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THE Dandelion

THE NEWSLETTER OF FERTILITY NEW ZEALAND, A REGISTERED CHARITY SUPPORTING PEOPLE WITH FERTILITY ISSUES

NOVEMBER 2018

Fertility Week 2018 Discover your chances



24th-30th
September
2018

FERTILITY WEEK REVIEW

Up to one in four New Zealanders experiences infertility during their lifetime. The latest data from the Ministry of Health shows that infertility is not biased by socio-economic status, ethnicity or education levels. Even Olympic champions can be affected by infertility!

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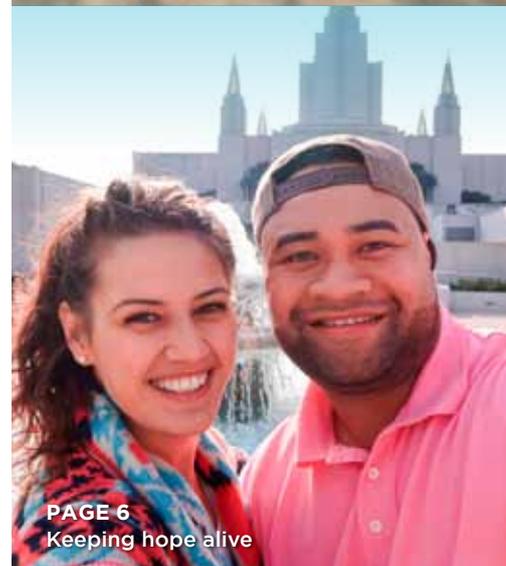
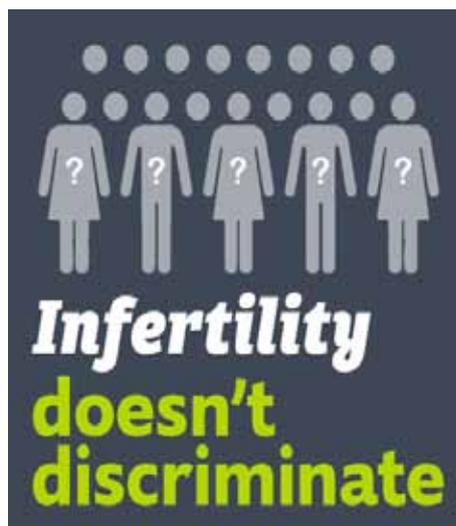
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Above: Fertility Week Ambassador Dame Valerie Adams with Fertility NZ President Anita Killeen (left) and CEO Nicola Bitossi (right).



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Keeping hope alive





Welcome Notes

Welcome to *The Dandelion* newsletter.

As the calendar year draws to a close, and a new year opens up before us, there is often some time spent on reflection combined with renewed optimism and planning for the new year. This is certainly the case for people walking the path towards their goal of the children they desire. Our prime purpose is to hold the hand of Kiwis faced with difficulties conceiving. We thereby invite you to connect with us and let us help you with your journey during 2019 – whether through our 0800 line for impartial advice and support, our online resources or attending your local group. Our support groups are a safe space to gain support and connect with others ‘in the same boat’. They are informal and based on positivity and friendship, and there are often guest speakers or themes. New people

are always welcome, so please turn to the back page and contact your local volunteer facilitator. We often hear people say that they wish they had reached out to us sooner!

Our annual awareness campaign, Fertility Week, was held in late September. The campaign continues to grow in momentum thanks to the dedicated support of many volunteers and organisations.

We were delighted to meet many of you both in-person at our events, and virtually during the Webinars. Ambassador Dame Valerie Adams was indeed inspirational in sharing her own journey in addition to her belief that people should seek help when they are having difficulties conceiving.

It’s our privilege to provide information and support to all New Zealanders through this campaign

and we look forward to reaching and supporting more people in future campaigns.

This will be my last column as President, as I plan to retire at the coming AGM following six years of service. I know that I will be leaving the organisation in good hands and wish the governance and management teams all the very best as they continue the important health promotion work that we do.

Fertility NZ exists to support you, and any feedback you have on the information, support and advocacy we provide is always welcome. I would like to thank you for taking the time to read *The Dandelion* and we look forward to continuing to support you.

Best wishes

Anita Killeen – President

About Fertility New Zealand

Fertility New Zealand is committed to supporting, advocating for and educating all people who face infertility challenges at all stages of their journey and beyond.

Fertility NZ was founded in 1990 and is a registered charity. It operates on a national level and much of its work is undertaken by dedicated volunteers. Fertility NZ provides assistance for people with fertility issues through the following channels:

- **Support** A network of regular support gatherings, workshops and contact groups throughout the country; an 0800 line and email address for enquiries, and infertility forums on our website where

Members can provide support to one another.

- **Information** Fertility NZ’s website www.fertilitynz.org.nz is the focal point of information; informative fact sheet brochures are available for Members and through Clinics; regular publication of *The Dandelion* newsletter and email updates to Members; conferences and information events.

- **Advocacy** Representing the voice of people affected by infertility on medical, ethical and policy issues.

Our vision

FertilityNZ has a vision of a ‘fertility friendly’ and fertility-aware New Zealand where:

- Infertility is recognised, understood and supported;
- All men and women faced with the medical condition of infertility have access to appropriate, timely and fully-funded medical treatment;
- Men and women have all the information necessary to enable them to make informed decisions regarding their fertility;
- Young New Zealanders learn about fertility preservation;
- Fertility and all alternative forms of whanau and family-building are respected and valued.

FERTILITY WEEK REVIEW



◀ From page 1

It was an absolute honour to have the inspirational Dame Valerie Adams front our recent Fertility Week campaign as Ambassador. You may have heard her promoting Fertility Week on the radio, seen her sharing her story on TV, or even met her at the Auckland or Waikato events during Fertility Week.

Dame Valerie is passionate about breaking down the stigma of infertility in Pasifika and Maori communities and encouraging Kiwis to seek help if they need it. With emotion, honesty and humour, Dame Valerie shares the challenges of her own journey with husband Gabriel through endometriosis and low AMH to cherished baby Kimoana.

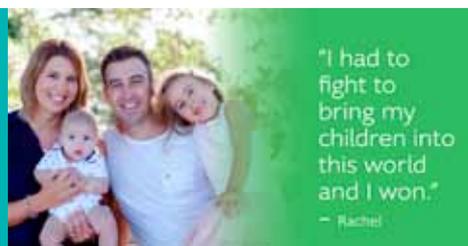
Young New Zealanders have a low level of fertility awareness – and

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Above: Dame Valerie Adams at the Waikato event during Fertility Week with Hamilton support group facilitators Jenny Tukiwaho-Stokes (left) and Hansi Bennett (right).

Left: Dame Valerie at the Waikato event speaking along with Dr Laura Miller (centre) and Hansi Bennett (left).



FERTILITY WEEK REVIEW



Dame Valerie is passionate about breaking down the stigma of infertility in Pasifika and Maori communities and encouraging Kiwis to seek help if they need it.

◀ From page 3

Fertility Week 2018 confronted this head-on. Fertility Week: Discover your Chances aimed to start the conversation about fertility with New Zealanders who wish to have children in their future but are not yet trying-to-conceive. Over 2,000 Kiwis completed a quiz which tested their fertility knowledge and recommended areas for further education.

The campaign also provided information and support for our trying-to-conceive community via in-person events around the country and a series of six information webinars, presented by fertility experts.

Kiwis who are currently trying-to-conceive, along with those who aren't there yet – were drawn into the personal accounts of infertility so generously shared for Fertility Week. One of these stories, shared for Fertility Week by Hannah on Manu, can be read on page 6.

Webinars

Recordings of the Webinars listed below are available to view on www.fertilityweek.org.nz

- Age and Fertility – Associate Professor Louise Hull
- Weight and Nutrition – Alice Gormack
- Maximising your Chances – Jo Barnett
- Infertility Diagnoses & Treatment – Dr Guy Gudex



Dame Valerie and husband Gabriel with their daughter Kimoana.

THANK YOU!

Thank you to the many volunteers around the country, financial supporters and professionals who donated their time and expertise, to make Fertility Week happen. Thanks to everyone who helped spread the word and raise awareness about fertility by sharing their story or promoting Fertility Week, and to all of you who engaged with us during the campaign. And of course, our heartfelt thanks to wonderful Ambassador Dame Valerie Adams. Arohanui.

Postscript: warm congratulations to Dame Valerie and Gabriel on the news that they are expecting their second child!

Have you seen our fertility information videos?

Did you know that we have a series of over 20 information videos? Each video features advice from experts combined with people sharing their own experiences. Each video is a few minutes long there is a wide range of topics. Check them out today!
<http://www.fertilitynz.org.nz/information/information-videos/>

The Emotional Impact of Infertility Video



Living Childfree Video



Fertility Treatment Guide Video



PUBLIC CEREMONY

Seeds of Hope

We are holding a Ceremony to acknowledge the losses connected with infertility.

Designed and created by two celebrants who have been on infertility journeys of their own, to assist in the healing process and to provide hope.

We are planning ceremonies in Auckland and Wellington in early May 2019. These events will be free-of-charge and will be suitable for many types of fertility experience.

For more information or to register your interest, please contact

Keeley Jenkins

Auckland

keeley@kjcelebrant.co.nz

Winnie Duggan

Wellington

winnie@lifeccelebrant.co.nz

Hannah and Manu's story

Keeping hope alive

by Hannah Fisi'ihoi

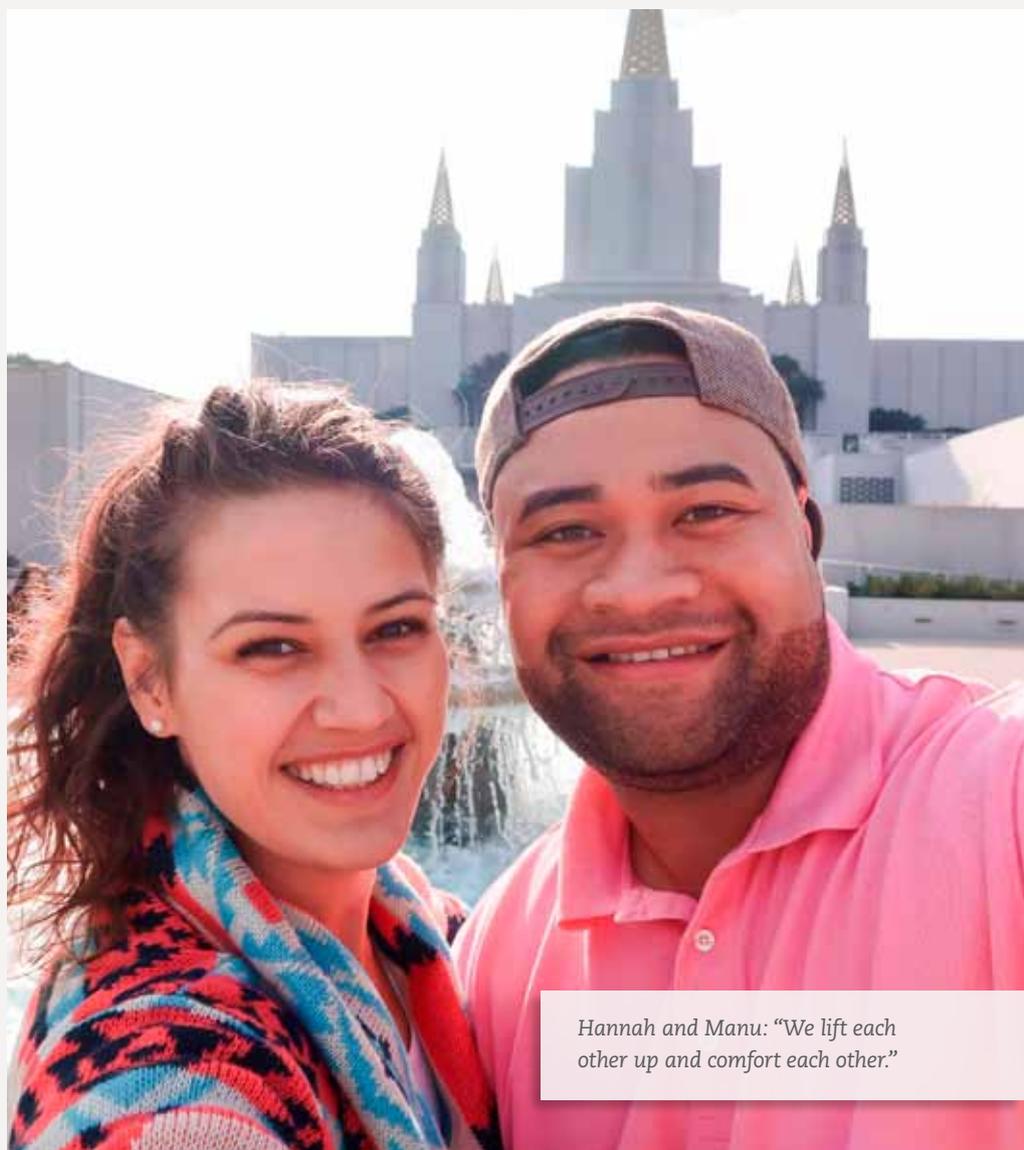
We never thought Infertility would be a word we would use on a daily basis. We never thought having a family would be so hard. Infertility was never on the cards.

We met in February 2015. After a month of dating we were engaged. Three months later, we were married. It felt right and we knew it was right. Throughout our talks about the future, we knew a family was definitely a plan. We both loved kids and couldn't wait to have our own in the near future. After a year of marriage, we decided it was time to try for a baby. So many of our friends and family were falling pregnant and we felt surely our turn would be next.

Month after month passed and nothing happened. We saw baby after baby being born and still we had nothing to show for all our trying. After a year of trying, we decided we should see the doctor to make sure everything was okay. Following that appointment, we were referred to a fertility specialist.

Not our choice

Our appointment with the fertility specialist changed our lives forever. Prior to our appointment we had done some tests. We went over the results of



Hannah and Manu: "We lift each other up and comfort each other."

those tests and found out the reason we hadn't yet conceived. We had male factor infertility.

Neither me or my husband even knew what that meant. All we knew was that our journey to starting a family was going to be harder than

we thought. Our hopes and dreams for a big family came crashing down as we realised the size of our family would be dependent on how many IVF cycles we could afford. We never thought our family plans would not be our choice.

We were placed on the waiting list for publicly funded IVF treatment. The wait at the time was 12-18 months. This was so disheartening for us. We had already had a year of nothing, only to be told we would have another unknown length of time to wait. Nevertheless, we went on the list and waited for our time to come.

Over the time of waiting, so many babies have been born to family and friends. With every bit of joy we have for those we know, an equal bit of sadness holds heavy in our hearts. Over time, the sadness gets so overwhelming that it is hard to see a light at the end of the tunnel.

So much harder

We try not to let our infertility affect the way we interact with those we love. We try to remain positive and supportive of them. At the same time, we struggle silently and behind closed doors.

Over time, it has been hard to be involved in baby conversations. I personally have found myself leaving the room or walking away. Pregnancy talk finds me being excluded accidentally. Seemingly light-hearted jokes from friends regarding our lack of babies cuts deeper than intended. Innocent daily conversations regarding anything baby-related suddenly seem so much harder.

Our relationship has strengthened through our wait. We only have each other to rely on in this process and only we know what infertility brings and feels like.

We don't have many people that we know of who have dealt

"Infertility changed our lives. Infertility is no longer a word for others. It is ours. It is us."

"How do you explain infertility? It's not about words - it's feelings and emotions. It's thoughts that others can't comprehend. It's personal in a way that only those who have dealt with it know."

with infertility and certainly no one in our immediate families has experienced it before.

While we have their support, it's hard to talk to them about what we are feeling because how do you explain infertility? It's not about words - it's feelings and emotions. It's thoughts that others can't comprehend. It's personal in a way that only those who have dealt with it know how to help.

Stronger as a couple

We have come to a point where we now only have each other. We strengthen, support and encourage each other through this journey. We lift each other up and comfort each other. We have become stronger as a couple in every possible way because of the struggle infertility has created. It's a hard realisation to come to but it is true. I don't think we would have such a relationship if we didn't have this struggle.

We have recently received our letter to advise we are nearing the top of the waiting list. It is almost our turn. We are one step closer to our dream of becoming parents. As of now, we are two and a half years into our infertility journey. We are lucky we chose to see someone when we did. If not, we could be even further away from our chances of having our family.

Infertility changed our lives. Infertility is no longer a word for others. It is ours. It is us. But, we will not let it beat us. We will beat it.



Participants wanted:

Egg and Sperm Donation Survey

If you identify as a male or female New Zealander, are at least 18 years old and interested in sharing your views about payment and recognition for egg and sperm donors, then we'd like to invite you to participate in this research!

This involves completing an anonymous online survey.

- Participants will be asked questions about their views on a range of payment forms and recognition for egg and sperm donors
- The survey will take approximately 20 minutes to complete
- Responses will be completely anonymous
- The aim of this research is to better understand views on payment and recognition for donors, donor recruitment and concerns related to these issues.

The study is conducted by Dr. Sonja Goedeke, Senior Lecturer in Psychology, Auckland University of Technology.

If you are interested in participating, please visit this page for more information and access to the survey: <http://bit.ly/donation-survey>

If you have any questions, please e-mail Dr. Sonja Goedeke on sonja.goedeke@aut.ac.nz.

Thank you for your contribution!



noticeboard

Support
Group
Dates

**AUCKLAND:
PREGNANT AFTER
FERTILITY TREATMENT**

Sunday 4th November

**AUCKLAND: CASUAL
COFFEE**

Wednesday 21st November

**AUCKLAND:
SECONDARY INFERTILITY**

Sunday 25th November
Sunday 16th December

HAMILTON

Saturday 17th November

HAWKE'S BAY

Sunday 18th November

CHRISTCHURCH

Tuesday 27th November

DUNEDIN

Tuesday 6th November

Keep an eye on www.fertilitynz.org.nz/support/calendar for 2019 meetings!

Local information

How can we help you
in your area?

Fertility NZ Local Contacts

Whangarei

whangareisupport@fertilitynz.org.nz

Auckland

aucklandsupport@fertilitynz.org.nz
(Fertility Support Series, Casual
Coffee, Pregnant After Fertility
Treatment)

secondariesupport@fertilitynz.org.nz
(Secondary Infertility)

singlewomensupport@fertilitynz.org.nz

Hamilton

hamiltonsupport@fertilitynz.org.nz

Tauranga

taurangasupport@fertilitynz.org.nz

Rotorua

rotoruasupport@fertilitynz.org.nz

Gisborne

gisbornesupport@fertilitynz.org.nz

Hawke's Bay

hawkesbaysupport@fertilitynz.org.nz

Wellington

wellingtonsupport@fertilitynz.org.nz

Nelson

nelsonsupport@fertilitynz.org.nz

West Coast

westcoastsupport@fertilitynz.org.nz

Christchurch

christchurchsupport@fertilitynz.org.nz

Central Otago

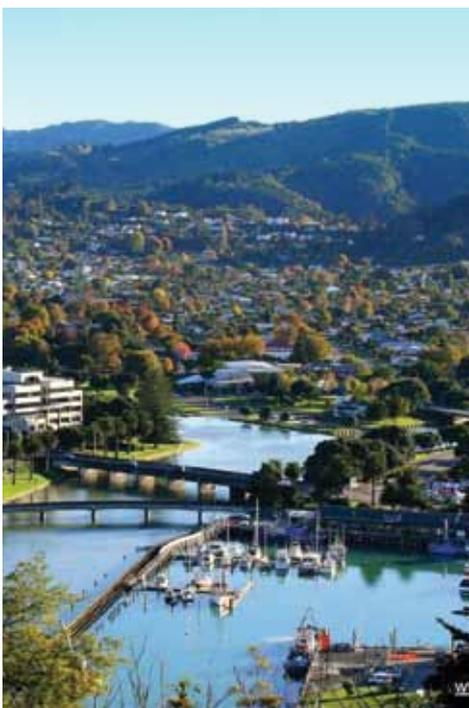
centralotagosupport@fertilitynz.org.nz

Dunedin

dunedin-support@fertilitynz.org.nz

Invercargill

invercargillsupport@fertilitynz.org.nz



Gisborne support group

Our wonderful volunteers, Donna and Fontaine, are re-invigorating our support gatherings in Gisborne. The free-of-charge sessions are held monthly and open to anyone experiencing infertility. The sessions are very casual with a 'coffee and chat' format (some sessions will have guest speakers). Please contact Donna or Fontaine on gisbornesupport@fertilitynz.org.nz to enquire or register your interest.

This material is supported by way of an educational grant from Bayer New Zealand Limited. The information submitted is intended to assist health care professionals and patients in forming their own conclusions and making decisions, but may not represent a comprehensive listing of all available information on the subject. The views and opinions expressed by the individual presenters do not necessarily represent the opinion of Bayer New Zealand Limited.

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