

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **CANCER SURVIVOR TO SPEAK AT THE FIRST NORTHLAND EDUCATION & SUPPORT MEETING**

The Leukaemia & Blood Foundation (LBF) has sponsored six-time cancer survivor Phil Kerslake to speak at the first Northland Haematology/Oncology education and support meeting on 2 April at 10.30am.

Author of *Life, Happiness & Cancer*, Kerslake is well known in New Zealand for his sound advice to cancer patients and survivors, relatives and friends and cancer support professionals on fighting the battle with cancer and surviving the journey.

Every day six children and adults in New Zealand are diagnosed with leukaemia, lymphoma, myeloma or a related blood condition. Many patients in Northland have to travel as far as Auckland for their treatment. Often, they are without resources or someone with shared experience.

The LBF Support Services team invited Kerslake to speak with patients on 'How to build and coach your healing team.' The goal is to help patients identify ways to establish a support team while coping with cancer.

Kerslake says, "This is a fantastic opportunity to continue the information sharing and education about leukaemia, lymphoma and related blood conditions. I am delighted that the Leukaemia & Blood Foundation has given me this opportunity to share my experiences with the communities in Northland."

In turn, the LBF plan to use the Haematology/Oncology education and support meeting to establish a programme that will be a resource for patients and families in Northland.

The Leukaemia & Blood Foundation is the only organisation in New Zealand dedicated to supporting patients and their families living with leukaemia, lymphoma, myeloma and related blood conditions.

The LBF Patient Support Services team has more than 900 contacts with patients and general enquiries every month.

"There is no existing specialised education and support programme for patients with blood cancers in this area," says Pru Etcheverry, Executive Director of the LBF.

"A diagnosis can change a person's life overnight. It causes huge disruption and treatment may need to begin immediately, continuing for months, or even years. It also has a major impact on family and friends. This event is an opportunity to offer current information, practical advice and support for blood cancer patients and their families in Northland," she noted.

The event is free to the public and will be held at the Cancer Society Daffodil House in Whangarei. Attendees will get a chance to win a book by the author.

For further details please contact Debbie Murphy at 0800 15 10 15 (option 2) or email [debbie@leukaemia.org.nz](mailto:debbie@leukaemia.org.nz).

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