

**Subject**: Keep your promise and act now

Kia ora,

Bowel cancer kills over 1,200 Kiwis each year, as many as breast and prostate cancer combined. Yet, despite the new government's promises, no plans have been announced to lower the screening age.

**Bowel cancer is 90 per cent curable if caught early**, and screening is an effective way of doing this. The rising incidence of this disease in younger people makes it an urgent priority.

Both major party leaders promised during the election campaign to lower the screening age to 45, and Health Minister Shane Reti reiterated in February that the Government was committed to lowering it. However, when pressed, he would not confirm that it would be lowered to 50 per the Prime Minister's promise, only that it would be reduced.

**I call on you to be bold and act now to prioritise bowel cancer.** Stand by your election promise to lower the bowel screening age and fund new cancer drugs.

It has been over 20 years since any new medicines for bowel cancer have been funded, and there are **no** targeted drugs for metastatic (advanced) bowel cancer funded in New Zealand. Unbelievably, Australian patients have been funded to take these medicines for years. New Zealanders are still waiting for even one of these drugs to be subsidised.

The National party campaigned in the election to *“fund 13 cancer treatments that are helping extend survival rates in Australia by making them available to patients in New Zealand.”* **I want you to make good on the promises you made, and that got you elected as our government.**

Families should not be forced to create “give-a-little” pages or to use their retirement savings to get treatment. It is unacceptable that our country is ranked last in OECD medicine access. We must agree that time with our loved ones is a need and not a luxury for a few.

I want you to ACT NOW and save lives!Do what you promised and lower the bowel screening age and fund new bowel cancer drugs.

**While you delay – Kiwis are dying.**

Regards,

*(insert name)*