



IMPACT REPORT

2024 - 2025



17 Kiwis are diagnosed with a gut cancer every day.

That's over 6,100 Kiwis every year, making gut cancers the most common type of cancer in New Zealand.

Collectively, cancers of the digestive system remain the most common form of cancer in Aotearoa New Zealand.

This report captures the transformative progress we've achieved together in 2024/2025 made possible with your ongoing generosity and support.

Across our pillars of research and innovation, we continue to deliver meaningful impact that reflects the unique needs of our communities. We've highlighted initiatives that raise awareness, providing vital support to those affected by gut cancer, and demonstrate the power of collaboration in driving lasting change.

Our commitment to creating positive change and impact remains unwavering. Together, we are making a difference for all New Zealanders affected by gut cancers.

Thank you for your support.

Ka okea ururoatia mātou kia tū takitahi ngā tāngata katoa o Aotearoa e pāngia ana e ngā momo mate pukupuku kōpiro.

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WHO ARE WE?

Mō Mātou

Why we are here

Vision / Mission

We enable positive change for all New Zealanders affected by gut cancers. We lead innovative research, address barriers to treatment and care, and ensure people impacted by gut cancer receive the support they need.

What we do

Our Impact

We lead a gut cancer ecosystem to create change collaboratively:

Improve outcomes for people living with gut cancer

Address inequity

Enable better diagnosis, care, and treatment

Ensure people are better able to navigate the health system and manage their condition

OUR PILLARS

Ngā Pou Rautaki



Research & innovation

We prioritise research and innovation by leading and collaborating on clinical, scientific and social studies, both globally and locally, to benefit New Zealand gut cancer patients and address the unique needs of our population.



Equity

We are committed to addressing barriers to treatment and care for all New Zealanders.



Support

We partner to deliver holistic services to meet the needs of the gut cancer community.



Voice

We are the leading voice for gut cancers in Aotearoa, ensuring the needs of people living with a gut cancer are understood, acted upon, and advocated for.



Sustainability

We work with our staff, supporters, and board to ensure future organisational and financial stability.



8

grants made this year



173k

value of grants made this year



174k

value of new research commitments made this year

KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF 2025 AT A GLANCE



EXECUTIVE OFFICER REPORT *Pūrongo a te Āpiha Whakahaere*

2024/2025 has been a year of progressive impact for us, despite an ever-changing landscape.

Equity sits at the heart of everything we do. Our goal is simple but vital to reduce the barriers that prevent New Zealanders from accessing early diagnosis, treatment, and support for gut cancers. Whether those barriers are cultural, financial, or geographic, we know that improving equity is key to improving outcomes for patients and whānau across Aotearoa.

This year's impact reflects that commitment in action. We supported two PhD grants through our partnership with the Māori Researcher Development grant round, strengthening the pipeline of Māori-led gut cancer research. Equity also guided our approach to the national pancreatic cancer genomics study, ensuring Māori perspectives and participation are embedded from the outset.

We've taken meaningful steps to make our digital platforms more equitable and culturally safe, developed awareness materials that reflect our communities, and focused national campaigns on key inequities, including liver cancer prevention, hepatitis, and H. pylori in stomach cancer. Our partnerships with Māori-led community groups and health providers remain central as we work to address the inequities that see Māori and Pacific peoples disproportionately impacted by gut cancers,

Liam Willis
Executive Officer



such as liver, stomach, and pancreatic cancer. Together, these initiatives demonstrate how we're turning our commitment to equity into tangible change for those most affected by gut cancers.

Throughout 2024/2025, we continued to strengthen our online presence, enhancing both our website and patient information hub platform. We've seen a significant increase in visitors to our cancer information pages, a clear sign that more Kiwis are seeking and finding the trusted guidance they need on their gut cancer journey. Our mission remains to provide a platform that acts as a central hub for reliable, accessible information.

The reality is that gut cancers in Aotearoa continue to be prevalent. Our role is to help reduce distress, improve the flow of information, and ensure all New Zealanders have access to the right treatments, clinical options, and support when they need it most.

This period also marked the beginning of our journey to build a comprehensive pipeline of support for Kiwis, connecting them to research, clinical trials, and community resources that make a tangible difference.

We've also leaned more deeply into our collaborative relationships, working alongside other charitable organisations, researchers, industry partners, and health professionals, to strengthen collective action and drive lasting change.

OUR WORK

Research and innovation

We continue our strong commitment to improving outcomes for New Zealanders affected by gut cancers. Through collaboration with leading international researchers and the brightest New Zealand minds, we're helping to open access to cutting-edge clinical trials and treatments, and support vital research specific to our own population. Our vision is to build robust, locally relevant evidence and help deliver innovative therapies that make a real difference for gut cancer patients in Aotearoa.

Māori Cancer Research

As part of our commitment to a partnership with Cancer Society of New Zealand (CSNZ) and Hei Āhuru Mōwai Māori Cancer Leadership, in 2024, we supported two scholarships to PhD students. These are now underway.

1. Understanding Māori perspectives: tissue being used for living tissue models (Francesca Munro (Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Moerewa, Ngāti Rangī), University of Otago PhD Student

AIM - To understand Māori perspectives on the use of human tissue in the development of living tissue models for cancer research.

WHY - It is essential that Māori are included in these types of studies to ensure they benefit from the findings and that research practices align with tikanga and cultural values.

METHOD - This work forms part of a larger research programme that will apply the adapted protocols to identify gastric cancer subtypes and effective treatments for Aotearoa New Zealand's diverse populations. It will explore concerns and expectations around emerging tissue technologies, focusing on cultural safety, ongoing relationships, and appropriate data handling.

GCF COMMITMENT - \$25,000



“We recognise the importance of including Māori in these studies and will address cultural safety by understanding concerns, building ongoing relationships, adapting laboratory protocols, and ensuring appropriate handling of data and human tissue.” - Francesca Munro.

New funding overview

Understanding the Molecular Features of Pancreatic Cancer: An Aotearoa Biobank Initiative (Pancreatic Cancer)

AIM - To better understand the molecular, genetic, and immunological features of pancreatic cancer in Aotearoa New Zealand.

WHY - This project addresses the lack of New Zealand-specific molecular data on pancreatic cancer by generating locally relevant insights to support more equitable and effective treatments.

METHOD - The study involves reviewing existing tissue samples and establishing a dedicated pancreatic cancer biobank to collect and analyse tumour samples.

BENEFIT - This will provide vital insights into the molecular profile of pancreatic cancer in New Zealand, and a valuable national resource for future research, enabling precision medicine approaches and improving outcomes for all New Zealanders affected by pancreatic cancer.

GCF COMMITMENT - \$99,000 to this project, which will continue to be developed across the next 2 years.



3 new funding commitments made



7 patients accessing clinical trials



8 grants made in FY2025



173,605

distributed



“The ultimate goal is to develop more effective, accessible cancer therapies that benefit all New Zealanders, especially Māori, and support equity in cancer outcomes.” - Jayde Ngata.

2. Targeting the Tumour Microbiome to Improve Response to Immunotherapy in Colorectal Cancer, Jayde Ngata (Ngāi Tahu, Ngāti Porou), at the University of Otago, Christchurch, PhD student

AIM - To explore how the tumour microbiome influences response to immunotherapy in colorectal cancer.

WHY - Understanding the role of bacteria in improving immunotherapy outcomes could lead to more effective and equitable cancer treatments. This research particularly aims to enhance outcomes for Māori patients and reduce disparities in colorectal cancer care.

METHOD - This research will investigate how microbial interactions within tumours can be harnessed to boost treatment response.

GCF COMMITMENT - \$25,000

OUR WORK

Completed commitments

Helping people live better

MASTERPLAN (Pancreatic Cancer)

A key feature of the MASTERPLAN trial is the use of SBRT (stereotactic body radiation therapy). MASTERPLAN brought SBRT, a treatment rarely available within New Zealand's public health system for pancreatic cancer, into local practice advancing pancreatic cancer research and building national expertise, with three new radiation therapy sites now delivering this treatment beyond the trial.

STOMA GUARD

This project was to develop and test a 3D-printed, custom-fit stomal guard designed to improve quality of life, reduce pain, and lower the risk of surgical intervention for patients with parastomal hernias - a common complication following bowel cancer surgery. The project is completed, and we are waiting for the final analysis of the results.

Continued commitment

PALEO

This international trial is testing a chemo radioimmunotherapy treatment to improve swallowing, control tumour growth, and enhance quality of life for people with advanced oesophageal cancer. We have funded treatment for six patients and, in 2024–2025, supported the shipment of the investigational therapy from Australia for another 12. Recruitment is ongoing to ensure continued access for New Zealand patients.

AMBULATORY HOLTER MONITORING FEASIBILITY STUDY

This ongoing study is testing the feasibility of continuous ECG (ambulatory Holter) monitoring to detect silent cardiac events in patients receiving 5-FU chemotherapy at home. It also evaluates how practical and acceptable this approach is for patients and clinicians. With a \$149,000 investment and 6 patients enrolled, the project aims to improve the safety of at-home chemotherapy and inform future cardiac monitoring practices.



OUR WORK

Helping people live better lives



CASE STUDY

Breaking Barriers in Pancreatic Cancer Treatment: The ASCEND Trial

Ensuring Kiwis have access to international research and treatments is a core part of our work. Trials like ASCEND connect New Zealand clinicians and patients with global research networks and emerging therapies that have the potential to transform cancer care.

This international trial for advanced pancreatic cancer is testing whether a ‘carrier drug’ can enhance chemotherapy penetration through the dense, fibrous layer of pancreatic tumours, which are a key barrier that limits treatment effectiveness.



WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Patients with advanced pancreatic cancer face poor survival outcomes because chemotherapy drugs often struggle to reach cancer cells effectively. The ASCEND trial is investigating Lisata's Certepetide, a new carrier drug designed to help chemotherapy penetrate tumours more efficiently, potentially improving treatment outcomes and survival.



RESULTS TO DATE

Promising data presented at the ESMO Congresses in 2025 highlights the potential impact of this therapy. Findings show patients receiving Certepetide experienced higher rates of tumour shrinkage or disappearance compared with placebo, and saw encouraging signs of progression-free survival and overall survival. These results signal a meaningful step forward in improving outcomes for people with advanced pancreatic cancer.



“ASCEND has shown hope for the patients and families affected by pancreas cancer. GCF support has provided us with the opportunity to pull together as a country and provide the trial across three different sites in NZ. Without your support this would not have been possible.”

- Dr Jane So.



CASE STUDY

Understanding the Molecular Features of Pancreatic Cancer in Aotearoa

A core part of our work is supporting research that delivers meaningful benefits for the unique population of Aotearoa. With gut cancers more prevalent among Māori and Pacific peoples, we focus on research, awareness, and advocacy that drive real change.

Led by Dr Howe Mao, a specialist in hepatopancreaticobiliary (HPB) surgery, this project addresses pancreatic cancer, which is one of the most aggressive cancers. Late diagnosis, recurrence, and treatment resistance make it particularly difficult to treat.

This research aims to enhance understanding of pancreatic cancer at the genetic and immunological level and establish a pancreatic cancer-focused biobank that reflects New Zealand's diverse population. In partnership with Te Ira Kāwai Auckland Regional Biobank, the project ensures ethical stewardship of samples and fosters Māori and Pacific engagement, strengthening culturally safe research practices and building a foundation for more equitable and effective cancer care in Aotearoa.



“Our partnership with GCF is vital. Their generous support has been instrumental in initiating this research, and we are deeply grateful to the Gut Cancer Foundation for enabling us to address pancreatic cancer and the associated health inequities affecting Māori and Pacific Peoples.”

- Dr Howe Mao.

OUR IMPACT

1. Patient support information

Following its successful launch, our website has continued to grow as a vital hub for people impacted by gut cancer. It offers comprehensive, easy-to-understand information on treatment options, nutrition, emotional wellbeing, and connections to local support groups, helping patients and their whānau at every stage of their journey.

Developed collaboratively with input from patients, whānau, specialists, and Māori groups, the site ensures all content is accessible, inclusive, and culturally safe. In FY2025, our focus was on strengthening the foundations of our patient support services and ensuring the wider gut cancer community is actively engaging with our resources.

We have seen strong growth in reach and engagement, with over 44,000 visits to patient and whānau resource pages, which is up from 26,486 the previous year. This increase shows that more people across Aotearoa are accessing trusted, relevant information when they need it most.

We also continue to strengthen our partnership with Hei Āhuru Mōwai Māori Cancer Network, ensuring our content and support channels meet the needs of Māori and Pacific communities. Looking ahead, we are laying the groundwork for a psycho-social, nurse-led telehealth service that will further enhance patient care and connection in the future.

CASE STUDY

The right information at the right time made all the difference

Helen was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in July 2023 and began chemotherapy soon after. When treatment ended, she felt isolated and unsure where to turn. Discovering the Gut Cancer Foundation was life-changing. Reading others' stories gave her hope, and a nutrition webinar helped her finally manage her Creon dosage.

Most importantly, the Foundation's support calls provided understanding and reassurance. The team answered her questions, guided her to trusted information, and helped her feel genuinely supported. Helen says the period after treatment is the hardest, when people are no longer under oncology care and can feel completely alone. The Gut Cancer Foundation gave her the tools, confidence, and encouragement to keep going.



“ I was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer at 68 — fit, healthy, and working full-time. The diagnosis was an enormous shock. Once treatment ended, I felt incredibly isolated. That’s when I found the Gut Cancer Foundation.

The calls and advice helped me keep going. It was a huge relief to speak to someone who truly understands. ” - Helen.

Website Visits



APRIL 1st 2024 → MARCH 31st 2025
26,486 website visits → 44,073 website visits



66% INCREASE
in cancer information
page visits

OUR IMPACT

2. Advocacy

Addressing barriers to treatment and care for all New Zealanders.

We've played a key role, alongside sector and organisational partners, in advocating for better access to life-extending drugs for gut cancer patients. Advocacy takes time and persistence, and in March 2025, we achieved a major milestone with funding approval for atezolizumab (Tecentriq) and bevacizumab (VegzIma) after more than five years of sustained, collaborative effort (see timeline).

During this time, we also worked with PHARMAC to expand access to lenvatinib (Lenvima) for liver cancer patients who cannot tolerate atezolizumab and bevacizumab. This funding was confirmed in December 2024 and is another important step forward for patients in need of more treatment options.

Our Advocacy Role

- 9 submissions and consultations
- 41 Stakeholder meetings (Pharmac, Ministry of Health, other Government Agencies, NGOs)
- 2 key media placements

A big year for Advocacy

Pembrolizumab (Keytruda) is now publicly funded for people with a type of bowel cancer called MSI-H or dMMR colorectal cancer.

About 120 people are expected to start this treatment in the first year.

Cetuximab (Erbix) is now funded for people with left-sided metastatic bowel cancer whose cancer tests show it is RAS and BRAF wild-type.

Around 180 people will receive this treatment in the first year.

Lenvatinib (Lenvima) is now funded for people with liver cancer that can't be removed by surgery.

About 75 people are expected to benefit in the first year.

Atezolizumab (Tecentriq) and bevacizumab (VegzIma) are now funded together for people with advanced or inoperable liver cancer.

Around 70 people are expected to receive this treatment in the first year.



“Atezolizumab and bevacizumab have been the global standard of care for advanced hepatocellular carcinoma for several years, yet New Zealand patients have had to self-fund these life-saving therapies or miss out altogether. While we celebrate this milestone, we must also acknowledge that every delay in funding costs lives. To all those impacted, we acknowledge the significant and irrevocable toll this delay has taken on you and your loved ones.” – Executive Officer, Liam Willis.



ADVOCACY TIMELINE TO IMPACT

Atezolizumab & Bevacizumab - Advanced Liver Cancer



OUR IMPACT

3. Awareness

Raising Awareness and Reaching Those Most at Risk

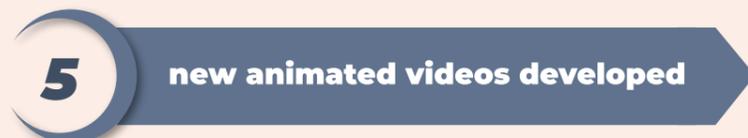


SHINE THE LIGHT ON GUT CANCER

Shine a Light is our annual awareness campaign, sharing the signs and symptoms of gut cancers and reinforcing the message to know your whakapapa. Our work to raise awareness and educate Kiwis continues to grow in importance, particularly for Māori and Pacific communities who are disproportionately affected.

Through targeted campaigns and partnerships, we continue to shine a light on inequities in liver, stomach, oesophageal, biliary and pancreatic cancers, ensuring those most at risk have access to the right information and support.

Key Metrics



Awareness Activities

This year, our issue-based awareness work focused on prevention and early detection. We collaborated with researchers to update the public and GPs with new Helicobacter pylori guidelines, partnered with the Hepatitis Foundation on liver cancer prevention, and worked with the ASPERT research group to improve understanding of pancreatic enzyme replacement therapy (PERT).

Awareness activities included Mediboard and digital posters in medical centres, direct GP outreach, and five new animated videos.



“ I wanted to take a moment to sincerely thank you for providing the brochure on gut cancer. It has been incredibly helpful and informative with a patient, and it will be valuable as I share this important information with others. ” - Medical Practice Nurse.

FUNDRAISING AND PARTNERSHIPS

Corporate Partners

We are grateful for the incredible support of our corporate partners, Turners Automotive Group, Cumulo9, Laurelwood, and 3Group, who continue to stand alongside us through donations, sponsorship, matched giving, staff-led fundraising, and generous pro-bono expertise.

This year, we were also delighted to welcome PIC Insurance Brokers Limited as a Major Charity Partner, strengthening the collective impact we can make together.



Partnership Spotlight

This year we were thrilled to welcome PIC Insurance Brokers as a Major Partner. PIC has committed to a long term partnership with GCF which includes donations, staff fundraising, awareness raising and event sponsorship.

This year alone PIC have joined our Auckland Marathon team, taken part in Give It Up and hosted GCF at their annual golf day.



PIC Golf Day

“PIC is proud to support the Gut Cancer Foundation and the incredible work they do. The GCF team’s commitment to making a difference is inspiring, and this cause is close to our hearts. It means a lot to everyone at PIC to help tackle an issue that affects families in our own communities.”

- Kristen Garner. Chief Executive Officer PIC Insurance Brokers.



PIC Auckland Marathon



PIC Auckland Marathon



PIC Purple for Pancreatic Day

Community Funding

Community fundraising remains an essential pillar of our model, and we are incredibly grateful to every individual and group who showed up in so many creative ways this year. Once again, our amazing community delivered remarkable support.

Our Give It Up fundraisers dug deep, raising more than \$220k, and our Gutsy Challenge participants tackled the Island Hills with passion and purpose to support clinical trial access.



From head shaves to line dancing, garden tours to marathon runs, people across the country stepped forward to champion our work.

A special shout-out to **Paige Badger** and **Scott McLaren**, our fundraisers of the year, whose dedication and energy truly stood out.



Well done Paige & thank you!



\$4,413 raised!



Scott McLaren - Auckland Marathon



Doing it for Dad Fundraiser



Garden Tour Fundraiser

GCF Supporter Acknowledgment

We would like to sincerely thank the Trusts & Foundations, community partners, corporate partners, bequests and major donors that have provided vital support this year:

3Group

A K Franks Charitable Trust
proudly managed by Perpetual
Guardian

Aotearoa Gaming Trust

Bootscootin Line Dancers

Cumulo9

Debbie & Grant Cathro

Dragon Community Trust

Estate of Lynn Cole

Ferrari Owners Club of New
Zealand

Four Winds Foundation Limited

JM Thompson Charitable Trust

John Tomson

Laurelwood Limited

Medical Research Fund
– Proudly managed by
Foundation@PerpetualGuardian

Milestone Foundation

Northern Arena

Pancreatic Cancer Support
Association

Paige Badger

Pelorus Trust

PIC Insurance Brokers

Pub Charity Ltd

Scott McLaren

The Estate of Ernest Hyam
Davis and the Ted and Mollie
Carr Endowment Trust proudly
managed by Perpetual Guardian

The North and South Trust
Limited

Tracey Bakker

Turners Automotive Group



OUR PEOPLE

Our Team



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