

information.

Photo: KRISTIN LEITCH

Te Whare Rata opens

By Justin Latif

A new mental health service in Te Atatu is helping older psychiatric patients re-integrate back into society.

Walsh Trust chief executive Rob Warriner and Waitakere MP Paula Bennett cut a ribbon to mark the official opening of Te Whare Rata last month.

The Te Atatu Rd home-stead will house former hospital patients over 65 who've struggled with depression and anxiety disorders.

Staff will help them return to independent living. The 20-year-old building

has been used by the trust for 20 years and cost around \$500,000 to refurbish.

"It was getting very tired and it's good how things have come together," Mr. Warriner says.

"We've got a contract for the older persons service for another two years.

"It's about supporting people to maintain their independence for as long as possible."

Ms Bennett says Walsh Trust's new service fits nicely with the government's philosophy.

"We want to see a greater emphasis on supporting people before they reach crisis point," she says.

Mr Warriner says there will be a need for more services as the population gets older.

"The over-65 group is expected to get up to 20 per cent by 2026," he says.

"It's a new initiative providing these kind of services outside the hospital campus.

"Old age is not just a medical issue but a social one."

New service: Rob Warriner speaks at the opening ceremony of Te Whare Rata, Walsh Trust's new older persons service on Te Atatu Rd.

Photo: JUSTIN LATIF

