HOSPICE EVENTS



What an incredible effort by the team at Zen Hair - cutting around the clock to raise a massive $20K! Raffel prizes and beautiful hair cuts contributed to this outstanding result. Looking forward to attending next year.



Another hugely successful BNI BIngo Bonanza event. A big community turn out with a full house, a tonne of laughter and excellent prizes. We want to give a massive thank you to BNI for supporting us with another successful event and raising $17.7K .



The Pioneer Central Otago dinner was a resounding success, raising a record-breaking $62K. The room was buzzing all evening. The Bacchus chef private dinner for eight including magician Jonathan Usher sold for over $7K- twice! A huge thank you to everyone who came along, donated, bid and dug deep.



After weeks of voting, and over **6000 votes across 20+ organisations**, Think Solar Dunedin announced us as the winner of a free 20kW solar system.

THANK YOU

To the Trusts & Foundations that supported us in 2025/26

100+ People Who Care
Aotearoa Gaming Trust
Aurora Fund Grant
Central Lakes Trust
Cleveland Family Trust
DCC Community Grant- Rates
Goodwill Trust
Harcourts Grant (Hospice NZ)
Healthcare Otago Charitable Trust
Jessie Hill Charitable Trust
John Lemon Charitable Trust
The Lion Foundation Trust
The Trust Community Foundation
William Downie Sherriff Charitable Trust

And to our amazing community

"Thank you to our community, whose generosity sustains everything we do. Through collaboration and a shared commitment to excellence, we are stronger and better together."

- CEO Ginny Green

DONATE TODAY

CONTACT

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HOSPICE NEWS

SPRING 2026
Otago Hospice Newsletter

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO AND CHAIR

Kia ora koutou

Stronger and better together

It's been a year of change, growth and partnership at Otago Community Hospice. We've reached further across the region, closed the 2025/26 year in a stable financial position, and kept delivering excellent care while demand keeps rising.

What we've achieved

- Reaching further in Central Otago: With Dunstan Hospital, we've created a dedicated Hospice Clinical Nurse Specialist role and increased specialist medical rounding, supported by Telehealth. More people can stay closer to home, even when their needs are complex.
- Seven-day community nursing in Dunedin: Patients and whānau no longer face a gap in support at weekends.
- Care for Whānau Māori: With the endorsement of the rūnanga, we've begun our three-year Māori strategy, Mahere Rautaki: Te Whakamana i te Manaakitanga Māori.
- Backing family carers: The Kowhai Programme, Kowhai in the Home and the ever expanding Ending Life Well podcast series are helping carers feel confident caring for a loved one at home.

Working together

No hospice can meet the growing need for palliative care alone. The six South Island hospices of the Te Waipounamu Hospice Collaborative are now formally working together to share expertise and build a more sustainable future. Our advocacy through Hospice New Zealand, including for pay equity for hospice nurses, has also helped secure a welcome uplift to our contract.

The numbers

We finished the year near break-even. Strong fundraising and an outstanding year from our shops offset rising costs. With inflation still a pressure, we'll keep a careful eye on spending while planning for growing demand.

Thank you

To our clinical, support, shop and fundraising teams, our volunteers, our Board, and every donor, sponsor and supporter: your generosity keeps this care going.

Thank you!

Ngā mihi nui,



Ginny Green,
Chief Executive



Stuart McLauchlan,
Chairman

Otago Community hospice
Te Kahu Pairuri ki Ōtākou
Living Every Moment

ACTIVITY SNAPSHOT

Our year in numbers

Otago Community Hospice 2025/26

1,198
patients cared for

295
on average at any one time

665
deaths, and where they happened



- 312 in residential care
- 148 at home
- 120 in hospital
- 85 in our inpatient unit

744
new referrals

27% rural

including Central, North and South Otago

5,827
visits

8,152
phone calls to patients and whānau

3,754
family support contacts



Residential Care Support Team



THE BIG QUESTIONS

New card game gets New Zealanders talking about what matters most

A new bilingual card game developed by Otago Hospice is helping New Zealanders start conversations about some of life's biggest questions: what truly matters to us, what we value, how we want to live and, ultimately, what matters to us at the end of life.

The Big Questions | Ngā Pātai Nui was created at Otago Hospice by Denise van Aalst, a senior palliative care nurse and educator who leads the Hospice's Kōwhai Programme for whānau carers.

Drawing on more than 20 years' experience in palliative care, Denise has seen first-hand how difficult it can be for families when they do not know what a loved one would have wanted.

"But in palliative care, we believe that talking about death and dying and getting things in order allows us to focus on living. These cards are really about creating the opportunity for those conversations before they become difficult or urgent."

Otago Hospice has previously used and promoted Go Wish, a card game developed in the United States. Denise saw an opportunity to create something that reflected Aotearoa New Zealand's culture and values, while broadening the conversation beyond dying to include how people want to live.

Working with palliative care colleagues, she developed questions ranging from the thoughtful to the joyful, including "What gets me out of bed in the morning?" and "What is my favourite memory so far?"

The cards were traialled with the Otago Hospice team and community groups. What was initially expected to be a project of just a few months, ultimately took 20 months to develop. Every card is presented in both English and Te Reo Māori.

Te reo Māori is so poetic and has such a beautiful way of expressing something in a more descriptive way. Having both languages represented was important to us.ö Said Otago Hospice CEO Ginny Green.

Ginny concluded "We are very excited about the potential of this small card game to make a big impact in people's lives across New Zealand."

PATIENT STORY - JAYREN DIXON

On June 30, 2022, our world changed forever. Jay—the love of my life, father to our two beautiful children, and our husky—was diagnosed with stage four lung cancer.

What followed were 20 grueling months of treatment, soaring highs, crushing lows, endless financial juggling, and a constant cycle of doctors and hospitals. Through it all, we fought to make every moment count, filling our days with memory-making and endless "I love yous."

Then came the news we had been dreading: the chemotherapy had stopped working, and there were no options left to try. We could no longer pretend or try to keep life feeling "normal." Jay kept fighting and putting on a brave face, but deep down, we both struggled to talk about—or even plan for—what was coming next.

When the hospital referred us to hospice, we were terrified. We all think we know what that word means, and to us, it felt like giving up. But then along came our wonderful nurse and a team of extraordinary, caring people who gently broke through the silence.

They visited us often and helped us talk openly about dying, about what the process would look like, and about what would happen after. For the first time in months, Jay's mind was truly put at rest. He knew that everything and everyone was taken care of, he understood what was happening, and he felt safe.

The Otago Hospice team surrounded us with support in every way imaginable. A counsellor worked with Jay, giving him a safe space to talk through what he was feeling. A volunteer sat with him and wrote down his life story—a bound book that now sits pride of place on our bookshelf.

Meanwhile, our nurse and the hospice doctors took charge of his pain, making sure he knew exactly how to stay comfortable as his body changed.

On the day Jay passed away, it started out like almost every other day at home, except he was more tired and struggling just a little bit more. Jay's nurse came over to check on him and gently suggested a night at the Otago Hospice in-patient unit to monitor his medication, adding with a smile that it might also give him a quick bit of respite from his slightly overcaring and fussy family.

So Jay went in. The staff fussed over him and found the absolute best recliner for him to settle into. The doctor came by, and together we made plans.

We spent the afternoon hanging out, made plans for the next day, and finally went home to get some much-needed sleep, completely at ease knowing he was safe and wrapped in care.

At 3:00 AM, my phone rang. I woke up to an apologetic Hospice nurse explaining that Jay had passed away suddenly from an embolism.

The next few weeks were a blur, but because of those hard conversations we'd had, everything was taken care of and organised exactly how Jay had wanted it. But once the initial blur faded, the house went quiet. It was just the kids, the dog, and me left in a very empty space.



Hospice knew how to support us through that, too. They brought me into the Tui group, where I met once a week with wonderful people who had also lost the loves of their lives—their sons, daughters, parents, and partners.

We were all broken and lost, but guided by compassionate counsellors, we learned to understand grief, loss, and everything in between. Even though our group eventually "graduated," we still keep in touch and meet often for coffee and a chat. That shared understanding has become a lifeline.

Here I am, two and a half years later, living without the love of my life and the father of my children. I miss him endlessly, but I carry a deep, lasting gratitude for what hospice gave to Jay and to our family: the tender care, the warmth, and the courageous conversations we never would have had without them.

Special thanks to Suzie Dixon for sharing her family's story with our community.

Otago Community hospice
Te Kahu Pairuri ki Ōtākou
Living Every Moment