

**Media Release, for immediate release
Sunday 1 September 2019**

ONE NIGHT, MORE THAN \$160,000 RAISED TOWARDS NEW MĀIA FOCUS – MENTAL HEALTH

Māia Health Foundation's new fundraising focus has received a massive kick start, with more than \$160,000 raised during last night's Feast event.

The Feast was attended by 288 people who were there to support the Māia Health Foundation on its mission to enhance Canterbury's health system, taking it from good to great. It was at the Feast that Māia outlined its next mission which will focus on the region's mental health facilities.

"You don't have to look far to realise the struggles that our community is facing in terms of mental health. While frontline staff have responded admirably to these challenges, we think we can do more – and we're going to," says Michael Flatman, Māia Health Foundation Chief Executive.

Since its launch in 2016, Māia Health Foundation has raised \$7 million for Canterbury's health system, \$5.2 million of these funds have gone towards an upgraded helipad for Christchurch Hospital and improvements to child health facilities.

"The community support we have received has been staggering, and the love we felt at this year's Feast is another example of how much our community really care. We want to thank each and every person who has opened their heart and mind to the difference Māia and our community can make," says Michael.

The Feast was supported by some impressive names. Māia ambassador and NZ Hall of Fame singer-songwriter Bic Runga gave an intimate performance, backed up by The All Girl Big Band. The event was emceed by Māia family ambassador Jason Gunn and a sumptuous Feast of wintery kai was provided by Vbase head chef Dan Shanks.

The Live Auction at the event featured some big names too, with auction items including a game of backyard cricket with Black Cap Tom Latham; a whisky tasting hosted by Kiwi sporting royalty Brendon McCullum; a private acoustic performance by Jason Kerrison; and an artwork by internationally acclaimed artist Neil Dawson.

Feast MC Jason Gunn says the generosity shown at the Feast was humbling and demonstrates just how invested the Canterbury community is in Māia's vision.

"We all know someone affected by mental illness – and we want to be able to help in some way. This is the way. Our beautiful kids and the incredible team that work in mental health need and deserve this world class facility. This is a game changer and I urge all Cantabrians to give a little. It will make a huge difference," says Jason.

The Canterbury population has increased by 10% in the last five years but demand for mental health services has exceeded population growth – with recent times being particularly tough on some of our children and young people. In the past six years there's been a 108% increase in new presentations to Child, Adolescent and Family mental health services. This means every month up to 300 more children and young people are requiring mental health services than did prior to the earthquakes.

Michael Flatman says specialist mental health staff have responded admirably, often working in facilities that are simply not fit for purpose.

“We realise that there will never be enough funds to do everything we need in health. This is where Māia can – and will – make a difference. While we can’t yet share details of our next project, we know we’re going to need to raise in the vicinity of \$5 million to create the state-of-the-art facilities our community needs and deserves. It’s a project that’s not for the faint hearted. But I know that with our amazing community of supporters we will be able to help create a physical environment where our loved ones can get the very best care – in the very best place - to enable them to be well.

“The community’s generosity at Feast has provided this mission an incredible kick-start, and we are humbled and so incredibly thankful for this support.”

Images are available from Feast. If you would like photos provided please let us know.

About Māia Health Foundation

Māia Health Foundation is a charitable trust launched in May 2016 to enhance health services in Canterbury. Its vision is to “be the difference” – taking our health services from good to great.

To date the Māia Health Foundation has raised \$7 million - \$5.2 million of which has gone towards the upgrading of the helipad at the Christchurch Hospital Hagley building and improved child health facilities.

The upgrades to the helipad will enable two helicopters to be on the pad at the same time and allow larger, long-range aircraft to land, allowing extended coverage across most of the South Island. Māia’s funding also enabled life-saving support to be provided immediately upon touchdown in a new rooftop clinical support unit.

Māia’s funding has enabled multiple enhancements to the children’s wards at the new hospital. These include a new children’s play area, as well as an activity room and school room, 60 parent beds and, for when times are really tough, an ICU Family Room so families can stay right alongside their children, including ensuite facilities and access to a laundry and kitchen facilities.

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