

Welcome

You are central to everything we do. As a charity, we simply wouldn't exist with the wonderful support of caring New Zealanders like you.

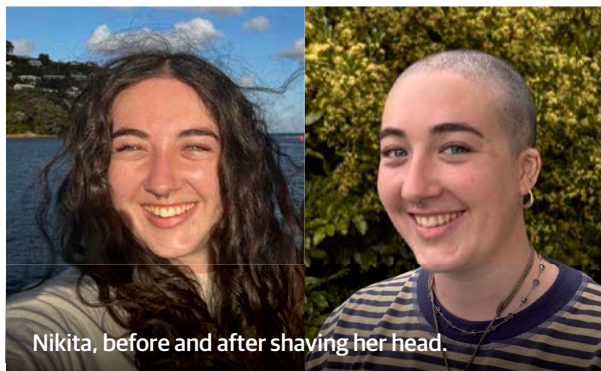
In this latest fold-out version of Newscan, we want to share just a little of the impact you're making everyday. From stories of wrap-around support to innovative research, you are at the foundation of making it all happen.

Cancer continues to take too many lives in New Zealand, but thanks to supporters like you, survival rates are improving and hope is growing. With your help, we remain committed to being there for all New Zealanders as we work towards our shared vision of a cancer free future.

Thank you – your support truly changes lives.



Helen Carter
Chief Executive Officer
Cancer Society
Waikato/Bay of Plenty



Nikita, before and after shaving her head.

More than a shave

Nikita's decision to shave her head again created a ripple she didn't see coming.

Nikita was 12 when her mum Michelle passed away from cancer. A decade later, she sees how deeply that experience shaped her.

"I feel like she's still there, holding my hand, pushing me through," she says, "It's nice to feel you've got someone on your team all the time."

This is the second time she shaved her head to honour her mum, raising money through You Can For Cancer, the Cancer Society's platform for people to create their own fundraising activities and get friends and family onboard to sponsor them. Donations help provide support during cancer including transport to treatment, counselling, accommodation, and wellbeing programmes.

"We are forever grateful for the support we received, and I'd like to do my part to help others in that position."

What she expected to be a personal moment became a community conversation, a chance for others to share their own experiences.

"I didn't expect that," Nikita says. "It opened up conversations with people about their own connections to cancer, and mine with mum. It felt like keeping her alive in that way."

"It could be quite heavy sometimes, but I never regretted having those conversations."

Michelle was known in her hometown as a force of nature; creative, cheeky, outrageously positive with a powerful hustle for community.

"She brought people together. She was fierce in the way she was kind," Nikita says. "She made you feel supported and heard."

Throughout Michelle's five year cancer journey, their community rallied around her with meals, gardening help and visits, and Nikita is carrying that spirit forward.

"The first time I shaved my head, it was for her. This time, it was for me - I think she'd like it more that way."

"It gets easier," she says. "The grief turns more into love."



Michelle reading to Nikita and her sister.

Kiwis all over the country fundraise for Cancer Society through events from morning teas to running marathons. If you would like to run your own, visit www.youcanforcancer.org.nz

Research Spotlight: Redefining how we prepare for cancer treatment



Jodie Collins, researcher.

Drawing on her own journey with bowel cancer, researcher Jodie Collins is beginning a powerful PhD focused on prehabilitation. Her research aims to help people feel stronger, more informed, and better supported before cancer treatment begins.

Jodie remembers the fear and uncertainty following diagnosis.

"When you're diagnosed with cancer, it's quite scary and nothing is in your control, because you're waiting on tests, waiting for the specialists, waiting for the next thing."

For her, discovering small things she could control, such as exercise and nutrition, made a huge difference.

Along the way, she noticed something significant.

"One thing I found was a huge gap, not just in research, but also in the services available in the prehab space here in Aotearoa."

With the support of a Cancer Society PhD scholarship, she is developing a customisable prehabilitation programme for people preparing for bowel cancer treatment. Prehabilitation helps people get physically and mentally stronger before treatment so they can go into it feeling more confident and supported.

Her work focuses on three key areas most people can do: gentle exercise to build strength, healthy eating to support the body, and mental wellbeing tools to manage stress.

Working with patients, whānau, and healthcare teams, Jodie aims to create a flexible programme that meets people where they are.

"It's a wrap-around service that will hopefully give patients some control and hope that it will help when they go for their next steps."

This research is made possible thanks to the generosity of Cancer Society supporters. Your donations are helping drive new ideas and better care for people facing cancer.



Makere.

Lighthouse: Makere's Story of Rare Cancer and Resilience

When Makere had her first breast screen at 45, she visited a mobile unit thinking nothing would come of it. Her days were busy, juggling marae and iwi responsibilities, supporting family and working 60-70 hour weeks as Director of Māori Archaeology with Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga.

"I was an anchor," she says. "The one everyone relied on."

Cancer forced her to stop.

"I myself wasn't the priority, until the universe said, enough, this isn't sustainable," she says. "In hindsight, my body tried to tell me in so many ways."

What the doctors found was not a typical breast cancer. Makere had a micropapillary carcinoma, a rare, highly aggressive type. Instead of forming a lump, it forms a web, spreading in fine, unpredictable patterns through tissue and lymph nodes.

Her tumour started the size of a Skittle. Within two months, it had grown closer to an orange.

She was told she might not survive surgery.

Her mind jumped to whānau and loved ones, to responsibility and legacy. If she didn't make it through, who would be the knowledge keeper and go to person?

"I'm the eldest child, family historian, the one who remembers everything... I had to think about what happens if I'm suddenly not there."

At Matariki, the time of new beginnings, she went into surgery. It was brutal, confronting and shook her sense of self.

"It's painful, you feel terrible, you've got all sorts of tubes you need to carry around," she says. "But this was about preserving life and to give you a fighting chance."

Chemo came next, then radiation and hormone therapy. The physical changes including hair loss and scars were hard to face, and asking for help was

even harder knowing her family had jobs, children, responsibilities of their own.

Makere leaned into support from the Cancer Society: a nurse, volunteer drivers, counsellors, and a support group that understood exactly what she was facing.

"It was the right kind of support," she says. "I know they care because they never disappeared and never intruded."

The rarity of her cancer brought uncertainty, but it also ignited fire.

"Some in my community see cancer as a stigma, and that fear keeps them away from help. Too many of our people never get diagnosed until it's too late."

Makere encourages everyone to get checked and not give up. Your support helps us promote vital cancer screening and provide support for everyone who needs us.



Makere with her sister.

Scan this QR code to watch Makere's story



Tobacco Interference Threatens New Zealand's Cancer Prevention

New Zealand's fall from second place to 53rd in the 2025 Global Tobacco Industry Interference Index is more than a statistic: it's a warning sign we can't afford to ignore.

The Index measures how well countries protect their health policies from tobacco industry influence. Once seen as a world leader, New Zealand is now being highlighted as 'most deteriorated'.



Cancer Society's Rachael Neumann says the decline follows decisions such as repealing strong Smokefree laws, reducing taxes on heated tobacco products, and allowing the "revolving door" between the tobacco industry and government roles.

"The report shows a clear pattern," Neumann says. "It outlines how the Government has failed to uphold its commitments under the WHO Framework and gives recommendations to better protect New Zealanders from tobacco industry influence."

New Zealand has long aimed for a smokefree future. Protecting that goal means keeping health decisions based on evidence, not commercial pressure.

"Tobacco industry interference leads to more smoking, more addiction and ultimately more cancer," Neumann says. "Cancer prevention should be guided by evidence, not the interests of tobacco companies."

These consequences are real for people and communities. Around 5000 Kiwis die from tobacco related cancer each year.

"Tobacco remains the biggest preventable cause of cancer and a major driver of health inequities in New Zealand."

Protecting our smokefree future means putting people's health, not the tobacco industry at the centre of every decision.