops with short sleeves that show my scars," the 53 year-old said.

"Now I'm happy to talk about my journey and my burns. I'd rather people come up to me and ask about them rather than stare and look away."

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Gregory-Marshall suffered third-degree burns to 60 per cent of her body when, as an 11-month-old, she pulled a jug of scalding hot water over herself.

Her burns cover her back, head, and arms.

As a child she received treatment at Waikato Hospital, and on Thursday returned to the hospital as \$7000 worth of equipment was gifted to the burns ward.



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Members and supporters of the Burn Support Group Charitable Trust present donated equipment to staff from Waikato Hospital's burns ward. In the foreground, from left, is Donna Gregory-Marshall, Michele Henry and Vanessa Glass.

The equipment - including a specialised shower chair and three handheld signal extraction pulse oximeters - was fundraised by the Burn Support Group Charitable Trust through its yearly telemarketing campaign.

To date, the trust has gifted \$22,000 worth of equipment to the hospital's burns ward.

Trust vice president Jan Steele said burns patients often faced a long and complex journey to recovery.

"Burns can happen to anyone at anytime. No matter how small, a burn injury is an injury for life. And with bigger burns it often necessitates ongoing care and treatment, especially when children are involved," Steele said.

Gregory-Marshall said the trust, together with family and friends, had been invaluable in helping her accept and overcome her injuries.

"Although I've had about 30 operations not once have I said why me. My scars are my tā moko and tell my story."

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