

DON'T WASTE THE OPPORTUNITIES

Dr Scott Waghorn BDS

NGĀPUHI

Scott is living his childhood dream – a dream he's succeeded in turning into the biggest dental practice in New Zealand.

Childhood Dream

I was seven years old and I saw a careers advice brochure and it said, 'Be a dentist'. It became my dream.

I went to Palmerston North Boys High, nothing came particularly naturally for me. If I didn't study, I didn't get good marks. If I studied, I got great marks or good marks. And if I really loved it, if I was passionate about the subject, if the teacher was nice to me, if everything flowed, I got exceptional marks. A lot depends on your motivation levels.

University Years

Dentistry at Otago is the same as medicine, you have to do your first-year health sciences before you get to select dentistry, medicine, whatever you want to do. I knew for that one year I had to crack the books. I had one year to change my life pretty much, because if I put in the effort I'd get the marks and I'd get in. That was my main focus, to put in as much effort as possible, so that at the end of it, if I didn't get in, there'd be no excuses. It'd be all on me.

Advice for First Year Students

I learned in my first year of study was, don't get behind, because things happen quickly at university. If you miss a lecture or you miss a week, all of a sudden, you've got to catch up on that week plus the week you are in.

There was a really inspirational guy called Eli – he's a doctor now, but back then he was 35, married with three kids, and he was trying to get into medicine. He'd study, and then he'd go work security to earn for his family. I lived in the Hall where they did everything for me, all I had to do was study and wash my clothes. I didn't want to waste that opportunity.



Has your hard work paid off

Absolutely. I own five other practices in Central Auckland, North Shore and South Auckland. I also own a mobile service that looks after 28,000 high school children within 35 schools in South Auckland and Hamilton, plus a large pre-school education contract with the DHB.

My main practice is Dentalcare West. It's got twelve chairs and a theatre. We're the largest practice in New Zealand. So yes, hard work pays off.

Māori into a Health Career

Māori make up over 15 per cent of our population, so we need Māori health providers. Māori work best with Māori. Māori understand Māori. Māori patients love Māori doctors and dentists. You know, nothing beats it when there's a Māori patient and then a Māori health practitioner comes in, it's incredible. We need to be looking after our own people properly. We can't leave it up to other people to do it.