



National  
Bowel  
Screening  
Programme



## Bowel screening programme - Wairarapa update

### Well done Wairarapa! 70% of screening tests have been returned!

Wairarapa amongst New Zealand's leaders in bowel screening participation rates

#### What do our statistics say...

- Over 8,000 (95%) of our eligible population have been invited to screen
- 70% of kits have been completed and returned

#### Of the 5,580 kits:

- 270 positive results
- 220 colonoscopies
- 21 cancers detected

#### Spoilt kits:

415 returned kits were considered "spoilt" with the main reason being no collection date given, or no barcode was placed on the sample.

Participants are automatically sent a replacement kit and the good news is that the majority then go on to complete their kit with a result, with less than 10% not redoing the test.

**Test kits expire after six months. Please remember to do the test as soon as it arrives, or soon after. It's easy, and only takes a few minutes.**

#### No symptoms? Well, I didn't either. The free bowel screening test saved my life.

**Dr Jacqueline (Jackie) Bews recommends doing the screening test as soon as it arrives - even if you feel 100% healthy.**

Jackie is presently researching and developing data into genetic intelligence pathways at Edinburgh and Oxford Universities. She is far too busy to be bothering with something as inconvenient as cancer!

Jackie had no symptoms. She is ridiculously healthy. But then, the surgeons told her, so are many of their cancer patients.

Jackie turned 74 in November last year and she wasn't sure if she'd bother doing the kit when it arrived in the mail. Then on doing some research (that's her thing!) she learned that Wairarapa DHB is one of only eight regions providing the free screening programme. Jackie did the test.

"I got the call and was told it was a positive test. I automatically said, *'that's good, everything about my health is positive'*, but I soon got that mistake straightened out for me, when I was told there is such a thing as a bad positive."

"The colonoscopy dates messed with my Christmas plans, having it on Christmas Eve, but it was necessary, I was told. Even though there was nothing wrong with me. There was no sign at all."

Being so active and healthy helped Jackie's surgery, and her recovery. But it also meant she had no symptoms and really didn't think she needed to do the test.

"Looking back, I had extreme tiredness for a few months but I put this down to the long hours I was working with my research projects. It turned out (the tiredness) was due to my red blood cells being depleted due to the cancer I didn't know I had."



*"I went past a bowel screening display about a year ago and just walked past saying 'no thank you, I don't need that'"*  
Jackie Bews

"Bowel screening picked this up just in time. The surgery was successful and I've now got a stoma bag for life. But I look at all the positive things – if I had lived anywhere else that didn't have the free programme, things may be very different now.

"Ironically," Jackie remembers, "I went past a bowel screening display about a year ago and just walked past saying 'no thank you, I don't need that', not knowing I had tumours growing inside me. How wrong was I!"

Jackie had excellent support from Wairarapa DHB's Cancer Nurse, the Wellington Colorectal Team and Stoma Nurse, and Cancer Society Wairarapa.

"All these caring and courteous professionals made the whole process bearable, sometimes even enjoyable, and I cannot thank them enough."



## National Bowel Screening Māori Network Hui

9<sup>th</sup> April, Auckland

On July 17<sup>th</sup> we will celebrate the two year anniversary of bowel screening in Wairarapa and our programme leads, Janeen Cross and Fiona Cundy were invited to tell the Wairarapa story at the National Bowel Screening Māori Network Hui. The Wairarapa participation rate is one of the best in the country and, while other regions look to us as an exemplar model, we know there is still room for us to improve. It was a great learning opportunity for all and a chance to share our experiences nationally.

## Next up... Whanganui

Janeen and Fiona attended Whanganui's Bowel Screening Education Day on 2 May. Whanganui will launch its Bowel Screening Programme in October this year. Janeen and Fiona met with Māori providers, surgeons and their wider screening team to open dialogue around the Wairarapa programme and share our learnings, stories and feedback.

## Good wives save lives!

*Geoffrey Reed is new to Wairarapa and a grateful participant of the bowel screening programme*

The bowel screening kit arrived in the mail and I thought, 'Rubbish! Nothing wrong with me, I don't want to waste anyone's time.' I put the kit to the side. My wife nagged me about it, but I still didn't do it.

During a routine check up at the doctor, I was told I should get it done, but they had as little luck at getting through to me as my wife. I guess I was a bit pig-headed!

A while later I was at the doctors again, and again confessed not to having done the test. I got the hard word. My wife and I were booked to go on holiday that week. I got home from seeing the doctor, told my wife, got more hard words and I did the test. Boy, was it easy!

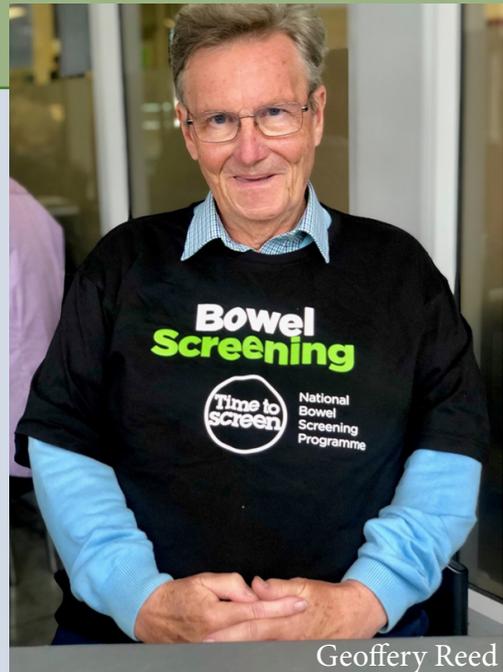
It took just five minutes, no problems at all. Off it went in the mail, and off we went on holiday.

A month later, we arrived home to an urgent message from the Doctor. I was told my test was positive. I thought, well of course it's positive! Then I found out positive wasn't the good thing I thought it was. A colonoscopy confirmed I had cancer. From that point on the medical staff were so impressive, and the immediate support network has been wonderful.

I used to live in Kapiti. The screening programme is not there yet, so coming to live in Wairarapa has been a real blessing. I could have done the test 8 months earlier than I did. My advice? If it's sitting on top of your fridge, get it done. Don't be fooled by self-diagnosing yourself healthy and thinking you're fine.

Just do it. Don't be a smart arse like I was. There is no doubting it, catching bowel cancer in its early stages saves lives. Bowel screening (and a bossy wife and doctor team) saved mine.

I am most grateful.... and a little less pig-headed!



Geoffery Reed

## Te Matatini Ki Te Ao - National Kapa Haka Festival

20-24 February 2019, Westpac Stadium

Te Matatini Ki Te Ao is the 'Olympics of Kapa Haka' and even with the inclement weather over 60,000 attended.

The bowel screening display and information centre proved an engaging education opportunity.

Most people recognised the screening pack, but many admitted they hadn't opened or done the test.

Wairarapa DHB's Janeen Cross and Tina Te Tau were able to talk people through the process of taking the test and provide good, clear messaging that everyone could understand.

This kind of 'outreach' communication with the wider public is invaluable and opens up a supportive discussion pathway to encourage our eligible population do the test.



"It's all about going to the people, and helping them to see and understand the benefits," says Janeen.

"Really, it's just about making it make sense, and showing people how quick, clean and easy it is to get some peace of mind for yourself and your family."



## Relay for Life 16-17 March, Clareville



Relay for Life is the Cancer Society's international signature fundraiser. It is also an excellent opportunity for community education and health promotion. This year, the Inflatable Bowel proved a great hit on site.

There were 600 people at Relay and almost everyone at the event walked through the inflatable bowel at some part of the day or night. A Wairarapa Bowel Screening team was on hand to answer all queries, and were surprised how many young people were engaged in the discussions.

The inflatable bowel generated a lot of interest. A lot of people didn't realise what our bowel looks like, so it was a great learning tool.

*There were a few younger visitors who thought the inflatable bowel was a bouncy castle. "There's a bouncy castle here, and it does poos, Māmā!" one fascinated child was heard to say.*

*Left: Wairarapa DHB Māori Health Directorate's Tina Te Tau (left) and Janeen Cross (right) with CNS Cancer Care & MDM Coordinator, Keren Williams (centre) stand at the entrance to the Inflatable Bowel.*

Vicki Hookham, Associate Leader Nursing, organised the Wairarapa DHB team, Heart and Sole, and walked for about 12 hours during the event, accompanied by her son, Jackson.

"Every Relay For Life I go to I always enjoy the sunrise period the most. It's amazing that every Relay always produces an incredible sunrise display. Even this year, the clouds broke and produced an awesome 45 minute sunrise. I find it very symbolic," Vicki says. "It always makes me think of my special nursing friend who lost her life to cancer."



*Wairarapa DHB's Heart and Sole team raised just under \$1,000 for the Cancer Society.*

*Pictured: Heart and Sole walkers, from left: Kerrie Sutton-Ticehurst, Mayor Lyn Patterson, Team Manager Vicki Hookham, Selena McKay, Snapper Pederson*



Billboards promoting the bowel screening programme are going up around Wairarapa. Pictured is a billboard on the corner of Solway Crescent on High Street, Masterton. Be sure to keep an eye out for them and use them as a conversation starter to encourage friends and whānau to participate.



Thank you to The Sign Factory for their generous sponsorship of the bowel screening programme - the billboards look fabulous! Call The Sign Factory for all your signage and digital printing, banners, flags and even trophies and engraving. Phone 06 378 7179 or find them online/Facebook. 45-47 Victoria Street, Masterton.

## Traffic light guide to keeping your bowel healthy



**GOOD FOR BOWEL HEALTH**



30 minutes exercise a day;  
Eating fruit, veges, grains;  
Drinking plenty of water



**IN MODERATION**



Drinking alcohol  
Eating red meat



**BEST AVOIDED**



Smoking  
Being overweight

With thanks to Southern DHB for the traffic light guide artwork

## Move your Butt



June is move your butt month - encouraging all New Zealanders - young, old, fit or not - to move their butt to beat bowel cancer.

Will you commit to doing some kind of daily exercise? Anything from a gentle 10-minute walk upwards counts!

Challenge yourself in June to get moving. Ask your friends and family to sponsor you and help raise funds to help more Kiwi's beat bowel cancer.

Find out more: [www.bowelcancernz.org.nz](http://www.bowelcancernz.org.nz)

Bowel Cancer New Zealand has launched an exercise campaign to highlight the impact even a small amount of daily exercise can have on preventing the deadly disease.

Don't forget - bowel screening is not a one-off. If you are aged between 60 and 74 years old, you will be invited to test every two years. Our 2 year programme anniversary is almost here, which means our first lot of second round invitations will be out soon!

### Be a champion!

Workplaces and community groups can book a bowel screening presentation. Call us today!

Fiona Cundy  
Clinical Nurse Co-ordinator  
Bowel Screening Programme  
06 9469800 Ext 5728  
[Fiona.Cundy@wairarapa.dhb.org.nz](mailto:Fiona.Cundy@wairarapa.dhb.org.nz)