

Newsletter August 2011



**Rachel
Holdaway**



Beat Bowel Cancer
A O T E A R O A

Welcome to Beat Bowel Cancer Aotearoa's third newsletter. My name is Rachel Holdaway and I was recently elected chairperson, replacing Sarah Derrett who is due to commence a Harkness Fellowship in Healthcare Policy and Practice.

Sarah and family will be based in Chicago for the next twelve months, but we know Sarah will continue to maintain a keen interest in the happenings of BBCA from afar.

We are very proud of Sarah's achievement and thank her for helping to lay the solid foundation that has ensured BBCA's future as the leading voice for bowel cancer advocacy in New Zealand.

It is a privilege for me to be involved with BBCA and as a bowel cancer survivor I know the importance of having support and credible information that is accessible and relevant to New Zealand patients and their families.

When I was diagnosed with bowel cancer five years ago at age 41, I was very aware of the assumptions of friends, that I had breast cancer. It is a fact that in recent years breast cancer awareness has dominated New Zealand media and public attention to the exclusion of other cancer killers.

It is long overdue that there is a concerted effort to raise awareness that bowel cancer is New Zealand's most common cancer, killing more than breast and prostate cancers combined. We certainly managed to get the bowel cancer message out there during our recent bowel cancer awareness week, running nation-wide from 6 – 12 June. This culminated with our very first television commercial being aired, made possible thanks to the generosity of sponsors, Roche (NZ) and Olympus (Australia).

Last month we received the very sad news that Claire Wilson passed away. Claire, despite facing serious health issues, worked incredibly hard for our charity. Our hearts and thoughts go out to Claire's family and friends.

At our recent AGM it was decided that our main focus for the next 12 months will be fundraising. With over 25,000 registered charities in New Zealand battling it out for the donation dollar, this could be a challenge. At the moment, Auckland woman, Rachael Randal is training to compete in the Auckland marathon to raise funds and awareness on our behalf. So if you are in Auckland on Sunday 30 October, please show Rachael your support.

Rachael's efforts follow on from Dr Mick Tarry's amazing stint, running a series of gruelling ultra-marathons. During these nine months, not only did Mick raise over \$3500, but he highlighted the importance of bowel cancer awareness.

Last November I was fortunate enough to be in Hanmer Springs at the finish line of the 75km Molesworth Run, and I was humbled by the level of support given to Mick by the organisers of the event-the Marlborough Harrier Club. I have found this to be the case whenever I have approached an organisation to assist us with promoting bowel cancer awareness. I'm sure this is because bowel cancer is so common - we all know of someone that has been affected by what can be a detectable, treatable and beatable cancer.

Rachel Holdaway

Making Donations

Donations help our volunteers to carry out the work of the charity. Donations over \$5 are eligible for a tax credit (formerly rebate) - receipts issued on request

Donate online:

<http://www.fundraiseonline.co.nz> Look for **Beat Bowel Cancer Aotearoa** among the cancer charities or directly support Rachael Randal's marathon efforts (see below).

Send us a cheque:

Beat Bowel Cancer Aotearoa Inc
PO Box 6405 | Dunedin North | DUNEDIN 9059

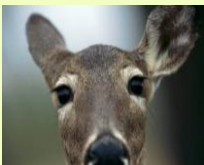
Internet Banking

Beat Bowel Cancer Aotearoa Inc
A/c no: 38-9010-0509792-00

Deposit at any Kiwibank branch

Beat Bowel Cancer Aotearoa Inc
A/c no: 38-9010-0509792-00

LOOK!



BBCA supporter **Rachael Randal** is running the Auckland Marathon to raise awareness and funds for bowel cancer. Please support Rachael in her bid by visiting her FundraiseOnline page at <http://www.fundraiseonline.co.nz/RachaelRandal/>
If you're in Auckland on Sunday 30th October, why not go and cheer them along.

Claire Wilson June 1981 – July 2011

On June 4th 2011 Beat Bowel Cancer Aotearoa member Claire Wilson held her 30th birthday party in Wellington. Claire invited members of BBKA to join the fun and bring their dancing shoes. It was Claire's idea that her party would be the 'launch' for our first ever Bowel Cancer Awareness week and the theme should be 'Beat Bowel Cancer'. Instead of presents she requested a koha entry with all proceeds to go to BBKA...a typically quirky, generous and selfless gesture.

Those of us from BBKA who attended the party felt privileged to be there and Claire lived up to her trademark reputation of her love of parties, family and friends. Her brother marked the occasion by playing his unique and way-out electronic music and there was a continuous photographic display of Claire's all too short life.

It was a moving reminder of her situation to see the photos of Claire from her smiling baby days through to the present day, culminating with beautiful images of her recent wedding in Arrowtown when she married the love of her life, Yoshi Hayashi.

It was a great party full of fun, love and friendship, music and dancing, moving speeches, mojito cocktails and birthday cake. Although Claire and everyone there knew that her time was short, this was not evident on the night or allowed to interfere with the celebration of her 30 years.

Sadly, shortly after her party, Claire's health deteriorated rapidly and she died five weeks later. Claire joined Beat Bowel Cancer Aotearoa charity in 2010 after her return to New Zealand from overseas travel. At that stage Claire knew she was terminally ill with bowel cancer but she wanted to make a difference. She was passionately and selflessly committed to raising awareness of bowel cancer and the importance of early diagnosis in the hope that her story may save others from a similar and painful experience.

Alison Ellison



Claire enjoying her birthday bash in June

RACHAEL RANDAL: Running for Awareness



Auckland healthcare communications writer and consultant, Rachael Randal is currently training to participate in her very first marathon - the Auckland Marathon on **Sunday 30th October**.

Known as New Zealand's premier event, Rachael has very generously dedicated running the 42.2 kilometres to benefit our charity - to raise money and raise awareness of bowel cancer.

Originally from Newcastle, North England, Rachael took up running eighteen months ago when she moved to Auckland with her Kiwi husband. Having competed in middle distance races as a teenager, Rachael

was inspired to take up running again to keep fit and healthy, and saw running the roads of Auckland as a great opportunity to take in the beautiful views of the city.

Seeing other runners out and about also encourages Rachael and when she needs extra motivation to train on rainy days she reminds herself that she is running for such a meaningful cause.

Training four to five times a week, Rachael expects the most difficult part of the predominantly flat run to be the climb over the Harbour Bridge. Running over this Auckland landmark will be a one-off opportunity, with access normally off-limits to pedestrians. With unprecedented demand for entries this year and record entry sell out, Rachael will be one of 10,500 participants all hoping to achieve their personal goals.

The marathon competitors leave from Devonport on the North Shore at 6.10am, head over the Harbour Bridge, continue to follow the picturesque coast all the way to St Heliers, and then back into the city and into Fanshawe Street to the finish line. The full course can be viewed at http://www.aucklandmarathon.co.nz/race/map_fullcourse.asp
We wish Rachael all the very best for this huge effort.

Secure online donations in support of Rachael may be made at <http://www.fundraiseonline.co.nz/RachaelRandal/>

Rachel Holdaway

Altered priorities ahead for Rebecca



Rebecca McPhail

My husband and I were excitedly anticipating our trip to Europe. We were days away from departing when I started to get a tiny bit of bleeding when I went to the toilet. I wasn't worried and thought at my age that it was simply a tummy bug, but went to my GP as I didn't want to be stuck in a small French village trying to explain my symptoms to the local doctor. She wasn't worried, but since my father and grandfather had appendiceal and bowel cancer respectively, she organised an urgent colonoscopy.

I should have listened to my instinct and undergone cancer screening anyway, as the colonoscopy booked by my GP discovered cancer. I remember the moment vividly. My husband and I were ushered into a small, windowless room and the doctor simply said, "It's cancer". I was 27 years old. It's a surreal feeling and words simply can't describe the emotion. I felt as if I began tumbling into an unknown abyss.

The following days and weeks were spent recovering from bowel surgery and enduring IVF treatment, instead of eating gelato and drinking wine on the Italian coast. Every dream and plan my husband and I had created was, in a nanosecond, destroyed by cancer.

I am currently undergoing six months' worth of chemotherapy treatment for stage three bowel cancer. I have had four cycles and have eight cycles to go. Although my prognosis is good, my life will never be quite the same. My cancer is genetic and comes with other cancer risks which need to be screened for and monitored for the rest of my life. I wish I had been screened sooner, as bowel cancer is pretty much curable if it's caught in its earliest stages.

My strongest message is to encourage others to get tested - especially if something unusual is noticed. It could save your life

Rebecca McPhail

Bowel Cancer Awareness Week

Our inaugural Bowel Cancer Awareness week took place June 6 - 12. Although fund-raising for the week in the present economic climate was more challenging than expected, we were able to work with a media company to develop a modest campaign. Donations at the till were undertaken for the charity at PBL pharmacies throughout the country during the month of June. The campaign included TV, radio and print stories and interviews utilising some of our well known Ambassadors who had agreed to be part of this campaign together with some of our own members.

Highlights included:

- The launch of Awareness week, hosted by Claire Wilson, at her 30th birthday party in Wellington
- The 20:20 documentary featuring Claire and Jared Noel (see link on our website)
- The Campbell Live interview with Chris Doig
- The production and screening of a Beat Bowel Cancer Aotearoa TV commercial with funding from Olympus in Australia and Roche in New Zealand
- and the many other TV, radio and print media stories including those featuring Mary Bradley, Christy Rolfe and the Bottom Line-up in the park.

Given the somewhat limited funds we had available as a new charity, we are delighted with the bowel cancer awareness achieved. We have next year's Awareness week scheduled for June 4 – 10, and with the experience we have gained this year, feel optimistic that next year will result in a bigger and better campaign, raising more awareness among New Zealanders about this detectable, treatable and beatable disease.

Alison Ellison



Alison Ellison

**DON'T
FORGET !!!**



Visit <http://www.fundraisonline.co.nz/RachaelRandal/>
to support Rachael Randal in her fundraising goal

Awareness Road Tour: Rural Roadies

There are inequalities in medical treatment due to access and cost issues for many people in rural and remote areas so our plan was to take the smart new BBCA 'Don't Hide Your Symptoms Behind Closed Doors' posters to rural areas of the beautiful East Cape and everywhere possible on the way.

After taking off from Wanaka, the aerodynamic shape of our Citroen Picasso soon began to shed the improvised www.beatbowelcancer.org.nz magnetic signs around the roadsides as we left the 50 km zone. Scrambling to retrieve them, we slapped them back on again to promote our charity, before each stop en route to Christchurch.

Staff at medical centres were delighted to receive our pamphlets while staff at **pubs, sports clubs, supermarkets, cafes, Town Halls, gas stations and WINZ offices** were co-operative poster targets.

After flying to **Auckland** we restocked and set off south across the Waikato. Rain-bedraggled and with coats obscuring our BBCA t-shirts, groomed pharmacy staff looked doubtfully at us but succumbed to our pamphlets. They were keen to provide bowel care information.

Into **Rotorua** Hospital, onto **Taupo**, then **Hastings**. On to **Napier** where we had a good chat to the district nurses. What a happy reception around **Wairoa** Hospital as we flashed the pamphlets and decorated loos. We hit **Mahia** in time to get the pub decorated before Happy Hour. Next day we raced around **Gisborne** hospital then headed for the farmers' market.

BBCA posters went on the central sign-board. We had lots of interaction; bowel cancer affects so many families. Mid-afternoon, lovely weekend staff helped us at the tiny hospital in **Te Puia Springs**.

Many isolated clinics and interesting public loos later it was getting dark so, disappointingly, we had to miss **Ohope** and **Whakatane**. Could someone out there cover those for us?

Tauranga public hospital has a new Outpatient Department, with sizeable notice boards. This hospital has proposed a Nurse-Endoscopist training scheme. This rigorous training has worked well in the UK where one of the nurse graduates is now teaching doctors and waiting lists have reduced.

While Ken and I were busy covering our areas, we were grateful for the work done by supporters such as Alison Read and Helen Lockley who visited over two dozen GPs surgeries and pharmacies in Taranaki to distribute posters and pamphlets during Awareness week. See below how you too can help raise awareness.

Back home on local forays we now drive our 2CV named Poubel. She's old, flatter and has more metal in her panels so the magnetic logos stick better. And she's cute/ridiculous/attracts attention, so more people notice. Since being home we've covered SH6 **Central Otago to Dunedin** and we're planning a Maniototo trip. Feedback from friends in transit tell us the posters are still behind the toilet doors so people are respecting them.

Christy and Ken Rolfe



Symptoms of Bowel Cancer

Please Be Aware

The first step you can take to protect yourself and your loved ones against bowel cancer is to **be aware of the symptoms**. Most importantly, **see your GP** if you are at all concerned:

- 6 **Bleeding from the bottom**
- 6 **A persistent change in bowel habit**
- 6 **Abdominal pain, especially if severe**
- 6 **Any lumps or mass in your stomach**
- 6 **Weight loss and tiredness (symptoms of anaemia)**

Outreach Appeal

Please, everyone out there, could you lend a hand?

We have pamphlets that you could take to your individual clubs or workplaces and posters to place discreetly behind a toilet door.

We are aware of at least one person who has come forward and been diagnosed with bowel cancer as a consequence of our Awareness week publicity. By alerting someone to the need to see their doctor you will have made a valuable contribution to raising bowel cancer awareness. Many people don't know the signs and they would have an opportunity to contemplate this information in privacy. Remember: Caught early, most bowel cancer is treatable and beatable. Send us an email today with your requirements and we'll send them to you:

info@beatbowelcancer.org.nz