



steps, surpassing his original goal for his November 17,664 step challenge.

However, in September, Mike's plans abruptly stopped after being admitted to hospital with a suspected heart attack. His cardiologist eventually gave him the go-ahead to continue with the challenge, but injuries to his hip and knees held up his training, so he devised a new plan.

"Considering my injuries and my family being on my case, I decided to change the challenge to no longer being about how many summits I could do, but how many summits the entire Huks community could do in 24 hours."

Over 300 people turned up at different times over the 24 hours to participate in the Huks Challenge, including 15-year-old Lachlan Bullen, who wanted to raise funds and awareness about the dangers of melanoma after seeing his grandfather go through treatment for his second bout of an aggressive form of melanoma. Together, the community climbed more than one million stairs.

At the time of going to print, Mike had raised \$2,274 of his \$17,664 goal, and Lachlan raised \$1,024, exceeding his \$1,000 target.

We thank Mike, Lachlan, and everyone else in the community who too part in the Huks Challenge for their generous support.

## Submitting in Support

**For the past six months, Hamilton electrician Mike Ridderhof has been regularly hiking up the picturesque Hakarimata Summit in Ngāruawāhia to prepare for a fundraising challenge held last month to honour the seventh anniversary of his nephew's passing from melanoma.**

Mike's nephew, Gavin Du Preez and his family immigrated from South Africa to New Zealand in January 2015, and four months later, the 48-year-old was admitted to Waikato Hospital Emergency Department after having a mild leg seizure while driving. Mike said the emergency doctor suspected it was cancer and immediately referred him to a specialist, who diagnosed Gavin with stage 4 melanoma.

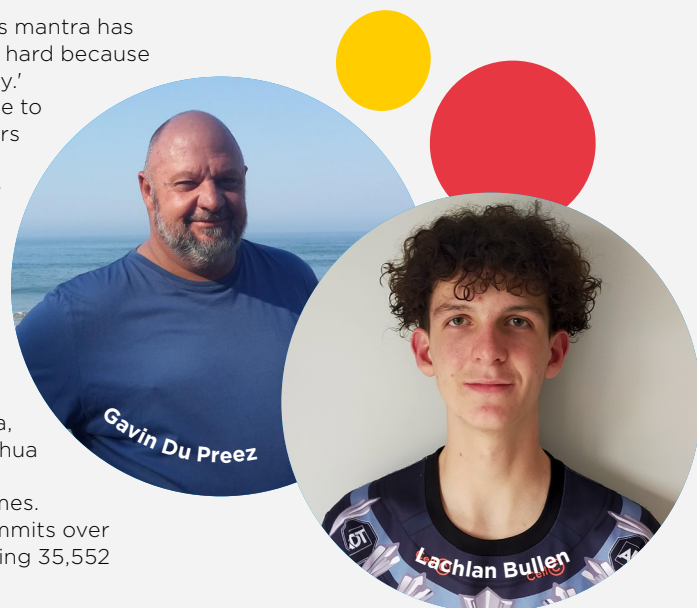
Although Gavin received some radiation treatment on his brain, Mike said the cancer had already spread too far. On 23 November, Gavin sadly passed away - just four months after his diagnosis, leaving behind his wife, Penny and two sons, David, 4, and Joshua, 2.

Mike said he never worried about melanoma or wore sun protection in the 'old days'. He now understands the dangers we all face from UV radiation and

wants to help raise awareness about this deadly disease.

As a marathon runner, Mike's mantra has always been, 'Do something hard because it makes everything else easy.' So, he set himself a challenge to reach 17,664 steps in 24 hours to mark the number of days Gavin was on earth, all while raising funds for Melanoma New Zealand. He also chose the Hakarimata Summit because it is well-shaded.

Friends and family have been training with Mike, including Gavin's son Joshua, who is now nine. In July, Joshua summited the Hakarimata Summit an impressive six times. Mike did an incredible 13 summits over nine-and-a-half hours, totalling 35,552



# Political Push for Patients

In September, Melanoma New Zealand joined forces with 20 other patient advocacy organisations to launch the MyLifeMatters campaign, declaring a medicines crisis in New Zealand and calling for the New Zealand Government to invest in new and breakthrough medicines at the same level as other OECD countries.

The collective of patient advocate organisations aimed to spark conversations and tackle the issue of investment and timely access to new and breakthrough medicines for the people of New Zealand.

Patient Voice Aotearoa Chair and campaign lead Malcolm Mulholland then took the MyLifeMatters Roadshow to 16 communities around New Zealand throughout September and October.

A vital component of the roadshow was ensuring the voices of local patients, like melanoma advocate Victoria Hudson-Craig, spoke at each event. Victoria drew a crowd in her hometown of Christchurch, where she discussed her journey with melanoma and the challenges she has faced to fund her immunotherapy treatment.

The roadshow ended in Auckland at the MyLifeMatters Debate. Guyon Espiner moderated a discussion between politicians



Dr Ayesha Verrall, Dr Shane Reti, Ricardo Menéndez March, Jenny Marcroft, and Todd Stephenson. The passionate audience of patient advocates, specialists and patients challenged the panel on how they planned to change the current system, which is failing to support them adequately.

MyLifeMatters was a powerful campaign ably led by Malcolm, and the calls for urgent action will continue – watch this space!

## Did you know:

- New Zealand ranks last - 32nd in a list of 32 OECD countries - for public funding of medicines. By comparison, Australia is ranked 18th, and the United Kingdom is ranked third.
- New Zealand has funded only 8% of the modern medicines launched between 2011 and 2020.
- Australia funds 105 modern medicines that New Zealand does not.
- \$181 million is the shortfall Pharmac faces in the health budget from 2024 to maintain access to the same list of funded medicines, including new medicines funded in 2022/23.
- 7.7 years is the average wait time and counting for applications across all Pharmac lists.
- As of April 2023, 109 applications are languishing on Pharmac's Options for Investment List, and the estimated investment required to clear this waitlist is \$417 million.
- 1.5 million patients would benefit if Pharmac's Options For Investment List was publicly funded.

## Will You Help Save A Life?

Every donation we receive from you, our wonderful donors, goes towards supporting the urgent work we do at Melanoma New Zealand to help save lives. Tragically, we lose too many of our loved ones to this terrible disease, and yet if caught and treated early, melanoma is nearly always curable.

To try to turn around New Zealand's terrible statistics, we need to fight for better funding, as well as reach as many people as we can with our life saving messages about the vital importance of both staying safe in the sun, and getting regular skin checks.

Your generous support enables us to get the message out into the community. Will you help save a life? No donation is too small, and we are very grateful for any support you can provide.



[www.melanoma.org.nz/donate](http://www.melanoma.org.nz/donate) or phone 0800 463 526.



Slip



Slop



Slap



Seek



Slide

For more information go to [melanoma.org.nz](https://melanoma.org.nz)

## Message From Our Chief Executive

### Welcome to our final issue of *Spot News* for 2023.

We are so grateful to all those who choose to put their energy and time into creating fundraisers on our behalf after being touched by melanoma – amazing people like Mike Ridderhof and Lachlan Bullen, who took part in a 24-hour event last month traversing the Hakarimata Summit (see page 1) as well as Chris Flannery and Nicola Jones, who held the second Cockies & Tradies Melanoma Awareness Charity Golf Tournament in Alexandra in October (you can read more about this on page 4).

I thank Mike, Lachlan, and their community for their truly epic efforts supporting Melanoma New Zealand. I feel so fortunate to have been able to have joined Chris and Nicola at the stunning Alexandra Golf Course, alongside their loyal and generous community who came together in droves to support the Flannery family's vision and the Melanoma New Zealand cause.

In this issue, you also will hear about Melanoma New Zealand joining forces with 20 other patient advocacy organisations to launch the MyLifeMatters campaign, which declared a medicines crisis in New Zealand and called for the New Zealand Government to invest in new and breakthrough medicines at the same level as other OECD countries.

We also introduce our newest Board member, Philip Harkness and Associate Trustee, Simon Moutzouris. Plus, we welcome Yachting New Zealand, Burnsco and Karma Drinks to our family of supporters.

I am very grateful to our corporate partners who helped us raise awareness and funds alongside the many schools, kindergartens, early childhood centres and businesses during our annual melanoma awareness campaign, Get Spotted, which ran from 16-22 October. A special thank you goes to Lidgard Shades for providing our 'spot prize', a shade sail worth \$20,000, won by Te Kura o Te Kauaeranga - Thames South School and to Jun Arita, who created another beautiful design for our ever-popular colouring-in competition.

Our hard-working nurses have been travelling the country to deliver free spot checks and education at events in Coromandel Town, Auckland, Waihi, Wellsford, Motueka, Marlborough, and Queenstown. This service is in hot demand, so in October, we also launched our new Spot Check Pop-Up Pod as an additional resource to our Melanoma Spot Check Van to help our team get even further afield, (see page 5).

Once again, thank you to our corporate partners, patrons, ambassadors, donors, fundraisers, grant providers and volunteers who continue to support our cause and make Melanoma New Zealand's efforts across the country possible.

I wish you all a safe summer and a happy holiday season with your family and friends and look forward to another impactful year in 2024.

#### Thank you!



**Andrea Newland**  
Chief Executive  
Melanoma New Zealand

## A Guide to Quality Care

Every year, around 300 New Zealanders die of melanoma – the highest rate of death from melanoma in the world. To improve these statistics and save lives, melanoma must be detected early, and an excellent standard of care must be provided to everyone diagnosed at every stage of their cancer journey.

In September this year, MelNet (a charitable organisation supporting health professionals working in skin cancer) released the third edition of the "Quality Statements to Guide Melanoma Diagnosis and Treatment in New Zealand" – evidence-based clinical guidelines that describe what good prevention, diagnosis and quality care should look like in New Zealand. The document has been developed by melanoma specialists to reduce New Zealand's world-leading rates and help to ensure every

New Zealander affected by melanoma has access to consistent, high-quality care.

Although the Quality Statements were developed with clinicians in mind, it is hoped they can also help those people affected by melanoma to understand the level of care they should expect to receive at every step and empower them to have more informed discussions with their healthcare team about their treatment plan.

You can download a copy of the third edition of the Quality Statements [here](#)

# Board Appointments



We are pleased to announce that Philip Harkness has joined the Melanoma New Zealand Board.

Philip is a chartered accountant who spent the first 28 years of his career working for large corporate organisations in New Zealand and overseas before taking up his current role as Chief Financial Officer at Coastguard New Zealand in 2020, where his focus shifted from profit to people.

Although Philip has not been affected by melanoma directly, he says one of his motivations for joining the Board was to help reduce the impact and number of people affected by cancer in New Zealand. He was also drawn by the calibre of the other Melanoma New Zealand board members, their diverse skills and backgrounds and the fact that these well-regarded people all want Melanoma New Zealand to be successful, irrespective of their connection to melanoma.

Philip not only brings a wealth of financial acumen with him but also an understanding of grant writing and funding.

As a member of the Westlake Boys High School Board of Trustees, Philip said he has a passion for education and believes it is the key to a not-for-profit success and plans to share his

connections with other agencies and cultural forums with Melanoma New Zealand to help raise awareness.

Philip lives in Birkenhead in Auckland with his wife and two of their three children but was born and bred in Palmerston North and is still an avid Manawatū Turbos rugby supporter.



We also welcome Simon Moutzouris to the Melanoma New Zealand Board as an Associate Trustee. Simon brings 20 years of marketing experience, with expertise in implementing and managing comprehensive strategies using digital technology, to our Board.

Since returning to New Zealand from Europe in 2014, where he worked for large organisations such as Hertz and Sony, he has assisted Methven, The Warehouse Group, and led the Global Digital Strategy for Fonterra's Food Service business unit before taking up his current role as Head of Customer Journey at Giltrap Group.

Originally from Christchurch, Simon enjoys taking his Harley for a ride, creating custom paint jobs on his helmets, attending air shows and spending as much time as possible with his wife, two teenage sons, and extended Greek family.

# Cockies & Tradies Dig Deep for Melanoma

Alexandra plumber Chris Flannery and his wife Nicola Jones pulled off another sold-out Cockies & Tradies Melanoma Awareness Charity Golf Tournament at Alexandra Golf Club in October, raising more than \$56,000 for Melanoma New Zealand.

Since being diagnosed with Stage 4 metastatic melanoma in 2019, Chris has undergone treatment, including immunotherapy, radiotherapy, and surgery – and he is currently self-funding his latest round of treatment.

While spending long months at home during treatment, where he felt disconnected from his friends and other tradies, Chris came up with the idea to hold a charity event to bring the community together and raise awareness about the risks of melanoma.

Their 2021 event sold out in just one week and raised \$80,000 to support our work. And this year's event was also well supported, with 186 players enjoying a spectacular day and digging deep for the cause.

We are so thankful to the Alexandra community, local businesses, sponsors and volunteers who once again rallied to support the event, as well as provide raffle and auction items. An extra special thanks goes to Chris and Nicola for their continuous efforts to help us raise awareness of this disease and vital funds for our cause.





## Forging New Partnerships and Support

Melanoma New Zealand's family of supporters continues to grow, with Yachting New Zealand, Burnsco and Karma Drinks recently coming on board to back our cause and help raise awareness about melanoma in New Zealand.

Yachting New Zealand has worked alongside us over the last few years, supporting our annual Get Spotted campaign and fundraising on our behalf, and this year, we formalised our partnership by becoming the official charity for Yachting New Zealand.

"We are a high-risk group as we typically spend more time exposed to the sun when we're out on the water," said Yachting New Zealand Chief Executive David Abercrombie.

"We look forward to helping Melanoma New Zealand deliver their important messages about being sun smart and checking your skin regularly."

Melanoma New Zealand is also excited to be partnering with Burnsco – the biggest seller of marine, RV and motorhome accessories in New Zealand.

Burnsco has been in business for more than 140 years and has committed to supporting Melanoma New Zealand's initiatives by spreading awareness about the importance of sun protection and early detection through its stores, websites, and promotional materials to its loyal customer base.

The partnerships with Burnsco and Yachting New Zealand underscore the importance of communicating lifesaving messages to a particularly at-risk group that spends considerable time outdoors and on the water.

We are also delighted to be the beneficiary of Karma Drinks summer campaign that includes a sun smart surprise to Lemmy Lemonade – all will be revealed soon!

Melanoma New Zealand is so grateful to these organisations and all our other partners for supporting our cause and offering to share our lifesaving messages with their audiences, helping Melanoma New Zealand make even more impact in early detection, prevention, and patient support.



## Pop-Up Pod Pilot Proves Potential

Our hugely successful Spot Check Van has been travelling the country since 2021, offering more than 12,000 people education about melanoma and free spot checks. In that time, our Nurse Educators have found more than 1,200 suspicious lesions and around 250 suspected melanomas.

This service is in hot demand, so in October, we also launched our new Spot Check Pop-Up Pod as an additional resource to our Melanoma Spot Check Van to help our team get even further afield more often.

The purpose-built portable pod can be set up in indoor and outdoor areas with limited space. It offers full privacy and is well-branded to capture the attention of passing foot traffic.

The pod was piloted in a four-day awareness campaign hosted at four Westfield shopping centres in Auckland in October. During the pilot, we provided education and 313 free spot checks and found 37 suspicious lesions, 17 of which were potential melanomas. Pub Charity Limited generously funded the Pop-Up Pod and contributed to the pilot campaign.

We hope to roll out the Pop-Up Pod as part of a national skin safety awareness campaign next year.



Photo credit: Shaun Ross



Sophia Gwilliam with her winning entry

## Get Spotted 2023

We had another successful Get Spotted campaign this year. More than 50 schools, early childhood centres and kindergartens registered to participate in the campaign and help us raise awareness by sharing sun safety messaging with their tamariki. We provided 167 free online course links to teachers to ensure they have the tools and knowledge about the importance of melanoma prevention and early intervention they need for themselves, their families and for the children they teach.

Lidgard Shades once again generously provided a \$20,000 shade sail prize, which was won by Te Kura o Te Kauaeranga - Thames South School. The effort and creativity that the entire school put into their entry made it look like they had a fun, memorable and very educational experience learning how to be sun smart.

Lidgard Shades also provided prizes for the winners of our colouring-in competition designed by Jun Arita. Jun said he wanted to make everyone winners as they were all great, but in the end, Khalid Mohammad won the adults category, and 9-year-old Sophia Gwilliam won the children's category. Congratulations!

We also sold a huge amount of our colour-changing UV bands to schools and businesses during the campaign. These great educational tools change from white to purple when exposed to UV radiation, as a reminder to protect your skin from sun damage.



The UV bands are available to purchase all year round for \$3 (+pp) in child and adult sizes - visit our website for more information about ordering or email [office@melanoma.org.nz](mailto:office@melanoma.org.nz).

## Thanks to our supporters.

