

HOSPICE WHANGANUI VOLUNTEER NEWS

JULY 2026 | #2



Kia ora koutou,

As we move through another busy season at Hospice Whanganui, I want to take a moment to thank each of you for the part you play in our Hospice whānau.

National Volunteer Week gave us a special opportunity to celebrate and acknowledge our volunteers, but our gratitude is not limited to one week of the year. Whether you support us in our shops, in the gardens, at events, or quietly behind the scenes, your contribution is woven into everything we do.

Thank you for your generosity, kindness and commitment. Every hour you give helps Hospice Whanganui continue to care for people and whānau across our community.



Helen

A message to our Shop Volunteers

Thank you so much for taking the time to read the first update on our Retail Project. We are right at the beginning of this journey together, and I promise to keep you closely in the loop over the next few months. There will be plenty of ways for all of you to get involved and shape our path forward!

The plans shared last week come after months of deep research and have been fully approved by our Board of Trustees.

As a charity in a small regional city, we have done amazing things together. Having three retail shops supporting our work is a massive achievement, and they truly have been the heartbeat of our fundraising.

But to make sure we are here for the long haul, we have to look honestly at our sustainability. It has been tough to accept that times have changed, and the high running costs of a rented storefront mean our Boutique Shop will struggle to remain sustainable. Continuing with a rented brick-and-mortar shop in any location is a financial risk we simply cannot take. Our top priority will always be ensuring our patients and whānau receive our absolute best care at no cost, and we have to protect that.

This is definitely not the end of the Boutique Shop story—it is just the start of a fresh chapter. By basing operations for our online shop in one of our own buildings, we can keep our overhead costs much lower, allowing us time to grow our online business and build our resilience for the future. Our online shop will feature the same high-quality donations you love, but now accessible to buyers all over New Zealand.

With reduced expenses, we have the freedom to grow this new venture gradually and securely. It will take a little time for our new online venture to find its feet, but it gives us the perfect foundation to grow sustainably.

Thank you all for your incredible dedication, your hard work, and your open hearts as we take this exciting leap forward together.

Ngā mihi nui,
Helen



SAVE THE DATE

SATURDAY 15 MAY 2027
WHANGANUI WAR MEMORIAL CENTRE



Mitre 10 MEGA Dancing for Hospice is returning on Saturday 15 May 2027, bringing another unforgettable evening of entertainment, community, and fundraising to the Whanganui War Memorial Centre.

Ahead of gala night, we're also excited to once again welcome the community to our Opera House Preview Night on Thursday 13 May at the Royal Whanganui Opera House. This special theatre performance offers the chance to experience the dancers, energy, and excitement up close before the main event.

Whether you're joining us at the Opera House, the gala, or both, we'd love to have you there.

More details, including ticket releases, will be shared over the coming months.

DREAMS DO COME TRUE!



Our gardening crew dedicate so much time and care to our gardens, bringing in their own equipment and supplies to use, donating endless plants, bulbs and cuttings and showing up in all kinds of weather. The work they do ensures our gardens are a haven for patients and visitors to Hospice, and a place for our staff to restore their spirits after a hard days māhi

The pride our gardeners take in keeping the grounds beautiful is obvious but the work it takes doesn't always get the appreciation it deserves. Our huge trees are forever shedding leaves and keeping them from becoming a huge mess is a big job. We'd like to thank all our gardeners for their amazing work, and in particular Graeme who has spent endless hours sweeping leaves with a broom and is finding it so much easier with our powerful new leaf blower.

Data Driven, Human Led

In the last quarter our staff have made 1742 visits to patients, that's our nurses, health care assistants, doctors, our social workers and whānau support team, each going out into the community to give our patients and whānau the best care possible. On the next page you'll see a profile of one of our student nurses Abby, she gives a real sense of what our visits look like. A visit from our team is about meeting people where they are at, taking the time after the clinical observations to build relationships, not just with the patient but with the whole family and those supporting them. Earning trust takes time and trust is at the heart of what we do, so that our patients feel secure and supported throughout their time with us.



Curiosity Corner

One of the most common reasons we hear for people being unable to volunteer is 'I don't have the time'. The way we use our time is evolving constantly, which is especially noticeable when you consider it has been less than 15 years since smart phones became common for everyday use and yet nearly half the population spends a minimum of 4 hours a day on social media, only 8% spend less than an hour!

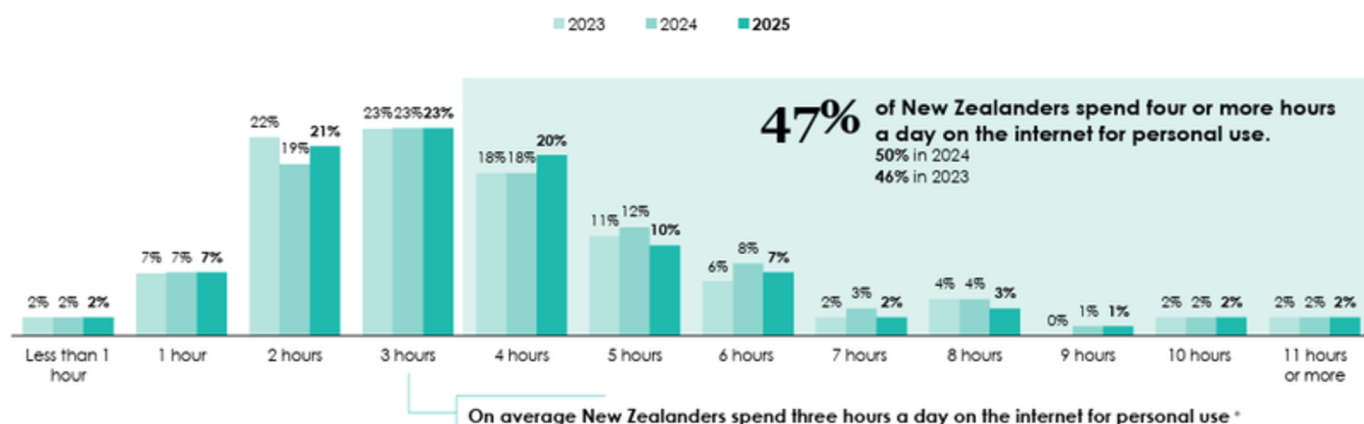
Internet NZ asked the following question - How many hours, on average, do you spend using the internet for **personal** use a day? This could be on any device e.g. your phone, laptop, streaming on a TV etc.

Read the full report here <https://internetnz.nz/assets/Archives/New-Zealands-Internet-Insights-2025-survey-findings.pdf>

On average New Zealanders spend three hours a day on the internet for personal use.

Nearly half of New Zealanders* spend 4 or more hours a day on the internet for personal use.

Average daily use of the internet (personal use on any device e.g. phone, laptop, streaming on a TV)



Student Nurse - Abby

One of Hospice Whanganui's most important roles is providing training in Specialist Palliative Care, which includes regularly hosting medical and nursing students to offer frontline experience in the field. We have been so happy to welcome nursing student Abby back for her final year of training, following her first placement with us in 2025.

When Abby first discovered her primary health placement was at Hospice Whanganui, she assumed it would be similar to working in a rest home. However, after a warm welcome, she quickly learned that our team mostly cares for people in their own homes.

On her first day, Abby visited a patient at home and spent over an hour talking with them. Their conversation was about so much more than the clinical symptoms. After completing the medical checks, they chatted about golf, mutual acquaintances, and what was happening around the world.

"I never do that in a hospital setting, by the time my five-week placement finished I had built a really good relationship with people and their whānau and it was just amazing. I got to know the person as so much more than their disease. When I'm a patient, I love for the staff that are taking care of me to know me as Abby rather than 'Oh that's the girl with xyz condition'. We are all whole human beings, and I really love that about Hospice and the care we give."

This patient-centred approach extends to involving the whānau and deeply respecting cultural practices. "Coming from overseas, I didn't know much about Māori culture," Abby says. "I have received so much support to learn more and to speak the language more naturally."

Through her placement, Abby has learned that facing death makes people incredibly vulnerable; many patients have shared that they feel out of their depth. This taught her how vital it is to build trusting relationships, allowing her to reassure patients that the team will do everything possible to keep them comfortable.

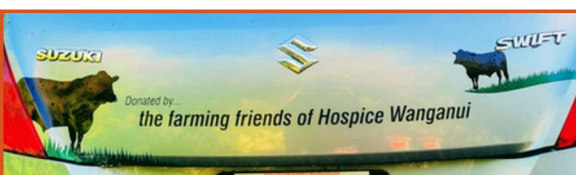


Abby enjoys telling patients they can eat cake for dinner or enjoy a whiskey—whatever it takes to live life to the fullest—while the clinical team will manage their condition, and any pain or nausea. Abby recognises that hospice care belongs to the whole whānau, viewing her role as a supportive background character who honours their choices.

Abby's greatest takeaway has been the importance of taking time to connect with patients and ensuring wrap-around support from other organisations. This seamless care starts at hospital discharge—making sure all medication, equipment, and support are ready for the home—and continues through to support for the family along their grief journey.

Even when facing difficult tasks like bereavement calls, Abby felt fully supported by experienced staff and our whānau support team.

Before joining Hospice Whanganui, Abby worried the environment would be mentally and spiritually draining. Instead, she has found the opposite. Inspired by seeing the staff go above and beyond, she is now focusing on becoming a hospice nurse after graduating.



Getting out into the community to bring care to people in their own homes with the support of Farming Friends

In memory of Jan Allpress

We are sad to share the news that a much cared for member of our Gonville team passed away on June 7th. Her friends at Gonville share the tribute below -

Jan started at Gonville Hospice as a volunteer in 2018. She was much loved and respected at 73 Tawa Street. Her car knew how to drive there on its own (it had been so many times). No one will ever be as passionate as Jan donating her amazing knitting and staking out prime real estate for all the knitting to be displayed, sole charge of Christmas, painting and sorting coat hangers, giving out advice if needed, sharing a laugh especially when she was locked out at the back door and was ringing the shop to get let in... bringing in morning tea numerous times and not having any herself.



We were privileged to know how proud of and the very much love she had for her family.

"You were so many things to all of us our beautiful friend."

~ From your Gonville Shop family

Volunteer Profile

Lachlan joined our Whanganui East team nearly a year ago, one of a growing number of young people coming to us to gain experience and give back to community. Although he was looking for paid work at the time, he decided to volunteer to keep active and do something useful until he found a job. He'd learnt a bit about palliative care during Religious Education, but it was at his orientation session that he came to understand our services and he then realised he's known people who've had hospice support.

As an enthusiastic 'gamer' and computer all-rounder Lachlan has been helping our electrical team sort through all the digital devices to make sure they are still functional before they are tested, tagged and put out for sale. His other role is with the DVD's and CD's, checking through all the donations to make sure they're in perfect condition, "If it has just one scratch, it's binned automatically. I'm not mucking around when it comes to that."



When Lachlan started volunteering one of the big challenges he wanted to overcome was his anxiety, he knew that he needed to become more confident to get a job. Talking about how far he's progressed since starting to volunteer at East he says, "I feel like back then, it was a real struggle to just meet people and do things. And now... I can just say hi and be like, hey, what's up?"

The great news for Lachlan is that he has been successful with getting a casual position with The Warehouse and started this week! For now, he is planning to continue with his 3 shifts a week at East, he wants to keep on staying active when he is not working.

BUSINESS CHAMPION

SPOTLIGHT- **LOW COST BINS**

Every business that partners with us helps us do more for our patients and their whānau. For the last year, Low Cost Bins has made a huge difference to our refuse disposal costs, not just here at Hospice but especially at our shops. We know how much our volunteers at the shops appreciate the service, having been part of the struggle dealing with unsellable goods. We've had good success with reducing dumping and monitoring donations to decline unsuitable goods. But at the end of the day there will always be waste items and Low Cost Bins have really helped take the pressure off, both financially and just knowing that they're standing by us!

PALLIATIVE CARE EDUCATION SPOTLIGHT

Providing care in the community is a collaborative process, we work with many different services to deliver wrap around support. Hospice's role is to provide Specialist Palliative Care and educating those we work alongside is an important part of our role. The course below is just one on the education sessions we provide to support other services in having the knowledge they need to care for patients with a life limiting condition.

Palliative Care for Caregivers

This full-day course is specifically designed for professionals, family/whānau or carers working with whānau in health settings, whether this is in the home, aged residential care facilities, or hospital settings. This course is also open to the general public, details are below -

Our next course is October 22, enquiries to Education@hospicewhanganui.org.nz or phone 06 349 0080. Cost per person is \$60

- Understanding pain and other common symptoms
- Communicating with and supporting the dying person and their whānau
- Caring in the last days of life
- Understanding loss and grief

HOW TO HELP SOMEONE VOLUNTEER WITH US

If you're one of our customer service volunteers you will have seen the guides (on the green paper) with how you could respond if anyone is interested in volunteering. It has already helped some of you have those conversations, so I thought we'd share with everyone.

If anyone is asking about volunteering, you could chat with them about why you like volunteering with Hospice and share why it matters to you.

Let them know how they can find out more through any of the options below -

- Give them one of Kisu's business cards (let me know if you want a couple to have on hand)
- They can enquire online by going to the Hospice Whanganui website and search 'Volunteer Enquiry'.
- They can pick up an application form at any of our shops or in the pamphlet rack at Hospice. When completed they can ring to arrange a catch-up with Kisu.
- If they just want someone to call them, pass their details onto

Kisu 06 349 0080 ext 246

Sometimes it only takes us showing the way that helps someone find something they've been looking for - friendship, purpose and fun!

A very warm welcome to Doctor Willem

Born in a small South African town just south of Lesotho, Dr Willem graduated from the University of Stellenbosch and completed his medical training at Tygerberg Hospital in Cape Town. His wife, Alna, completed a Bachelor's degree in Primary School Teaching. The couple married after his final year of medical school. After working in several regional hospitals in the Western Cape, Dr Willem joined a small two-doctor general practice in Somerset West. Their three children were all born in South Africa, the first in 1990 and the youngest in 1999.

The 1994 general election brought significant changes to South Africa. The practice where Dr Willem worked lost many patients as financial circumstances changed and a large number of people lost access to medical insurance. While considering their future, he came across an advertisement in a medical journal seeking a GP for the Emergency Department at Hawera Hospital in New Zealand. He applied and accepted a four-month locum position. That was 25 years ago.

Today, Dr Willem cannot clearly remember all the reasons why they left South Africa, but he knows exactly why they stayed in New Zealand. From the day they arrived, the family felt welcomed. The educational and career opportunities available to their three children were excellent, and his own professional career flourished.

Dr Willem worked in the Emergency Department at Hawera Hospital from 2001 to 2006. In 2006, he divided his time between the Hawera ED and general practice in Patea. Later that year, he joined the Emergency Department at Whanganui Hospital, where he worked until 2012. The family moved to Whanganui in 2008 and in 2012, Dr Willem joined Aramoho Health Centre as a GP, a role he held until February 2026.

Throughout his career in New Zealand, Dr Willem has worked closely with palliative care services and hospice teams. His time in Hawera, Patea, and Aramoho brought many opportunities to support patients and families receiving palliative care and hospice services.



During the 14 years working at Aramoho Health Centre, he was also responsible for the medical care of residents at St John's Hill Lifecare and New Vista.

Dr Willem and the Hospice Whanganui team have shared a long history of working together, always with the common goal of providing compassionate, patient-centred care to people and their families during some of life's most challenging times. When he is not at work, Dr Willem's most important roles are those of husband, dad, and Oupa to three grandsons. He and Alna are incredibly proud of their three children and all they have achieved. Much of his free time is devoted to gardening, a hobby he finds both relaxing and rewarding. He also enjoys walking to keep fit and hopes to get back into tramping and exploring New Zealand's outdoors. Travel is another passion that he and Alna share, enjoying new places and experiences together.

They are members of Equippers Church Whanganui, where Dr Willem serves as the leader of the Men's Ministry team. Their faith and church community have been an important part of their lives, providing many valued friendships and opportunities to serve others. Looking back over the past 25 years in New Zealand, they are deeply grateful for the opportunities, friendships, and sense of belonging they have found here. What began as a four-month locum position became a life-changing journey for their family, and Whanganui has truly become home.



SMALL TALKS FOR HOSPICE

It was lovely to see some of our volunteers join us for the Small Talks event in May. A special thanks to Robi Martin for donating a voucher for a two night stay at Station House, this was used for an impromptu auction on the night. Both the auction and ticket sales raised \$1630, much appreciated funds to help support Hospice Whanganui's work in our community.

HELPING SHARE OUR STORY



If you're on Facebook, sharing or liking Hospice Whanganui posts can make a big difference. It helps more people in our community see the work we do and learn how they can support hospice care, maybe even have them join our team!

Hospice Whanganui website

<https://hospicewhanganui.org.nz/news/>

Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/hospicewhanganui/>

Instagram

https://www.instagram.com/hospice_whanganui/

All of our shops have generous sales, often a 50% discount, so be sure to follow our socials

<https://www.facebook.com/hospiceshopwhanganui>

BEHIND THE COUNTER – CELEBRATING THE PEOPLE BEHIND OUR SHOPS

Over the past few months, you may have noticed more Behind the Counter stories appearing across Hospice Whanganui's social media and in our shops.

What started as an idea to shine a light on retail volunteering has grown into a celebration of the people who make our shops such special places. Through photos, videos, volunteer stories, and new in-store displays, we've been sharing the connection, laughter, friendships, and sense of purpose that exist behind the counter every day.

One of the strongest themes to come through has been something many of our volunteers already know – people may come for the cause, but they often stay for the people. Whether it's sharing a cuppa, having a laugh together, or welcoming someone new into the fold, the sense of whānau and community within our shops has shone through in every story.

Thank you to everyone who has been photographed, shared a story, completed a consent form, or simply continued showing up and doing what you do best. Behind the Counter has helped our community see what we already know – that our volunteers are at the heart of our shops, and our shops help make hospice care possible.

And we're not finished yet. There are still more stories to tell.

BEHIND the COUNTER

Behind the Counter has helped our community see what we already know – our volunteers are at the heart of our shops.



ANNIVERSARIES

Thanks to our amazing volunteers who volunteer year after year to support our community,

April

Brian McCarthy 2018
Les Cockburn 2021
Lynne Lower 2023
David Orr 2024
Noeline Trott 2025

May

Carole Torr 2005
Jean Corfe 2006
Anne Inwood 2011
Karen Aukett 2016
Heather Knofflock 2018
Brent Kuzman 2018
Hayley Saunders 2023
Andrea Breton 2023

June

Sandra Cockburn 2002
Cushla Deans 2004
Kimi Randle 2010
Brian Deadman 2012
Trish Woon 2017
Juliana Chuang 2017
Sue Barker 2021
Anna O'Leary 2022
Simon Deane 2024
Chris Haddock 2025
Ashleigh Lockett 2025

Thank you to all
of our volunteers
for the care and
aroa you bring to
our community!



WELCOME

We are happy to be welcoming some new volunteers, it's great to have you with us - Liam, Rowan, Clint, Linda, Ivana, Nicky, Phoenix, Haylee, Shirlee and Jude

Our next **Orientation** session will be on **Tuesday 14th of July**. All new volunteers need to attend an Orientation session so please **save the date** if you haven't attended one yet.

And new staff have joined Hospice too - welcome Dr Willem!

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR SATURDAYS

We have urgent need for Saturday volunteers in all our shops, if there is anyone in your circle who may be available please -

- Give them an application form or Kisu's business card
- Ask them to go to the Volunteer page on our website
- Ask them to call Kisu - **06 349 0080 x246**

