

Report for ANZHNCS AGM

August 2025

Objectives

The Head and Neck Cancer Foundation Aotearoa's mission is to improve outcomes for patients affected by head and neck cancer. Our work has three strands:

- 1) Supporting research to better understand head and neck cancers, and develop more effective and less invasive treatment;
- 2) Advocating for strategies which help prevent head and neck cancers, improve outcomes for patients and reduce health inequities;
- 3) Providing education for the public and healthcare professionals about head and neck cancer, including prevention, diagnosis and care.

Collaboration

The Foundation continues to work collaboratively with Sexually Transmitted Infections Education Foundation (STIEF) and Head and Neck Cancer Support Aotearoa and other organisations, to promote awareness and advocate to reduce the burden of head and neck cancer in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Research

In the last financial year, the Foundation commissioned a research project - Health Economy Study on the Cost of HPV-related Cancers. Board members Drs Swee Tan, Cathy Stephenson, Dean Ruske, Andrew Macann and John Chaplin, and Chief Executive Amelia Jenkinson, comprising a steering committee alongside Dr Hayley Denison of Messey University, Prof Peter Sykes of the University of Otago, and Dr Eric Ji from the Wellington Cancer Centre, worked collaboratively with Sapere Research Group on this project. The report quantifies, for the first time, the economic burden of HPV-related cancers in New Zealand, and analyses the HPV vaccination coverage in New Zealand. Findings of the research have been submitted to a peer-reviewed journal for publication, and have been / being presented at 6 conferences, 2 head and neck regional meetings and 2 clinical education webinars. The report also received coverage from national TV (1News) and radio stations (Newstalk ZB and Radio NZ's *The Detail*).

Advocacy

In August 2024, Chair of the Foundation Dr Swee Tan, Trustee Dr Cathy Stephenson and Chief Executive Amelia Jenkinson, alongside representatives from the STIEF met with the then Minister of Health Dr Shane Reti. Together with members of STIEF we outlined the urgent need to improve the very low and declining HPV vaccination rate in New Zealand, and to implement strategies to

achieve this. The Minister was very receptive of our advice and we urged the Minister to adopt the 90% international HPV vaccination target and a timeline of 2030.

The Foundation, alongside the STIEF, also continues to meet Te Whatu Ora's Immunisation Team regularly and work collaboratively and agreed on strategies to improve HPV vaccination rates. Many of the agreed strategies have now been implemented.

The Foundation continued to engage PHARMAC to advocate for widening access to immunotherapy by patients with certain type of head and neck cancers. We are pleased that at the end of 2024, the Government has increased access to immunotherapy by patients with mucosal head and neck cancers. We continue to advocate for further expansion to the eligibility criteria, in line with other developed countries.

Education

To increased awareness of New Zealand's poor HPV vaccination rates and the need to improve vaccine uptakes, the Foundation has published several educational articles in *Pharmacy Today* (*How to improve HPV vaccination rates and prevent future cancers*, August 2024); *NZ Doctor* (*Low HPV vaccine rates missed opportunity to address health inequities*, Oct 2024), *General Practice NZ's Pānui* (October 2024); and *GP Voice* (March 2025).

In October 2024 Dr Tan was invited to present at the Te Whatu Ora Immunisation Team's fortnightly update to the country's vaccinators on the importance of HPV vaccination.

Dr Tan also presented findings of the HPV Health Economy Study at the GP conference in Wellington, and the Central Region Head & Neck Cancer Service Network Meeting in Palmerston North, in August 2024. Dr John Chaplin presented the findings at the Northern Region Head and Neck Cancer Service Meeting in April 2025 and the GPCME in Rotorua in June 2025. Dr Chaplin and Dr Andrew McCann presented the findings at the NZ Sexual Health Society Conference in August 2025. Dr Tan presented the findings at the GP conference in Christchurch in July 2025 and the NZ Dental Association Conference, and the Royal Australian and the New Zealand of Radiologists NZ ASM in Wellington in August 2025. It will also be presented at the Australian and New Zealand Head and Neck Cancer Society ASM in Adelaide in August 2025.

New Trustees

In the last financial year, our board member Dr Cathy Stephenson retired from the Foundation. We are very grateful for Cathy's tremendous contribution. We are very pleased to appoint Dr Sam Murton and Dr Kim Gear to the Board. Dr Murton is a Wellington-based GP, a senior lecturer at the University of Otago, and the immediate past president of the Royal New Zealand College of GPs and Chair of the Council of Medical Colleges. Dr Gear, a dental graduate and an oral medicine specialist based in Auckland and has held various notable roles. We are delighted to have these very capable and highly regarded individuals joining the Board.

Awareness and Fundraising

The Foundation in collaboration Head and Neck Cancer Support Aotearoa held a Film Screening Fundraiser in Auckland, leading to the World Head and Neck Cancer Day. The Foundation also held a Mad Hatter High Tea Fundraiser in Wellington the World Head and Neck Cancer Day 27th July. These were excellent occasions to create awareness of head and neck cancer in the

community and we are grateful for their support.

Chief Executive

We are saddened by the resignation of our Chief Executive Amelia Jenkinson, who is returning to the UK with her family in September. Amelia has been a remarkable member of the Team with exceptional skills and ability. We are very grateful for her contribution and wish her well. We have now appointed Suzanne Giddens to the CE role. We look forward to welcoming Sue who will assume the role in September.

Finances

As of 1st August 2025, the Foundation has \$137,698.36 in the bank.

Performance Report

The Performance Report for the financial year ending 31st March 2025, prepared by Bakertilly Staples Rodway, has been accepted by the Trustees at the AGM, and is being filed with Charities Commission.

Prepared by Swee T Tan ONZM MBBS FRACS PhD
Chair, Head and Neck Cancer Foundation Aotearoa