



Breast Cancer  
Foundation NZ



Annual Report  
2021 - 2022

# Annual Report

1 August 2021 - 31 July 2022

## Towards Zero Deaths

### Imagine a world free from breast cancer.

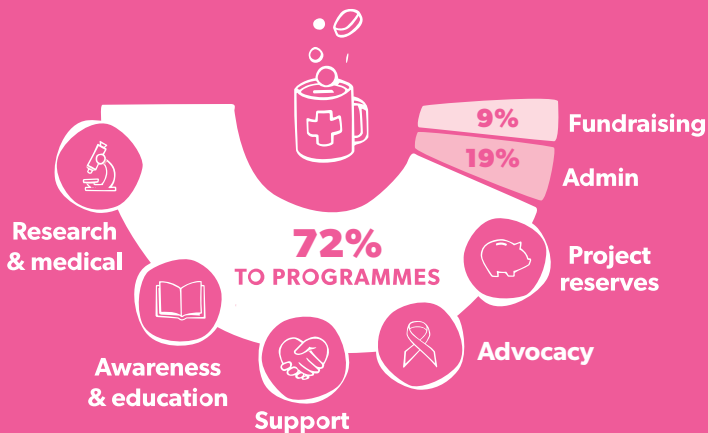
With your help, we are working tirelessly to make this a reality, by pushing for new frontiers in early detection, treatment and support.

As a charity that receives no government funding, we rely entirely on donations from the public and our partners to fund our life-saving work.

When you donate to Breast Cancer Foundation NZ, your money goes towards programmes in four focus areas to achieve our vision of zero deaths from breast cancer:

- 1 Education and awareness** campaigns to promote the importance of early detection;
- 2 Research** by New Zealand's top scientific and medical minds to advance breast cancer detection and treatment;
- 3 Support** to help patients get through treatment and recovery;
- 4 Advocacy** to improve access to diagnosis, treatment and care.

# Where your support goes



**Breast Cancer Foundation NZ is governed and guided by two professional bodies:** The Board of Trustees is responsible for the Foundation's financial stewardship, while the Medical Advisory Committee gives direction on a variety of the Foundation's programmes.

The members of both groups give up their time and expertise to voluntarily support us in our drive towards zero deaths from breast cancer.

# From the Chair and Chief Executive

Our financial year began in August 2021 just as New Zealand was plunged into the Covid-19 Delta lockdown. With the help of our very kind supporters, our team once again worked against the odds to make a significant impact for Kiwis affected by breast cancer.

Covid-19 forced the cancellation of many of our fundraising events. With challenging conditions made worse by the demise of cheques and a cost of living crisis, our fundraising income fell by 12%.

Thankfully, the ongoing support of our community at a crucial time allowed us to keep delivering vital services and projects to ensure more women survive and live well with breast cancer.

Underpinning our work was a greater drive towards improving equity, so that no woman is disadvantaged because of her ethnicity or where she lives.

None of this would have been possible without the generosity of all those who donated their time, money, knowledge and skills. This whakataukī (proverb) sums up this invaluable support: “Ehara taku toa i te toa takatahi, engari he toa takitini – our strength is not made from us alone but made from many”.

Our heartfelt thanks go to every person who has backed our vision of zero deaths from breast cancer. We very much hope you'll continue with us on this ambitious journey.

***Justine Smyth, CNZM***

(Chair)

***Ah-Leen Rayner***

(Chief Executive)



# Education

**Early detection is the cornerstone of breast cancer survival. Your support enables this message to be spread to women in all corners of the country.**

In 2021/22 our education and awareness programmes focussed on improving health equity and reaching people in rural and isolated communities who struggle to access specialist services.

Our Pink Caravan prioritised visits to areas with large Māori and Pacific populations, furthering our commitment to reducing the disparities in survival these groups face. Our nurse educators worked with iwi and marae to reach more wāhine Māori through hauora (health) events.

The Omicron outbreak forced the Pink Caravan's summer tour to be re-routed, but we still managed to visit 90 sites to deliver free breast health information and advice to 5,076 people. We also promoted breast awareness at major events like Fieldays, and upskilled doctors and nurses at conferences and clinics.

***"You don't know what you don't know. For example, most people are blown away to learn that mammograms can detect lumps as small as 2mm. I'm passionate about health promotion and it feels great to be doing something for Northland."***

**– Local Northland nurse Alison Smith, who works on the Pink Caravan.**





**HONOUR  
YOUR WHAKAPAPA  
BY LOVING YOUR  
BREASTS.  
GET A MAMMOGRAM**



**A remarkable achievement was the launch of our October 2021 awareness campaign, produced under trying circumstances in lockdown. Ahi Kā, a poem written and performed by the spoken word poets Ngā Hinepūkōrero that appeared on television, radio and digital adverts, drew on the Māori worldview (te ao Māori) of body positivity to encourage women to get a mammogram.**

*“Our poem tells the story of wāhine Māori and their journey back to respecting their breasts. We’re thrilled to be part of this national campaign, encouraging women to honour their whakapapa by loving their breasts and getting a mammogram.” - Arihia Hall of Ngā Hinepūkōrero*

We produced a fun, frank and fascinating podcast series called Breast Assured in partnership with The Spinoff, hosted by our Ambassador Sarah Gandy, in an effort to encourage younger women to be ‘Breast Aware’.

Thanks to you, more than \$1.3 million was invested across all of our education and awareness programmes.

# Research & Medical

**You're funding world-class Kiwi researchers and medical projects to make ground-breaking advances in the science and treatment of breast cancer.**

On World Cancer Day (4 February), we published *30,000 Voices: Informing a better future for breast cancer in Aotearoa New Zealand*. This was the first comprehensive analysis of Te Rēhita Mate Ūtaetae - Breast Cancer Foundation National Register.


This seminal research demonstrated the value of Te Rēhita in transforming breast cancer care in NZ. It identified the key areas that must be tackled in order to improve survival, such as delays to surgery and who is most at risk. The findings captured the attention of health leaders and clinicians, who welcomed these insights and committed to making improvements.

After a hiatus in our fellowships programme, we were delighted to name Dr Hamish McMillan and Dr Lauren Brown as recipients of our 2022 science and clinical fellowships. You contributed towards the \$120,000 grants we awarded to each of them for their work to make new discoveries in breast cancer metastasis (spread) and why breast cancer is deadlier for younger women.

You helped to fund trainee oncologist Dr Olivia Perelini to be our Clinical Trial Research Fellow at Auckland City Hospital, making it easier for patients to access emerging treatments and practices through clinical trials. You also helped to make possible Dr Perelini's research looking at Pacific people's experiences of cancer care.

In total, over \$1.1m was spent on research projects and Te Rēhita Mate Ūtaetae, the Breast Cancer Foundation National Register.

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***“I can’t reiterate enough how important it is for Pacific and Māori women to have mammograms.”***

**Ali Coomber was diagnosed with breast cancer in May 2021, at the age of 60.**

As a Pasifika woman, Ali falls into one of the groups that are most at risk of dying from breast cancer, as revealed by our 30,000 Voices report. But having this knowledge empowers us all to take action to change the statistics.

Thanks to your kindness, we can undertake more crucial research to unlock the information needed to stop deaths from breast cancer and give women like Ali hope for the future.

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# Advocacy

**Thanks to you, we can fight for changes to make sure Kiwis affected by breast cancer get better access to diagnosis, treatment and care.**

The consequences of breast screening being paused during Covid lockdowns led us to campaign ferociously to position this issue at the forefront of public and political interest.

More than 10,600 supporters signed our Missing Women petition, calling for urgent action to find the 133 women with undiagnosed breast cancer as result of cancelled mammograms. In December 2021, ACT Party Deputy Leader Brooke van Velden accepted this petition on behalf of Parliament.

In May 2022 we launched the #GiveUsOurMammograms campaign, urging the Government to allocate \$15 million in its Budget to clear the backlog of 50,000 overdue mammograms. With your help, we applied pressure on Ministers, politicians and health officials through meetings, letters and submissions.

At a Pink Ribbon Breakfast in Parliament, more than 100 MPs, patients, healthcare professionals and officials heard our plea. We also repeated our call to increase the screening age from 69 to 74.

Although the Budget failed to deliver this funding, strong public support allowed us to keep the issue high on the political and media agenda. We welcomed two reviews into mammogram delays by Health NZ and Wellington health authorities, and our voice was instrumental in making sure the backlog was addressed.

We also made formal submissions and commented in the media on issues including drug funding and Pharmac's independent review, health workforce shortages, and plans to tackle treatment delays.

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***“All cancers are best caught early. No excuses.”***

**Dr Heidi MacRae, a GP and mother of three, had been due her routine mammogram in August 2021 but it was postponed to December due to lockdown. While waiting, she learnt she had fast-growing triple-negative breast cancer. Heidi underwent chemotherapy, immunotherapy (that was self-funded), a double mastectomy and radiotherapy, but sadly passed away in November 2022 after the cancer spread to her brain.**

Heidi was a fierce advocate for the Foundation, sharing her story in support of our campaigning on the mammogram backlog and Pharmac funding. Right until her final days, Heidi was passionate about persuading women to get screened and fighting for unfunded medicines.

We're immensely grateful to Heidi for her activism to demand better for the women of New Zealand. She has left a lasting legacy for all Kiwis affected by breast cancer.

# Support

## **Your generosity goes towards free practical support to patients recovering from treatment and those living long-term with breast cancer.**

Thanks to a very generous donor in Canterbury who left us a gift in their Will, we established the region's first ever oncology clinical nurse specialist dedicated to breast cancer, based at Christchurch Hospital. Katherine King supports patients who've been discharged from hospital after treatment.

Ongoing Covid-19 lockdowns made it difficult for patients to access health services, so the role of our nurses was vital for connecting people with the help they needed. Through our 0800 support line and online forum, mybc, thousands of patients received advice and support.

Throughout Covid, we were able to continue funding free physiotherapy, lymphoedema therapy and counselling sessions to help patients recover after treatment.

The Breast Cancer Services Directory was revamped, giving patients access to more than 500 businesses and services.

We partnered with ACC to trial a new community-based exercise programme, Live Stronger - Pink Edition, helping women to manage the common side effect of bone density loss after breast cancer treatment.

Our ABCpro telehealth nursing service in Waikato continued to empower women with advanced breast cancer (ABC) to control their symptoms. Health officials have recognised ABCpro as an industry-leading innovation that is making a real difference for people living with ABC.

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# Making a difference

Nine women in Aotearoa New Zealand will learn they have breast cancer today. Thanks to your generosity, these women won't have to go through breast cancer on their own.

Women like Deborah, who was diagnosed in February 2021.

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*"There was only so much information from the doctors that I could absorb at once, so I was grateful I could call the BCFNZ nurses to help me make sense of everything. And the funding I received for physiotherapy gave me access to tailored exercise programmes – this was like an oasis in the desert of chemotherapy for me.*

*"It's incredible to know there are so many people I'll never meet who've helped to make these good things happen through their support of BCFNZ."*

– Deborah, diagnosed with breast cancer aged 55.

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**Thank you for supporting our vital work**

**67,863 of you hosted or attended a Pink Ribbon Breakfast**



**377 organised their own fundraisers to support us**

**4,738 of you donated to our written appeals**



**4,477 volunteered for the Pink Ribbon Street Appeal**



**2,084 registered for virtual Pink Ribbon Walks**



**\$755,936 raised by our top 4 corporate partners  
Farmers, Griffin's, Stuff  
Events and Harrison's**




# Your impact in 2021/2022

Education & awareness campaigns  
viewed **47 million times**

**351,487**   
printed education &  
support resources  
given out

**14,080**  
people spoken to  
**face-to-face**

**2,832**  
messages and emails  
sent to patients

**9,481**   
breast nurse  
helpline calls

**1,549**   
patients funded  
for counselling, physiotherapy  
& lymphoedema therapy

**5,000**  
patient webinars  
viewed

**203**  
advocacy engagements  
with influencers & decision-  
makers to drive change

**\$1,113,000**  
spent on research projects &  
Te Rēhita Mate Ūtaetae, the  
Breast Cancer Foundation  
National Register



Breast Cancer  
Foundation NZ

To view the 2021/22 Breast Cancer Foundation NZ  
financial reports, go to [www.charities.govt.nz](http://www.charities.govt.nz)



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