



Cancer doesn't stop for *Christmas*

Seven years ago, I was diagnosed with Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. My chemotherapy treatment went really well, so I was happy when I was able to get back to work doing what I loved, being a nanny. I was told I'd hopefully be in remission for five years or more, but just three years later I came out of remission.

Sadly, it turned out my cancer cells had become quite aggressive. Palmerston North Hospital decided to try three different types of chemotherapy, but when we ran out of options, my doctors suggested a stem cell transplant which was only available in Wellington. Thankfully one of my sisters was eligible to be my donor, so in 2023 we did a graft for the transplant. I then spent the next 30 days in hospital, and the Cancer Society staff visited me and others in my ward often, offering personal help and support, which meant a lot to all of us there. Following that, I spent 70 days here at Margaret Stewart House – a Cancer Society community home where patients and their whānau can stay while they're going through treatment.

After such a long time away, I was delighted to be discharged to my home in Palmerston North,

although it did mean quite a long drive to Wellington for tests. That soon became really difficult, and dealing with all the complications of my treatment became a bit like 'whack-a-mole'. My immune system wasn't coming right, and at least twice a week I was driving two hours from my home to Wellington hospital, doing my appointments, then driving two hours back home. I was going downhill being so far away, and I got admitted to hospital again. At one point, my kidneys basically shut down and I went on dialysis, as well.

When I was finally discharged from hospital again last December, I had to be close by, and couldn't go back home. I was so grateful to be offered a place here at Margaret Stewart House again. There are 18 bedrooms here, and it has a lovely feel to it. I mostly appreciate the nice garden (I'm a keen gardener!), library, and the large kitchen and lounge where groups of us can cook together and spend time chatting and sharing our experiences in life and with our own cancer journeys.

Here, I've been able to live as well as I can and get all my tests, scans and biopsies easily, which has been really good because I actually can't drive at the moment.

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Welcome to the Spring/Summer edition of CanNews 2025!

In this issue, you'll hear powerful stories of resilience, compassion, and hope from across the Wellington Division.



Julie shares her wish for a Christmas at home—her first since 2023—as a reminder that cancer doesn't stop for Christmas. Helen opens up about facing breast cancer for the second time with courage and grace, while Vince reflects on the joy and purpose he's found through volunteering.

We highlight the groundbreaking international research led by Dr Perera into cancer-related complications, and take you behind the scenes with Jennie, one of our dedicated Cancer Support Nurses, for a glimpse into her day-to-day work supporting clients.

From Marlborough and Nelson Tasman to Wairarapa, our regional centres continue to make a meaningful difference in their communities. We also celebrate another unforgettable Daffodil Day and look ahead to exciting events Relay For Life and The Longest Day Golf Challenge.

Earlier this year, we asked for your feedback in our 2025 Supporter Survey. Thanks to everyone who responded. We're proud to share that over 70% of donors feel extremely or very recognised, and more than 80% are happy with how often they hear from us.

Whether you're a client, a volunteer, a donor—or all three—thank you. Your support powers every story, every breakthrough, and every moment of care. Together, we are bringing hope closer, every day. ■

Ngā mihi,

Darryl Carpenter

Darryl Carpenter

Pou Ārahi/Chief Executive

Cancer Society Wellington Division
Covering Marlborough, Nelson Tasman,
Wairarapa, and Greater Wellington.

Cancer Nurse, Jennie

After more than 25 years working in the hospital, community, and a little in the hospice setting, I know one thing for sure: the cancer journey is complex, and no one should walk it alone.

Four years ago, I joined the incredible team of nurses at the Wellington Cancer Society on helpline. Our mission is simple: to provide compassionate, professional support and trusted information to anyone in Aotearoa impacted by cancer.

What I love most is the sheer variety and deep connection of this work. A typical day can involve everything from supporting a person who has just received a cancer diagnosis to helping someone navigate the intricacies of the health system. The core, however, is always the same: dedicating time to listen.

We see it every day: the value of a non-judgemental ear. When cancer magnifies existing life challenges, a simple moment of connection can be empowering. By helping callers recognise their own strengths, weaving in vital information, and connecting them to practical support services, we can help shift them from feeling overwhelmed to feeling heard and understood.

Our free 0800 line can be a lifeline and a beacon of hope, connecting clients to community support services, transport, and counselling. Any question, big or small – my specialised team of experienced nurses are at the end of the phone, ready to help. ■

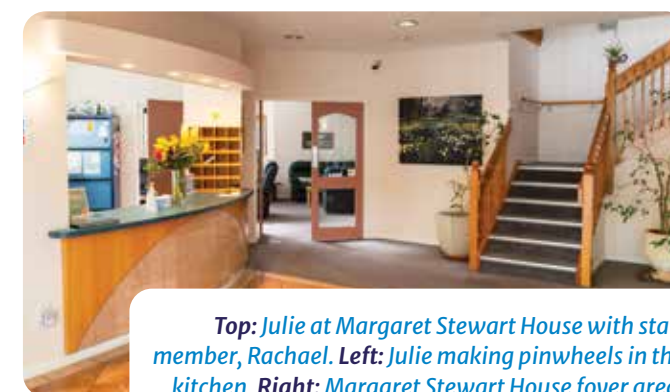


Any person, any cancer, anywhere.

Phone 0800 CANCER (226 237)

Email info@cancersoc.org.nz

Web wellington.cancernz.org.nz



Top: Julie at Margaret Stewart House with staff member, Rachael. **Left:** Julie making pinwheels in the kitchen. **Right:** Margaret Stewart House foyer area.

What makes this place so amazing though, is how everyone supports each other. The staff and volunteers are always here to help. There's even a group that cooks meals and puts them aside for anyone who needs one after a long hospital visit, which is such a nice way to help someone. Us patients are here for each other too, and it's all the little things everyone does for each other that make a big difference.

You don't realise how important a place like this is until you really need it. My two wonderful sisters have been with me as much as they can, as I don't have a partner or children, so throughout everything, I've really felt the extra support I've needed from the Cancer Society.

Cancer affects everyone in their own ways, but going through this whole process has made me feel incredibly appreciative of what's important in life, my loved ones, and all the dedication coming from those around me.

And I'm so grateful for Margaret Stewart House. I don't know what I would have done without it. Being so close to the hospital in this lovely environment really keeps you going, and it's made me feel safe to face everything that comes up.

One way I can show my gratitude is through cooking! I often bake for people here, or take something across to the nurses and doctors to enjoy. It is hard being away from your home, especially for Christmas, because we all have our own traditions. For my sisters and me, the Christmas meal has always been a big deal, and we usually bring together extended family and friends who also have smaller families.

My positivity says that this year, with the support of everyone around me at Margaret Stewart House, I'll get my last few issues under control and I'll be back at home for Christmas.

I'd love to sit in my garden this summer and listen to the birds, and I've really missed my dog, Layla!

I don't know what the future holds, but I don't let the worry of tomorrow ruin the peace of today, and I'm proud of myself for having the strength to keep a smile on my face. I can't tell you how grateful I am for everyone who's helped me stay positive. To all the Cancer Society supporters out there, I would say that your kindness is just fantastic, and words alone can't show enough how thankful I am. I know that so many people would be lost without you! ■

Helen's Inspiring Outlook



When life gave Helen lemons she made lemonade.

I'm a mother to three beautiful girls, a grandmother to two lovely granddaughters, and I've been married to my wonderful husband, Michael, for 48 years.

In 2006, while living in Napier, I had my first brush with cancer, when I discovered a lump in my breast. That was a bit of a shock to say the least. I hadn't turned 50, and my kids were still young. I then had six months of chemo followed by five years on an oestrogen blocker.

I have to say that there wasn't much professional support available back then. After finishing with my oncologist and being told I was OK, that was it. My family was very supportive of course, but I wanted to know more, and there wasn't anything out there for me. You just have to sit with it and carry on with life. It was honestly the loneliest I've ever felt, and my husband was quite lost too, because he didn't know how he should help.

Fast forward 16 years to October 2022, and after moving here to the Kāpiti Coast, I went to the doctor for something unrelated, and was diagnosed with Stage Four breast cancer.

It was another huge shock, and I remember that whole Christmas period for us was spent waiting and worrying. But this time, I also found the amazing sources of support I had wished for before, and the Cancer Society became my first port of call. I enjoyed talking to people and finding the answers I needed, and that was so empowering.

I started going to monthly meetings at the Cancer Society Kāpiti hub with kindred spirits – people who understood what I was going through. It's just such a comfortable place to be because no matter what type of cancer someone has, we're all on a similar journey. It gives us a chance to share information and experiences, and have fun!

I adore my counsellor, Viv, too – she just gets it! She knows what she's talking about, but she also has the heartfelt empathy to understand what it's like walking in our shoes.

The Cancer Society offers practical assistance too, such as meals and groceries, and transportation to the hospital if you need it. The support you get feels so personal – it's like being wrapped up in cotton wool. You have a nest of people around you who just want the best for you. Now I don't feel alone at all, and neither does my family.



Above Left: Helen sitting with husband, Michael.

Above Right: Helen with George the dog at a housesit.

"You can't change the direction of the wind but you can adjust the sails"



I don't like to say my diagnosis is 'terminal' because really, life is terminal. So I say it's incurable but manageable. If it wasn't for the support I've had from organisations like the Cancer Society I don't think I'd have the same positivity that I do now.

I've learnt that I'm heaps stronger than I thought I was, and a big thing for me is not worrying about the future, but focusing on the very day you're in. That's hard, but it's getting easier as I go along.

For our family, Christmas has become even more important than it was before. We have more appreciation of being together and making memories. We are all together for Christmas, then rent a house at the beach for a few days in January – all nine of us. It's a lovely time, where we can appreciate one day at a time and make memories. I can reflect on my family's successes, celebrate having another year, and think about what I want to do next.

I'm still going to my Cancer Society meetings, and I have no intentions of stopping. I'll carry on doing all the things I love, like knitting and spending time with friends to share laughs and find enjoyment every day. I do also have my faith, and I love my family! ■

Cathy Tia
Kāpiti Hub,
Community
Support Advisor



Helen is a beautiful and positive woman. She's one of the most inspiring and courageous women I've ever met, and we are very privileged to know her and have her as part of the Kāpiti hub.

She is such a light in our group. She really does inspire other people, and puts them at ease when having those difficult conversations.

It's so great to see her and her family living well with cancer, and we love having her as part of our family at the Cancer Society!



Volunteering a great fit for for Vince

When Vince Beckett wanted something else to do in his retirement, he found a volunteering role with the Cancer Society that was tailor-made for him!

In the 1960s, Vince started a five-year apprenticeship as a tailor at Bookers the Tailors in Wellington. He then spent more than 20 years working in the fashion and clothing industry before landing his “dream job” as a tutor in the design school at Wellington Polytechnic – later to become Massey University.

In 2010, Vince began phasing into retirement and dropped down to two days work per week. That’s when he began volunteering for the Cancer Society. For several years he drove people from the Kāpiti Coast where he lives, to Wellington Hospital for their radiation and chemotherapy sessions, before his volunteering took an interesting turn.

“I was in the lunchroom at Evan’s House (Cancer Society Wellington offices) having a cup of tea while I was waiting for my client. A lady from the sewing group came in and recognised me, and said ‘You should be part of our sewing team!’”

As his involvement in the sewing team grew, Vince’s volunteer driving took the proverbial ‘back seat’ for his tailoring talents. Now, the sewing group comes together every Friday to prepare and cut out all the pieces, then they’re sent to Vince for finishing in his sewing room at home. He supplies around 25 finished items each week for cancer patients.

“When people ask me what I make, I say I make products that I hope they will never need”, said Vince. “The two main items we make are softies, which are for women who’ve had mastectomies, and hats for those who suffer hair loss as a result of treatment”, Vince explained. “I also make drain bags, which are attractive shoulder bags that drains can go inside so no one knows what someone is carrying around.”

In his sewing room at home, he has created hundreds of products over the years that have been used by people with cancer around the Greater Wellington area, right down to Marlborough and Nelson and up to the Wairarapa.

“Without this volunteering, I don’t know what I would have done with my industrial machine and overlocker, and cutting table at home”, Vince said. They’ve been a big part of my life, but they would be sitting idle now. It’s so rewarding as well. The fact that these products are needed is sad, but it’s good I can help and I know they are so appreciated.”

“There’s definitely no pressure, but I sew for an hour or so in the early evening while listening to my music. And at 80 years old, that suits me just fine.”

When asked what Vince would say to others about getting involved in volunteering, he said, “It definitely

makes you feel good! Everything is appreciated, like driving people into Wellington for treatment. There’s a real need for volunteers, and you’re lucky if you’re fit and well enough to help!”

Thank you so much to Vince and all of our volunteers for your dedication and generosity – we couldn’t do it without you! ■



Top/middle: Vince finishing off a hat. Bottom: a softie under construction at the volunteer sewing group.

Keen to find out more about how you can get involved?

Head to
cancer.org.nz/get-involved/volunteer/
or email
volunteering@cancersoc.org.nz

Practice-changing

clinical trial

triples recovery rates

It’s not every day that a clinical trial reshapes global cancer care — but the BM12 CAST trial, led by the Australasian Leukaemia & Lymphoma Group, is doing just that.

Dr Perera is a haematologist, bone marrow transplant physician, and researcher at Wellington Hospital. He received a national research grant from the Cancer Society to join researchers working across Australia and New Zealand to improve survival and quality of life for people with high-risk blood cancers. The successful outcomes of the trial have led to immediate implications for clinical practice.

The trial tested a new drug combination on patients living with acute leukaemia who were undergoing blood stem cell transplantation. The drugs routinely given to prevent the life-threatening post-transplant complication of Graft Versus Host Disease (GVHD) are a combination of cyclosporin and methotrexate, the standard practice for 40 years. The trial compared this with a new combination of cyclosporin and cyclophosphamide.

Researchers have demonstrated that the use of the new, less toxic drug triples the chance of a person being alive, healthy and free of GVHD three years after stem cell transplant compared to the current standard of cyclosporin and methotrexate.

Dr Perera said the study exceeded his expectations going into it.

“A lot of current international research involves the use of costly new targeted inhibitors or novel therapies, and in New Zealand we have big delays in getting these funded, which limits our ability to take part in the trials using them. However, this study... took an already funded, old drug, and used it in a new way, to show great benefits.”

Local researchers like Dr Travis Perera have contributed to findings now changing how blood stem cell transplants are done around the world.



History, Hospitality and Heart

In April, we held our sixth annual Historical Homes Tour, offering locals a rare chance to step inside some of Nelson’s most beautiful historic homes.

Over 300 people enjoyed the self-guided tour, exploring homes full of charm, character, and historical stories. Each stop offered a unique glimpse into Nelson’s heritage – from original architectural features to lovingly preserved interiors.

A huge amount of effort went into bringing these homes to life. Our volunteers researched histories for each property, staffed the homes, welcomed guests, and served Devonshire Teas – complete with scones and a smile.



High school volunteers ready to serve scones.

This much-loved event blends local history, heartfelt hospitality, and a shared commitment to supporting people in our region affected by cancer.

Classic Cars and Community

The sun was shining, and the engines were purring at this year’s Nelson Vintage Car Club Daffodil Day Rally for Cancer – Show & Shine, held on 24 August at Nelson Speedway.

Rows of classic and vintage cars filled the large field and parking area at the Speedway, turning it into a showcase of beautifully restored vehicles. Visitors enjoyed the chance to get up close, while live music, great coffee, tasty food, and plenty of community spirit set the scene. The day was a huge success.

We were also joined by The Moutere Hop’s Daffodil Day Rally, which wrapped up their own run at the Show & Shine, adding even more colour and energy to the event.



This much-loved annual event continues to grow, drawing big crowds and even bigger heart.

Together, both rallies raised an incredible \$11,241.95 for Cancer Society Nelson Tasman – with more than half of that total coming from raffle sales alone.

Supportive Care at the Heart

At Cancer Society Marlborough, supportive care is at the centre of all we do. We continue to strengthen partnerships and deliver services that bring connection, wellbeing, and hope.

Blue Brothers, Creative at Heart, and Live Stronger are three excellent examples of the importance of community partnerships. From men finding connection and support through camaraderie and exercise, to clients discovering calm and creativity through art therapy, to others building resilience, fitness, and friendship, initiatives like

these are only possible thanks to the generosity of Marlborough people.

Marlborough may be a small centre, but we are mighty — with power to create change. Our Supportive Care Coordinator, Dallace Lilley, ensures clients feel supported every step of the way.

A special thank you goes to Volunteer Coordinator, Hilary Gill, for her outstanding tenure of service and the way she nurtures a strong and caring volunteer network.

Volunteer Drivers Go the Extra Mile

Our volunteer drivers remain the beating heart of our transport service, helping clients to access treatment beyond our region.

Since 2021, the distance they’ve driven has more than doubled—soaring by nearly 140%. In the last financial year alone, we saw a further 25% rise, with demand for the service as strong as ever. Many trips now involve ‘buddy-up’ drives, where clients with similar appointment times travel together. This approach allows us to meet growing need while honouring our volunteers’ time and care.

Daffodil Day 2025: A Community Effort

Daffodil Day 2025 bloomed brighter than ever, marking our most successful financial outcome to date. A wonderful array of August events culminated in a spectacular region-wide street appeal. We are deeply grateful for the community support we have received, which allows us to continue the work we do locally and maintain a strong presence in the Wairarapa.

Daffodil Day is a powerful opportunity for the community to come together and reflect on how we are all impacted by cancer. It also reinforces the region’s passion for helping people right here in our community.

Companionship on the Cancer Journey

This year also saw the heartfelt launch of CanSupport—a new initiative that pairs compassionate, trained volunteers with clients and whānau seeking extra support on their cancer journey.

From sharing a warm cuppa and gentle conversation to a short stroll or a helping hand with daily tasks, our volunteers offer meaningful companionship in a safe, caring space. CanSupport is available both for those at home and in residential care, with seven dedicated volunteers already trained and eager to help.



General manager, Amber, with a volunteer street collector on Daffodil Day.

As the new General Manager, I feel privileged to serve the Marlborough community. To all who donate time, energy, or resources — thank you. I have gratitude for the centre team, the volunteers, the clients who open themselves up to our support, and our donors and sponsors.

We are looking forward to deepening our connections across the region, ensuring every person facing cancer can access the support they need.

Marlborough General Manager, Phillippa, with students from Marlborough Boys College.





Top left – Helpers at Silverstream station street collection **Top right** – The Sharesies team participating in Street Collection **Bottom left** – Staff member, Nora, in a garment constructed by Whitecliffe School of Fashion and Sustainability students **Bottom right** – Bowen Hospital Staff

Daffodil Day in full bloom

On Friday 29th August, the yellow daffodil filled the streets of Wellington as the Cancer Society held its most iconic fundraising campaign; Daffodil Day. We are pleased to say it was another successful day for Cancer Society Wellington.

With over 140 collection sites and nearly 600 volunteers, Daffodil Day was able to reach as many Wellingtonians as possible. Whether that was along Lambton Quay, the Hutt Valley or Kāpiti Coast, the yellow

daffodil was there. We were able to spread our message, connect with individuals supporting our cause and make an impact for the 1 in 3 New Zealanders who will get cancer in their lifetime.

Daffodil Day would not be able to operate without the village of volunteers that kindly give their time to support our street appeal. Standing on the streets collecting donations from 7am – 6pm, our volunteers represented Cancer Society Wellington with a smile on their face, eager to help. We can't thank them enough for giving up their time to help us continue our

mission of reducing the impact and incidence of cancer.

Friday 29th August is not the only day we celebrate Daffodil Day. Throughout the month of August, schools, businesses, individuals and community groups took the initiative to support Daffodil Day by hosting their own fundraisers. There were dance nights, markets, slime contests and much more. Thank you to all who got involved and made a difference!

The response to this year's Daffodil Day was humbling and a great reminder of why we do the work we do.



You Can For Cancer

On October 1st, You Can For Cancer fundraiser Greg wanted to do something special.

To mark 35 years at Kmart Porirua and honour those in his life who have been impacted by cancer, he made the commitment to shave his head as the ultimate fundraiser. The Kmart whānau came together to cheer Greg on, celebrating his incredible milestone as well as his impressive efforts in raising over \$3,000 for Cancer Society Wellington. Inspiring people like Greg allow us to continue the work we do, and we couldn't be more grateful.

If Greg's challenge inspires you, head to youcanforcancer.org.nz to see how you can make a difference.



The Longest Day Golf Challenge

Looking for another reason to get out more on the golf course this summer?

Introducing The Longest Day Golf Challenge. 72 holes in one day. This is the ultimate golf challenge raising money for the Cancer Society. Players tee off at sunrise and play through to sunset, making the most of daylight on the longest days of the year. Choose the day, the course, tell your mates and make a team – or do it solo. It is one of Cancer Society Wellington's much loved fundraising campaigns. Participants love how it challenges them mentally and physically, but even more how it sparks important conversations about doing what we can, for those who need it the most.

Head to longestday.org.nz to find out more.

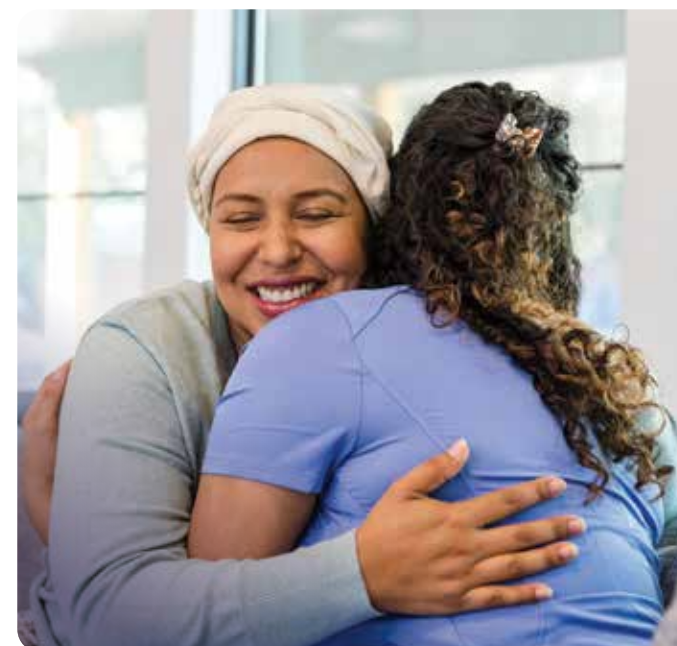


Round the Bays 2026

Round the Bays is back on Sunday 15th February 2026.

Take part in the 8.4km fun run or challenge yourself to the 21km Half Marathon, all while raising funds for Cancer Society Wellington. At Round the Bays 2025, we raised over \$12,000 for Cancer Society Wellington! It was inspiring to see participants from competitive runners and social walkers to colleagues and families all come together at Round the Bays to raise vital funds for New Zealanders impacted by cancer. We want to keep this momentum going for 2026 and support our community as much as we can.

Sign up to Round the Bays 2026 at roundthebays.co.nz, select Cancer Society Wellington as your chosen charity, and let's run for a reason!



Cancer doesn't stop for Christmas

Give the gift of comfort and care these holidays. Donate today.

Please donate at
www.cancer.org.nz/christmas





Let's all

Slip, Slop, Slap

and Wrap

We can't see or feel Ultraviolet radiation (UVR) so, when the Ultraviolet Index (UVI) is 3 and above, for the best protection use all five SunSmart behaviours – Slip on clothing, Slip into shade, Slop on sunscreen, Slap on a hat, and Wrap on sunglasses.

- Temperature is not a good indicator for deciding when to use sun protection.
- UVI Index levels can still be 3 and above on cool or cloudy days, especially between Sept – April in Aotearoa New Zealand.
- To check the UVI levels in your area, download the free UVNZ app, visit the Sun Protection Alert or check the UV Index at NIWA.

You can find out more about each of the SunSmart behaviours at sunsmart.org.nz/be-sunsmart/

Be SunSmart and protect yourself when you're outside from September to April, especially between 10am – 4pm.

Protect yourself all year round when you are:

- in the mountains
- on the water
- around reflective surfaces like snow, ice, concrete, and sand
- outdoors for extended periods of time
- or have a health condition (such as an autoimmune disease, organ transplant recipients) or taking medicines (such as antibiotics) that make you sensitive to the sun.

Wellington Year in Numbers

Key Stats for 2025

Accommodation

We housed patients at Margaret Stewart House during treatment at Wellington Hospital.

4,778
Bed nights

Transport to Treatment

We provided transport services for cancer patients across the region.

181,650
Kilometres travelled

Research Funded

We provided funding to further Cancer Research in the region.

18
Research pieces funded

Cancer Society Wellington

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T 0800 CANCER (226 237)

Donation enquiries:

E fundraising@cancersoc.org.nz
T 0800 467 345

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