

0800 AVIVA NOW  
SUMMER 2018



# THE advocate



## Support for Rangitahi Gains Momentum

In October the Aviva Youth Service (supported by the Wayne Francis Charitable Trust) celebrated two years of operation with a celebration event involving many of the young people who the service had supported.

Youth ambassadors helped organise the event, which they named Momentum to represent the forward journey they are all on. They met with staff on a fortnightly basis in the months leading up to the event to undertake its planning and delivery including designing the invitation, meeting with an artist that Aviva had commissioned to celebrate the young people's journey, and writing a Waiata and Whakatauki to perform at the celebration.

Momentum provided an additional opportunity for young people, their whānau and professionals to feed back their experiences with the Youth Service, as well as celebrating the achievements of both the Service and the service users. Attendees at the celebration also contributed to the artwork by adding leaves containing quotes and inspiration.

An important element of the celebration, and of the ethos of the service, was encouraging communities to talk about family violence and how we can work together to address it. A special guest speaker was Matt Brown from My Father's Barber, who shared how he achieves that goal every day in his business. Matt knows the importance of talking and connection, and how that can be hard to find for young people, and for men as well. He makes his business a safe place for people to share and be supported by Matt and his team, whilst getting amazing haircuts.

Matt shared his own experiences of living an 'unsafe childhood'. Matt's earliest memory of Christmas is as three-year-old witnessing his drunk dad pick up the Christmas tree and beat his mother with it. He remembered how

violence wasn't talked about and was considered a private issue. "No-one intervened or offered assistance, even when they saw the black eyes on mum."

Despite years of physical and emotional abuse his message was one of an inspiring journey, of breaking the cycle of family violence and of achieving his dreams. Now a successful barber, loving husband and doting dad, Matt is an example of how you can create your own path. "If you want to change the narrative of your life, you can. Where you start out in life doesn't have to be where you finish." That is the power of momentum.

An evaluation of the Youth Service, including feedback from the young people themselves, will be available on the Aviva website in December.

# Walking with Elly

It was on a walk up the Harry Ell track that Elly gained some insight into her journey to become safe from the violence she had experienced just a year before. On that walk, she reflected on the regeneration process of the Port Hills caused by the fires of 2016, and how quickly nature begins to recover after devastation. Elly knew that rejuvenation process first-hand.

The journey to wellbeing wasn't a simple one to navigate for Elly. She tried to seek support but was failed on numerous occasions by lawyers and agencies where she says she "didn't feel like a priority. I found it really hard to find where support was. Before I worked with Aviva, I was pretty lost. I think it was my faith that got me through, otherwise I wouldn't have been here at all."

Despite the frustration, Elly was determined to improve her situation and she self-referred to Aviva. Elly engaged with Aviva's Youth Services team, receiving one-on-one support tailored for her situation and needs. "When you've been let down by the system, it's really hard to trust again. I didn't expect this to work and then after a few meetings and some suggestions from Dylan that were really helpful, I felt really hopeful. I knew what I wanted and where I wanted to go, but I didn't know how to get there. Dylan was the first person to just listen and he was able to challenge me when I needed to be challenged. He was able to help me in ways I never knew anyone would, or could. I felt safe here."

**"That's what I relate to with my situation – Aviva is what has helped me to regenerate."**

Thanks to that support Elly learned that what she'd experienced was not her fault and that she was not alone in her experiences, or in her journey to move past them. Isolation was a precaution Elly had taken in the past to keep herself safe, but that isolation compounded her situation and it took a while for her to come back out of her shell. Dylan fostered a relationship with Elly built on trust, and through this she began to rebuild her confidence and realize that she could rely on others. Opportunities to get out in nature during their sessions together and also to meet other young people using the Youth Service helped Elly reconnect with other people and not feel so alone. "My work with Dylan helped me realise we can't isolate ourselves... that we need other people

in our lives" she says. Her music is another way in which she's found healing and connection. An accomplished musician, Elly expresses herself through song and composition, with her powerful voice sending tingles down spines at the recent Aviva Youth Celebration event, 'Momentum'.

Fast-forward five years and you'll probably find Elly helping others through their own challenges because, having had the support she got from her Family Support Worker, she can see the difference it has made to her she now wants to help others make the same difference in their lives. Elly is keen to undertake the Aviva Specialist Peer Support training in 2019, thereby using her own lived experience to support others towards a journey of hope and wellbeing.

"Up on that hill, I was quite surprised that it didn't take long for trees to come back from something dark to something green and beautiful again. That's what I relate to with my situation – Aviva is what has helped me to regenerate." Now, her journey has only just begun.



Harry Ell Track, September 2018



## Let's Talk Me Kōrero!

Leading up to Christmas we've been running a "Let's Talk Me Kōrero" campaign, offering tips to help start conversations related to family or sexual violence, signs to look for if you're concerned about someone, and what to do if you are worried for yourself or others. We've thought about how we can all use the opportunities that naturally exist for us to make safe spaces for conversations – even challenging ones – about family violence commonplace. Here are some ideas:

- The next time you see behaviour or hear language that concerns you, challenge it
- The next headline you read about someone hurt or killed by a family member, start a conversation about it with your family, friends or workmates
- When you next have a little spare time, read more about family violence in New Zealand and really find out how it really does affect all of us on some level
- If you're open to having conversations too – no matter what, no matter when – then download our Let's Talk Facebook photo frame or get your Let's Talk badge so that people know you're a Let's Talk Champion.

You can also visit our Facebook page and read – or offer – some other ideas on how we can activate conversation and change, so that organisations like Aviva won't be needed in 45 more years' time. Visit us on Facebook or our website ([avivafamilies.org.nz](http://avivafamilies.org.nz) – click the Let's Talk logo), get involved, and start talking! #LetsTalk



## The Loft – Changing the Future of Social Wellbeing

It's hard to believe the doors to The Loft, the home we share with 13 other social and community services, opened well over two years ago (4 July 2016). It has been an amazing whirlwind journey since then as The Loft has become an integral part of the social support system of Christchurch, particularly the eastern suburbs.

We asked an external evaluator to prepare a report for us on how the first two years of operation have gone for clients, staff, and the wider community. The results, and client comments such as "They played a part in something that has changed my life. Without them, I'd still be suffering" have confirmed that The Loft is changing and saving lives.

What people liked most about The Loft was the friendly, non-judgemental atmosphere, the range of supports received, from clothing, food and toiletries to advocacy and advice, and the ability to be connected and referred to other services. "They really opened my eyes and provided me with all my options. They didn't just give me one option. They introduced me to lots of supports," said one client.

It was a key goal of the partners in creating The Loft to make support seeking easier and less intimidating – and it's working. As another client said, "If The Loft doesn't know, they'll find out for you. Others tell you to Google it."

The positive approach and willingness to work through what support would be most beneficial for people was also very important to clients: "I felt it really useful in that, one, for the first time, I was being listened to – I WASN'T at fault."

Here's a snapshot of where we are at after two years:

- 13 social and community service providers are now represented at The Loft, supporting 300 visitors weekly
- 600 families have received detailed Navigator assessment and referrals (70% of clients have children)
- 20% of people walking in the door had their needs resolved immediately; 40% were referred internally; and 40% to external agencies
- 95% of those surveyed felt well supported, with 89% reporting that they had a good or very good experience
- 100% would recommend The Loft to others.

And they have been. Not only does this prove that The Loft is delivering on its purpose of enhancing outcomes for families and communities, but it demonstrates an empowering transition from 'Victim' to 'Supporter'.

The evaluation will be available to read on The Loft ([theloftchristchurch.org.nz](http://theloftchristchurch.org.nz)) and Aviva ([avivafamilies.org.nz](http://avivafamilies.org.nz)) websites from 1 December.



Aviva's values in 2018, and our focus for the future

# Building a Community of Change

This year marks 45 years of our agency's work (previously as Christchurch Women's Refuge) to end family violence and support those affected by it. As with any milestone birthday, it can be timely to look back, and to look forward.

In 1973, some courageous women took the pioneering steps to found Aotearoa's first women's refuge. They saw a need, and they responded. They say they were 'hell-bent' on bringing about radical social change: they wanted violence to end in our communities.

As a society we haven't yet achieved that purpose, although we at Aviva passionately believe that we can. Part of our journey has been acknowledging that different approaches are needed. That's why we have changed the way we respond to the effects of family violence in our communities. Instead of working with women in isolation of their partners or families, community and loved ones, we decided in 2011 to begin working with the whole family – adults, young people and children of all genders and ethnicities, whether they're affected by violence in their whānau, experiencing violence in a relationship, or using violence against someone they care about.

Forty-five years on and as a society we've seen some wonderful advances

– people talk more openly about family and sexual violence; there are high profile campaigns to encourage conversations; we have laws and regulations to protect people; and there are many services to support people in their journey to live violence-free. But as a society we are still nowhere close to ending the problem. That still requires radical social change, one in which we all must be involved.

Just as we were in 1973, Aviva is, and will always be, a social change agency. We believe that New Zealand has the collective potential to build communities and homes that are safe and loving for all children. The real potential of a violence-free Aotearoa calls upon the collective powers and responsibilities of us all to co-create a society that no longer tolerates violence of any kind. Ultimately, this is how we will break the intergenerational cycle of violence.

You are an essential part of the urgent action needed to bring about truly sustainable change. That's why we're

promoting the message of "Let's Talk Me Kōrero" (more about this campaign inside) this Christmas, encouraging us all to talk more about family and sexual violence to raise awareness and make it easier to ask for support. As always, our committed and passionate team have been stretched to the limits this year in providing that support, but without you – our family of volunteers, supporters and partners – that support would not be available at all. Never forget that you are a vital part of helping people to change their lives, their relationships with those they love and, no less importantly, their relationship with themselves.

As we approach the holiday season we will take time to reset, renew, and be grateful. On behalf of our staff, Board and volunteers, I wish you all a safe and happy holiday with your friends, family and loved ones and look forward to connecting with you in 2019.

**Nicola**  
CEO

# Choosing a New Ending

How long do you wait to start living a better life?

For Dianna, it was 27 years. All that time she had experienced psychological abuse which, she says, “left her feeling like a ‘thing’ – I didn’t feel like a woman”, until she decided she wasn’t prepared to be living like that when she was 60.

She had tried to leave eight times before but “he sucked me back in” she said. Once she had even organised a flat and told him she was leaving, but he insisted that she’d still have to pay half the mortgage. Unable to pay both rent and the mortgage, Dianna had no choice but to stay.

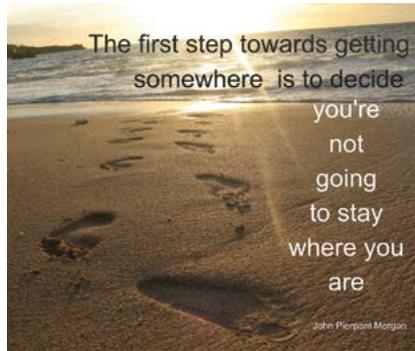
After what she describes as “two months of unrelenting vileness” she finally made the decision to leave her husband in January this year. “I had worked at Victim Support in the past and knew of Aviva. I met with Carmen in February and she suggested a Protection Order. Things went from there.

“I got Protection, Parenting and Occupancy Orders. He had no idea it was coming. It took a lot of courage as I knew he’d be livid. I was absolutely terrified to put my head above the parapet because I know he’ll want to get me until his dying day.”

With an Occupancy Order, Dianna’s husband had to leave the house. In order to make that happen more easily and quickly, she agreed to pay the mortgage alone, even though that has added financial strain to Dianna’s life.

Dianna undertook Aviva’s 10-week education course, and then had one-on-one support. “The education group was helpful in so many ways. The women had so many stories, and to hear them coming from others made you feel less alone. I see Carmen one-to-one now; she has been an absolute tower of strength, even on my bad days. I look back and think how cruel he was, saying what he did to me. He’d made me think I was mad. I started to write down things that happened and what he said so that I could prove to myself I wasn’t going crazy. Writing it down was key for me in

**“I want to empower other women in the same situation to make the change.”**



making the decision to finally leave.”

Dianna’s children are also receiving support. “My daughter is having counselling and my son, who is older, is working with Dylan (from Aviva) around healthy relationships. He was reluctant to engage at first, but he tried it and is enjoying what he is learning, getting tools to develop healthier relationship behaviours.”

It took years to get the courage and resources to be able to leave her husband, and the hard work is far from over for Dianna. “It’s taken a huge toll on my health. I can’t work full-time any more – I get too exhausted. And the legal side keeps on going. I went to Court last week because he is fighting having the Protection Order made final, and the Parenting Order, because he doesn’t feel he’s abused me in any way.

“But I’m lucky as I get to see a counsellor and Carmen each week and they help me make plans. I’m also reading an amazing book called ‘Power: Surviving and Thriving After Narcissistic Abuse’ by Shahida Aradi. There are light bulb moments on every page for me; it validated everything I felt and experienced.

“The ongoing process is draining, but I know I made the right decision – getting the Protection Order was the best thing I could have done. I want to empower other women in the same situation to make the change and reclaim their lives. Life is all about managing your expectations, acceptance of what is, and moving forwards, even if that means digging deep to find strength the size of a grain of sand. Concentrate on looking forward.”

If you or someone you know needs support, please call our 0800 AVIVA NOW line – help is here, 24 hours of every day.



## Aviva Activators

Join the club! Aviva Activators is the name we’ve given to all the people who are acting on behalf of Aviva to raise funds and awareness.

The first group of Aviva Activators used their passion for running in the Queenstown marathon to also fundraise for Aviva. In their case, they were very active!

But an Aviva Activator doesn’t have to own running shoes. There are many ways you can activate conversations and also activate others to support you (and us) along the way. For instance, Grace (with her mum’s help) made and sold heat bags to raise funds for toiletries for our clients; Alexia quit sugar for a month and got friends to sponsor her; Livia sold bath bombs; Denis organised a music quiz; and 9Round Fitness held sausage sizzles!

If you’re taking part in an event like a run, planning a garage sale or suggesting a ‘casual Friday’ at work, perhaps you could use your activity to raise awareness about family violence and even raise some funds to help provide the services and support so many Cantabrians need. And if you are planning on getting active somehow, remember to let us know; you can register on our website – <http://activators.avivafamilies.org.nz/> – so that we can help you, help us!





## A Listening Ear Down the Phone Line

Recently we have launched an awareness campaign called 'Let's Talk Me Korero', encouraging all people to bring family and sexual violence out of the shadows by having conversations that question why violence is so prevalent in New Zealand Aotearoa. An important part of that conversation is being there for people when they want to talk, because family and sexual violence doesn't keep office hours or take holidays. It can happen at any time, on any day – even Christmas and New Year.

Lara Moses has worked on Aviva's 0800 AVIVA NOW line for almost three years, first starting when she was volunteering at Aviva. Although she then became a full-time staff member, and now works at Tūranga, she continued to undertake shifts on the after-hours line. The reason is simple – "It's important that people have someone there when they need to talk" Lara says. "And you're helping people – it's a nice feeling when you know you're making a difference."

The needs of those who call during the day are different to those who call after hours she says. "During the day, people may be asking things like 'can you recommend a good counsellor', but after hours it's because of more

immediate needs. A crisis may have just happened. That is why it is so important to be there 24-hours a day. I've sat with people for an hour while they talk and cry. I wish that some other support lines were available 24-hours as well, because they may be more relevant for what's occurring for this person – they just need someone to listen."

Lara says it's particularly common for women who call to minimise what has happened, commenting that they are being 'over-emotional', or 'over dramatising', whereas men are less likely to consider what has happened to them as abuse. In either case, an important part of Lara's support is to validate their experience and the fact

they have reached out. "Making that call is hard, but there is no judgement here. We really do understand."

With the support of dedicated people like Lara, Aviva is committed to being available 24-hours a day to anyone who needs support, advice or help to become safe; our 0800 AVIVA NOW line can be literally a lifeline for some people. We received over 4,000 calls for support and advice last year (1 July 2017 – 30 June 2018) alone, but this lifeline is unfunded. If you want to make sure someone can talk and be listened to, any time of the night or day, please use the donation slip with this newsletter to ensure phone support is available 24-hours a day. #LetsTalk. Let's listen too.

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## Sexual Assault Support for Ashburton

The Sexual Assault Support Service Canterbury (SASSC) is spreading further, having added the Ashburton region in April. SASSC is now available in Christchurch, North Canterbury, Selwyn and Ashburton. Currently Ashburton-based clients are supported by phone support (available 24-hours a day), or people can be assisted to come to Rolleston's weekly clinics or to Christchurch, if that is preferable. The SASSC team hope to operate a monthly clinic in Ashburton in the early new year.

Overcoming the effects of sexual harm takes time and support. No matter whether it happened last week, or ten

years ago, SASSC is available any time of the night or day on (03) 377 5402. If you would like to become a SASSC

volunteer support person, please email [SASSCadmin@avivafamilies.org.nz](mailto:SASSCadmin@avivafamilies.org.nz).

# Leaving a Lasting Impression

Most of us want to make the world a better place, particularly for those who will inherit a society they did not create. Sometimes working out how to make that difference seems too overwhelming to contemplate, but there is an easy way for some of us to help future New Zealanders – leaving a gift in our will.

Making a will is something we as Kiwis are notoriously bad at doing, but it is crucial for your family and loved ones as, without a will, taking care of your assets is a complicated business. When planning or updating a will you can also consider including a legacy or bequest along with your other gifts to family and friends. These gifts cost nothing while we are still here enjoying life but ensure that part of our assets can be committed to supporting a cause we care about. In Aviva's case, that is about making our families and communities safer places for our young people and children to grow up in, and to ensure that there are resources to minimise, or even eliminate, the enduring impacts of family or sexual violence.

Recently Aviva was told that it would be the recipient of a bequest made via the new Christchurch Foundation. Our supporter, Frida\*, tells why she made sure she got a will, and why she chose to make gifts to charities in it.

"I'd come face to face with the results of domestic abuse while working in family law and in women's health.

Consequently, I've known about women's refuges for around 30 – 40 years, and supported them with donations of both goods and cash in Auckland and later in Christchurch on moving here.

"When my brother was diagnosed with cancer, we had a number of discussions about wills and bequests generally, and following his death I gave a great deal of thought as to where I would like my assets to go, and how they might be administered to best effect.

"My decision to utilise the Christchurch Foundation was a piece of good timing. Having recently moved from Auckland, and following the death of two of my previous beneficiaries, it was necessary to draft a new will. At the time I was giving thought to making charitable bequests, information about charitable foundations crossed my desk and on making enquiries of the parent organisation, I was put in touch with the Christchurch Foundation. Jodie Shaw of that organisation was of great assistance, providing me with considerable information on a variety of



charities, and I selected three which most closely matched my beliefs and values. Aviva was one of those charities. Sadly, I believe that the assistance provided by organisations such as Aviva will continue to be required for many years to come, and as such, Aviva is a worthy recipient of a bequest.

"You spend a lot of years acquiring assets, and if you die without a will (intestate), those assets may be divided in a manner not in accord with what you might have wanted.

**"The assistance provided by organisations such as Aviva will continue to be required for many years to come."**

"I would strongly recommend that everyone give thought to drafting a will as soon as you start acquiring assets (Kiwisaver, for example), and revisit the provisions of your will every 10 years or so, or when a major change in your life occurs – a new partnership, birth of children, or death of a family member for example. A bequest made through a charitable foundation such as the Christchurch Foundation gives you the additional confidence that your bequest will continue to receive the scrutiny of the Foundation.

If you are interested in leaving a gift in your will to Aviva, please contact us to discuss your wishes. You can leave a legacy gift directly to us in your will (with your lawyer's advice), or utilise a Foundation, as Frida did. Either way, maybe now it's the time to think about what your legacy will be after you've gone. How will you leave the world a better, safer place for the children of today, who will become the adults of tomorrow?

# Spreading the Christmas Joy

Christmas has snuck up on us again! The time has gone so quickly and now we're preparing for the wonderful experience of receiving gifts from you, our supporters, for the people who use Aviva's services.

Whilst the reality of some of their lives may be challenging, people's joy (including our own!) at seeing the kindness and support that comes in at Christmas (and during the year) is a truly amazing gift.

If you're looking for ideas on how you could help others with Christmas gifts, here are some suggestions:

- Petrol vouchers
- Grocery vouchers
- The Warehouse, other store or Mall vouchers

- Phone top-ups
- Christmas-type treats
- Entertainment passes for families
- Christmas gifts for all ages and all genders e.g. toiletry sets, jewellery, sports gear, family games etc
- Wrapping paper and gift tags

Remember that we support boys and men too!

Thank you so much for helping spread the joy of Christmas and the holidays to others in our communities.



Donations of gifts for Christmas, 2017

## Thanks to Our Supporters

As always, we have a lot of people to thank! Many people have gifted us donations ranging from handmade jerseys through to furniture for clients – thank you for always being here when we put the call out for support. Thanks also to all our individual donors, those who give regularly or occasionally – your support is invaluable to us.

These generous funders are key investors in our work and we want to acknowledge their commitment to making families safer:

### Funders

- Pub Charity
- Lottery Grants Board
- Catholic Diocese of Christchurch/The Tindall Foundation
- Christchurch City Council
- New Zealand Community Trust
- Kelliher Charitable Trust
- Health Promotion Agency
- ANZ Staff Foundation



Getting Ready for the Stands Up Ride 2018

- Maurice Carter Charitable Trust
- Keith Laugeson Charitable Trust
- Macpac Fund for Good
- George Sevicke Jones Trust

- Von Burns Charitable Trust
- Anstiss-Garland Charitable Trust

### Supporters and Fundraisers

The students, staff and families of Christ's College, who over the course of the year have raised almost \$13,000 for Aviva.

Cornerstone Rides, which organised a Stands Up for Aviva motorbike ride and celebration, raising \$3,300.

Rotary Club of Christchurch Sunrise, Grace Communication International, 9Rounds Fitness and Nia Dance Jam for their support.

### Receive the Advocate by Email

Please help us reduce costs by choosing to receive The Advocate by email. Contact [julie@avivafamilies.org.nz](mailto:julie@avivafamilies.org.nz) or call (03) 378 3847

### Like us on Facebook

Aviva Families has a Facebook page. Check us out and 'Like' us to keep up to date on what each service area is doing and to share your thoughts with us.



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