

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

NewsCan

SPRING 2026



**With your
help, no one
faces cancer
alone.**

Welcome

to the Spring edition of Newscan 2026!

Spring often brings a sense of optimism and hope. And at the end of another incredible Daffodil Day, when New Zealanders came out in their thousands to support families facing cancer – my heart is full.

Thank you so much to all of you who support us every day. This edition of Newscan gives just a little insight into the incredible impact you're making.

You'll read Samara and Blaze sharing the life and cancer journey of their beloved husband and dad Shane. Their story is a powerful reminder of the positivity and love that can endure, even through life's toughest challenges.

With the general election approaching, we're also sharing more about Cancer Society's election manifesto, focusing on our call for stronger action on skin cancer prevention. As New Zealand's most common cancer, we know that skin cancer deserves greater attention and leadership moving forward.

Every story and every moment of care shared in these pages exists because of your generosity and kindness. We couldn't do it without your ongoing support – thank you so much.

Ngā mihi,



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



Dave enjoys supporting the Circle of Hope

Finding Hope, Giving Hope Dave's Long Legacy with the Cancer Society

More than 30 years after his bowel cancer diagnosis, Dave considers himself one of the lucky ones. When he was diagnosed at just 42 years old, the news was devastating.

"I had plenty of living to do," he says. "I had lots of things I wanted to do."

Cancer had already touched Dave's family in profound ways. Both of his parents died from cancer, so when doctors discovered a bowel tumour, he understood the seriousness of the diagnosis. Thankfully, it was caught early and surgeons were able to remove it before it spread.

Today, at 75, Dave remains cancer-free.

"I've been lucky," he says. "I'm very grateful that I've managed to carry on."

That gratitude has shaped much of what has followed. After his surgery, Dave joined a Cancer Society support group, finding comfort in connecting with others who understood the challenges of a cancer diagnosis.

"It was excellent," he says. "Having that support was really important."

Over the years, Dave has continued to stay connected to the Cancer Society as a donor and member of Circle of Hope – a group of special supporters who have chosen to give a gift to Cancer Society in their Will.

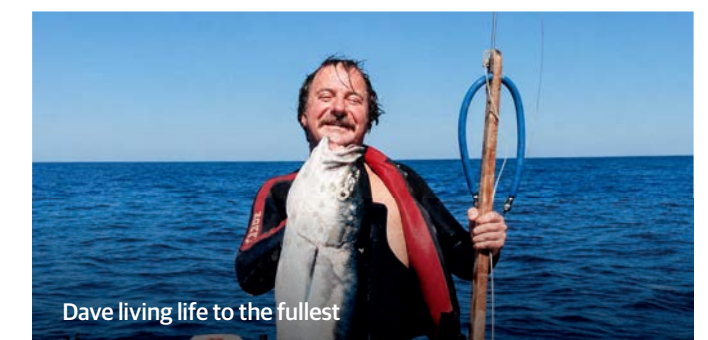
"It's always good to meet people who have experienced cancer, or whose families have been affected by it," he says. "It's a supportive community."

A former chemist with a lifelong interest in science, Dave greatly values the Cancer Society's contribution to cancer research and takes a keen interest in keeping up with the advances it makes possible.

"I find the research very encouraging," he says. "I was fascinated and very impressed."

"The work being done is tremendously valuable," he says. "Because of my own experience, and my family's experience with cancer, I think it's important to stay involved."

For Dave, Circle of Hope is about more than giving. It's about shared experience and helping ensure others facing cancer in the future have the same hope that helped carry him through.



Dave living life to the fullest

If you'd like to know more about giving a gift in your Will contact Tracey.
traceywood@cancersociety.org.nz



Shane, Blaze and Samara with the family dog

Wrapped in Aroha: How Shane's Legacy of Kindness Continues to Guide His Family

When Samara talks about her husband Shane, she talks first about his humour.

Even after being diagnosed with an aggressive brain tumour, Shane never lost his ability to make people laugh. Friends and family would leave his hospital room smiling, amazed at how he could still find lightness in the darkest of circumstances. He welcomed visitors, played music, shared stories and found ways to uplift the people around him, even as he faced a terminal diagnosis.

"Because Shane was Shane, he was amazingly positive about it," says Samara.

For his son Blaze, now 17, Shane was first and foremost Dad.

"He was really positive and he was funny," says Blaze. "He always tried hard for me. I remember him taking me fishing, watching movies together and putting effort into everything."

When Shane was diagnosed with terminal brain cancer, life changed almost overnight. Shane remained focused on what mattered most: the people he loved and the time they still had together.

During treatment, he recorded video messages for Blaze. One piece of advice would guide his family through the months ahead:

"Wrap your friends and family around you like a korowai."

A korowai is a traditional Māori cloak symbolising protection, care and connection. As Shane's illness progressed, that protective cloak took many forms. Friends delivered meals, whānau stepped in to help,

and donor-funded Cancer Society services offered practical support when the family needed it most.

"My friends were probably the most important thing," Blaze says. "Just having people around to talk to and hanging out with them."

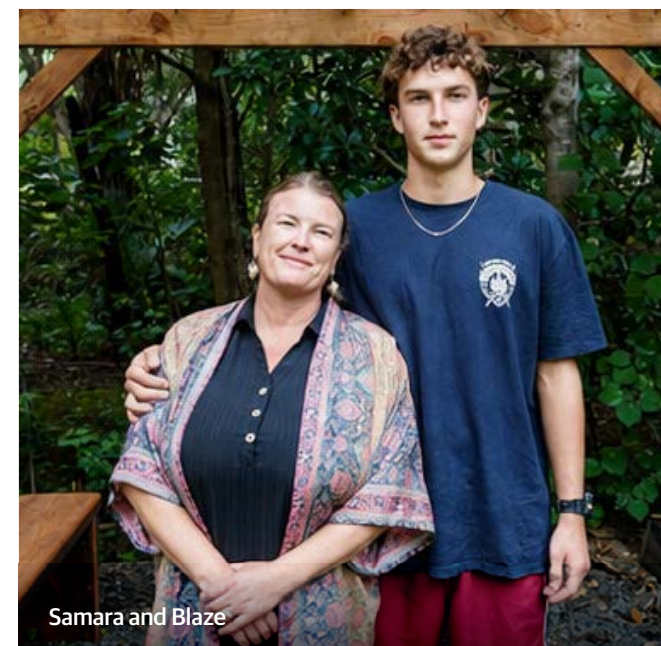
When Shane travelled to Auckland for treatment, the Cancer Society provided accommodation at Domain Lodge, a home-away-from-home for people receiving cancer treatment and their families, made possible through the kindness of donors like you.

"It was a real family atmosphere, a supportive atmosphere," Samara says. "There were other families going through the same thing as you."

Having accommodation close to the hospital meant the family could spend their time where it mattered most. After long days by Shane's bedside, they returned to a safe and supportive place, sharing meals prepared by friends and whānau.

"It was really good just being close," Blaze says. "We didn't have to worry about where we were staying."

Thanks to the generosity of donors, support was there when the family needed it most. Counselling and support services were offered to help the family navigate the emotional challenges of Shane's illness and the grief that followed.



Samara and Blaze



Shane passed on his passion for gathering seafood to his son Blaze

Looking back, Samara sees the Cancer Society as part of the very thing Shane had encouraged them to embrace.

"He said 'wrap your family and friends around you like a korowai' and we did."

Cancer took Shane far too soon, but his legacy continues to shape the lives of those who loved him. Blaze jokes that he has become the family's "hunter-gatherer", bringing home seafood just as his father once did. More importantly, he carries forward the values Shane lived by.

"The biggest thing Dad always said was to be kind," says Blaze. "You never know what people are going through."

Not Just a Number: Shane's Cancer Journey

When father of two Shane was diagnosed with stage 3 lung cancer, it confirmed what he'd already suspected.

"There was a bit of a foreboding that something wasn't quite right," he says.

After weeks of breathlessness and exhaustion, his wife Jess urged him to see a doctor. An X-ray revealed a shadow on his lung, and he was sent straight to hospital.

For many people, hearing the word cancer can be overwhelming. Shane chose to focus on what came next.



Shane and his wife Jess

"I just try to tell people that if you're positive, the journey isn't so scary."

As he began treatment, Shane quickly discovered he wasn't facing cancer alone.

Thanks to your support, Cancer Society nurse Naomi got in touch soon after his diagnosis to understand what support he might need. She became a trusted source of information, practical advice and reassurance throughout his treatment.

"Naomi was always checking up on me," Shane says. "She'd call me up. They'd come and visit you to make sure you're all right. It was good. Like an angel."

The support was particularly important when transport became a challenge. Shane and Jess only had one vehicle, and with Jess teaching and caring for their two young sons, regular trips to hospital weren't always easy.

That's when Naomi connected Shane with Cancer Society volunteer drivers.

"What a blessing they were," he says. "They were always on time. We'd have a yak, we'd have a talk. God bless them."

For Shane, the impact of the Cancer Society went far beyond practical help.

"It was 100% support," he says. "I didn't feel abandoned. I felt looked after."

Even now, Naomi continues to check in.

"She still rings me. She's very engaged."

Looking back, Shane says the greatest gift the Cancer Society gave him was peace of mind.

"With the Cancer Society, you're not just a number. You're a person."

Today, Shane has completed chemotherapy and radiation treatment and continues immunotherapy. Most importantly, he's looking forward to more time with Jess and their two boys.

"I live for my wife and I live for my kids," he says.

"The Cancer Society has given me another couple of decades on this, I hope."

Skin Cancer Prevention: An Investment That Makes Sense

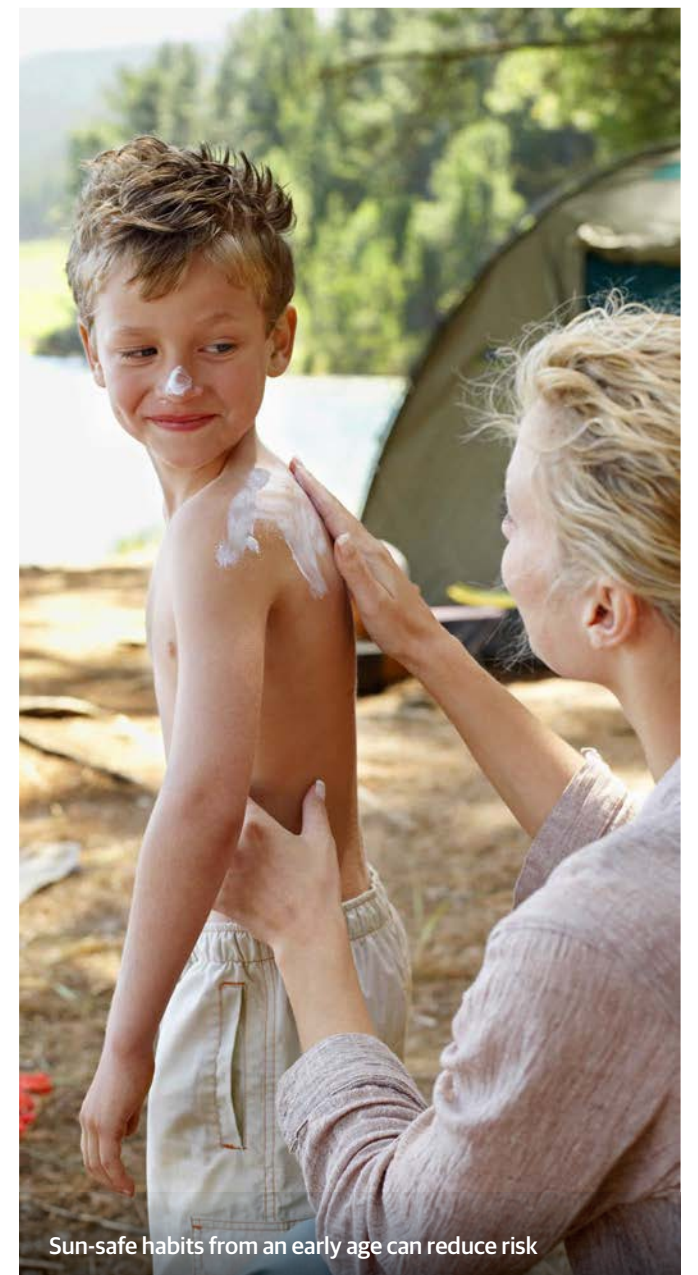
The Cancer Society's Election Manifesto 2026 identifies skin cancer prevention and early detection as one of five key actions needed to reduce New Zealand's cancer burden. We are calling on the next Government to invest in a coordinated national programme to help prevent skin cancer and improve early detection.

Skin cancer is one of the most common cancers in Aotearoa New Zealand, and our rates are among the highest in the world. Yet it is also one of the most preventable. More than 90% of skin cancers can be prevented, and almost all can be successfully treated when found early.

Too many New Zealanders still experience sunburn every summer, especially young people. While sunburn may seem temporary, the damage it causes can increase the risk of skin cancer later in life.

Supporting people to build sun-safe habits from an early age could help prevent thousands of future cancer cases. Seeking shade, wearing protective clothing, using sunscreen and limiting time in the sun can all help reduce risk. But prevention is about more than individual choices alone.

Aotearoa's intense UV levels and outdoor lifestyle mean communities, schools, health services and government all have a role to play in reducing skin cancer rates. A coordinated national approach can help ensure people have the information, support and services they need to protect their health and detect skin cancers early.



Sun-safe habits from an early age can reduce risk

Investing in prevention makes good economic sense. New Zealand spends hundreds of millions of dollars each year treating skin cancer, and prevention can significantly reduce those costs over time.

The Cancer Society is calling for a \$5.5 million annual investment in a national skin cancer prevention and early detection programme. This would include sustained summer sun safety campaigns, support for the SunSmart Schools Programme, and training for GPs to strengthen early detection.

Most importantly, skin cancer is not something we should accept as inevitable. By investing in prevention and early detection, we can save lives, reduce pressure on the health system, and create a healthier future for everyone.



Thank you

Every daffodil sold, every dollar donated, and every act of support has helped bring hope to people facing cancer. Thank you for being part of Daffodil Day 2026 and standing beside the 1 in 3 Kiwis who will receive a cancer diagnosis in their lifetime.

