



MEDIA RELEASE

BRAIN TUMOUR SUPPORT NZ

Nelson, New Zealand

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INTERNATIONAL BRAIN TUMOUR AWARENESS WEEK

Brain Tumour Support NZ has announced a series of events across New Zealand to mark the 2020 International Brain Tumour Awareness Week (24 – 31 October).

International Brain Tumour Awareness Week is held every year in the last week of October. Throughout the Week, brain tumour patients, families and supporters from all corners of the world mobilise by holding events such as walks, lunches, afternoon teas, information displays and many other activities.

“A global awareness-raising effort is important,” says Gavin Starling, a founding trustee of Brain Tumour Support NZ. “Brain tumours are a rare cancer, representing less than 2% of all cancers diagnosed worldwide, and consequently don’t have the same level of public awareness as more common cancers such as breast, prostate, lung or bowel,” Gavin said.

Gavin, who lost his partner Natalie to brain cancer in 2018, is hosting a high tea in Whangarei on Saturday 31 October to raise funds and awareness of the disease. Other high tea fundraisers are being held in Nelson, Rotorua and Wellington on the same day.

Brain Tumour Support NZ trustee, Chris Tse, is hosting the Wellington high tea at the Bolton Hotel. Chris’s wife, Lynda, is a long term survivor of a glioblastoma multiforme, the most common and aggressive form of brain cancer in adults.

“When Lynda was diagnosed 14 years ago, the median survival time for glioblastoma patients was just over 12 months.” Chris explains. “Unfortunately that statistic still applies today as the survival rates for brain cancer have not improved significantly in more than 30 years,” Chris said.

Chris puts this down mainly to an inequity in research funding. “New treatments for breast cancer and melanoma have pushed their 5-year survival rates to 90% or higher¹. Currently, only 1 in 20 patients with glioblastoma will survive longer than five years,” Chris says.

The chair of Brain Tumour Support NZ, Mandy Bathan, explains that advocacy is one of the core activities of the charity. “Brain tumour patients in New Zealand need a voice,” she says. “We feel it is an honour and a privilege to represent the brain tumour patient community so that their needs and concerns are heard,” Mandy said.

Mandy is hosting the Nelson high tea, which has already sold out. Tickets for the other events are still available and can be booked at: <https://www.braintumoursupport.org.nz/events>

Brain Tumour Support NZ is also encouraging Kiwis to get together during the International Brain Tumour Awareness Week with friends and family over a barbeque, a morning tea at work, weekend brunch or a sausage sizzle. Any activity to bring people together and raise awareness about brain tumours is welcomed.

For more information, visit: <https://www.braintumoursupport.org.nz/>

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ABOUT BRAIN TUMOURS

- Brain tumours are the biggest cancer killer of children and adults under 40.
- The most common malignant brain tumour, glioblastoma multiforme (GBM), has a median survival of 12-15 months and a 5-year survival rate of 5-6%.
- Every year around 335 New Zealanders are diagnosed with primary brain cancer, representing 1.4% of all cancers diagnosed in New Zealand.
- Brain cancer is the 10th most fatal cancer in New Zealand with an average of 250 deaths per year.

ABOUT BRAIN TUMOUR SUPPORT NZ

Brain Tumour Support NZ is a registered charity formed in 2019 to provide much needed support, information and advocacy to brain tumour patients in New Zealand. Our Vision is that everyone living with a brain tumour has the support, information and access to best treatments, so they feel less afraid, less alone and more empowered.

Website: www.braintumoursupport.org.nz

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¹ Cancer death rates are falling; five-year survival rates are rising: <https://ourworldindata.org/cancer-death-rates-are-falling-five-year-survival-rates-are-rising>