

SPRING 2023

How you're making a difference for New Zealanders facing cancer

Newscan

**Your
generosity
in action.**

See inside

Inspiring New Breast
Cancer Research

Karen's Journey with
Tongue Cancer

Meet Peter our Passionate
Volunteer Driver



**Cancer
Society**

Te Kāhui Matepukupuku
o Aotearoa

Welcome to the spring edition of Newscan 2023!

Cancer Society's iconic fundraising event Daffodil Day was held at the end of August, where I joined 8,000 incredible volunteer's street collecting around the country.

No matter where I collected, people came up to me with stories about their cancer experience – either of their own or on behalf of a loved one, relative, neighbour, friend or work colleague. A big thank you to everyone who volunteered or gave a donation on the day.

With 72 New Zealanders diagnosed every day, cancer is all around us. And cancer rates in New Zealand are expected to almost double over the next 20 years.

All of us have a part to play in preventing cancer, improving outcomes for future generations and ensuring that those who are diagnosed with cancer receive the vital treatment and care they need.

Thank you for believing in this mission and ensuring that the Cancer Society is there when people need it most.



Ngā Mihi,

Helen Carter
Chief Executive

Meet Cancer Society Nurse Jane

From a young age, Jane always knew that helping people was her calling. It was only natural that when it came time to decide on a career, nursing was at the top of the list.

Now qualified, Jane works for the Cancer Society as a Community Support Nurse Specialist and is "loving it". Her job involves providing support, advice, and advocacy to patients going through the cancer journey.

"I like to be one of the people on the front line saying to patients, we're here for you and we want to help and support you," says Jane.

"I love it. I really love it. One of the most important things to me is connecting with my patients and building that rapport and being there for them while they're going through their cancer journey."

One of the things that sets our cancer nurses apart is that they often visit patients in their own homes. This can be much more

comfortable for patients compared to a clinical hospital setting.

"Patients would really struggle without us. They are often overwhelmed with appointments and meeting so many different people. So, it's nice for them to just have one face that's always there and they know they can rely on. That consistency of us showing up every single time is what gets them through."

Our incredible team of nurses are on the frontlines, helping Kiwis facing cancer get the support they need. If you want to find out more about the work Cancer Society do, head to cancer.org.nz.



Nursing Support Made All the Difference

In 2022, army veteran Warren was undergoing a stent procedure in his kidneys when the doctors discovered something worrying.

"The doctor was straight up. He just said 'Unfortunately, you have stage four prostate cancer.'"

During the stress and uncertainty of a cancer diagnosis, having someone who understands exactly what you are going through, and can offer expert advice, explain complex treatment plans, and provide support, can be a lifeline. For Warren, that's where Cancer Society Nurse Jenny has been invaluable.

"It makes you stronger and it helps you to keep going."

"Jenny [the Cancer Society Nurse] is amazing. She rings all the time and asks how I am. It just really really helps me to know that someone is there, that someone cares and is looking out for you... It makes you stronger and it helps you to keep going."

Knowing someone will listen, that's also a big thing because I don't want to be a burden to my wife, or my family. So having [Nurse Jenny] just makes this [journey] easier."

For the last year, Jenny has supported Warren throughout this difficult journey. And when Warren needed to travel down to hospital for radiation treatment for four weeks, Jenny was able to ensure he had a place to stay at our Lodge.

"You know, if I had millions of dollars, I would give it to [the Cancer Society]... We were so lucky to be able to use the Lodge. The whole place was amazing. It was just this place of healing. And the other [guests], you could talk to them about [cancer], and they understood because they were going through the same thing."

Warren is currently on hormone treatment to manage his cancer. Alongside his friends and whānau, Nurse Jenny will continue supporting Warren through his cancer journey.

"I just want to say thank you to the helpful staff and nurses from the Lodge and my radiation team. They have been so helpful and caring; I couldn't ask for more."

When you donate to Cancer Society, you're ensuring patients like Warren, have the support of specialised nurses, and vital accommodation to help them through their journey. Thank you for this priceless gift.



Your Support has a Life-Changing Impact!

Over the last year, Cancer Society Waikato/Bay of Plenty has provided:



9,442
Contacts with a supportive care nurse



3,147
drives to and from treatment



12,031
patient nights at Cancer Society's Lions Lodge

Karen's Story

*"I started to get panicky - I didn't realise there was a chance it could be cancer... When I received my results, I could tell by the tone of the doctor's voice that it didn't sound good. **My heart started to race when they told me they were really concerned...**"*

Just after Christmas last year, Karen was diagnosed with stage two squamous cell carcinoma on her tongue. To remove the cancer, Karen would have to undergo intensive surgery where part of her tongue and two lymph nodes, and her thyroid gland would be removed, requiring a major surgery.

Although the surgery was successful, unfortunately two of Karen's lymph nodes came back positive for cancer. After her 4-week recovery in hospital, Karen was now facing a gruelling 30 days of radiation treatment spread across six weeks to ensure any remaining cancer cells were eliminated. And that is where the Cancer Society stepped in.

"The support I have gotten from the Cancer Society has been immense. *During my radiation treatment, every day a [Cancer Society] volunteer driver would come and pick me up and bring me to treatment. I actually looked forward to them picking me up and I would get to know each driver's story and they would get to know me."*

Cancer Society volunteer drivers aren't just a ride to and from your treatment, as Karen found out our drivers often have a personal connection to the cancer themselves. When treatment is tough and isolating, our drivers understand and are happy to lend a listening ear.



Cats Demetri and Deloris brought Karen comfort and joy during her recovery



Karen with her radiation team

"Honestly, I felt alone sometimes even though I lived with my whānau. Sometimes it can be hard to talk about it with them because they don't know what to say. But when you are in the car with a volunteer driver they understand, because often they have been through it with their family members, so you are not alone in the car with them."

"Driving in with the volunteer drivers also helped me to express gratitude. I could see what a blessing it was for people to take their own time [to help] and so I wanted to know who they were and what drove them. And that made my journey more joyful."

It took the focus off me so I didn't have to think about what I would have to endure when I went into radiation, and it gave me something to look forward to when I finished my radiation session.

And if it weren't for those volunteer drivers, Karen says she may have been forced to miss out on life saving radiation treatments.

"If it weren't for the Cancer Society, I wouldn't have been able to afford to go in [for my treatments]."



Karen with her sisters

"It costs a lot of money to pay for a taxi or get others to drive you. My whānau used up their leave during my time I was in hospital so they couldn't take me to my radiation treatments. If it weren't for the Cancer Society, I wouldn't have been able to afford to go in [for my treatments]. So, I'm really grateful to the Cancer Society, just so grateful."

Karen also received nursing support from Cancer Society Nurse Jan throughout her treatment journey.

"[Jan] has been really supportive over the phone, and she's come to visit me. She'll listen to me and give me some really good counsel and I really have appreciated the listening ear."

"You know, Cancer Society is a blessing. They are a gift and I'm so grateful for them. Without the Cancer Society my journey would have been more difficult, and definitely more challenging."

It would have been a huge struggle financially, emotionally, and physically. Not only on me but also on my whānau support."

Kiwis like Karen are the reason the Cancer Society is here. We don't want anyone to feel alone or miss out on their vital appointments. Please consider making a donation to help us continue providing this crucial support by returning our donation form or going to cancer.org.nz/donatenow. Thank you.



Head and Neck Cancer

Head and neck cancer is a general term for many cancers that start in the tissue or lymph nodes in the head and neck.

The symptoms will depend on where the cancer is, but signs and symptoms may include:

- A lump in your neck
- A change in your voice
- A growth in your mouth
- Difficulties swallowing
- Changes in your skin

Having these symptoms does not mean you have cancer, but it is important to get any changes checked by your doctor.

Daffodil Day – A Day of Hope!

The most important event in the Cancer Society calendar is Daffodil Day, and this year was no exception. From our wonderful team of street collectors who generously volunteered their time, to the schools and businesses around the country who joined in, thank you.

In celebration of Daffodil Day, check out these wonderful photos from the day.



“They’ve made my journey so much easier”.



Brian Hosking

Brian Hosking was enjoying retirement. His weeks were spent with his wife, extended family, and he could be often found heading down to the local cossie club with his friends for lunch and a game of snooker. But it was there, in the middle of lunch this year, that Brian received a devastating call.

“It was a shock. I knew [cancer] was always a possibility for everybody but receiving a phone call out of the blue saying, ‘I’ve got your biopsy results and you’ve got cancer’ – it was a shock.”

He had a squamous cell carcinoma that required immediate surgery, followed by weeks of vital radiation treatment. But for Brian, who lives an hour out of the city, travelling in for hospital appointments presented a real challenge.

“At first, I thought rather than bother the Cancer Society that I’d catch a train from home and change to a bus in Newmarket. I tried that for a couple of days, but the weather was shocking - blowing wind a hundred miles an hour and raining! My family said you’re crazy – if the Cancer Society is offering volunteer drivers you should take all the help you can get!”

So, I rang up and it’s been so excellent. The volunteer drivers have been absolutely wonderful... They have been very good, safe drivers and are all so nice, friendly and helpful.”

Whilst undergoing cancer treatment, Brian has also received support from Cancer Society nurse Tanja. Tanja checked in with Brian at home, leaving him books and advice about the cancer treatment journey which he says was ‘very helpful’. But it is the volunteer drivers that have left the biggest impact.

“A couple of days the [Cancer Society] supplied ordinary taxis for me, but I think the volunteer drivers are even better than the taxis!”

“They’ve made my journey so much easier. I certainly would recommend the service to anyone.”

We are so thankful to our incredible volunteer drivers, who ensure Kiwis like Brian don’t miss out on vital treatment. Supporting Cancer Society’s work through a regular monthly donation is a great way to ensure Cancer Society can be there for everyone who needs our help. To find out more about monthly giving, give our friendly donor care team a call on 0800 123 230.

Meet Peter, our Passionate Volunteer Driver.

For Peter, retirement has been an opportunity to give back. For the last seven and a half years Peter has generously volunteered five hours a week to drive cancer patients to their treatments, as part of our wonderful team of volunteer drivers

“It’s very fulfilling... I’ve been driving for about 7 and a half years. I’m retired so it gives me something to do... And the patients that I drive for are invariably very grateful and appreciate of the service that we provide from the Cancer Society.”

Peter’s personal connection to cancer inspired his decision to get involved. After losing a number of close family members to the terrible disease, Peter saw the impact Cancer Society can have in someone’s darkest moments firsthand.

“Unfortunately, I do [have a connection to cancer]. My first wife died of cancer and my mother died of cancer.

“I thought it’s best that I give back, someone’s got to do it... and it’s a really good service that the Cancer Society provides.”

For patients going through cancer treatment, physical, emotional, and financial strain are all too common. Removing even a small amount stress can have a significant impact. And for some, this driving service is the difference between a patient making their vital appointments or missing out.

“I had a patient recently that wasn’t aware of the service. And they had been getting a bus, a train and a bus to get here. And then obviously had to do that all on the way back again. So you can imagine their delight when they found out about the service.”



Volunteer Driver Peter

Peter joins an incredible team of volunteer drivers across New Zealand. To keep this driving service free and available to all cancer patients, Peter says donations are needed now more than ever.

“There’s hundreds of drivers throughout the country on a weekly basis, so you take that away and it would leave a very big impact.”

“... it’s a really good service that the Cancer Society provides”



Peter has been helping cancer patients get to their appointments for the last seven years!

“It’s tough times out there. You know, cancer doesn’t pick and choose. So there’s a lot of people that couldn’t afford to get taxis or public transport to get here so, it being a free service, it’s great...”

...I’d encourage people to donate either their time or money. Let’s keep the driving service free for those who need it most.”

Inspiring New Breast Cancer Research

Dr Emma Nolan is a research fellow at the Auckland Cancer Society Research Centre (ACSRC). After 11 years working in research institutes overseas, Emma has returned home to New Zealand to start her own cancer research group at the ACSRC. Emma's research group is generating a collection of tumour organoids that can be used to study breast cancer.

"To study cancer in the lab we need to use models that really represent how a tumour would grow in the human body - how complex tumours are and also the variability between patients."

"So, in my research lab, I'm trying to use material which has been donated by breast cancer patients in New Zealand, to study cancer in the lab."

Emma's research could have a big impact, which she hopes will lead to new drugs going from a discovery in the lab, to helping patients in the hospital more quickly.

"Breast cancer is really one of those cancers which touches everybody."

One in eight women in New Zealand will be diagnosed during their lifetime, and it's one of those

cancers that even if you don't necessarily have it in your immediate family, it's certainly within your friends and wider family...



"For me, I feel research can have such a huge impact because of the number of cancer patients that a discovery can help. One discovery in the lab can change the outcomes for thousands of patients."

And it is all thanks to our wonderful Cancer Society supporters that we can invest in life-saving research projects like Emma's.



Dr Emma Nolan research fellow at the Auckland Cancer Society Research Centre

"Your support can really make a huge difference. It can allow researchers to stay in New Zealand, to conduct really exciting research that hopefully will have a significant impact on cancer patients in New Zealand. It's a huge support and it allows us to continue working to hopefully finding a cure for cancers in New Zealand."

To watch Emma share more about

her incredible research, and to see inside the Auckland Cancer Society Research Centre, simply scan the QR code below or head to

www.cancer.org.nz/researchers



Thank you so much for your incredible support! We couldn't do it without you.

Waikato/Bay of Plenty Cancer Society

For any queries regarding fundraising or donations please contact our friendly team.

☎ 0800 123 230 ✉ donations@cancer.org.nz

www.cancer.org.nz

