



30 years of Daffodil Day History and impact

2020 marks 30 years of Daffodil Day in New Zealand. That's 30 years of coming together to raise much-needed funds to support people facing cancer.

There has been much progress over the years. Many New Zealanders have faced cancer. Volunteers have collectively driven thousands of kilometres to get people to cancer treatment. Countless others have helped us in our campaigns to reduce the risk and impact of cancer. These are the stories of how your donations have helped the Cancer Society support people with cancer.

Currently, one in three New Zealanders are affected by cancer. Within the next 30 years that is estimated to rise to two in three.



Major Sponsor



Daffodil Day

Humble beginnings

From a humble street appeal, Daffodil Day has expanded to become a highly-organised community activity across the country. It is now one of the most well-known days on the fundraising calendars for New Zealanders.

It was modelled on a campaign that began in Canada in 1957 and introduced here after Cancer Society staff attended the first global cancer fundraising conference in 1989. It was trialled in the Wellington and Central North Island regions in 1990.

The odds seemed to be against the first Daffodil Day though. Red Nose Day and Telethon were happening at about the same time, as was the General Election. It was the middle of the school holidays, some regions weren't keen to get involved, and Wellington City Council denied the application to run a street day.

In the end it was a great success. Of 30,000 fresh daffodils ordered in Wellington, only 900 remained at the end of the day.

“ One of the most compelling sights of the day was when I drove down Lambton Quay. Everyone I saw in that busy lunch-time rush was carrying a daffodil. ”

Pamela McConchie, Co-ordinator for Wellington Division, 1990.

A feat at this time, that proved decisive for Daffodil Day's future success, was securing sponsorship from the National Bank (these days ANZ).





The Daffodil

A symbol of hope

Central to the whole campaign is the daffodil. The first flower of spring. Bringing light after cold, dark winter days and the hope of a new beginning. It has become a symbol for people experiencing the winter of diagnosis and treatment, finding hope of a new life ahead.

The daffodil was first used in Toronto, Canada in the 1950s during volunteer organised coffee mornings to raise money for cancer awareness and research. Guests were given a daffodil - a symbol of hope - as thanks for their support.

This poem was written by a woman many years ago after she came home following cancer surgery, the first thing she noticed was the daffodils her daughter had cut.

*Dear daughter mine...
How could you know
The daffodils
You gathered in
Culled so lovingly
To fill your room
With brilliant spring
How could you know
Those previous blooms
Rejoiced your mother's heart
Filled her heart with
sunlit singing
Golden, liquid sound*

Copyrighting the daffodil was an important move. It eventually replaced the sword as the Cancer Society emblem since establishment in 1929. Other charities used the daffodil in their campaigns until informed about copyright issues. "Plunket parents around the country were not amused with us for several years," June Mills Otago-Southland volunteer.

While people liked receiving a natural flower, fabric flowers were introduced as an innovative new option, partly in response to supply issues after a series of weather-related events. We have daffodil flowers in many forms now - including silk blooms and crocheted daffodils, with a paper daffodil ready to hit the streets in 2021.

Volunteer enthusiasm has always been a key part of Daffodil Days success. From the first group of Feilding volunteers who picked daffodils from local paddocks to exchange for a donation, to the thousands who now take part every year over the country.

Each year, on the last Friday of August, **over 11,000 volunteers** get out to collect for us. But before then thousands of hours have already been spent packing boxes of silk daffodils, pre-selling fresh daffodils to local businesses, organising rosters, delivering donation boxes and working with schools in their fundraising efforts.

Daffodil Day has grown to become an iconic event in New Zealand and one of the biggest fundraising success stories. Fundraising activities have varied from street collections to community events.



Every year since it began, Joan Swift from Auckland collects for the Cancer Society. She and her hat are a key part of the event. Joan was a key person to bring Daffodil Day to the city.

“ The first Daffodil Day left us feeling on such a high that it was so successful. It all came together just like we knew it would ”

Over the years we've introduced other options for collecting donations alongside street collecting, such as online donations.

Previous Cancer Society fundraiser Faye James recalls, “We were the first fundraiser in the country to introduce text-to-donate. Some years we had to import daffodils because of growing conditions. But we had great relationships with New Zealand growers and this became a good business for them.”

Many private landowners have contributed their land and time to grow daffodils for us. Included in these are Whangimoana owners Alistair and Jackie Sutherland in the Wairarapa, who have raised over \$26,000 for Cancer Society, and Don Heslop of Lower Moutere, who is still growing his daffodils for us aged 92.



Jackie Sutherland daffodil grower. Photo source: Stuff



Since 1990, Daffodil Day has inspired people to come together to support our work. It's been an opportunity to raise awareness of cancer in New Zealand. This event, like the Cancer Society and our services, has increased exponentially over the years.

In 1990 we had no National Office and only a few centres over the country. Now there are 34 offices and a National Office based in Wellington working closely with Government and the NGO sector.

- ✘ The number of volunteers helping us on the day has grown from 2000 to 11,000
- Funds raised have increased from \$67,000 to a net return of around \$4 million a year
- ✘ Around 600,000 fresh daffodils are needed every year
- Over 50 daffodil farms are involved with 40 in the Wairarapa alone

Between 2007 and 2019 Cancer Society spent over \$62 million on cancer research alone. This is around the same amount we raised from Daffodil Day over the same number of years.

Last year, nearly 8700 people with cancer were referred to the Cancer Society support services. Around 100 submissions were made by our health promoters around the country. These submissions focused on reducing the risks of cancer.

We provide support to schools around the country on making their schools sun safe. Nearly a third of all schools now study in a sun-safe school environment.

Last year:



47,160

Individual copies of some 75 publications were printed by us, helping people understand and cope with the impacts of cancer.



1,000,000 km

Driven by our 1,322 volunteer drivers. Travelling over a million kilometres to take people with cancer to and from treatment.



50,000

Nights were provided in our accommodation for people required to be away from home during cancer treatment.



9,600

Over 9,600 calls were made to our 0800 phone line from people all over the country.

We know our services are in demand as the number of people with cancer has tripled since 1990. In 1990 there were 11,942 people diagnosed with cancer. This number is expected to increase by 45 per cent by the end of 2020 with the number of people diagnosed with cancer estimated to exceed 26,000.



Principal sponsor ANZ

ANZ is the principal sponsor of Daffodil Day. In addition to their financial support, ANZ's staff and customers help with raising funds for the Cancer Society. Since 1990 ANZ staff have organised bake sales, quiz nights, and raffles and together have fundraised almost **\$20 million** to support Daffodil Day. This partnership has been critical to Daffodil Days success.

ANZ New Zealand CEO Antonia Watson commented recently: "ANZ raise around **\$1 million** a year for Daffodil Day. This year is special because it's our 30th year of partnership with the Cancer Society, and in the aftermath of COVID-19 it's more important than ever we support their vital work. Across New Zealand ANZ staff are looking forward to fundraising in various ways including in branch and street collecting with the money each region raises going to their local Cancer Society and giving back to their community."



We've had challenges and highlights over the years

The first Daffodil Day was launched with fanfare in 1990 at the Beehive. From 1994 to 2005, thousands of people joined the Daffodil Day Express, a steam engine that carried passengers from Wellington to the Wairarapa. Once there passengers were taken to Middle Run at Gladstone to pick fresh daffodils. The service was stopped in 2006 due to the rising cost of the carriages on the steam train.

In 1992 (and in 2008) Daffodil Day had to be cancelled in Canterbury due to the "big snow" event and in 1997 anti-vivisectionists targeted Daffodil Day to protest in Christchurch.

Through-out these 30 years we've experienced ups and downs but stayed on course. This is because cancer doesn't go away when there's a crisis-cancer is a crisis. People are still having treatment and still need support.

In 2011 Canterbury-West Coast region continued to support their clients, albeit in temporary facilities and without access to either their centre or their accommodation facilities, which were severely damaged by the earthquakes. They continued the Society's work, despite personal issues and circumstances.

During that time we helped meet these challenges through the simple things - food, transport, accommodation, a listening ear. Providing compostable toilets for people going through chemotherapy after the earthquakes was one of the most helpful things we did.

"This is what the Cancer Society does – deals with the here and now"

Elizabeth Chesterman, CE of Cancer Society Canterbury-West Coast.

In August 2017 Kaikoura Cancer Support found themselves short of daffodils!



“ We had always got a supply from Clarence, but our major supply had been dug up and turned into a horse paddock. Following the 2016 earthquake, we had no access North to Clarence to get the daffodils here. Contact was made with NCTIR (North Canterbury Transport Infrastructure Recovery) to see if they could help.

They had a helicopter returning from sluicing the hills above the quake-devastated road and could bring back two boxes of daffodils for us.

Alison had to go and meet the helicopter at Hapuku (itself a mission given the road access south also) with the mandatory orange jacket and hard hat. A very pretty picture indeed and matching the splendour of the daffodils.

Kaikoura has always enjoyed the support of its community for this day, and post-quake was just that sort of support we needed. It was lovely to see everyone out, sporting daffodils and smiling again after a very difficult few months. ”

Linda Bennett

In 2010 we sought permission to have Shona McFarlane’s beautiful painting of Daffodils to have prints made and framed for our 10th anniversary of Daffodil Day. Every branch of ANZ (then The National Bank), plus each Division were presented with a print.

Daffodil Day in 2014 included an art show where 20 artists donated their work. These were auctioned on TradeMe and artists included Man Booker prize winner Eleanor Catton, celebrity chef Al Brown and netball legend Irene van Dyk.



Feilding Intermediate students from left: Brooklyn Riwai, Riley Jenkins, Mackenzie Clarey, Lillie Michie

For the last 30 years, a group of year 7 and 8 students from Feilding Intermediate have collected for Daffodil Day.

Every year, on Daffodil Day, a group of students would walk into the town centre, carrying buckets, flowers, pens, and stickers. Feilding Intermediate students love being a part of this day. Rain or shine, it goes ahead.

Among the highlights in 2016 was the Daffodil Raceday in Hastings. Not only did the Racing Board donate directly and collect on the course, they worked with regions to hold high teas to thank volunteers for the hours that they contributed across the country.

In the same year in Wellington, the Lions rugby team helped out with the street collection, drawing considerable attention from commuters. While in Auckland, Paul Henry's breakfast show was stopped by a Daffodil Day fundraiser to play their daily competition "9 in10".

For a number of years now the Vector lights on Auckland Harbour Bridge have been alight for Daffodil Day.



Auckland Harbour Bridge 2019

And this year, 2020, we are taking into account the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic for Daffodil Day. This means being able to take Daffodil Day to a digital platform if we can't have our street appeal.