

**Me kōrero**

# Let's Talk



November 2023

**Lip-sync  
finally  
happened!**

**“ Even if it’s hard to  
ask for help, you  
truly do deserve  
help. If you can’t  
talk to friends or  
family, you can talk  
to people at Aviva.”**

**– SKYLER’S STORY**

**Support  
families to  
overcome  
violence this  
Christmas**





Gwenda Kendrew and Nicki O'Donnell, Aviva's General Managers

## A NOTE FROM Gwenda and Nicki

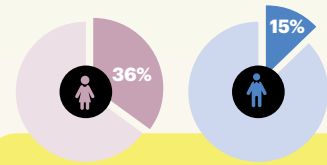
**We come to the end of our 50th year with huge gratitude. We were founded in 1973 as Christchurch Women's Refuge, when a group of women in Ōtautahi decided they could no longer look away from the raw deal wāhine were getting in society, so decided to bring a change. And it is thanks to those pioneering women, and to every single individual or organisation that has supported us over half a decade, that we stand where we do today.**

However, that the need for our services remains so great, is a damning indictment on our society. This year has, rightly, been one of celebration for Aviva as an organisation. But we must acknowledge that there are still so many people in Aotearoa experiencing violence every day.

The past few years, Christchurch has been plagued by an onslaught of media around the state of family and sexual violence in our

communities. Most recently we were united by our collective horror with the notorious case of the offending at Mama Hooch. It is right for us to condemn this kind of violence. But the uncomfortable truth is, that sexual violence is rife in Aotearoa. This stood out because of its scale and brazenness, but it did not happen in a vacuum. It is just the tip of the iceberg. Anger towards the offenders is justified. We should all be appalled. But it's not enough for us to comment on news stories, calling for these men to be "strung up", or to post words like "monsters" on social media. Because to cast human beings as "monsters" is to cast their actions as unavoidable and their victims as the inevitable collateral damage. This simply isn't true. Their actions could and should have been prevented. It is unfortunate that after all these years of work, there is still so far to go in this space.

We've taken great strides as an organisation and as a nation toward



**36% of women and 13% of men report having experienced sexual assault in their lifetime**

recognising the impact and needs of those who have experienced sexual harm, whether it be alongside family violence or not.

If there is any hope to be found, we can find it in the societal outrage at the offending. Because if we can harness that outrage, we can take action. Systems and structures that make this kind of violence possible of course need to change. So too do our attitudes – the beliefs we uphold with the words we use; who we choose to believe; the responsibility we take for holding others – and ourselves – to account; the jokes we tell, judgements we make, the things we teach our children.

We were founded in 1973, because society at large wanted to turn a blind eye to the violence that existed behind so many closed doors across the country. Half a century on, great work has been done and countless lives have been saved. Yet there remains a stigma.

And so, thank you – to each and every one of our supporters who will not allow the taboo around violence to stop them supporting us. In particular to Christchurch Casino, who were our gold level sponsors for our 50th year, and to home, whose spectacular fundraising event raised thousands for our emergency and crisis funds. And to so many other supporters, donors and volunteers, of which there are too many to list. Thank you to our staff, thank you to our advocates, and thank you to our clients. Their efforts and bravery to overcome violence is the toughest work of all – yet in doing so, each of them takes us all one step closer to an Aotearoa free from violence.

Meri Kirihimete

**An open  
letter to the  
wahine toa  
who survived  
sexual predators,  
Danny Jaz and  
Roberto Jaz.**

**We want to honour you.**

The bravery from all of you has inspired us.

Know that your voices have made a profound difference.

You stopped future hurt at the hands of these offenders.

You have given courage to other victims of sexual offending to speak out.

You have made our city safer and the rest of us need to follow your lead.

To everyone who has experienced sexual assault, even if you didn't get a conviction, **we support you.**

For those who haven't felt safe to report an assault, who feel confused about what happened, who feel they've let too much time pass, or who fear repercussions, know that **we believe you.**

To all who have reported sexual violence, who have endured lengthy court proceedings, who have withstood the mental health repercussions, **we are in awe of you.**

To those who have intervened to prevent harm to others, who were relentless in the pursuit of these charges, who believed the survivors every step of the way, **we thank you.**

**You have all made Ōtautahi  
Christchurch safer.**

This is an open letter from members of the Christchurch community. If you are in Canterbury and need sexual assault support, you can call Aviva 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, on 0800 AVIVANOW (0800 26 48 2689).

An open letter written by members of the community to honour those who endured the violence at the centre of the court case. It was published in a full page in The Press on the day of the sentencing.



Skyler is the first to acknowledge that it can be very difficult for people who need help to ask for it, but encourages people to reach out anyway.

## Skyler's Story: 'I'm reclaiming my power'

**For twenty-four-year-old Skyler\* (she/they), life was moving in exactly the right direction... until they were raped.**

"I was in such a great place. I had made the big move to Christchurch from my small hometown, which I consider to be pretty closed-minded. I was doing a job I loved and I felt like I was healing from some childhood trauma I'd experienced. Then I was raped and suddenly I felt as though everything I'd achieved was lost."

The rape triggered post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and chronic fatigue, ultimately resulting in Skyler losing their job.

"I tried to prevent it ruining my life, but it was so overwhelming. I had

to go back to my hometown to get support."

Skyler was put in touch with Abby from Aviva who they describe as, "a breath of fresh air", especially given that many of Skyler's previous experiences with the health system had left a lot to be desired.

"I was instantly comfortable with Abby. She supported me through the interview with the police, which was such a long interview. The whole thing was terrible for my mother as well and I know she also really appreciated Abby's support.

"Abby got me in touch with services that could help me in Christchurch which was important because I really wanted to come

back. Although I don't remember the names of the people at the Cambridge Clinic, I can remember that they were also lovely and warm. They helped me find a GP who understood my sensitivities and who was knowledgeable about trans issues."

Skyler is the first to acknowledge that it can be very difficult for people who need help to ask for it, but encourages people to reach out anyway.

"Especially if someone has been through sexual abuse, it can be very isolating and there can be feelings of guilt. That stopped me reaching out sooner. I should have reached out when I was doing full-



service sex work, but I had this idea in my mind that because I'd chosen that industry, that I was responsible for any consequences; the reality is I didn't choose for those men to rape me.

"My message to others is that even if it's hard to ask for help, you truly do deserve help. If you can't talk to friends or family, you can talk to people at Aviva who really want to help and who genuinely understand the intensity of those situations."

The past few years have been pretty challenging, but thanks to Skyler's dedication and the support of Aviva and others, things are much more positive today.

"Art has always been a way of processing and venting and I'm so happy to be drawing again. I had tended to draw melancholy women and emaciated women, which was partly a reflection of my self-esteem."

"These days I am working to be more assertive and it's coming through in my art. I think there has been a lot of demonisation of feminine sexuality and I want to push back against that as part of reclaiming my power."

"I'm planning to go back to finish a certificate in digital media and design and I'll also be volunteering with Trade Aid."



**It is estimated that fewer than half of sexual violence victims ever disclose**

Skyler is fully focused on recovery and healing and eventually realising their goal of moving to Wellington.

\*Not their real name.

## Support families this Christmas



**You can ensure that a family working to overcome violence has presents to open on Christmas morning.**

**Drop-off a gift at The Loft, Level 1, Eastgate Shopping Centre by Friday 8th December.**

- New children's books, games, and toys
- New clothes
- Sports equipment
- Presents for older teens
- Presents for Mum, Dad, or other parental figures
- Toiletries for adults (including men and teen boys)
- Petrol and grocery vouchers
- Warehouse, Kmart and other vouchers
- Chocolates and other non-alcoholic treats
- Wrapping paper and gift tags

**Gifts must be unwrapped. We cannot accept toy weapons such as nerf guns or water pistols.**

Or donate at [www.aviva.org.nz](http://www.aviva.org.nz) to directly support the people needing our services this Christmas.

# Aviva Lip-Sync Battle Actually Really Happened!



**And we had a blast. After three cancellations, it truly was worth the wait. Eight acts from across Ōtautahi Christchurch took to the stage, imitating The Spice Girls, Disney villains, Shania Twain and more.**

The winners of the night were “The Spice Board” whose choreography, energy and sheer entertainment factor were top notch. The audience was moved to tears by the heartwarming performance by our star fundraisers, Mads N’ Mum and Tonia’s Salt n’ Pepper team were incredibly well-deserved runners up.

All up the event raised \$17,000 and we are truly grateful to everyone who made it happen. From the fabulous acts, to the sponsors, to the brilliant people at Majestic on Durham, to the lovely volunteers and the audience who came along.

One audience member described what they liked best about the night as, “the pure light fun when life can be so heavy out in the world.”

We couldn’t have put it better ourselves.



The NZ Crime and Victims Survey (published in June 2023) showed 33% of respondents had been physically or sexually assaulted in their lifetime, with 140,000 having been so in the last year



## An update on Ki Te Tihi/ The Loft

**If you have been following local news over the last few months, you might have seen some worrying headlines about The Loft/Ki Te Tihi. The Loft opened in 2016 as a collaborative partnership of community, social and health services working to improve the wellbeing of whaiora in our community. There is no reason to assume that the cut to The Loft's funding will directly impact Aviva's services or mean that we need to relocate.**

However, the Loft's pioneering Social Emergency Response Service (SERS) is at risk of closure, or significant reduction in capacity. This is because Ministry of Social Development funding has been discontinued. What this effectively means is that there is now a huge gap in the funding which allows three Community Connectors to work directly with whaiora, connecting them to the services they need.

This could have devastating effects for individuals and the community in Ōtautahi, because SERS is the only service which anyone can access, without an appointment and be connected to every service and support they need, without

having to repeat their story again and again. It is likely they will be able to continue operating a reception for clients and visitors to Aviva and the other services housed here. However, without SERS, thousands of individuals and families, who could have been helped, are at risk of falling through the cracks of a system that is hard to navigate.

SERS provides a vital service to so many. They are professional and compassionate people who offer those in our community who need it validation, guidance and manaakitanga. As a client who came to Aviva through SERS put it:

"I was at my lowest point, and I just didn't know what to do... I spoke to [one of the Loft's Community Connectors]. I think if she could just tell that if I wasn't doing it there and then, I wouldn't have come back. She was amazing... I'll be forever grateful. Just the way she listened and she believed me; I felt validated. She made it easy for me to keep talking."

Accessing SERS is a turning point in the lives of so many people. There is currently a petition to reinstate the funding for this vital, one-of-a-kind service. It can be found at [www.theloftchristchurch.org.nz](http://www.theloftchristchurch.org.nz)

Accessing Social  
Emergency  
Response Service  
is a turning point  
in the lives of so  
many people.



# Thank You

**We are so grateful to all the supporters below who make Aviva's mahi possible.**

ACC Grants  
All Souls Trust Board  
Aotearoa Gaming Trust  
Beautiful Girls  
Bishopdale School  
Black Cat Cruises  
Bolt of Cloth  
Books4Babes  
Brannigans  
Canterbury Women's Legal Association  
Casebrook Intermediate  
Chive Charitable Trust  
Christchurch Aunties  
Christchurch Casino  
Christchurch City Council  
Community Trust of Mid and South Canterbury  
Cowdy and Co Ltd  
Crusaders  
David Ellison Charitable Trust  
Dove Charitable Trust  
Elim Church - Belfast  
Enlightened Solutions  
Estate of Beverley Palmer  
Estate of Robin MacDonald Smith  
FreshChoice Barrington  
Further Faster  
Gattung Foundation  
Good Shepherd NZ  
Grace Communion International  
Hagley Windows and Doors  
He Puna Taimoana  
Helen Stewart Royle Charitable Trust  
Inner Wheel Club of Ashburton  
Keith Laugesen Charitable Trust  
Kelliher Charitable Trust  
Kirsty May  
Lincoln University - Golden Z Club  
Lions Club of Akaroa and Bays  
Lois McFarlane Charitable Trust  
Maurice Carter Charitable Trust  
Ministry of Justice  
Ministry of Social Development  
Media Suite  
Moon Under Water  
NZ Charitable Foundation (NZCF)  
Oranga Tamariki  
Parklands Garden Club  
Pasefika Proud  
Rata Foundation  
Redcurrent  
Research First  
Roy Owen Dixey Charitable Trust  
Sharp Glass  
Skills4Work  
Stratford Garden Club  
Te Pae  
Terra Viva Home & Garden  
The Methodist Church of New Zealand  
Thurs in Black  
Twigger Women's Refuge Endowment Fund  
Un Cadeau Charitable Trust  
Urban Style Sumner  
Viridity Jewellery  
Waitakiri Primary School  
Waiwetū Trust  
Wayne Francis Charitable Trust  
Westfield Riccarton  
Windsorcare Retirement Village  
Zeal Consultants  
Zonta Club of Waimakariri

## 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](http://aviva.org.nz) or contact [community@aviva.org.nz](mailto:community@aviva.org.nz) to make a contribution.

### Contact Us

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

#### ADDRESS

The Loft, Level 1  
Eastgate Shopping Centre  
PO Box 24 161,  
Christchurch 8140

#### PHONE

0800 AVIVA NOW  
(0800 28482 669)

#### EMAIL

[enquiries@aviva.org.nz](mailto:enquiries@aviva.org.nz)

#### WEB

[www.aviva.org.nz](http://www.aviva.org.nz)

#### SOCIAL

[f](#) @AvivaNZ  
[in](#) @AvivaNZ  
[@](#) violence.free.aotearoa