

## Welcome to the latest issue of the Rural Health Alliance Aotearoa New Zealand (RHANZ) e-newsletter.

In this issue: Budget 2016 response, election of the new Executive Committee, big thanks to Bayer for their generous donation plus a selection of relevant media articles and research...

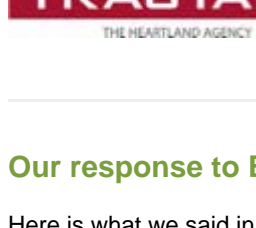
### Who are RHANZ?

The Rural Health Alliance Aotearoa New Zealand represents a united voice from across multiple rural sector organisations. Our aim is to provide solutions and influence policy affecting the health and wellbeing of rural communities.

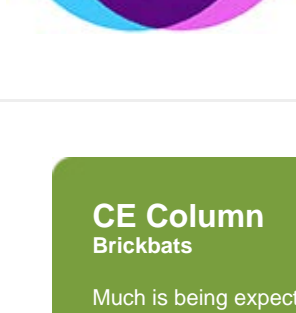
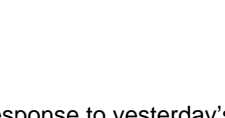
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### We thank our partners.



We are.  
**LGNZ.**  
NZFarmer



### Our response to Budget 2016

Here is what we said in our media release in response to yesterday's Budget:

It is good to see an increased emphasis on vulnerable communities and increasing access to services in Budget 2016, but the Rural Health Alliance Aotearoa New Zealand (RHANZ) is disappointed there are no specific references to the needs of rural communities.

RHANZ is a peak organisation with 42 member organisations, all interested in the health and wellbeing of rural communities.

Key pressure points our members have identified that will impact rural health and wellbeing are increased social cohesion, increased capacity in our rural health workforce, increased research and information about rural health outcomes, improved mobile and internet connectivity, and well supported rural health facilities.

RHANZ chairperson Dr Jo Scott-Jones says an increased budget for research activities is welcome, provided that the Health Research Council is encouraged to support research that is driven by the needs of rural communities.

"We applaud the government's plan to put additional funding into health once again, investing in the health of the most vulnerable communities will have positive impacts, not only on the economics of the country but also in our sense of wellbeing as a society," Dr Scott-Jones says.

"Rural communities are high needs communities, and their vulnerability is only made worse by difficulty accessing services due to workforce pressures and the challenges of being distant from increasingly centralised health service providers."

Dr Scott-Jones says it costs more to provide services in rural communities because of these difficulties and, while it is heartening to see an increased emphasis on vulnerable communities and increasing access to services, it is disappointing that there is no specific reference to the needs of rural communities in Budget 2016.

### Rural Mental Health Initiatives update

#### Suicide prevention workshops

We are on the home straight of our suicide prevention safeTALK workshops across rural NZ. The final three are to be held in Taranaki next week and spaces are still available. Click on the links to register:

[Hawera](#) - 30th May 2016

[New Plymouth Morning](#) – 31 May 2016

[New Plymouth Evening](#) – 31 May 2016

This will bring the total number of workshops delivered to 43 – against a contractual requirement of 40 – and we are indebted to a huge number of people who have helped make these workshops possible. More about this in coming weeks.

With most workshops now completed our clinical champions are focussing on working with local Rural Support Trust coordinators and regional leaders.

#### Post workshop survey

If you have already attended one of our safeTALK workshops please be on the lookout for a "post workshop survey." The purpose of the survey is to check in with participants some weeks after the workshop to see if it has been of any value to them 'on the job'. We'll do this survey in three groups so that we give people enough time to have had the opportunity to use their learnings:

Survey for the workshops up until Dargaville mid- March was circulated this week.

Survey for workshops up until the end of April will be sent out after Queen's Birthday.

Survey for workshops in May will be sent out in the third week of June to give people a bit more time to use their learnings.

Please take the time to complete this very short survey when it arrives in your in-box. The information will be really important for our final report to the Ministry of Health.

## Media Watch

### One 'battered' sector helps another

Lessons learned from Psa will be shared with farmers facing the lowest milk price in years when leaders from the Bay kiwifruit industry take the platform at the DairyNZ Farmers' Forum this month. Kiwifruit industry representative Ian Greaves and Zespri chief operating officer Simon Limmer will talk about how Psa affected growers, the production crisis, and its pathway forward to a bright future. (NZ Herald)

[Read more](#)

### Family wants greater awareness about rural school buses after death

Mandie Robans hasn't cut her hair since her 12-year old son was hit by a car and thrown like a rag doll up in the air and killed in front of her seven years ago. On May 15, 2009, Jordan had just got off the school bus in a rural area. (Stuff)

[Read more](#)

### Research into rural disease transmission

The transmission of diseases passed between animals and humans is the focus of research to be carried out by Otago University. The research led by Dr Pippa Scott will concentrate on two diseases, Escherichia coli, a particularly nasty bug that causes severe diarrhoea, and Staphylococcus aureus, a skin and blood infection. (Radio NZ News).

[Read more](#)

### A country GP – Radio NZ interview

It takes 15 years lag time to get a qualified generalist practitioner in rural NZ. This Radio NZ interview provides a good overview of the various training programmes and professional pathways being developed to help retain and recruit our rural doctors. Giving them a quality rural experience during their training is seen as the biggest recruitment chance we have.

[Read more](#)

### Appointment affirms Waikato Uni's focus on population health

"We also need to be supporting our rural areas better. Rural communities are the backbone of New Zealand, yet their access to health services is poor. The highest occurrence of cardiovascular disease is in rural towns, and GPs in cities far outweigh those in rural towns per head of population" said Professor Ross Lawrenson, newly appointed professor of population health at Waikato University. (Waikato University)

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### Farmers can cope with stress during busy times

Experts suggest the best way farmers can cope with busy times is by exercising, sleeping and eating well. (NZFarmer)

[Read more](#)

### Providers hope sex abuse funding will bring change

Sexual abuse workers say they're worried it might take a long time for rural communities to see the funding promised to help the sector stay afloat. The government will put \$46 million from this year's budget into support services for sexual abuse victims, including \$41 million of new funding over the next four years. (Radio NZ).

[Read more](#)

### Virtual health doctor appointment at the touch of a screen

No longer will hospital patients now need to travel five hours to see doctors to have them say everything is fine, see you again in three months. HealthTap can be downloaded on to any smart phone and allows patients to video conference their doctor for what would otherwise be an outpatient appointment at Waikato DHB. (Stuff).

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### CE Column Brickbats



Much is being expected of the rural sector at the moment, not the least of which is the goal of doubling the value of primary exports from \$32B to \$64B within the next eight years. As Nathan Penny, ASB's Rural Economist, recently said "bold goals such as these require a bold response."

It is therefore disappointing that there are no specific references to the needs of rural communities in yesterday's budget. Time will tell how much of a rural trickle-down there will be from increased funding for DHBs, roading projects and ambulance services for example, but right now our response is fairly lukewarm. See our budget media release across the page.

#### Boquets

Yesterday the newly elected Council members met to discuss a range of issues such as: progressing our five strategic priorities, our programme of events for 2017 and electing the Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee members for the 2016-2017 term are:

- Chairperson – Dr Jo Scott-Jones (Rural Chapter, Royal NZ College General Practitioner)
- Deputy Chairperson – Craig Young (Telecommunications Users Association NZ)
- Treasurer – Bill Eschenbach (Rural Canterbury PHO)
- Secretary – Sharon Wards (NZ Rural Hospital Network)

The Council also agreed to co-opt three other individuals – one of which was Sharon Wards above – and the other two are still in the process of being contacted. Our governing body encompasses a great mix of skills, experience and rural passion and we are very much looking forward to working together over the coming year.

Speaking of good news, last week we received a most generous donation from Bayer. The proceeds came from a raffle at the Bayer Australia and New Zealand Crop Science conference held in Melbourne back in February this year. The funds raised were then matched by Bayer's Give program and split equally between RHANZ and BlazeAid – a volunteer-based organisation that works with families and individuals in rural Australia after natural disasters such as fires and floods. We feel most privileged to have received these funds and we thank all Bayer staff across New Zealand and Australia for their recognition and support.



Cheers and best wishes  
Michelle Thompson

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### Subscribe

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### Member Column

Would you like to contribute an article for our newsletter? Tell a story about yourself or one of your members or something you're passionate about. Email your item to Michelle [ce@rhaanz.org.nz](mailto:ce@rhaanz.org.nz)

## Media Watch

### Global antibiotics revolution needed

A global revolution in the use of antimicrobials is needed, according to a government backed report. Lord Jim O'Neill, who led the Review on Antimicrobial Resistance, said a campaign was needed to stop people treating antibiotics like sweets. It is the first recommendation in the global plan for preventing medicine "being cast back into the dark ages". (BBC News)

[Read more](#)

### Time to break the digital drought – opinion piece Nathan Penny ASB

Rural business are a big part of New Zealand's export story and the Government has some big goals for the rural sector too: to double primary exports in real terms from \$32 billion in June 2012 to \$64B by 2024, for example. Bold goals such as these require a bold response. And that's what the rural sector will be hoping for in Thursday's Budget announcement. (NZFarmer)

[Read more](#)

### Fire and emergency services merger could be good news for rural New Zealand

Rural fire services could benefit from the merger of New Zealand's fire and emergency services in 2017, New Zealand Fire Service board chairman Paul Swain says. And it could be that small struggling stations will get more support for volunteers, he said. (Southland Times)

[Read more](#)

### Churchill blog – The Hunts and the Healds by Glenda Lewis.

This is a great blog about two families of generational farmers in Southern Hawke's Bay. It touches on the families' contribution to the community and wider economy as well as the war effort. It talks about the challenges of isolation, economic volatility and mental health and wellbeing.

[Read more](#)

## Research & Resources

### Ethical priority setting for universal health coverage: challenges in deciding upon fair distribution of health services

BMC Medicine | Online – 11 May 2016 – Priority setting is inevitable on the path towards universal health coverage. All countries experience a gap between their population's health needs and what is economically feasible for governments to provide. Can priority setting ever be fair and ethically acceptable?

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## Events Watch

**World Indigenous Suicide Prevention Conference**, 1-3 June 2016, Rotorua [Read more](#)

**A World of Rural Health, International Conference, Cairns, Australia**, 26 April – 2 May 2017 [Read more](#)