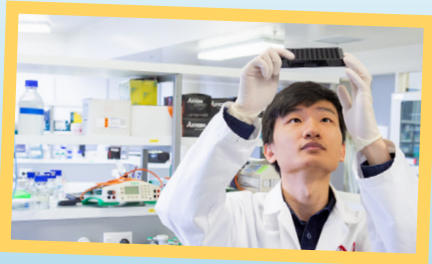


Inside the Cancer Society's Commitment to Cancer Research

Research is a vital component to the Cancer Society's mahi. Thanks to generous donors like you, we have proudly invested over **\$50 million** in life-saving research over the past decade.



In this special edition newsletter, we'd like to give you a behind-the-scenes look into the amazing work happening in your back yard in our bid to lessen the impact of cancer in our community.

As an organisation, we are equally focused on cancer prevention as we are on post-diagnosis support as we endeavour to get ahead of this disease, with the ultimate goal of seeing fewer cancer diagnosis across Aotearoa.

Our New Zealand-based knowledge and expertise plays an essential role in achieving this aspiration.

Help us reach our goal of doubling our research contribution over the next 3 years from \$250,000 to

\$500,000

He Taonga Tapu Cancer Society Tissue Bank The little laboratory doing big things for cancer research



In a small laboratory inside Christchurch Hospital, our He Taonga Tapu Cancer Society Tissue Bank (HTTCSTB) team are working alongside clinicians and brave patients to help progress cancer research in New Zealand.

HTTCSTB was established in 1996 to facilitate health research through gifted tissue samples. When it opened its doors 27 years ago, it was the first of its kind in the country. Since then, over **14,500 patients** have become donors. Each donation can provide multiple samples to be banked for future research studies.

HTTCSTB Curator, Helen Morrin, says **"Our overall focus is about the patient as much as the research. Recognising their trust and honouring all their hopes and aspirations of what their sample will facilitate in terms of research excellence."**

Patient care and public trust is at the forefront of every step of the HTTCSTB pathway. From the initial connection and consent, through to collection, storage and the release of the specimen to researchers, **"We work to the absolute highest levels of ethical and legislative standards, cultural sensitivity, and to be as scientifically sound as possible."** Helen explains.

Working in collaboration with the University of Otago Christchurch and Te Whatu Ora Waitaha | Canterbury, the Cancer Society Canterbury/West Coast division provides significant funding to HTTCSTB through our community fundraising efforts and generous supporters.

There is currently no government funding for cancer biobanking in New Zealand. Helen explains, **"The Tissue Bank simply wouldn't exist without the Cancer Society Canterbury/West Coast division"**.



1.

1. HTTCSTB Curator Helen Morrin storing samples in freezers



2.

2. Bridey Watson prepares tissue samples



3.

3. The University of Otago - Christchurch building



He Ringa Āwhina

All people. Every cancer. We're here to help.

JOURNEY OF A TISSUE SAMPLE

The HTTCSTB pathway

Patient Consultation & Consent

Cancer patients coming to Christchurch Hospital for surgery could be asked to become a tissue bank donor and gift a small sample from their specimen for medical research. Patients who agree sign a consent form.



Pre-surgical Blood Draw

Before surgery, blood samples are collected from donors who have given consent.

Surgery Procedure

The patients scheduled surgery takes place as planned.



Pathologist tissue assessment

The specimen removed during surgery is examined by the duty pathologist who decides if there is spare tissue for research. Our HTTCSTB team are on standby to process the tissue ready for storage.

Long term storage



All samples are frozen and stored securely on-site in -80 degree Celsius freezers to maintain the integrity of the specimen. Our freezers are connected to backup generators at Christchurch Hospital in case of power outages and fitted with extra backup Liquid CO2 tanks.



Research approval

Researchers go through two approval processes before they can access HTTCSTB samples.

Part 1

Ethics Committee Approval of Study

Part 2

Tissue Bank Board Approval of Study



Release of tissue to researcher

Samples from our Christchurch based HTTCSTB are sent all over New Zealand for national studies and in some cases, with donor permission, contribute to global research collaborations.

Researchers will use the human samples with the hope of finding new knowledge that will contribute to better health outcomes for patients, by developing new screening tools, tests, medicines, and other medical developments.



Interview with a Tissue Donor



Vicki Smith

As Vicki Smith entered her local Greymouth GP's office with mild abdominal pain, she never thought it would end in an ambulance trip over to Christchurch hospital and a pancreatic cancer diagnosis. But this was exactly what happened in August of 2022.

When Vicki's GP explained that the necessary scanning equipment was being replaced at Greymouth Hospital, she was asked if she would be willing to travel to Christchurch to have a CT scan. Keen to understand her symptoms and find resolution, Vicki agreed.

Upon arriving at Christchurch Hospital, Vicki underwent a number of scans and tests and what was meant to be a one day visit turned into a 3 day stay.

The results revealed a devastating pancreatic cancer diagnosis and just 16 days after her initial visit to her GP, Vicki was back in Christchurch undergoing a risky major surgery on her pancreas and spleen.

In the following whirlwind two weeks, Vicki remembers thinking, "Oh my god, Mum had this cancer so did one of her cousins." But Vicki wasn't worried about herself. At 74 years old, she had already lived a fulfilling and meaningful life and in her own words had 'pushed life to the limits'.

Instead, her immediate concern shifted to her children, grandchildren and extended family. Watching her own mother go through a similar cancer journey, Vicki struggled with the

thought of future generations having to face the same fate. "My mindset was, what can I do, what can I do for my family."

Family played a key part in supporting Vicki through this challenging time. "It was important my family were involved from the very beginning so that they were aware of what was going on. In particular for my daughter in Melbourne, who is medical scientist, to be able to ask questions. There wouldn't have been any way that I could have handled that situation myself."

From here, Vicki wasted little time in taking action. "I spoke with the liaison staff at Christchurch hospital and made enquiries about how I could help contribute to research. And it was all put in place quickly." Vicki explains.

The Tissue Bank staff met with Vicki after her surgery and went through the donation process and the details of her contract. She also learned that there had already been an enquiry from Auckland for her tissue sample. "That gave me a warm feeling that someone is interested and doing some research right now" Vicki says.

"I had absolute confidence in the professional abilities of the Cancer Society Tissue bank staff and I wasn't concerned about the my tissue or not being treated properly and respectfully."

When describing her motivations for donating tissue samples, Vicki explains "I hope that giving my tissue for further research will help to develop those tests that they can use as a control to find out much earlier whether other people have it. Not very many people are as lucky as I was to have an incidental pancreatic cancer discovery. By the time there are any symptoms it's usually advanced and often too late."

When speaking with Vicki, it's impossible to ignore her unwavering resilience and determination. Vicki is an unstoppable force and after successfully completing 12 rounds of brutal chemotherapy, she's not letting her cancer hold her back. Instead, she's enjoying being involved in the community again, has visited family in Wellington and Melbourne, and is heading back to work supervising NCEA testing this year at the local high school in Greymouth.

This experience ignited a fire within her to do whatever she could to contribute towards preventing cancer and ensuring a better future for her loved ones. And she hopes other's in her position will be willing to do that same. "It's a great opportunity to contribute to the advancement of cancer research here in New Zealand. The more information they have to help understand the disease which can lead to cancer prevention, earlier detection and hopefully cures."

Congratulations to our Amazing NZSO Bridget Robinson Award Winner

Helen Morrin



The New Zealand Society of Oncology (NZSO) Awards were held back in September at the Napier Events Centre during the annual conference where head of our CSTB Helen Morrin received the prestigious Bridget Robinson Award which recognises exceptional career achievement in translational cancer research.

This award is a fitting and much deserved recognition of the work Helen has done as Curator with the Tissue Bank here in Christchurch.

We congratulate Helen on her tremendous achievement and celebrate her acknowledgment in the important field of cancer research. We are so proud of you!

Bridget Robison Award winner, Helen Morrin.

Cancer Research Community Engagement

Mid Canterbury Event

On September 11th, our Cancer Society Mid Canterbury centre hosted a "What's New in Cancer Research" event in association with the University of Otago, Te Whatu Ora - Waitaha Canterbury and Mackenzie Charitable Foundation for the Ashburton community.

A group of research oncologists from presented on a range of topics, including genetic testing, preventative therapies, cancer risks, clinical trials, and diagnostics using AI. This was a fantastic opportunity for the Ashburton community - which currently funds \$250,000 on cancer research to learn how their donations are contributing to positive outcomes here in New Zealand.

Cancer Information Freephone 0800 CANCER 0800 226 237 www.cancer.org.nz

Follow us on @cancercwc @cancersocietycwc The Cancer Society Canterbury-West Coast Division



Cancer

The Not-So-Silent Killer A Pacifika Perspective

Cancer research in New Zealand has made significant strides, delving into the unique challenges faced by different communities, including the Maori and Pacific Islander populations who have high incidence and mortality for a range of cancers.

Dr Villiami Puloka ran a recent webinar through the Cancer Society Research Collaboration / Te Rōpū Rangahau ō Te Kāhui Matepukupuku and explains, *“What is most important when working with pacific people is to engage them by design - not by default. Pacific people think with their hearts and feel with their minds. You have got to touch their hearts.”*

With this in mind, the Cancer Society actively collaborates with Maori and Pacifika communities, healthcare providers, and researchers to develop culturally appropriate strategies and initiatives aimed at reducing cancer disparities and ensuring equitable access to cancer prevention, treatment, and support services.

This collaboration has been instrumental in raising awareness and improving access to early detection measures, such as screenings and education campaigns.

Find out more at:
otago.ac.nz/cancer-society-research/news



The Longest Day 2023 72 Holes. 1 day.

The challenge is to successfully complete a golf marathon - four rounds of golf, or 72 holes - in one day to raise funds for the Cancer Society. 72 sound like too much? Try our new two-round 'half marathon' option, that's 36 holes.

You choose the day, the course, and the team - or play solo if you prefer. The longest day of the year is Friday 22 December 2023, but you can play any day in December or January that suits you.

Sign up today at longestday.org.nz

Cancer Society Research Collaboration with University of Otago

The Cancer Society Research Collaboration / Te Rōpū Rangahau ō Te Kāhui Matepukupuku is a partnership that draws together leading cancer researchers in a programme on cancer prevention, care, and support.

The Cancer Society Research Collaboration aims to reduce the incidence and impact of cancer in New Zealand. The work focuses on cancer prevention and advancing knowledge in six research themes:

-  **Cancer care and support**
-  **Cancer communications**
-  **Nutrition, physical activity and alcohol**
-  **Preventing infection-related cancers**
-  **Skin cancer prevention**
-  **Smokefree Aotearoa**

New Canterbury Cancer Centre Supporters

We are delighted to thank and welcome our most recent supporters of the new Canterbury Cancer Centre:

- Bishopdale Burnside Rotary Club
- Waghorn Builders
- Qestral
- Pak n Save Papanui
- Gallagher Insurance (formerly Crombie Lockwood)
- Colliers Canterbury
- Oxford Lions Club & Lloyd Morgan Trust
- Glenmark Lions Club
- Christchurch Sunrise Rotary Club
- Mitre 10 Mega Papanui
- Kiwi Gaming Trust
- Rotary Club Avonhead

The newly opened Canterbury Cancer Centre in Christchurch.



Your local Cancer Society Centres

Christchurch Centre
PO Box 13450, Christchurch 8141
P: 03 379 5835 E: contact@cancercwc.org.nz

North Canterbury Centre
43 Church Street, Rangiora 7400
P: 0800 226 695 E: northcanty@cancercwc.org.nz

South Canterbury Centre
32 Memorial Avenue, PO Box 682, Timaru 7940
P: 03 688 0124 E: southcanty@cancercwc.org.nz

Mid Canterbury Centre
122 Kermode Street, PO Box 296, Ashburton 7740
P: 03 307 7691 E: midcanty@cancercwc.org.nz

West Coast Centre
98 High Street, PO Box 81, Greymouth 7840
P: 03 768 9557 E: westcoast@cancercwc.org.nz

Selwyn Centre
6B Kidman Street, PO Box 25, Rolleston 7643
P: 03 925 9708 E: selwyn.centre@cancercwc.org.nz