

Me kōrero

Let's Talk



April 2023

**'Supporting
Aviva is an easy
decision'**

**'I'm in my
first healthy
relationship'**

**Celebrating
50 years of
life changing
mahi**

Aviva celebrates



1973 - 2023





Fifty years of life-saving work

What do you think of when you hear “1973”? Whether you were around then or not, the ‘70s are a pretty iconic era! Maybe ‘the ‘70s’ makes you think of Fleetwood Mac, or maxi dresses or avocado bathroom suites.

But for Aotearoa New Zealand, the year 1973 changed the social landscape forever. 1973 was the year Christchurch Women’s Refuge was founded – the first family violence refuge in the country. What’s surprising, is that its foundation was somewhat accidental. It happened when a group of women in Ōtautahi Christchurch decided they could no longer look away from the raw deal wāhine were getting in society, so they got together and started organising!

“[We] decided to start a Women’s Centre to be a base for meetings

and consciousness raising about the oppression of women and to plan actions to improve women’s rights [...]

We rented half a house in Kilmore Street, paying the rent with donation pledges. Before long women and children in serious distress and obvious victims of violence began to arrive at the door. We were shocked.

It was cause for dissension amongst the groups. Some wanted to offer accommodation support, others wanted to focus on our consciousness raising objectives.

I wanted to do both.

A compromise was quickly reached. We rented the other half of the house as a refuge for women and children who were victims of violence.”

A brief recollection from Rose, one of many founders

A group of women decided they could no longer look away from the raw deal wāhine were getting.

ABOVE Woman arriving at Refuge in 1970s

OPPOSITE Christchurch Women’s Refuge second safe house

Half a century on, we have supported more than 40,000 people to live free from violence.

That refuge not only led to the creation of others across the country, but the organisation was to continue evolving alongside the society it served, until in 2013, it became Aviva. Now we offer family violence, and sexual violence support and education programmes for adults and tamariki of all genders. Our services now also include assisting with home security, financial loans, work with Pasifika aiga, and working with users of violence.

"We realised that being a crisis service for women and children only was not going to solve the big intergenerational issues that were causing violence in our community.

"We needed to work proactively in the preventative violence and education space to ensure long-term solutions in our community. Being an ambulance at the bottom of the cliff was critical, but it was also a band-aid across wider societal issues and causes of violence."

Gwenda Kendrew, General Manager, Operations

Half a century on, we have supported more than 40,000 people to live free from violence. Our name, the world around us and how we work has changed. But our mahi of breaking cycles of violence, and social justice and advocacy has not.



Our Journey

- 1973** Founded as Christchurch Women's Refuge, beginning the family violence refuge movement in NZ
- 1981** National Collective of Independent Women's Refuges founded
- 1995** Christchurch Women's Refuge partnership with the Police Established
- 1998** Launch our children's services
- 2007** Christchurch Women's Refuge launches "Igniting Change" campaign across Canterbury
- 2011** Christchurch Women's Refuge supports thousands of people affected by violence, following the Christchurch earthquakes
- 2012** Start ReachOut service, working with people who use violence
Start Safe@home, which keeps people safe in their own homes
- 2013** Become Aviva
- 2014** Start offering no interest loans
Launch Sexual Violence Support Services
Peer Support Services start
- 2016** Aviva co-founds The Loft/Ki Te Tihi
- 2020-21** Support thousands of people to stay safe through two lockdowns
Launch Seuga for Pasifika families
- 2023** Celebrate 50 years

Aviva's 50th Annual Appeal!

To find out more, sign up as a volunteer or make a donation to the appeal, visit www.aviva.org.nz



Marama and Zealand helping with Aviva's appeal

DOUBLE YOUR DONATION

Aviva's annual street appeal will take place this year on 5 and 6 May, and we are hoping to make it our most successful yet! Not just because it's our 50th year (have we mentioned that much?!) But because demand for our services just keeps increasing.

We need your help to make it happen. Whether you want to volunteer to collect, donate online or run a fundraiser with your friends or colleagues, it all makes a difference! Volunteers will be asked to give two hours of their time to collect.

And if you want to have double your dollar impact, we are super excited to tell you that thanks to some very generous private donors, if you make an online donation (between 24 April and 7 May), your generosity will be matched. That means, that if you donate \$5, we get \$10! If you donate \$100, we get \$200. You get the picture.

Funds raised from the appeal support services which are unfunded, such as our emergency funding for people leaving violence, security upgrades for people's homes or our 24-hour support line.

A lip-sync battle?! For real?

How many times can you try and run a fundraiser and have it thwarted by a pandemic? So far, we've scored 3/3 on that front!

But traffic light systems, lockdowns and cancelled gatherings are starting to feel like a distant memory. And so while this story is typed with shaking fingers... we are ready to announce that Lip Sync Battle is scheduled once again! The event is planned for 13 October 2023 at Majestic on Durham Street.

And so, if you're always singing in the shower or dancing around the kitchen (or office!), this is your chance to show off your skills, for a good cause. It's also an opportunity for businesses wanting to give back and raise the profile of their organisation (and a great staff social activity to boot).

Money will be raised through ticket sales, sponsorship and voting – all money raised will go directly to Aviva.

To sign up for the lip-sync battle,
or for more information please
contact Eve at Aviva on 027 453 7323,
or email evew@aviva.org.nz.





“I was homeless and living with him out of desperation. The abuse was psychological, financial, and physical.”

Bethany's Story: I'm In My First Healthy Relationship

‘Before I started working with Aviva, life was very messy. I had no understanding of healthy relationships because I'd never been in one. Throughout my life, I was always looking for love in the wrong way; I didn't know my value.’

Bethany* first came to Aviva when she was going through an external rehab programme and was put in touch by her case worker. She was initially connected to Aviva's sexual violence services, who supported her to take the first steps in overcoming an assault from her past. However, Bethany also needed support to help leave an abusive relationship that she was in.

‘Me and my son were living with a man I was in a toxic partnership

with – I was homeless and living with him out of desperation. The abuse was psychological, financial, and physical. He never hit my son, but my son witnessed him hitting me.

‘My support worker Trish came and met me in a motel where I'd been staying, and at first the support was one-on-one. It was like having a safety rail – something that kept me accountable to myself because I needed to learn some structure. She was so supportive and non-judgmental – she gave me the education I needed [about family violence] when I needed it but didn't push anything on me at the wrong time. She's been on this journey with me now for two years and she's been at every meeting with other agencies – over time, people drop off, but she's been a constant... I feel like if I told

her I was going off to war, she'd walk into battle with me.’

Aviva made sure Bethany and her son had gifts and food parcels at Christmas.

‘As a mum, that was just such a weight off my shoulders. People would say to me that being clean and having a safe home was the biggest gift I could give my son. But you still feel guilty, so to just be able to give him something really nice... it made such a difference.’

Bethany also did Aviva's Courageous Steps group programme for women who have experienced violence.

‘The family harm programme opened my eyes to a whole new world. I learnt stuff that I had never had modelled to me or that I knew

about. Not only was I in an abusive relationship, but I could be abusive as well. So, I constantly have to work on that and check in on myself...

'Now I'm in my first healthy relationship. When I'm dealing with my PTSD from what's happened, he's supportive and opens up space, without forcing me to talk or share if I don't want to. He engages with my family and shows up for things that are important like Family Group Conferences. He makes effort with my son but gives him space. [My son is] very wary of males because of what he's seen in the past...

'It's been challenging - [my partner] has moved in with me and then moved out. But we've learnt from all of that, and we've learnt what's best for both of us, and my son...

'I'm working on my son's recovery as well as my own. He's doing so much better. He had play therapy and it's made him much more relaxed around adults, he has more trust in people.'

Bethany is focused on the future and is currently enrolled on a course at Ara.

'I got top marks in my last assignment - I couldn't believe it.'

Her ultimate goal is to work in family harm, to give hope to women who are experiencing what she has in the past.

'You can come out the other side. I just want to support women and show them that it is possible to change your living environment and yours and your children's future.

'I can't even begin to tell you how much my life has changed. I never could have imagined three years ago that I'd be sitting here and living the life I do. It's possible to come out the other side stronger...

'Other than that, I'm staying clean, I've been discovering what spirituality means to me and I guess I'm learning how to be a human in the world.'

"I can't even begin to tell you how much my life has changed."



Jo Bader, Senior Client Services Manager (far right) with her team

Congratulations!

We are excited to announce that our fabulous Jo Bader, Senior Client Services Manager, Aviva Sexual Violence Services, has been voted on to the TOAH-NNEST Taiwi Caucus as the National Crisis portfolio rep.

TOAH-NNEST stands for Te Ohaakii a Hine - National Network Ending Sexual Violence Together. Jo's appointment is a huge acknowledgement of her expertise, skill and reputation in this space and we are so pleased to know her passionate voice will be at the table.



To share the celebration with those on the journey with us was an absolute privilege.

A Night to Remember

If you're a friend of Aviva's, no doubt you already know that we just celebrated a very special birthday. This year marks 50 years since we were founded, not as Aviva, but as Christchurch Women's Refuge. To mark this milestone, reflect on our evolution and celebrate the thousands of lives saved or changed for the better, we held a night of performances, kai and storytelling at Te Pae Convention Centre.

Attended by over 300 people, including staff past and present, clients, supporters, dignitaries and some of our founding members, it was a night to remember. MC'd by the lovely and warm Hilary Muir of The Breeze, highlights of the evening included a journey through the ages (1973-now) by Playspace Productions, performances from local musician Elly Rydge and St. Bedes Polyfest Group and a moving keynote speech from a former client.

It is not often that we have an opportunity to come together and recognise the incredible contribution that thousands of people have made towards an Aotearoa free from violence. To be able to do so and share the celebration with those on the journey with us was an absolute privilege.





Staff from the Casino
at our 50th celebration

“Talking about it
doesn’t normalise
it, but it does
humanise it.”

‘Supporting Aviva is an easy decision to make’

Christchurch Casino’s Brett Anderson on why they support Aviva

“Why do I think it’s important to support Aviva’s mahi? Because it stops that cycle that people get caught up in... Supporting Aviva is an easy decision to make.”

These words come from Brett Anderson, Chief Executive of Christchurch Casino – a long term supporter of Aviva and Champion Sponsor for our 50th year.

He explains how the Casino’s charitable giving works.

“Through our Charitable Trust we give a percentage of our revenue annually – so far, we’ve made over \$5.5 million in donations. We make it as easy as possible for organisations to apply and try not to limit what we support. As far as I’m concerned, if it benefits the organisation, it benefits the community, so why would we limit it? Basically, if we’re in a position to help we will. Whether

it’s a grant, a discretionary donation, an auction item or supporting an event. Because it’s the community we operate in, and we have over 270 employees and it’s their community.”

The Casino also likes to enable their employees to engage with charitable giving.

“We recognise employee anniversaries [of their time working for the Casino] – as well as a bonus, we will give money to a charity of their choice under their name. Employees find it empowering.”

General managers are also provided with funds to make donations to charities of their choosing. Recently through this, a donation was made to Aviva’s safe@home service, which allows families to stay in their own homes, rather than have to leave to escape violence.

“Aviva’s work is so important,” says Brett. “Especially now – when there’s stress [like earthquakes, pandemics, economic crashes], abuse goes up. We know that. And it doesn’t end in the home, it has knock on effects in schools, workplaces, the whole community. And it continues. All the research points to early intervention and that children need to feel safe to thrive and be children.

“Still in New Zealand, there’s things we don’t talk about – things like suicide, domestic violence, and sexual violence. It’s shameful. It means that businesses don’t want to put their name to those charities. But those are the ones where there is the most need.

“We need to get beyond the stigma and really look at the impact and what will happen if we don’t do something about it. Talking about it doesn’t normalise it, but it does humanise it.”

Ultimately, says Brett, this is why the Casino is supporting Aviva for our 50th year.

“You deserve it. It’s about recognising all of those that had the foresight and the courage to see what was happening and do something.”

Ngā mihi nui

We would like to take a moment now to say a huge THANK YOU to our 50th Sponsors and event sponsors, without whom none of this would have been possible.



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Aviva exists because we care

Aviva is a Canterbury-based, specialist family and sexual violence agency dedicated to making New Zealand Aotearoa violence-free. We offer an extensive range of integrated, specialist services to support individuals and whānau to not only become safe, but begin a journey toward a fulfilling, violence-free life.

Help Us
Break the
Cycle

By donating to Aviva, you are helping pave the way to a violence-free future for thousands of tamariki and whānau across Canterbury.

Go to aviva.org.nz or contact community@aviva.org.nz to make a contribution.

Contact Us

Keep up to date on our services, campaigns, and opportunities.

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