

# PINK RIBBON PRESS

## Together we're finding a "gold standard" for diagnosing lobular breast cancer

**For Hamilton woman, Jackie, 62, a "lifesaver" scan helped her avoid unnecessary chemotherapy treatment. Now, thanks to a clinical trial, more women will have access to this same scan.**

A year on from her lobular breast cancer diagnosis, Jackie has "peace of mind" knowing she had the right treatment for her cancer.

*"I am so excited this scan is available for other woman so they can get guidance for their treatment. For me, the PET/CT scan was the reassurance I needed to move on."*

The first-of-its-kind trial has the potential to transform the way lobular breast cancer is diagnosed and treated in New Zealand. The \$550,000 trial – funded by Breast Cancer Foundation NZ – is only possible thanks to the generous support of people like you.

Lobular breast cancer is the second most common type of breast cancer. Diagnosing and treating lobular breast cancer can be complex. Women are likelier to receive more aggressive treatment than necessary, or insufficient treatment, putting them at greater risk of their cancer returning or spreading.

Jackie was diagnosed in January 2024. Following a mastectomy, cancer was found in four of her lymph nodes – but they couldn't be sure if cancer had spread further.



Jackie was diagnosed with breast cancer at 61

Photo courtesy of Waikato Times

She was offered the option of a PET/CT scan – then only available in the private sector with a price of more than \$3,000.

"It came back clear, so we decided we won't go with chemotherapy because... we could just carry on and get the radiation done and that was it."

Dr Remy Lim, medical director at Alleuvia Radiology is running the four-year trial.

The aim is to increase survival rates and quality of life for patients with this challenging type of breast cancer.

*"We've designed a completely new approach to imaging lobular breast cancer. By proving this is a more effective way to assess the extent of disease, patients will be able to receive treatment that is more reliably tailored to them and avoid unnecessary treatment."*

# There's a lot to celebrate in this newsletter and we have you to thank for it

In 2025, in the current state of health care, philanthropy is becoming ever more essential to accelerating research and innovation in our universities and hospitals. This is particularly true for empowering scientists and doctors – people who hold our future in their capable hands but who, statistics show, are far less likely to receive funding through traditional sources.

When generous people like you work with a respected non-governmental organisation like Breast Cancer Foundation NZ – change-makers with an exceptional reputation and deep connections to the needs within the system – an investment can punch well above its weight. Working together to benefit science, the clinical world and women living with – and beyond – breast cancer.

In this edition of Pink Ribbon Press we look at investment into clinical trials, research and support programmes and how we can positively change the future of breast cancer, together.

Breast Cancer Foundation NZ receives no government funding. All this work, and the other achievements you'll read about in this newsletter, have only been possible because of you. Thank you for your incredible generosity.

Best wishes,



**Ah-Leen Rayner**  
Chief Executive



## How your donations have made an impact this year

**289,258**

women signed up for a mammogram during our education campaigns

**Pink Campervan tours resulted in:**

**6,708**

people spoken to

**114**

women encouraged to see GP about concerning symptoms

**140**

women referred to BreastScreen Aotearoa for free mammograms

**3,335**

new people using our nurse specialist support services

**9,306**

calls to our Nurse Advice Line

**2**

big advocacy wins – breast screening age raise to 74 + Keytruda funded for triple negative breast cancer

**\$1.9m**

spent on research projects & Te Rēhita Mate Ūtaetae – Breast Cancer Foundation National Register

# Your support helps fight for game-changing drugs for New Zealanders with breast cancer

Since the last Pink Ribbon Press, two new drugs have been funded for advanced breast cancer – Keytruda, for advanced triple negative breast cancer and Enhertu for advanced HER2+ breast cancer. This is wonderful progress and a testament to the impact of the community; advocacy groups and amazing people like you. These drugs represent hope and connection for women living with breast cancer. Time to spend with loved ones, to work, to travel, live and live well.

This will make an enormous difference for women like Maggie, who self-funded \$175,000 to pay for Enhertu. Funding for Enhertu means she no longer needs to personally put a “price on this time” with her daughters. These are wonderful achievements. But there’s more work to be done.

For Auckland woman, Catherine, self-funding Keytruda for early triple negative breast cancer has meant selling her home in Pāremoremo – a choice she never thought she’d have to make.



Catherine was diagnosed with triple negative breast cancer.

*“Before [the funding], there was that balance of what is time worth? And now, that’s taken that stress away”.*

Maggie



*“The guilt that I feel is insurmountable,” she says.*

*“It’s been my family home for 20 years and selling it feels like I’m letting my children down. But I wouldn’t be able to have treatment otherwise.”*

Breast Cancer Foundation NZ believes no one should have to sell their home to give themselves the best chance of survival. Because of your generosity, we will continue to fight for women like Catherine.



Debra, our breast nurse educator and our Pink Campervan.

## Your support helps Debra share vital breast health information

**Thanks to incredible supporters like you, our two Pink Campervans have been on a summer road trip delivering breast health information around the country.**

Breast nurse educators, like Debra, travel around New Zealand chatting to women – and men – about breast cancer, breast health and mammograms.

The Campervan has been on the road since October visiting Tairāwhiti, Northland, Southland, Otago and rural Canterbury. Debra shares what happens on a typical day on the Pink Campervan.

*“Each day two nurses drive the campervan to the booked site, which could be a local supermarket, marae or community centre.*”

“We visit rural and remote regions all over New Zealand, which sometimes means we drive across farmland to the broccoli fields!

“Sometimes people approach us straight away. Other times people can be a bit hesitant.

We always begin with a cheery 'hello' or 'kia ora' and ask about breast health, if they're enrolled in screening and if they have any questions and concerns. Our breast model "Bessie" is helpful for showing breast changes and lumps.

"If someone asks about a concerning symptom, we will discuss what it is, how long it has been there and suggest that they go to their GP. Sometimes we are parked beside the BreastScreen Aotearoa mobile screening unit and if someone isn't being screened or overdue we can take them, and they can have the mammogram then and there!"

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## Your generosity is providing much needed support for women taking hormone therapy

**myHT Guide is Breast Cancer Foundation NZ's ground-breaking nurse-led support programme being launched later this year. It will help people taking hormone therapy after breast cancer to prevent their cancer coming back.**

Taking hormone therapy results in a 30% reduction in risk of breast cancer returning and a 40% improvement in overall survival. However, people taking hormone therapy can experience debilitating side effects that stop them completing treatment.

There is an urgent need for new strategies to support women on hormone therapy to stay on their treatment, which could save their lives. It is only because of amazing people like you, that we can help fill this critical support gap.

This summer several themes have come up in conversation.

*"I didn't know men could get breast cancer too", "I didn't know I should be checking my breasts", or "I didn't know there were other signs and symptoms other than a lump!"*

This information is truly life-saving and none of this vital work could be possible without your kind gifts. Thank you for helping to get our breast health messages to the women who need them.



Melissa Warren is the nurse lead on our ground-breaking myHT guide.

We are thrilled to announce Melissa Warren has been appointed as the Hormone Therapy Programme – Nurse Lead and will be leading this vital new programme.

Melissa has worked at Breast Cancer Foundation for the past six years and has made a significant contribution to the development of the nurse service and caring for people with breast cancer during this time.



Shivani Kumar is a dedicated breast cancer trial coordinator funded thanks your incredible generosity.

# You are helping improve access to new drugs and clinical trials

**Because of you we were able to award a grant to Shivani Kumar to help make more breast cancer research possible.**

Shivani will help co-ordinate breast cancer clinical trials, so clinicians and patients are aware of what trials are available. This will help boost participation rates in New Zealand.

Participants in clinical trials get the best, current, standard of care for their breast cancer. But, in 2022, only 2% of people with breast cancer in Auckland were offered the chance to join a clinical trial – many of which will not be drug trials.

Shivani hopes increased involvement will provide more options for people with breast cancer. She is most excited about the changing landscape of drug access and delivery in New Zealand, such as the use of oral medication.

Dr Michelle Wilson, medical oncologist and clinical director for Cancer and Blood Research says, “increasing clinical trial activity not only helps to improve patient care through new drugs, but it also gives us better understanding of breast cancer, how we deliver care and how we support breast cancer patients through every step of their journey.”

This investment will help to shape the future of breast cancer in Aotearoa, and it is only possible thanks to people like you.

*“Oral meds are a lot easier to take, and patients don’t always need to come into a hospital to take them. So, someone in rural New Zealand could have the same treatment at home as someone in Auckland without the need to travel. We need clinical trials to ensure they’re appropriate for patient use.”*

## I would like to make a donation to Breast Cancer Foundation NZ



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

### Please accept my gift of:

\$35    \$75    \$250    Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Credit card:**    Visa    Mastercard    Amex

Card number:

Name on card: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiry date:       Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

### Direct bank transfer:

**12 3030 0534226 07** (One-off donation)

**12 3030 0534226 06** (Monthly donation)

## Thank you for your support

**Please send this form to:** Breast Cancer Foundation NZ, Private Bag 99906, Newmarket, Auckland 1149

Please include your **donor ID** and **PRP Aut** as a reference

# Join us for Pink Ribbon Breakfast



Sophie raised an incredible \$45,000 in honour of her mum Julie.

This May, thousands of Kiwis will come together at special events all over the country in the ultimate show of support for women with breast cancer.

For Sophie, from Christchurch, Pink Ribbon Breakfast is a chance to honour her mum and bring the men in our lives into the conversation about breast cancer.

Sophie's mum, Julie, was diagnosed with breast cancer in November 2022. The impact of the diagnosis was hard on the whole family – but especially Sophie's dad.

*"He's a typical Kiwi bloke and doesn't talk about his feelings."*

After Julie's year of treatment, Sophie knew she wanted to celebrate overcoming breast cancer as a family and raise vital funds to support families like hers.

So, the idea of a Tits and Tees golf tournament was born: a unique blend of golf, community, and compassion in support of breast cancer research and awareness.

In 2024, over 225 people attended the tournament. Together they raised an incredible \$45,000 for Breast Cancer Foundation NZ. Sophie is hosting another tournament this May with a goal of raising \$50,000.

Sophie is proud and emotional about the impact of the event.

*"Tits & Tees came out of something that was so sad for our family, but to be able to help so many people is such a blessing..."*

*"Men are an important part of the conversation, they can encourage sisters, wives and daughters to have mammograms and be breast aware."*

You can join inspiring Kiwis like Sophie in hosting a Pink Ribbon Breakfast. Your support means women like Julie don't have to face breast cancer alone.



Sign up to host your own event at [www.pinkribbonbreakfast.co.nz](http://www.pinkribbonbreakfast.co.nz)



"I usually checked my breasts in the shower, but one day something made me lift my left arm prior to getting into the shower, and I felt a sizeable lump on the top of my left breast. A week later, I was diagnosed with triple negative breast cancer.

*"A friend said to me, I had to get on the train, strap on for a ride and get through to the other end. So that's what I did."*

## Xero are back supporting Kiwi women with breast cancer this May

**Like many businesses hosting a Pink Ribbon Breakfast this month, Xero are raising vital funds for education, awareness and support for breast cancer.**

For the second year in a row, our friends at Xero have a special surprise brewing for Pink Ribbon Breakfast hosts.

Supporting the Foundation is close to their heart. Xero's Aotearoa New Zealand Country Manager, Bridget, has personal experience with breast cancer.

"I had booked myself in for my first mammogram and was given the all-clear, so I was shocked when I was told I had breast cancer two months later. I had no family history and was otherwise fit, healthy and young.

"Cancer is now behind me, and I am grateful for every day. I'm focused on enjoying it all.

I have three gorgeous children, an incredible husband, wonderful wider whānau and friends, and I love my job. It's so special that my workplace, Xero, has jumped on board to support Breast Cancer Foundation NZ and all the amazing work they do to support women like me."



Bridget with her three children and husband.

### Business partner recognition

Breast Cancer Foundation NZ is grateful for the support of our major partners:

#### Corporate partners



#### Major trusts/grants



### Contact us

**Email:** [info@bcf.org.nz](mailto:info@bcf.org.nz)

**Phone:** 0800 902 732

**Ask a nurse:** 0800 BC NURSE (0800 226 8773)

**Website:** [breastcancerfoundation.org.nz](http://breastcancerfoundation.org.nz)