

EMBRACE



Celebrating our contribution to Smokefree 2025

As we approach the Smokefree Aotearoa 2025 goal we'd like to reflect on the journey we've been on over the last few decades in reducing smoking in our communities. The Cancer Society has actively encouraged councils to create smokefree environments, worked with other organisations to support people to quit smoking, and actively advocated for stronger tobacco control measures over the years.

New Zealand has made significant progress in reducing smoking rates, but there are still opportunities for further improvement. Efforts continue to address the higher smoking rates among certain populations, including Māori and Pasifika. Achieving the Smokefree 2025 goal of less than 5% daily smoking for all groups remains a priority.

We have made real change across the Central Districts region. As we celebrate this milestone we'd like to showcase some of the work we have done in supporting Smokefree:

Taranaki, became the first smokefree region in the country in 2007 with all councils having adopted a smokefree policy. We revived the smokefree coalition in 2021 and are now working on the Fresh Air Project to promote smoke/vape-free outdoor dining.

In **Hawke's Bay**, we proposed recommendations to strengthen smokefree/vapefree policies by extending smokefree and vapefree zones to beaches, rivers, and outdoor dining areas.

In **Whanganui** we have worked over the years with local health providers to strengthen smoking cessation programs by offering personalized support plans and resources, as well as working with local councils to update smokefree and vapefree signage.

In **Manawatū**, we supported Palmerston North City Council adding smokefree criteria to their Signs and Public Places Bylaw, which was the first in the country. Horowhenua District Council has done the same, modelled off of our work with Palmerston North Council.

In **Gisborne**, we have hosted the Auahitūroa Art Exhibition in 2024, exploring innovative ways to inspire change and create a healthier, smokefree community.

The Cancer Society is proud of our work in reducing smoking rates and the impact of cancer in our communities. With your support, we will continue to help people quit smoking and continue to normalise smokefree and vapefree environments.

Snapshots From Relay For Life 2025!



Whanganui

Paddy Kellow (Team Paddy) completed 80km at Whanganui's Relay for Life 'Festival of Colours'. Paddy was inspired to sign up to Relay For Life as the event provided an opportunity to push himself to his limits in order to raise funds to help fight cancer. In his words, "I felt that more km's would result in more donations".

Paddy's motivation to not stop running came from all the people at the event who had fought or were fighting cancer. To him, their battle seemed so much harder than him running for seven and a half hours. He found "the strength of these people very contagious. Seeing hundreds of people come together as a community to move our bodies for such a great cause set the stage for an awesome experience. More involvement will result in more funds raised". Paddy was blown away with his community's generosity. Most of his donations came from friends and family. It didn't matter the size of the donation, as everything counts. "A huge shout out must go out to all the people who supported me", he said.

Needless to say, because of Paddy's stellar efforts at Relay, he received the 'Stamina Prize' for the most laps run by an individual.

Reflecting on Relay, Paddy's bit of advice which could also serve as life advice, "all I can say is that with consistency, you too will redefine what you think of as physically and mentally possible for you to achieve".

Taranaki

This was the biggest Relay For Life in Taranaki since COVID, with nearly 900 participants, 54 teams, and two Relay Your Ways. It was a sold-out event with amazing community spirit. Many volunteers helped before, during, and after the event to make it possible.

The day began with a touching opening ceremony and celebration lap, led by bagpipes and those who have or have had cancer, along with their support people.

The entertainment was fantastic, featuring Zumba and line dancing, which encouraged people to join in on stage. The relay runway and dance-off were a hit, getting the crowd roaring. Schools embraced the spirit of the day by competing in the Battle of the Schools. The schools decorated tents, dressed up, and created chants to show their enthusiasm. Local bands provided great music that kept everyone motivated and having fun. The health hub brought in many outside health providers to showcase what they do in our community.

The Kapuni Gas Bags showed particular commitment, with five year old Poppy whose great grandad passed away from cancer, doing 11 laps of the track in her splints. The team has been taking part for approximately 15 years, each year aiming to be a "Dream Team" raising over \$5,000. We want to thank all our regular teams who come each year and our new teams who came along for the first time. Without your support and the support of our many amazing sponsors we couldn't do what we do to help those with cancer in Taranaki.



Gisborne

"Pretty Much Elite" may sound like a bit of a cheeky name, but the seven person team put it to the test over the weekend while completing the Gisborne Relay For Life.

Team Captain Tracy Utting said their name was ironic. "Last year we got close to beating the teenagers and then we couldn't" leaving them to be "pretty much" but not quite elite! Having completed a very respectable 577 laps (totaling over 230km) Pretty Much Elite not only enjoyed a successful weekend, but also ran a very good fundraising campaign. Utting said she was motivated by her father David, who died from cancer. "Most of us have had a family member affected by cancer. We definitely want to support the cause, but the running is what brought us together as a group of friends. We're all mates."

Their Relay and fundraising efforts alongside their overall contribution to the campaign has seen Pretty Much Elite pick up one of two major prizes - "The Spirit of Relay". This award is given to a team that stands out across the entire Relay For Life campaign. Their efforts in fundraising are matched by their efforts in community spirit, team engagement and passion for the cause. During their time onsite at Relay weekend, this team was organised, polite, engaged, follows instructions and was a pleasure to have around.

Manawatū

It was a weekend to remember! The Manawatū RFL Silver Disco celebrated 25 incredible years in the Manawatū with a vibrant event filled with colour, fun, emotion, and a deep sense of community. With our largest turnout of team registrations yet, participants filled the venue to capacity, ready to walk, run, and shimmy their way around the track in celebration, remembrance, and determination to fight back against cancer. The 24-hour format is what makes this event truly special, and hearing from adults who fondly recall their time participating as school kids is a testament to its lasting impact.

You can't fully grasp what RFL is about until you experience the atmosphere, the Wairua (spirit), and the Kotahitanga (unity) that radiate throughout the event. The pride and commitment of the Manawatū RFL community were beautifully reflected in the heartfelt messages on the card presented to the Cancer Society team at the closing ceremony - a truly special moment. Here are a few of the messages: "You are Iconic, we will see you again" - Jen and her team from Canopy Imaging (Formerly Broadway Radiology). "What an awesome Relay 4 Life 2025 arohanui" - Te Kete Hauora Rangitane. "An amazing event inspirational for our future nurses" - UCOL Nursing students team.

Hawke's Bay - Relay Your Way

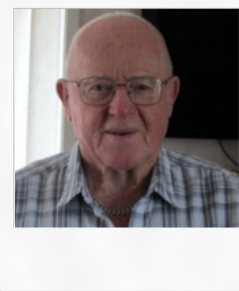
Gareth Mentzer recently completed an extraordinary 102km walk in just 24 hours to support the Hawke's Bay Cancer Society. Starting at 6pm on April 4 in his Northwood neighbourhood, he walked around his block over 200 times crossing the finish line at 6pm on April 5 — logging over 130,000 steps despite limited training.

Throughout the challenge, 20 supporters joined him in two-hour shifts, along with dozens of neighbours and friends cheering him on, providing much-needed encouragement as Gareth pushed through exhaustion and painful blisters. Fuelled by electrolyte water and unwavering determination, he never gave up. Gareth's mental resilience and community spirit is an inspiration. His journey was not just about distance, but about hope, awareness, and the strength of support system. Thank you to Gareth and all others who took part in or supported a Relay Your Way event this year!



The Stratford Support Group Volunteer who makes it all Happen!

Murray Fawcett is a good sort. Seven years ago after experiencing cancer he set up the Stratford Cancer Support group. A place where people no matter where someone is on their cancer journey can get together and share their burden. It all started when he went to a Men CanTalk support group meeting in New Plymouth, "I went to a meeting and couldn't believe how much better I felt. It really hit home that I wasn't the only one dealing with it." There'd been a support group in Stratford many years prior, and Murray decided to bring it back.



For Murray, volunteering his time to host the group is the thing he does to give back to the community. The group is "a nice casual get together/meeting and a talk over a cup of coffee. If the subject of cancer comes up then we talk about it, but it's not solely about cancer." This is important to Murray as he says "I don't want people to leave feeling gloomy. Everyone walks out the door with a smile on their face". Alongside the monthly meeting he also runs two casual walks a month for those in the group that want to come along.

If you're considering volunteering Murray would say to you "it's a very rewarding job. You should volunteer in any way that's a good fit for you personally."

If you or someone you know is experiencing cancer, please reach out to us. We have support groups across all our centres. All you need to do is contact your local Cancer Society and we can help. If you're experiencing cancer in the Stratford area Murray would love to invite you along for a cup of tea/coffee and a chat, feel free to give him a call on (06) 765 6259, or on 021 025 80282, his door is never closed for those who want help, 24/7 he says!

If you're interested in volunteering, we're always looking for more passionate people to lend a hand. Whether it's administration support, providing transport to and from treatment, volunteering at an event, or something else you're interested in, we'd love to hear from you. Please give us a call on (06) 348 7402 or visit www.cancer.org.nz/get-involved/volunteer

Daffodil Day is on it's Way - Save the Date 29 August 2025

1 in 3 Kiwis will receive a cancer diagnosis in their lifetime. Each day 74 Kiwis hear the words, "you have cancer." Daffodil Day is a chance to show your friends and family affected by cancer they're not alone.

Daffodil Day is Cancer Society's most iconic and much-loved fundraising campaign. It's the generosity of New Zealanders that help cancer patients and their families (whānau) get the care and practical support they need; from crucial help getting to treatment via our free driving service, through to counselling support, and accommodation grants for those needing life-saving treatment far from home.

Upcoming Dates for your Diary

May

8th.....World Ovarian Cancer Day
12thInternational Nurses Day
31st.....World Smokefree Day

June

All Month.....Men's Health Month
9th-15th.....National Blood Donor Week
15th-21st.....National Volunteer Week
19th-22nd.....Matariki

July

All MonthDry July
27th.....Head and Neck Cancer Day

GRANTS THANK YOU

The Cancer Society Central Districts Division and its regional centres are immensely grateful to the following grant providers who have provided support in the past few months.

Their support alongside our generous donors allows us to continue supporting people with cancer in the community.

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| • First Light Community Foundation | • NZ Community Trust |
| • Four Winds Foundation Limited | • Pelorus Trust |
| • Mainland Foundation | • Pub Charity Limited |