

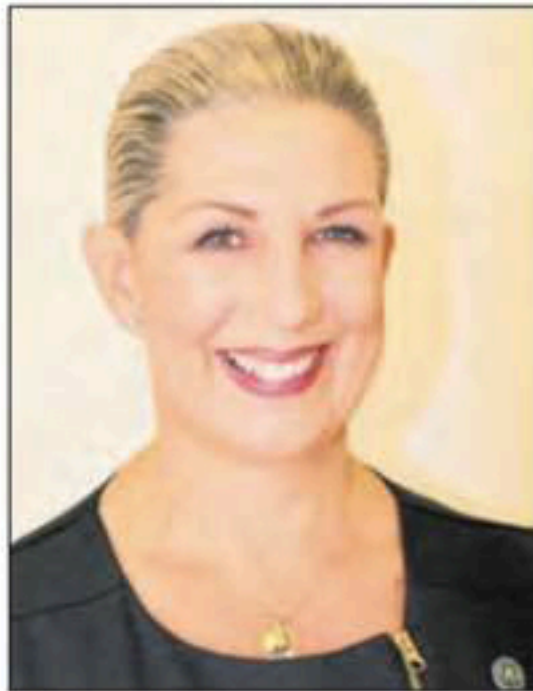
Breast cancer survivors helped with tattooing

A Waikato woman who has overcome two types of cancer is helping fellow breast cancer survivors reclaim their confidence through cosmetic nipple tattooing.

Debbie Casson, the founder of Lady Ink Cosmetic Tattooing, works with women who have been through breast reconstruction surgery. She wants to help raise awareness this October for breast cancer awareness month.

Around 2800 New Zealand women and 20 men are diagnosed with breast cancer every year. One in nine women will get breast cancer in their lifetime.

Within one week in 2012, Debbie was diagnosed with both a rare type of sinus cancer and breast cancer. She understands the emotions of what cos-



Lady Ink Cosmetic Tattooing founder Debbie Casson. Photo / Supplied

metic nipple tattooing can mean to a woman after undergoing breast reconstruction, chemotherapy and radiation.

The nipple repigmentation and 3D nipple cos-

metic tattooing service helps post-mastectomy patients by creating the appearance of an areola after reconstruction.

A 3D nipple can be created by shading with pigments.

For her clients, knowing that Debbie is a survivor herself helps them feel more relaxed.

“Making those women feel whole again, and their reaction when they first look at themselves in the mirror, it really is the cherry on top.”

As part of her training she also learnt to do eyebrows, eyeliner and lips, as chemotherapy can often result in loss of eyebrows and hair. She also specialises in scar camouflage to help with scarring after surgeries or due to other skin issues.

After being diagnosed Debbie joined Shocking Pink, a nationwide charity for woman aged 45 years and younger diagnosed with cancer.

Being a part of Shocking Pink is what led her to train in cosmetic tattooing.

Talking to the women within the group, she realised how financially out-of-reach it was to get areola tattooing done after they'd had breast cancer.

Last year a contract between the Waikato DHB, Tristram Clinic and Debbie was established to help fund this service.

To inquire about Debbie's services contact your specialist as you will need a referral.

■ For more information visit shockingpink.org.nz or www.ladyink.co.nz