

Life Flight

Saves time · Saves lives

ANNUAL  
REPORT

2022

1,213  
LIVES  
SAVED  
THIS  
YEAR

THANK YOU FOR HELPING SAVE LIVES





# Kia ora



## Welcome friends and whānau of Life Flight

Coming out of 2020, we all felt we might enjoy some breathing room with the return of events, reunions with loved ones from overseas and the team at the Life Flight Base settling into a new normal for day-to-day operations. Unfortunately, 2021 brought its own challenges, with COVID-19 lingering and diversifying.

Our crews worked tirelessly through the various waves and strains, flying sick Kiwis all over the country as case numbers grew exponentially. The Westpac Rescue Helicopter experienced one of its busiest years ever, with more people exploring their own backyards due to international travel restrictions.

Despite the uncertainty many New Zealanders felt, the community support our teams received throughout the year was simply tremendous.

Fundraising continued to be crucial, with a little over half of operational funds gifted by the community. One of the significant hurdles during the year was the phase-out of cheques. For many of our generous donors, cheques were a staple of their everyday living. As we move into a cashless society, I reflect warmly on how many of our loyal and longstanding supporters adapted the way they bank and continue donating to Life Flight.

Amidst the challenges of this year, we celebrated a huge milestone. Life Flight and Westpac marked 40 years of partnership. This partnership is a monumental achievement, not just for Life Flight but for any charity, making it one of the longest-standing sponsorships in the country. We are very proud to have Westpac as the Principal Sponsor of our Westpac Rescue Helicopter. What started as Peter Button's dream has become an iconic partnership with a shared goal of saving time and, ultimately, saving lives. Here's to 40 more!



“Despite the uncertainty many New Zealanders felt, the

# community support

our teams received throughout the year was simply tremendous.”

Partnerships are the cornerstone of Life Flight, so I want to thank our community sponsors and partners who have continued to support Life Flight; your efforts do not go unnoticed.

Finally, I look to you, our incredible base of supporters, from our amazing Red Angels to the people who give when they can. Your support has kept our crews flying to where people need them most. You've helped a granddad meet his first grandchild, saved a best friend in the Taranaki Ranges, held a family from heartbreak, and given people precious time with their loved ones.

No matter how you support Life Flight, I hope you read through this Annual Report feeling proud of what you have achieved and the 1,213 people who you have helped. Thank you very much.

Ngā mihi nui,  
**Richard Stone**  
LIFE FLIGHT CHAIR

— A message  
**from Mark**

The past year has seen yet another challenging year for emergency services providers and not-for-profits as we have continued navigating through COVID-19 and its continuing impact on our flight operations.

We have been able to maintain 24/7 aeromedical services by keeping our Flight Teams safe in their bubbles, courtesy of regular surveillance testing and on-base health protocols for all teams. While most of the Life Flight Team and their loved ones have been impacted by COVID at some point over the past year, thankfully none of us have been really sick or required hospitalisation after testing positive. Our thoughts continue to go out to those members of our community who have been much more severely impacted by the virus.

These challenges have been compounded by inflation, which has increased our day-to-day operating costs, particularly the fuel bill for our two Air Ambulance Planes and Westpac Rescue Chopper.

Our fundraising has continued to be impacted by the pandemic, with most of our event-based activity postponed or cancelled for the second year running. We have however continued to receive fantastic support from our donor community, including partnering with our first-ever Air Ambulance sponsor Accuro. We are absolutely thrilled to have them on board with us and look forward to building a long-lasting relationship with the Wellington-based team at New Zealand's best little health insurer.

Our contract to provide helicopter search and rescue services from Life Flight's Wellington base, as part of the Central Air Ambulance Rescue Group of five North Island Trusts, has also been extended by the Government for at least four more years.

This report is for the financial period April 1 2021 to March 31 2022.



We are thrilled to partner with our first-ever

**Air Ambulance  
sponsor Accuro.**

We simply would not be able to do what we do, 24/7, 365 days a year, without the incredible ongoing support that we receive from our donors and sponsors. It is this generosity which quite literally enables us to save time and save lives every single day of the year.

On behalf of the entire team, I want to say a huge thank you to everyone who has contributed to Life Flight, particularly during yet another challenging year for everyone. Your support makes a difference, to yours, and the wider community.

Best wishes,  
**Mark Johnston**  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE





## Our vision

To provide exceptional care in the air

## Our purpose

We help to save lives by providing outstanding aeromedical care and transport to people in need

## Our culture

Our **teamwork** saves lives

**Safety** underpins everything we do

We **support** each other to help those in need

We find **new ways** to be “best in class”



— Our strategy  
**in action**

**CARE:**

In December, the team at Proactive visited the base to observe the fixed-wing crews loading and unloading patients. A report was made to Life Flight on Work Task Analysis, along with recommendations on improving current techniques and to help underpin our continual improvement approach. This report will be the basis of a fitness test that is being developed for both recruitment and benchmarking purposes during 2023 and beyond.

**AIRCRAFT:**

Our Westpac Rescue Helicopter was fitted with an Automatic Dependent Surveillance-Broadcast (ADS-B) as part of an upgrade to the aircraft transponder system. Previously, aircraft transponders would send out a radio signal to Air Traffic Control radar. The radar system could then determine where that signal was coming from and plot the aircraft's position reasonably accurately on the radar screen. Air Traffic Control could then communicate position information to different aircraft within controlled airspace. The ADS-B is integrated into the GPS so the unit "knows" exactly where it is, and can communicate that position not only to Air Traffic Control but also directly to other aircraft equipped with ADS-B. This means we can now see other traffic represented on our navigational instruments, whether we are in controlled or uncontrolled airspace.

**SUPPORT:**

Life Flight continues to offer the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) to all crew and staff. EAP offers callers free counselling over multiple channels, including in-person, phone calls and web chat options. Often our crews face many heart-breaking and stressful situations in their day-to-day work, so being able to have an avenue of talking with counselling professionals available helps our crews stay mentally healthy.





# Our people



Mark Johnston with Lance Walker from Accuro



## Health insurance

When medical emergencies happen, Life Flight is there to transport patients to receive the best possible care to New Zealanders. Now, Life Flight can provide its employees access to great medical care insurance, on and off the job.

The challenging and often uncertain nature of being a crewperson on board Life Flight's aircraft means that insurance can be harder to obtain for many of our staff. As part of Life Flight's new partnership with Accuro Health Insurance, Life Flight now offers free healthcare insurance for all employees, ensuring that our crews' health is well looked after should they fall sick.



## CPR training

In July, both Operational and Support teams participated in CPR Training with Wellington Free Ambulance and the Lloyd Morrison Foundation Heartbeat programme. With best practices continually changing, keeping on top of the latest techniques could help save a life.



## Keeping the crew fit and ready

During the lockdown in August, thanks to the support of the community, Life Flight was able to update the gym equipment at the airbase to help keep our crews fit and strong whilst on call. This equipment allows our crew to be ready for when lifting heavy incubators, being winched down to rough waters or lifting a patient over tricky terrain.

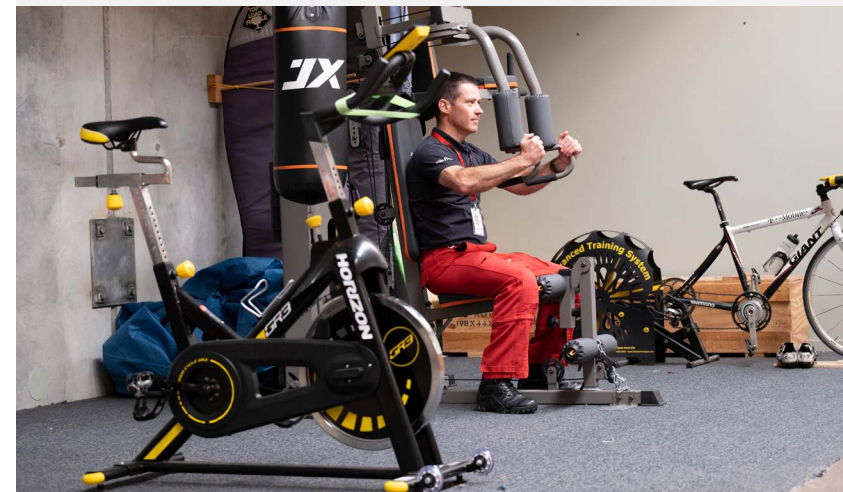


# Green Initiative

In 2021, Life Flight introduced recycling for soft plastic and metal. With most medical equipment being wrapped in soft plastic, Life Flight is committed to improving recycling practices.

A full base refurbishment was completed last year, with upgraded bedrooms, kitchen and public areas for the team, Life Flight is now looking to roll out LED lighting for the base. This will make the premises more energy and cost-efficient.

Westpac Rescue Helicopter Pilot Dylan testing out the new equipment





# — Staying ahead of the curve



## Vaccinations

As crews continue to fly potential COVID-19 patients, or often patients with weakened immune systems, Life Flight adopted a strategy of getting ahead of the curve. Our crews and support staff received their second COVID-19 vaccination in April/May 2021. This allowed all parties to be as safe as possible and put minds at ease as case numbers continued to rise.



## Saliva testing

As an early adopter, saliva testing was brought onto the base in September. Both the crews and support staff tested twice a week, with tests coming back from the lab via text within 24 hours. This was monitored by the safety systems manager.



## RAT kits

Life Flight were one of the first emergency services approved for receiving RAT kits and PPE for our crew. Following Life Flight's COVID-19 Operations Manual, developed alongside the Capital and Coast District Health Board (CCDHB, now Te Whatu Ora, Health New Zealand), all crew were required to test before they arrived at the airbase.



## Special leave and rosters

Special leave was developed so that our crew and staff did not have to worry about using sick leave when they tested positive for COVID-19.

Rosters continued to be made following the COVID-19 Operations Manual produced in 2021. Operational crews were rostered together to avoid cross-contamination and to mitigate too many staff off sick at one time as case numbers rose exponentially. The COVID-19 Operations Manual was continually reviewed as the situation changed regularly.

This was to mitigate any potential risk to patients and crew and to minimise possible disruption to the service. The testing frequency continues to change as the target of best practice moves. Results were monitored and managed resulting in an uninterrupted service.

Life Flight secured 400 testing kits in the first shipment, and during the lockdown of February this year, all crew and support staff, including immediate family, had access to free RAT kits. This included kits being dropped off at houses with minimal contact to alleviate stress for those working from home.



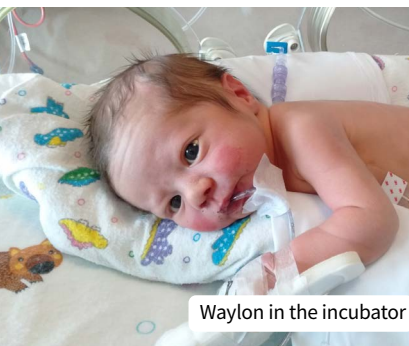
Pilot Dylan completing a RAT



Crewperson Jack at the saliva testing booth



— Why we fly  
**meet Waylon**



Waylon in the incubator

Chloe and Kyle were excited to welcome their baby boy into the world, Waylon was born at Clyde Maternity Hospital.

However, the bliss was short-lived; “12 hours after the birth we realised something was seriously wrong”, Chloe remembers. Waylon was not feeding and was losing consciousness.

The Dunedin Paediatric team rushed Waylon to Dunedin Hospital by helicopter, Chloe and Kyle following by car. Little Waylon was diagnosed with a rare condition that less than 20 babies face every year in New Zealand. With his oesophagus not properly formed, dangerous liquid started flowing into his lungs.

With this prognosis, the medical team rushed to find the hospital best equipped to deal with baby Waylon’s condition. Luckily there was a bed in Wellington, and, thanks to you and other generous supporters, the Life Flight Air Ambulance Plane was dispatched to transfer Waylon and his parents.

Chloe says the entire experience with the crew and Wellington NICU team was excellent.

“From our first meeting with the Life Flight team until he was stable in Wellington, they were phenomenal; they made us feel at ease and kept us fully updated.”

After a five-hour operation, Waylon was able to swallow for the first time and after two weeks, the family were able to return home. Waylon is not fully out of the woods. The family travel back and forth to Christchurch Hospital and will continue to do so as he grows. “He’s so happy and relaxed - you wouldn’t know that he’d had such a traumatic start.”

For Chloe and Kyle, they are so happy to have their boy home with them.

“We love him. He just completes us totally. **Words escape me with how grateful we are to have Life Flight.**”

“We were in such a dark place in Dunedin; to learn that there was a plane coming for us was awesome. When we took off for the first time, we felt positive, like we had a chance at getting him better, so thank you.”



Chloe and Kyle with Waylon

“From our first meeting with the Life Flight team until he was stable in Wellington,

**they were phenomenal; they made us feel at ease and kept us fully updated.”**

— Chloe

— Missions at a  
**glance**



**1,213**

PATIENTS FLOWN

**421**

SUPPORT WHĀNAU FLOWN

**312**

PĒPĒ/TAMARIKI FLOWN



## — Training **our teams**

Training is an integral part of Life Flight's day-to-day operations to make sure the crews are ready for anything, anywhere, anytime. Training ranges from keeping with best practices from the CCDHB (Health NZ) to ensuring rescue techniques are up-to-date and efficient.



### COVID-19 training

As the pandemic continues to change, so do our handling techniques. Life Flight hosted one of the recurrent COVID-19 infectious procedure trainings with Air Freight New Zealand (AFNZ) pilots, Life Flight crew and Health NZ. The team covered the full procedure from dispatch, donning PPE, loading simulated patients, doffing PPE, and aircraft decontamination.



## Helicopter Underwater Escape Training (HUET)

Five of our crew sat and completed HUET in New Plymouth. This simulation helps ensure our crew can quickly and safely evacuate a submerged vessel. The training covers ditching the vessel from underwater, both in theory and practice, with the vessel able to turn and disorientate the crew inside.

Crew inside the training vessel



## Training missions at a glance

**94**

Total number of training missions

**66**

Number of Westpac Rescue Helicopter training missions

**28**

Number of Air Ambulance Plane training missions



— Equipped  
**for the job**



Julian with the new night vision goggles



Logan with new defibrillator

Thanks to the support of our Grant Funders and community of supporters, Life Flight was able to purchase new equipment and upgrade existing technologies for our crew.

Through our Christmas Appeal in 2021, supporters bought two new pairs of Night Vision Goggles for the Westpac Rescue Helicopter crew.

Essential for almost a quarter of our missions, Night Vision Goggles magnify ambient light thousands of times, allowing the Westpac Rescue Helicopter to land on unlit areas and conduct search and rescue missions in the middle of the night.

Our Westpac Rescue Helicopter crew upgraded to the new state-of-the-art corpuls3Touch Monitor/Defibrillator, thanks to funding from the Pelorus Trust.

Used for cardiac arrests, this monitor gives real-time data to the paramedics and hospitals as our team transports the patient, making crucial information available on the spot. It can also, if necessary, provide a shock to restore a regular heartbeat.

## Fagan Motors

# Vehicle sponsor

Thanks to our Vehicle Sponsor, Fagan Motors Masterton, Life Flight was gifted a Mazda BT-50 in October. The ute has a large tray that is perfect for transporting gear, both for the crew and for the fundraising team.

The new decal on the ute also makes it easy for specialists, doctors, and nurses to quickly spot our crew from the hospital for a quick transfer.



— Why we fly  
**meet Pat**

85-year-old Pat pulled on her gumboots - it was Boxing Day, and she and her husband, Con, were off to their friend's farm in Cape Palliser where they had spent numerous weekends over the years. Pat had many fond memories of visiting the farm when her kids were young and was looking forward to enjoying the sunny day and making new memories with her family.

Pat, along with her daughter Sheridan, son-in-law, and two granddaughters, Tessa and Abby, walked over a grassy flat when suddenly her foot got caught in a rabbit hole. She turned to reach a nearby fence, however, narrowly missed it and landed on the ground, sitting up.

"As soon as I fell, I just knew something was wrong"

Pat remembers her granddaughter Tessa saying, "nan, don't look at it, just don't look." In a state of shock, Pat looked down at her leg, which was sitting at a right angle. She had broken her left femur.

Tessa immediately called 111, and, given the rural location of the accident and the dangerous nature of the break, it was clear that the Westpac Rescue Helicopter was Pat's best choice. Pilot James, crewperson Mike and Wellington Free Ambulance flight paramedic Hannah quickly took to the skies.

Pat could not get over the professionalism that Hannah and the crew showed.

"They were just out of this world, truly. **Hannah was so reassuring to my family and me.**"

*continued on next page*



Pat and her husband, Con, with their granddaughter

**"I was in Wellington Hospital for two weeks where Hannah came back to see me,**

**and then taken to Kenepuru Hospital for a further fortnight."**

— Pat



Pat was carried up the hill on a stretcher to the helicopter and was flown immediately to Wellington Hospital. What would usually be a two-hour drive to Wellington Hospital by car, Pat was able to land on the hospital helicopter pad within minutes. There, Pat underwent surgery where doctors inserted a rod into her leg.

“I was in Wellington Hospital for two weeks where Hannah came back to see me, and then taken to Kenepuru Hospital for a further fortnight.”

Speaking from her hospital bed, Pat reflected that she was hesitant to call for help, not wanting to burden the first responders - a sentiment that has been echoed by other former patients.

However, Life Flight first began with Peter Button’s desire to be there to help those who require it. Those involved in the Trust today are motivated by the same thought.

Pat remembers Button from his pioneering days “and the amount of good he accomplished in all those years”. But she never thought that 40 years on, she would be landing on the roof of Wellington Hospital in the Westpac Chopper he fought to establish.

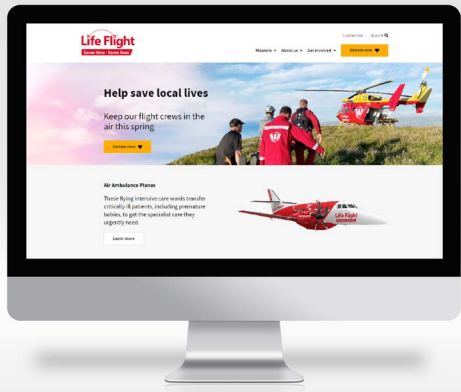
Thanks to the generosity of people like you, the Life Flight team continues Button’s dream of helping the local community when they need it most. And ensuring lovely people like Pat always get the help they need, fast.

Pat being carried to the Westpac Rescue Helicopter





# — Creating a better donor experience



## Technology frees up time

To increase the efficiency of the support team, and free up more time to provide a delightful donor experience, a large project was undertaken in FY22. Our database – a core piece of technology used by all members of the support team – was upgraded for the first time in ten years. The new system is secure, fast, and has reduced the time spent on administrative tasks significantly.

## Website refresh

In Q4, a project was undertaken to move the Life Flight website from an old platform that was due to be retired, to a modern platform. At the same time, design work was undertaken to align the website with the rest of Life Flight's branding. The donor experience was front of mind - and key pages, such as the donation form, are now much more user-friendly.

## In Safe Hands

In FY22, Life Flight refreshed the invitation to support our missions by leaving a gift in Will. By consulting in late 2021 with valued supporters, we developed the 'In Safe Hands' campaign to keep Kiwis in safe hands by remembering Life Flight in your Will.

Since then, more than 100 new enquiries have been received and already there are over 200 incredible bequestors who have confirmed their commitment to leave a gift to Life Flight in their Will.

## Cheque phaseout

By August FY22, all banks ceased accepting and issuing cheques. With many of our loyal supporters using cheques as their way of donating, the Fundraising and Marketing team laid out a plan to help transition people from cheques to alternative methods of donating. This was done across all communications over the course of a year and included inviting people to the base to 'use their last cheque for good'.

Thank you to all our supporters who moved with us, and to all those who wrote cheques over the years!



Supporters using their last cheque for good



## Green Initiative

To reduce the impact on the environment and reduce costs, all gift receipts are now sent by email where possible, instead of hard copies in the post.

Because each donor likes to receive communications at different times, in different methods we have implemented a framework which allows us to cater better for these different preferences, reducing the amount of mail we send.



— Celebrating a  
**milestone**



In December, we celebrated 40 years of one of the longest-standing charity sponsorships in New Zealand: Westpac NZ and Life Flight. Over the past forty years, thousands of lives have been saved thanks to this fantastic partnership with our Major Sponsor Westpac, and today it is stronger than ever.

Working together with Westpac, a 16-page spread in the Dominion Post was dedicated to partnership and history, along with feature articles on Stuff and other regional newspapers.

*Here's to the next 40!*

Flooding in  
Marlborough, 1983

A very happy Fundraising and Marketing team



— Fundraising Excellence at  
**FINZ Awards**

In March, Life Flight's Fundraising and Marketing Team attended the virtual FINZ awards (Fundraising Institute of New Zealand), where we celebrate the extraordinary work of not-for-profits all over the country.

Life Flight, along with our Principal sponsor Westpac were awarded the Best Partnership Award and the Overall Fundraising Excellence Award for the 40-year partnership.



One of our many volunteers for our street appeal

Mitre 10 MEGA Masterton Calendar photo shoot



## — Out in the community

While most of our flagship fundraising events were put on hold with COVID-19 restrictions, the community fundraising spirit remained high. Big thank you to our incredible volunteers and fundraisers across Wellington and Aotearoa! Here are just a few of the events that happened across the year.

### **Westpac Chopper Street Appeal**

On May 6th, with the help of our Major Sponsor Westpac, hundreds of volunteers across Marlborough, Wellington, Porirua, Kāpiti, Hutt Valley and Wairarapa took to the streets to 'shake a bucket' for their local Westpac Chopper. Not only is it a wonderful day for our incredible supporters to engage with the community, but a total of \$40,356 was raised, funding about 10 missions.

### **Mitre 10 MEGA Masterton Calendar**

Sponsors Mitre 10 MEGA Masterton bared all in a cheeky calendar fundraiser. Selling the calendars over the Christmas and New Year's period, \$25,000 was raised, and it looks like a lot of fun was had with the team

### **Craigs Investment Partners**

Over the month of March, Craigs Investment Partners ran a nationwide fundraiser where staff walked, biked, and moved over 100,000km for their local chopper. The Wellington team raised \$1,498 for Life Flight.

### **Fernridge School ice block sale**

A class at Fernridge School sold ice blocks to their fellow schoolmates to raise money for Life Flight. They made a total of \$272. Ka mau te wehi!



Fernridge School entrepreneurs



## — Why we fly meet Tilly

After two-year-old Tilly came down with a terrible virus and took time to recover, Mum Melissa took her to Hutt Hospital for a full check-up.

When Tilly's blood tests showed a low red blood cell count, Melissa prepared herself for whatever came next.

While waiting for the results at the Hutt Hospital, Melissa recalls - "I know not to Google things, but I just had this feeling, and I felt sick."

Soon after, mum Melissa and dad Sam were told their gorgeous two-year-old had leukaemia. As they began to process the shock, the teams in the background got ready to take them to Christchurch Hospital to the only specialist care available. Your support ensured Tilly could get to Christchurch and begin her treatment the next day.

It was a stormy Wellington day when the family arrived at the Life Flight Airbase, but the Air Ambulance crew quickly reassured them.

Melissa recalls: "it was scary, and we were thinking the worst. The flight team made a tough situation that much better. When the nurse said that this service relies on donations, I was blown away. We couldn't believe it."

Tilly was looked after on her first-ever plane ride:

"It was sleeting when we arrived. The crew all took off their jackets and put them over Tilly as she was being unloaded from the plane, so she didn't get wet."

For the next seven weeks, Tilly and her parents were in and out of Christchurch Hospital. They have since returned to Lower Hutt for ongoing treatment.

Despite Tilly's tough start in life, she still manages to find time being a bubbly two-year-old.

"She had chemo a few days ago, yet here she is laughing, running around...you wouldn't know that she is going through what she is."

Thank you for making sure Tilly could receive treatment straightaway and for flying so many other sick children to the urgent care they need so they can return home to their whānau, sooner.



Tilly in ambulance with dad, Sam



Tilly and  
mum, Melissa

“It was sleeting when we arrived.

# The crew all took off their jackets and put them over Tilly

as she was being unloaded from the plane, so she didn't get wet.”

— Melissa

# Sponsors

The Trust gratefully acknowledges the contributions and support received from the following companies and organisations.

## Major Sponsor



## Air Ambulance Sponsor



## Vehicle Sponsor



## AMBASSADORS

- > Clive Button
- > Bill Day
- > Juliet Best



# Grant funders

1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022

Life Flight would like to thank these wonderful organisations for their ongoing support. Grants help Life Flight to provide 24/7 emergency air service and are hugely appreciated.



- Bowen Trust
- Dorothy L Newman Charitable Trust
- Eastern and Central Community Trust
- EM Pharazyn Trust
- F H Muter Trust
- Gaynor Charitable Trust
- Hutt City Council
- Jack Jeffs Charitable Trust
- Kāpiti Coast District Council
- Leonard Monk Charitable Trust
- Marlborough District Council
- Masterton District Council
- New Zealand Community Trust
- Nikau Foundation
- Pelorus Trust
- Porirua City Council
- Pub Charity
- Rannoch Charitable Trust
- Ray Watts Charitable Trust
- TG Macarthy Trust
- The Nick Lingard Foundation
- The Phillip Verry Charitable Foundation
- Trust House
- Upper Hutt City Council
- Wellington City Council
- W N Pharazyn Trust



## FINANCIALS

Fees that we are able to charge government agencies for services make up approximately half of the funds required to keep our service operational. This means there is a significant annual funding shortfall, which our wonderful supporters donate toward. Life Flight also keeps at least three months' worth of operating costs in reserves.

### Date 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022

Operating Revenue	\$5,782,000
Less Operating and Administrative Expenses	\$12,086,000
Operational Deficit	(\$6,304,000)
Fundraising Revenue	\$6,263,000
Operating Deficit for the Year	(\$41,000)

We are a registered charity (#CC24283) and abide by the codes and standards of the Fundraising Institute of New Zealand.







# Life Flight

Saves time · Saves lives

Your support through COVID-19, increasing operational costs and other events have meant that our crews can continue to fly to those who need us.

You have helped friends, whānau, neighbours and communities with your generosity - we could not have done it without you!

**The Life Flight Trust**  
PO Box 14448, Kilbirnie,  
Wellington 6241  
(04) 920 2242  
info@lifeflight.org.nz  
[www.lifeflight.org.nz](http://www.lifeflight.org.nz)



Photography donated by Lindsay Keats

**THANK YOU**  
FOR YOUR SUPPORT