

Impact & Performance Report 2025

Melanoma
New Zealand



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Image: SAVS Photography

Thank you to Rainger & Rolfe

Melanoma New Zealand would like to warmly acknowledge and thank the team at creative agency Rainger & Rolfe for its generous support and expertise in designing this Impact & Performance Report.

ABOUT MELANOMA NEW ZEALAND

Melanoma New Zealand was founded in 2004. Our mission is to champion melanoma prevention, detection, and patient care for all.

OUR VISION

No deaths from melanoma

OUR MISSION

Early detection
to save lives today

Prevention
to save lives tomorrow

Patient care
to improve treatment and
patient experiences

OUR VALUES

Compassion
we care deeply

Courage
we bravely take smart chances

Collaboration
we work together for greater
impact

OUR PRIORITIES

Advocacy
advocating for system
improvements and behaviour
change

Access
providing targeted services to
address critical unmet needs

Advancement
driving advancements in
research and service delivery

REPORT FROM OUR CHAIR AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The 2024-2025 financial year marked another period of strong progress and growing impact for Melanoma New Zealand. With the backing of our donors, partners and other funders and supporters, we expanded our reach, strengthened our services, and continued to bring about change where it matters most.

From prevention and early detection to patient support and national advocacy, this year has been about doing more, with purpose.

Whether you donated, had a skin cancer spot check, hosted a fundraiser, partnered with us, or got behind our advocacy efforts to improve treatment and patient care – you've played a part in saving lives. This report is about impact, but more than that, it's about the impact we can have together when we push for change, show up in communities, and support New Zealanders affected by melanoma.

Making progress on our plans

One of our most significant achievements this year resulted from continuing to advocate for better access to effective melanoma medicines in New Zealand. We are proud to have contributed expert input to Pharmac's proposal to fund more treatment options for advanced melanoma patients. (This funding has since been confirmed and is effective from 1 June 2025.)

This funding is life-changing for many New Zealanders living with advanced melanoma and finally brings our treatment options further in line with what is already standard care in many other developed countries. The voices of patients, clinicians, and advocates have come together to push for better, fairer outcomes – and we've succeeded.

In March we were able to purchase our second mobile spot check van. We fitted it out and hit the road in the South Island, bringing spot checks and melanoma education to even more regions in New Zealand. Those regions include remote and rural areas where many people work outdoors and may be at higher risk of developing a melanoma.



Johnathan Eele
Chair



Andrea Newland
Chief Executive

“

This report is about ... the impact we can have together when we push for change, show up in communities, and support New Zealanders affected by melanoma.

”

In 2024 we officially launched the Melanoma New Zealand Research Fund. This fund is about accelerating progress – investing in ideas, expertise and solutions that could shift the future of treatment and patient care. We're excited to see our first funded project, led by Dr Andrea Gu, get underway soon. Investing in research is a big step forward, made possible by the research fund's founding bequest and ongoing generous supporters.

We have invested \$80,000 in this year's research grant aiming to reduce the burden of melanoma in New Zealand in years to come. We look forward to seeing more exciting research projects come through in future funding rounds.

Another milestone was establishing our Patient Advisory Group – a group of people with lived experience of melanoma who help guide and shape our work. Their ideas and feedback have already proven invaluable. It's a privilege to be advancing our mission alongside them, making sure our support and services truly reflect what patients and their families need.

On the ground and growing

At an operational level, we've continued to focus on key areas increasing awareness and sun safe behaviours, promoting early detection, and providing meaningful support to patients and their families.

Our free spot check service, delivered by our dedicated nurse educators, carried out 63% more spot checks this year than the year before. The service has provided spot checks to more than 20,000 people since it was launched in 2021. That's 20,000 opportunities to catch melanoma early, start treatment sooner, and save lives.

We also introduced a new free counselling service, designed to meet the emotional and psychological needs of those facing a melanoma diagnosis. It's a response to what we've heard again and again – that melanoma isn't just a medical challenge, it's a deeply personal one. We're proud to now offer this wraparound support.

Awareness and reach

Melanoma Awareness Month in October 2024 was a standout moment, with a national campaign running throughout the month. We were in communities, on airwaves, and online, explaining why prevention and early detection matter and what they involve. Our Get Spotted schools campaign brought creativity, competition and crucial information to students and teachers across the country. And, for the first time ever, we reached young people on TikTok with prevention messaging tailored to the 13 to 17 age group, partnering with influencers to speak directly to a hard-to-reach but important audience.

Stronger together

As we look back on the year, one thing is clear: we couldn't have done this work without you. We're so grateful to our corporate partners, including La Roche-Posay, CARTERS, and FMG, whose commitment to our mission continues to grow. Alongside them are many other businesses and organisations that have supported us, contributed time, resources, and heart to help us extend our reach and deepen our impact. We thank you all.

To our ambassadors, patrons, volunteers, donors, grant providers and pro bono suppliers – thank you. Your continued support strengthens everything we do, and we are truly grateful for your contributions.

Thank you, too, to our hard-working Melanoma New Zealand Board and team for the expertise you bring to your roles.

The voices of those experiencing melanoma are at the centre of all we do. It is always a privilege to have patients involved in our activities and sharing their stories.

“

Together, we will keep pushing forward, improving outcomes and making a tangible difference for New Zealanders affected by melanoma.

”

THANK YOU

We're extremely grateful to everyone who has supported us in the past year.

Corporate partners and supporters

La Roche-Posay, FMG, CARTERS Building Supplies, Just Cuts, Burnsco, Merck Sharp & Dohme, Lidgard Shades

Grant providers

Aotearoa Gaming Trust, BlueSky Community Trust, Department of Internal Affairs, Grassroots Trust, Pub Charity, Four Winds Foundation, Lion Foundation, Trillian Trust, One Foundation

Pro bono supporters

The Giltrap Trust, SCG, Simpson Grierson, Rainger & Rolfe, Yachting New Zealand, IT Live Auckland, Pure Productions

Ambassadors

Josh Emmett, Adine Wilson, Laura McGoldrick, Martin Guptill

Founding Patrons

Douglas Charitable Trust, Fife Foundation, Lynn Stratford

Volunteers

We're very grateful for the invaluable support of our volunteers who donate their time and expertise to us – on our Board, in our office, at events and as members of our new Patient Advisory Group. Their work is helping us raise public awareness, educate people and improve outcomes for patients and their families. In the 2024-2025 year, volunteers contributed 712 hours to Melanoma New Zealand.

Patients and families

A heartfelt thank you to the patients and their families who have shared their stories during the year. The voices of people experiencing melanoma are at the centre of all we do, and it is always a privilege to hear such personal and heartfelt stories.

Fundraising and events

The fundraising efforts of individuals and organisations raised awareness and funding to help us prevent melanoma, detect it early and support patients. Thank you all very much for so generously contributing your time, efforts and funds. Fundraisers in the past year include:

Ruby & Black Fundraiser

Christchurch-based lawyer and melanoma advocate Vickie Hudson-Craig organised the Ruby & Black event to raise funds and awareness for melanoma. Vickie has stage 4 melanoma. The May 2024 event, sponsorships, raffles and donations raised \$12,357 for Melanoma New Zealand, supported by Vickie's colleagues, family, friends and the local community. Our Pop-Up Spot Check Pod and a Nurse Educator were on site, and many guests took the opportunity to have a free spot check. We are so grateful to Vickie and everyone involved for their generosity and supporting the cause.

Sam Gattsche Memorial Fundraiser

In November 2024, Michael and Sophie Gattsche organised an event in Palmerston North to remember Michael's brother Sam, a 28-year-old builder who died of melanoma in September 2023. More than 230 guests attended the fundraiser which raised \$40,285 for Melanoma New Zealand. Thank you to the 30 generous local businesses who donated items totalling \$20,000 for the live auction, and to people who generously bid on those items on the night. One of our Nurse Educators attended the event to offer free spot checks and reinforce why detecting melanoma early is so important. The evening celebrated Sam's vibrant spirit and showed how one family's grief can galvanise an entire community to fight against melanoma.

Gibbs Farm

Our thanks to the trustees and team at Gibbs Farm for allowing us to host another event at their magnificent property in November. We raised more than \$26,000 from donations and ticket and raffle sales.

CARTERS Charity Golf Tournament

In March 2025, CARTERS hosted the first CARTERS Charity Golf Day at Remuera Golf Club in Auckland, raising vital funds for Melanoma New Zealand. This event brought together suppliers, clients and staff to support melanoma awareness and early detection. The tournament raised \$85,600 to help fund our education programmes and community activities. We are hugely grateful for CARTERS' continued partnership and commitment to supporting the fight against melanoma.

SNAPSHOT

MELANOMA IN AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

New Zealand has one of the highest rates of melanoma in the world and the highest death rate. More people die from skin cancer in New Zealand each year than on our roads.

There are more than 7,000 diagnoses of melanoma each year, and around 300 people will die from the disease annually.

Melanoma is less common than non-melanoma skin cancers but is responsible for the most deaths from skin cancer.

Most melanomas are caused by too much ultraviolet radiation (UVR), either from the sun or artificial sources such as sunbeds.

UVR cannot be seen or felt and can be harmful even on cool and cloudy days.

UVR exposure during a person's first 18 years of life is the most critical for cancer-causing skin damage.

“ The good news is that melanoma can be preventable and, if caught and treated early enough, it is almost always curable. ”

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Your A-G guide to melanoma



Asymmetry

One half is different from the other half



Border irregularity

The edges are poorly defined e.g. notched, uneven or blurred



Colour is uneven

Shades of brown, tan and black are present (there may also be white, grey, red, pink or blue)



Different

Looks different from other spots, freckles or moles (“ugly duckling”)



Evolving

Any change in growth; new, elevated or painful



Firm

To the touch



Growing

Most are larger than 6mm and keep growing

These images are indicative only. Look for the type of behaviour described, rather than trying to match your lesion to the images.

Melanoma images:
DermNet

Visit melanoma.org.nz/early-detection for more information

OUR 2024-2025 YEAR IN FOCUS



Skin cancer spot checks and education

- 7,096 spot checks with our Nurse Educators (up 63%)
- 350 suspected melanomas detected
- 715 other suspicious lesions detected
- Purchased and fitted out our second spot check van



Patient support

- 420 melanoma patients and their families provided with support (up 79%)
- Launched free counselling service and patient support groups



Patients' voices

- Launched Patient Advisory Group



Communications and community engagement

Campaigns and communications

- Get Spotted campaign (primary schools and early learning centres)
- First TikTok campaign (13 to 17 years) reached more than 95,000 people
- National Melanoma Awareness Month: 1,537 spot checks, 21 events, 9 locations
- 868,403 individuals (in workplaces and schools) received melanoma awareness information through our partners (up 60%)
- 46,888 newsletters distributed (up 34%)
- Coverage in national, regional, trade and partner media

Major public events

- 11 activations at major public events
- Melanoma awareness information displayed to 236,225 attendees (up 7%)

Educational activities

- 78,363 educational brochures distributed (up 159%)
- 9 educational events and webinars
- 2,850 links to online education course sent



Advocacy and technical expertise

- Clinical meetings, sector meetings, submissions

Contributed to:

- Pharmac's consultation leading to funded melanoma medicines from 1 June 2025
- Skin Cancer Prevention and Early Detection Strategy 2024-2028
- Consultation on taxation issues for not-for-profit sector



Research

- Launched Melanoma New Zealand Research Fund
- First Melanoma New Zealand funded research project



Partnerships, fundraising and in-kind support

- 7 corporate partnerships
- 4 fundraising events
- \$1.076m in donations, fundraising and grants
- \$185,000 in pro bono goods and services
- 712 hours of volunteer expertise

SPOT CHECKS

EDUCATION THAT SAVES LIVES

Our Nurse Educators travel around Aotearoa New Zealand, providing education about melanoma, raising awareness and offering free skin cancer spot checks. They also provide free online and phone consultations for anyone seeking advice or links to support and other services.

Our year-round spot check programme included checks at CARTERS Tradie Breakfasts for people working in construction, the FMG Spot Check Roadie for people in rural parts of the country, La Roche-Posay activations at sporting events, our free community events across the country, at Hamilton Fieldays and other national events, and in workplaces.

In October 2024 we partnered with La Roche-Posay for Melanoma Awareness Month, reaching large audiences with our communications, and offering free spot checks over 21 days in high-traffic areas in Westfield shopping centres and Chemist Warehouse stores across the country. We carried out more than 1,500 spot checks, finding 132 suspicious lesions, including 47 suspected melanomas.

Feedback from our spot checks

“A big thank you to your team for spotting my melanoma and encouraging me to do something about it.”

“A great service. A suspicious lesion was found, and I have since seen my GP, who has referred me to a skin specialist for further assessment.”

“I was made aware of marks that I would never have thought could be melanoma.”

“I am certain that this service will save lives.”

“An amazing service which is easy and accessible. Thank you.”

“The nurse was excellent, informative and had great people skills.”

7,096

Individuals received spot checks

350

Suspected melanomas identified

715

Other suspicious lesions identified

Each visitor was given **education** about preventing melanoma and detecting it early, including what to look for when checking their own skin.

THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION

Jade is one of our Nurse Educators. With our other Nurse Educators, Abbie Cameron and Gill Rolfe, she provides free skin cancer spot checks and melanoma education around the country, using a Melanoma New Zealand spot check van or other private space. Jade also supports and advises patients and their families through online and phone consultations. Here she explains her role and what a spot check involves.



Jade Castaños-Bosnić

Nurse Educator

"I love working with patients and doing a job that helps people. Making people aware of melanoma, helping detect skin cancers and making a difference in their lives – it's really rewarding. And the technical side of the role is interesting too."

Since she emigrated from the Philippines to New Zealand in 2018, Jade has developed her nursing career by specialising in melanography – using a dermatoscope to check skin lesions. She has carried out thousands of spot checks.

"A dermatoscope's like a high-tech, hand-held magnifying glass with a light. It lets me see structures under the skin's surface that can't be seen with the naked eye. I use it to examine patients' skin lesions, including moles, freckles and other suspicious spots, to identify potential signs of skin cancer."

Education is a major part of every spot check. "While I'm doing a check, I ask the person how they protect themselves from the sun. This starts the conversation and encourages people to think about their sun safe behaviour."

A typical spot check takes about five minutes and includes discussing the three types of skin cancer, with a focus on melanoma. Jade explains that everyone should check their own skin (a 'self-check') every three months and have an annual full body skin check with their skin check provider.

Jade outlines what to watch for on the skin, highlighting common areas where melanoma can develop. "I also remind people that melanoma can appear in places that aren't usually exposed to the sun. Then the patient is on their way with a brochure about sun safe behaviour and self-checks, and a sample of sunscreen."

If Jade detects a suspicious lesion, she writes up a card with notes about the lesion for the patient to take to their doctor or other skin check provider. Melanoma New Zealand also sends the notes to the patient's GP clinic.

Supporting the patient is important. "I highlight that we offer free online consultations with nurses like me, and free counselling services for anyone who needs support – patients, family and carers."

Following up with patients suspected of having melanoma is an essential part of the service. Jade recalls ringing a patient whose spots she'd checked at an Auckland market earlier in the year.

"One patient had a suspicious lesion on her left forearm. When I called, she'd had it excised [removed] and it had been diagnosed as a melanoma. Her dermatologist noted that the melanoma was caught at a very early stage and asked how it was detected – early detection's so important. Fortunately, the patient had visited our van while she was shopping at the market. This is why we travel to places where people gather – right around the country."

In the past year those places have included Kerikeri in the north of the North Island to Winton in the south of the South Island.

When it comes to sun safe behaviour, Jade believes habits are important. "I put sunscreen next to my husband's toothbrush, so he applies it after he brushes his teeth every morning. It works!"



Jarrod Lill

Patient - Auckland

“I was blessed enough to know that something was wrong pretty quickly and went straight away and got it looked at.”

Jarrod spent much of the past year being treated for advanced melanoma. He finished his Keytruda treatment in May 2025 and doctors have told him that he is 'pretty much 90% cured'. The father of three young children aged 10, 14 and 16 lives in Auckland. He is a Construction Manager who is currently overseeing commercial projects in Queenstown.

Jarrod was holidaying with his children in Noosa in mid-2024 when he suspected something wasn't quite right. The Queensland destination had become an annual escape for the family, after losing their wife and mum to cancer in 2019.

“I was surfing, swimming, running every day, and I started feeling a bit tired. At first, I put it down to the busy combination of running a commercial construction business and being a solo dad.”

Back in Auckland, Jarrod noticed a pea-sized lump in his groin which blew out to the size of a golf ball. His local medical centre sent him straight to an urgent care clinic which directed him to a hospital emergency department.

A cancer specialist surgeon quickly discounted a hernia. Two days later, she confirmed the results of an ultrasound.

“She said, I've got some really, really bad news. You've got cancer.”

“I was driving to a big factory to run a meeting. We talked for the duration of my drive, and she explained that I had six tumours bigger than my thumb. The cancer was advanced – stage three melanoma.

“My lymph nodes had been destroyed by cancer and become necrotic. I also had tumours growing in my groin.”

Jarrod's oncologist quickly confirmed a treatment plan involving drugs and surgery. The message was clear – he needed to start treatment the next day.

Three initial cycles of immunotherapy followed, which Jarrod's health insurance covered. The oncologist hoped Keytruda would shrink the tumours which were deep, large, wrapped around arteries and possibly difficult to remove.

Jarrod responded like a 'textbook patient'. “After the second cycle, the result was amazing... the tumours had shrunk 40%.”

In August Jarrod had major surgery – four hours, three surgeons. “They got all the cancer out. They took out all eight lymph nodes in my leg, and eight up into my heart and stomach. I've had a prognosis that I'm 90% cured. From what I've gone through, it's as good as it can get.”

Throughout the journey Jarrod has been mindful of the impact of his diagnosis on his children. “My kids are my life, they're so important. You have to keep the family going, right?”

Jarrod's melanoma is one of a small percentage of cases where specialists cannot identify the primary source. However, he knows his years outdoors, unprotected from the sun, are the likely cause.

Growing up in the lower South Island, Jarrod spent many hours enjoying the outdoors. A career that has included a stint in the police dive squad and working as a builder has meant time in the sun. Jarrod knows that he could have been more vigilant to protect his skin from the sun – using sunscreen, wearing a hat, clothing and sunglasses, seeking shade.

He has generously shared his story, hoping it will 'help someone else'.

“I was blessed enough to know that something was wrong pretty quickly and went straight away and got it looked at. And everyone who helped did their best job. I couldn't ask for more, right?”



Joy Heath

Patient - New Plymouth

“Melanoma differs from many cancers. People say, OK, you’ve got it off. You’re fine. But it’s always in the back of your mind.”

Joy is one of five patient representatives on our Patient Advisory Group (PAG). We set this group up this year to ensure patients’ voices are central to the decisions we make. Members of the group are providing advice and feedback to help us succeed in our mission of improving awareness of, preventing, detecting and treating melanoma in New Zealand.

Joy has a lived experience of melanoma. She was a medical laboratory scientist, specialising in haematology, and Head of Department at Taranaki Medlab for 20 years. She is married to Ted and lives in New Plymouth. Joy has three adult children, three adult step-children and 12 grandchildren.

Joy’s reasons for joining the PAG are both personal and professional.

“My mother died of melanoma, and I’ve had eight melanomas myself. Plus, with my scientific background, I’ve seen lots of melanoma in the lab. When I retired, I wanted to keep using my research, teaching and training skills and Melanoma New Zealand was looking for volunteers.”

Joy has a daughter who is a pathologist in Australia. ‘We have lots of conversations about melanoma and she keeps me up to date.’

She is enjoying being a member of the PAG which draws on the experiences and expertise of a wide range of people.

“We’ve got people who’ve had early melanomas, people who’ve gone through treatment that hasn’t been a smooth ride, and people who’ve been treated successfully. Some members have had one melanoma. I’m the old lady of the group with eight.”

The role is a broad one.

“We’re responsible for providing advice and feedback and for representing the interests, views and needs of melanoma patients and survivors to help Melanoma New Zealand do its work.”

The group meets online every three months and in between if needed. Recently, it gave feedback on a video the charity is making to support patients, whānau/family and carers. This feedback is helping Melanoma New Zealand ensure the final video reflects the views and needs of the wider melanoma community.

“Many people have different stories about their melanoma and different attitudes to dealing with it. It was good to help Melanoma New Zealand produce a video that’s as relevant to as many people as possible.”

Through her volunteering with the PAG, Joy hopes to help the wider community understand the challenges melanoma patients and survivors face.

“Melanoma differs from many cancers. People say, OK, you’ve got it off. You’re fine. But it’s always in the back of your mind. You have to keep checking – and it’s on you, unless you’re dealing with advanced melanoma and in the oncology system.”

Even with funded drugs financial challenges remain.

“Once I retired, I couldn’t afford insurance. But I need to keep paying my dermatologist and surgeon. My dermatologist refers me to the local hospital outpatient clinic to reduce the cost, but they get swamped with referrals.”

She’s concerned that advances in treatments are causing some people to be complacent.

“We’ve got wonderful drugs. But they don’t work for everybody, and the side effects aren’t easy. There’s still a lot of tragedy. People need to be sun safe and vigilant to catch melanoma as early as possible.”

Joy is a strong advocate of sun safe behaviour to prevent melanoma.

“If we’re outside I’ll say, can I sit in the shade? And explain why. It’s amazing how many people say, oh, my husband’s had melanoma. Or my brother. Melanoma’s everywhere.”



Allan Sinclair
Patient - Ashburton

“Cover up! Some jobs are naturally outdoor jobs but there’s still plenty you can do to keep your skin out of the sun.”

Allan Sinclair is a retired South Island landscaper. He has spent many years working outdoors, helping people across Canterbury create and maintain their gardens and lawns. Since he retired, Allan and his wife Mary have lived in Ashburton. Gardening continues to be a passion.

Alan’s experience with melanoma started in early 2024 when he and Mary attended a Melanoma New Zealand spot check event in Ashburton.

“Mary wanted to go for a spot check at our local Ruralco store. She’d noticed some spots that she thought I should get checked out too, and she encouraged me to come along. That visit may have saved my life.”

Melanoma New Zealand Nurse Educator Jade carried out Allan’s and Mary’s spot checks. She remembers Allan’s consultation well – because of the number of suspected melanomas she detected on his skin that day.

“I’m so glad Allan came for a spot check! When I inspected his skin with my dermatoscope, I found several spots that I thought were melanoma. And I knew there could be more.”

Jade urged Allan to have his spots investigated more thoroughly – and quickly. She wrote up her clinical notes on a card for Allan to take to his doctor. Our office team followed up promptly too, sending notes to Allan’s GP.

Fortunately, Allan heeded Jade’s advice and sought an urgent follow-up with a Methven doctor who specialises in detecting skin cancer. “I didn’t muck around!”

Several sessions at Burwood Hospital in Christchurch followed where Allan had five melanomas excised. One of the melanomas (on his cheek) needed to be cut out three times before the specialist was comfortable that they had removed the cancer fully. A GP visit since has identified another possible melanoma which Allan has also had excised. The worst spot, on his upper arm, was recorded as a grade two melanoma.

Education is a crucial part of every one of our skin cancer spot checks. The information Jade provided during Allan’s check has left an impression.

“The nurse told me that melanoma is largely preventable. And that it can almost always be cured if you catch it and treat it early enough. I’m just grateful mine was picked up early and that I now know that I need to get my skin checked regularly.”

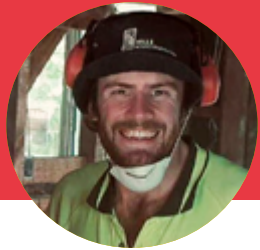
Allan realises that a career working outdoors as a landscaper has exposed him to a lot of sun. He says his skin was in the sun daily. His message to others is simple: “Cover up! Some jobs are naturally outdoor jobs but there’s still plenty you can do to keep your skin out of the sun.”

Those sun safe precautions include wearing clothing that covers the body, a broad-brimmed hat and close-fitting sunglasses, using a broad-spectrum SPF30 or higher sunscreen liberally (and reapplying it regularly), and seeking shade whenever you can.

Allan talks about the ‘peace of mind’ that comes from knowing he’s now having his skin checked regularly. In his case, those checks involve frequent self-checks and visiting his skin specialist every four months. And we can be sure that Mary is keeping a close eye on him too.

PERSPECTIVES

A MEMORIAL FUNDRAISER



Sam Gattsche

Memorial Fundraiser - Palmerston North

“Our time here is limited, and it matters what we do.”

Sam Gattsche, a young Palmerston North builder, passed away from melanoma in September 2023 at just 28 years of age. He'd noticed a mole on his back in 2022 and after getting it checked, the spot was confirmed as melanoma. It claimed his life, far too early.

Sam's death was heart-breaking for Sam's brother Michael Gattsche and Michael's wife Sophie. It motivated them to do something selfless to prevent other lives from being lost to melanoma – to organise an event to fundraise for Melanoma New Zealand and to raise awareness about the disease. The event took place in Palmerston North, one year on from Sam's passing.

“Anyone who has known such grief, or lost a loved one too soon, you will know that it changes your perspective on life. You realise that tragedies happen every day, that our time here is limited, and it matters what we do,” says Michael.

“We had two reasons for wanting to host this event. First up, we wanted to have a big party to celebrate Sam. We also wanted to raise money for a cause that matters.”

He talks fondly of his brother.

“Sam was one of those people who had an electric energy, someone you always wanted to be around. Sam and I were pretty much inseparable all our lives, and even shared a room until we were 21,” said Michael, who was also Sam's business partner.

“If this fundraiser can encourage one person to get a spot check, and get their melanoma detected early, we could save a life. And that really does mean something.”

More than 230 people attended the event. Generous donors gave \$20,000 worth of items for a live auction, 33 big-hearted local businesses chipped in with sponsorship, and many kind friends and family donated money. Their actions showed the profound impact and ripple effect of Sam's death across the Palmerston North community.

The community's generosity far exceeded Michael's and Sophie's expectations, with \$40,285 raised for Melanoma New Zealand's vital work.

“We thought we'd raise about \$15,000 but we raised heaps more than that which is so cool,” said Sophie.

“So many people messaged Mike afterwards saying just how much they were impacted by the event. When Mike did his speech, there wasn't a dry eye in the room.”

Nurse Educator Gill Rolfe represented Melanoma New Zealand at the event. She put her expertise as a specialist dermatology nurse to use, carrying out skin cancer spot checks for many guests on the night. She also spoke about how important it is to prevent melanoma and to detect it early.

Gill said it was a privilege to be part of the event and ‘a very humbling experience’.

PERSPECTIVES

Our Partners



“Partnering with Melanoma New Zealand to save lives and prevent suffering is a no-brainer for us,” says Pete Frizzell, Chief Marketing Officer. “We know it can be harder for those living rurally to access healthcare, so let’s take this life-saving service into these communities.”

We’re proud to be sponsoring Melanoma New Zealand’s brand new skin cancer spot check van to bring free melanoma spot checks to even more rural communities across New Zealand Aotearoa, via the FMG Spot Check Roadie.

The new South Island-based van means more opportunities to raise awareness in areas where many people work outdoors and may be at higher risk of developing melanoma.

Ever since 2021, the FMG Spot Check Roadie has been travelling the country, providing free melanoma spot checks at rural events. In the first half of this year, Melanoma New Zealand’s Nurse Educators have identified hundreds of suspicious lesions with more than 40 being suspected melanomas.

As a mutual, we are committed to building strong and prosperous rural communities. Supporting initiatives like this is just one of the many ways we invest back into the wellbeing of our clients and the wider rural sector.



Left to right: **Pete Frizzell** (FMG Chief Marketing Officer), **Alex Johnston** (FMG Chief Insurance Officer), **Abbie Cameron** (Melanoma New Zealand Nurse Educator), **Andrea Newland** (Melanoma New Zealand Chief Executive), **Adam Heath** (FMG Chief Executive), **Glenn Croasdale** (FMG Chief Client Officer) with the new spot check van in the background

PERSPECTIVES

Our Partners



For 15 years La Roche-Posay has been conducting a global public health campaign, Save Your Skin, which aims to educate consumers about the harmful effects of UVA and UVB rays. To help bring to life this campaign and achieve our skin cancer awareness goals, the brand is proud to support Melanoma New Zealand.

Together, we have been championing melanoma prevention and early detection through offering free spot checks, education and sunscreen at our pop-up events. La Roche-Posay also sponsors the Melanoma New Zealand Spot Check Van and a Nurse Educator who provides nationwide checks and information on the importance of staying sun safe and self-checking your skin regularly.

In October 2024 we partnered together for Melanoma Awareness Month, offering free checks across 21 days in high traffic areas in Westfield shopping centres and Chemist Warehouse stores across the country. Our impactful 'Your Skin Remembers' campaign shared the important message that harmful UV damage adds up over time and encouraged people to book in for a complimentary spot check at a location near them. We were proud to conduct over 1,500 checks during this campaign, with 132 suspicious lesions, including 47 suspected melanomas found.

We look forward to continuing to make a positive impact on the skin health of New Zealanders and collaborating with Melanoma New Zealand on several upcoming events, including our second Melanoma Awareness Month campaign.

Olivia Kember
Communications and Partnerships Manager, L'Oréal
Dermatological Beauty

PERSPECTIVES

Our Partners



This February marked one year since we proudly partnered with Melanoma New Zealand to support their mission of championing melanoma prevention, early detection, and treatment for all New Zealanders. With members of our team working outdoors in timber yards and our customers spending long hours on building sites exposed to the elements, this partnership brings immense value and meaning.

Over the past year, at events across the country, we've had the Melanoma New Zealand Nurse Educator on site offering skin cancer spot checks to our trade customers, and the response has been incredible. Not only have hundreds taken the opportunity to get checked, but a significant number of suspicious lesions have been identified, reinforcing just how critical early detection is. We're proud to be helping our customers take proactive steps toward protecting their health and building a future free from melanoma.

Mike Guy
Chief Executive,
CARTERS Building Supplies

Building a future *free* from melanoma.

We are partnering with Melanoma New Zealand to deliver lifesaving tools about sun safety and finding skin cancer early so we all stay healthy on-site and off.

Find out more:
www.carters.co.nz/melanoma

CARTERS Your Building Partner | Melanoma New Zealand
TRUST PARTNER



Dr Andrea Gu
Melanoma researcher

Inaugural recipient of funding from the Melanoma New Zealand Research Fund.

Dr Andrea Gu is an award-winning post-doctoral researcher with the Auckland Cancer Society Research Centre at the University of Auckland. She's the inaugural recipient of funding from the Melanoma New Zealand Research Fund, awarded in 2024.

Dr Gu is an emerging talent in lab-based melanoma research in New Zealand. Her impressive academic background includes a PhD in Biomedical Science from the University of Auckland. Now she is using her knowledge and skills to find new treatment options for advanced melanoma patients.

"Treatments like immunotherapies and targeted therapies have saved and extended many lives," says Dr Gu. "But some patients don't respond to these treatments and others respond initially and develop resistance to the drugs later. There's an urgent need for new treatment strategies to overcome drug resistance."

From September 2025 Dr Gu will spend 18 months working alongside Dr David Adams, Head of Experimental Cancer Genetics at the high profile Wellcome Sanger Institute in the United Kingdom. The opportunity to collaborate with an international expert in an institute known for its cutting-edge research in genetics, especially in cancer treatment, is significant.

Dr Gu's research project is titled "Investigating resistance mechanisms to MAPK signalling inhibitors in melanoma using CRISPR-mediated combinatorial screening". She talks about gene sequencing, gene editing, CRISPR technology, melanoma cell lines, gene paralogs, bioinformatics. It's complex, jargon-filled scientific territory for most of us. But ultimately, she's seeking new treatment options for people who are out of options, and her work could mean the difference between life and death for the next generation of melanoma patients.

"In my research, I will use new gene editing technology to identify genes linked to drug resistance in melanoma. This can help us uncover new treatment options for melanoma patients."

It's vital research. New Zealand is a skin cancer hot spot with one of the worst rates of melanoma in the world, and the highest melanoma death rate.

Dr Adams will act as Dr Gu's mentor while she is in the UK. He tells us that "Dr Gu's project is timely and innovative. Her approach has the potential to uncover new genetic dependencies and therapeutic targets that can significantly advance the field of cancer treatment."

Dr Gu is looking forward to getting started. "One thing that's really exciting is that I will be not only learning many new techniques, but also able to work with researchers from around the world."

And she's setting her sights high. "The very ambitious goal would be to find something that's very effective and can actually move cancer treatment forward a step... to find something that may have a large benefit to a large population."

If her research is successful, it could be globally significant, not only for melanoma patients, but also for those battling other cancers with tumours that share similar genetic mutations.

After her time at the Wellcome Sanger Institute, Dr Gu will return to New Zealand. Here she will apply what she and Dr Adams have learnt to make it more specific to our population. This will involve screening melanoma cell lines donated here by a range of melanoma patients.

We're excited to be a part of her journey and wish her well.

This groundbreaking research is being co-funded by Melanoma New Zealand and the Cancer Research Trust New Zealand.



Johnathan Eele

Chair, Melanoma New Zealand

“ Tackling melanoma feels achievable. This isn’t about rainbows and unicorns. We really can make a difference by helping prevent melanoma, detecting it early and supporting patients, families and communities. ”

Johnathan brings to our Board commercial and leadership skills and experience from an international career in telecommunications. He is Chief Executive of fibre broadband provider Enable in Ōtautahi Christchurch.

We asked Johnathan why he chose to offer his expertise to Melanoma New Zealand.

“I wanted to do something philanthropic, and the melanoma cause resonated. Plus, my family has experienced melanoma.”

Several features of the disease piqued his interest. Johnathan talks about melanoma as ‘New Zealand’s cancer’. He says that the organisation’s vision (‘no deaths from melanoma’) speaks to the facts that melanoma can be preventable and that the disease is almost always curable if it is caught and treated early enough.

“While we’re not proud of it, New Zealand has the world’s highest death rate from melanoma. I could use my skills to fight other cancers, but the issues involved are similar in New Zealand and every other country. Melanoma’s more specific to us.

“And, unlike other cancers which are hidden in the body, melanoma typically manifests itself visibly. Let’s make the most of those early warning signals!”

Our next question for Johnathan was about what he brings to the Board.

“I bring a very commercial perspective and I’m good at galvanising teams around a mission – what we need to achieve. Melanoma New Zealand now has a very clear mission and a strategy to get us there.” That mission guides the organisation’s work.

“When I’m considering what we’re doing, I’m big on the primary objective. What’s the main thing we’re trying to achieve? Fundraising? Delivery? Advocacy? We need to be clear or there’s a risk that we don’t serve any of the important elements of our mission.”

Johnathan’s commercial background has helped Melanoma New Zealand build its valuable corporate partnerships.

“I’m proud of our commercial activities. Building corporate relationships is great for the cause and the charity’s finances.”

He’s proud of what the charity has achieved in the past year. The highlight is seeing the Pharmac funding come through. Plus, I’m super proud that we’ve launched our counselling service and Patient Advisory Group and bought and fitted out our second van.

“I’m also proud that the Board and management team operate with the level of professionalism and rigour that we do. You don’t see that in every organisation of this size.”

The Board has a cross-disciplinary background, and Johnathan says it is serving Melanoma New Zealand well.

“It’s been great seeing the Board pull together on big issues this year, and what different Board members bring. I enjoy spending time with people from different backgrounds – political, commercial, the different clinical specialties.”

He is clear on the challenge the organisation needs to tackle in the coming year.

“We need to scale up what we do. We’ve got a good foundation and a great team. Now it’s about scaling our work around our mission to be more efficient and effective.”

When pushed for a personal vision for Melanoma New Zealand, Johnathan says this:

“I want us to increase our reach so that melanoma is on the tip of everyone’s tongue. I’d also like to see more partnerships with corporates in appropriate categories, because those engagements are so valuable. We’ve shown the value we add to businesses and the value they add to us – not just in monetary terms but through the people and communities we can reach together.”

FOUNDING PATRONS

We're very grateful to our generous Founding Patrons, the Douglas Charitable Trust, Lynn Stratford and the Fife Foundation. Their tremendous support plays a huge role in helping us carry out our day-to-day work. It also helps us increase our impact over time so that we can bring even more awareness and services to more people right around the country.



“We're proud to support Melanoma New Zealand's vital work across the country - from education initiatives, to funding research and providing much-needed patient support. Melanoma New Zealand is the only charity in New Zealand solely dedicated to championing prevention, detection and patient support, and we are delighted to play a part in contributing to the organisation's impactful work.”

Jeff Douglas, Douglas Charitable Trust and Melanoma New Zealand Founding Patron

LYNN STRATFORD

“I'm excited to see the wide range of initiatives Melanoma New Zealand has been involved in this year. I appreciate the organisation's relentless focus on improving outcomes for the public and patients - whether that's addressing New Zealand's high melanoma incidence and mortality rates, successfully advocating for better funding of medicines, or being there for patients and their families when they need practical and emotional support. I'm proud to be a Founding Patron.”

Lynn Stratford, Melanoma New Zealand Founding Patron



“Melanoma is far too common in New Zealand and it's costing far too many New Zealanders their lives. It's hugely important to educate people about preventing melanoma and detecting it early, and to advocate for better treatment and support for people fighting this disease. Melanoma New Zealand is doing this very well, and we're delighted to continue to support its wonderful work.”

Gina Satterthwaite, Fife Foundation Founder and Melanoma New Zealand Founding Patron

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[melanoma.org.nz](https://www.melanoma.org.nz)




Slip
Slip on clothing that covers as much of your skin as possible.
[#slipslopslapseekslide](#)




Slop
Slop on sunscreen that is at least SPF 30, broad-spectrum and water-resistant.
[#slipslopslapseekslide](#)



Slap
Slap on a broad-brimmed hat that shades your face, head, neck and ears.
[#slipslopslapseekslide](#)



Seek
Seek the shade or indoors.
[#slipslopslapseekslide](#)



Slide
Slide on close-fitting sunglasses.
[#slipslopslapseekslide](#)

PERFORMANCE REPORT & INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

For the year ended 31 March 2025

Please click the link below for the full audited accounts of Melanoma New Zealand.

[Melanoma New Zealand 2025 Performance Report](#)

