

Nau mai. Haere mai. Ki te pānui o RHĀNZ mō tēnei wiki (Te Reo for welcome to the RHĀNZ Newsletter for this week).

In this issue: Embracing Māori Language Week, Rural Contractors National Conference, rural mental health initiatives update, cutting through brexit and health & safety implications for after work drinks plus a selection of relevant media and research articles...

### Who are RHĀNZ?

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.

[Visit our website](#)



Rural Contractors Conference, Bay of Islands. *Left to right – Helen Slattery (board member), Roger Parton (chief executive) and Steve Levet (President).*

### We thank our partners.



### Rural Mental Wellness Initiatives 2016-2017 Update

It was such a buzz to be at the Mystery Creek Field Days in June for the Prime Minister's announcement of a second year of funding to support the Rural Mental Health Initiative. I must admit to feeling both highly privileged but also a little apprehensive about undertaking a project that has the attention of the Prime Minister!

That said, in just seven months we've already seen robust foundations for collaborative partnerships emerge through the genuine enthusiasm and willingness of so many fantastic people. It is great to be able to build on this over the year ahead in our work programme that is based on four key projects.

We are confident that they will collectively build rural workforce and community capacity and capability to respond to mental health and addiction issues. These projects are:

- Delivering 10 more safeTALK workshops in areas that missed out last year.
- Developing a new workshop that builds on the safeTALK workshop to assist health and social service professionals caring for psychologically distressed people in rural settings. We will deliver 10 of these new workshops in the second half of the year. Through a continuous evaluation and improvement process, by year end we will have developed an effective and uniquely rural focussed workshop for future use.
- Supporting our team of Clinical Champions to build helpful and effective relationships between health and social support services and the Rural Support Trusts.
- Developing a *Framework for Improving Mental Health and Addiction Outcomes in Rural New Zealand*. We will refer to this as 'the Framework'.

At the moment our main focus is on the planning and preparation of the Framework project and more specifically, establishing an Expert Advisory Group to help us develop the Framework. We are recruiting members for this through an 'Expressions of Interest' process and are hoping to receive applications from a wide range of rural health, social service, agribusiness and farming professionals.



Applications for the Expert Advisory Group close on Friday 8 July (today) so there is still time to apply or encourage someone who you think may be suitable to apply. Here is the link to the Expressions of Interest:

[Framework for improving rural mental health addictions outcomes.](#)

**Marie Daly**  
RHANZ Programme Manager

### Media Watch

**Cutting through Brexit: delivering a platform of pain with the potential to build a stronger future for Britain and its partners - opinion piece by Ian Proudfoot, KPMG Global Head of Agribusiness, based in Auckland. Well worth a read.**

We are now over a week on from the vote that could never happen. The outcome that nobody saw coming, despite it being in plain view of all for months.

So much has been written and said about Brexit over the last week that I thought long and hard about adding my reflections to the debate; what would another contribution add? I am not sure if I add anything more, but as a proud Brit I felt I had as much right as anybody else to have my say on the outcome of the referendum.

[Read more](#)

**The Mobile Surgical Unit helps people off the waitlist**

Surgeons and Anaesthetists from Southern DHB spent four days of last week working on the Mobile Surgical Unit that was located in Oamaru and Balclutha.

Southern DHB doctors, Dental Surgeon Dr Tim Mackay and Anaesthetist Dr David Hunt along with other doctors, worked on the Mobile Surgical Unit during the four days and made the most of the 'extra capacity week' organised for Southern DHB.

"This is a fantastic service that assists our rural communities by providing low risk surgery, providing care closet to patient's homes, and shortening our waitlists. Over two days I was able to complete seven dental surgery cases in both Oamaru and Balclutha, taking 14 people off the waitlist," commented Dr Mackay. (Scoop).

[Read more](#)

**Tokoroa doctor job that still can't be filled despite \$400,000 salary, 12 weeks annual leave and going viral**

The Tokoroa medical practice swamped with applicants in February after the \$400,000 job went viral has not yet filled the role.

The Herald received hundreds of applications from around the world for the position after one of the surgery's two directors, Dr Alan Kenny, said he was struggling to fill the position so he could ease into retirement. (Rotorua Daily Post)

[Read more.](#)

**South Island drought to be longest ever**

North Canterbury farmers could be forced to walk off their land if the lack of rain persists. Hurunui District mayor Winton Dalley made the comment as the official drought period for the South Island's east coast was extended. It has now lasted two years - the longest the country has ever seen.

[Read more](#)

**Rural round-up: A look at telehealth**

Dr Jo Scott-Jones of New Zealand and Dr Kate Dawson of Scotland (NHS) write about telehealth. (WONCA News)

[Read more](#)

**Spike in leptospirosis notifications prompts warning to farmers**

After a spike in cases of leptospirosis in Northland, farmers are being urged to take care around animals and to vaccinate their livestock. Leptospirosis is a serious bacterial disease that can cause flu-like symptoms, such as headaches, muscle pains, and fevers – in severe cases, it causes bleeding from the lungs, meningitis or kidney failure.

WorkSafe has been advised by the Medical Officer of Health of the increase in leptospirosis notifications in Northland. Seven cases have been confirmed so far this year with another one under investigation as a suspected infection. No cases were reported last year. (Worksafe).

[Read more](#)

**Is drug use rife on farms?**

Federated Farmers Waikato Provincial President Chris Lewis chats to The Country Early Edition's Dom George about a growing drug problem in rural New Zealand. Not only are isolated farm houses being used as meth labs, there is also a worrying increase in positive farm worker drug tests.

[Read more](#)

### CE's Column

Ākina te reo – behind you all the way



This week is Māori Language Week – a time for us all to celebrate te reo Māori and to reflect on the importance of language and culture on health outcomes.

This year's theme is ākina te reo – behind you all the way - which is about using te reo Māori to support people, to inspire and to cheer on.

Improving health outcomes for rural Māori is central to what we do. It underpins our vision and is recognized in our logo: RHĀNZ. Our definition of health enshrined in our Constitution reflects the "whare tapa whā" model of health. That is, health is more than just the absence of disease, it's about having good physical, mental and spiritual health as well as social wellbeing. Respecting the Māori language leads to respecting the Māori culture and respecting the Māori culture is necessary if we are truly serious about addressing Māori health inequalities.

Our chairperson, Dr Jo Scott-Jones, wrote an [article this week](#) on "using te reo in a patient consultation for the first time" (NZDoctor subscriber only).

Last week I had the pleasure of attending the Rural Contractors of New Zealand's (RCNZ) national conference in the Bay of Islands. RCNZ has been going for 20 years and was our first non-health member organisation. They are a great example of getting behind their people - their members and their rural communities. The theme for this year's conference was "Your Business from Start to Finish" where they looked at ways of running smarter businesses, utilising the latest technologies and looking after your workers and yourself. They also raised \$21,500 at their annual charity dinner for St Johns which will be used to support ambulance services in the Bay of Islands. A more generous and down to earth bunch of people you'd be hard pressed to find and we love having them as members!

Work continues on developing our #RuralFest NZ priorities and we are aiming to have a further draft of the five policy statements out to members for review in early September. Also, don't forget that the expressions of interest for the Rural Mental Health & Addictions Framework Expert Advisory Group close today. See lead article for more information.

Ngā mihi  
Michelle

### Subscribe

Anyone interested in rural health is welcome to subscribe to this newsletter. Keep up to date with us by [subscribing now](#).

### 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

**If you buy health and safety advice, make sure it's the right advice**

Good health and safety practice is not something you can just buy off the shelf, and farmers need to build health and safety into everyday activity on farm. WorkSafe's Agriculture Programme Manager, Al McCone, says while many farmers will want to get consultants in to give them expert advice, there is no single product or document that is a silver bullet for farm safety. (Worksafe)

[Read more.](#)

### Research & Resources

**Health & Safety at Work Act 2015 – Implications for Employers re After Work Drinks.** *Not strictly a rural issue but some useful thoughts and advice for all business owners and workers.*

The introduction of the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 (HSWA) is provoking a range of reactions - from the ridiculous to the sublime, and mostly somewhere in between. One example is the approach that some workplaces are taking to after-work drinks, or to the availability of alcohol more generally in the workplace or at work-related events. (Buddle Findlay).

[Read more](#)

**A pilot video conference group stress management program in cancer survivors: lessons learned. Journal of Rural & Remote Health, 15 June 2016**

This study explores the effectiveness of psychosocial interventions following cancer treatments. It looks at the additional challenges for people living in rural areas and concludes that while telehealth solutions are feasible for survivorship programmes, and are desired by patients, obstacles such as technology and interpersonal relationships can interfere with their implementation and efficacy, especially in a rural setting.

[Read more](#)

### Events Watch

**Rural & Remote Scientific Symposium, Canberra, Australia, 6-7 September 2016.**  
[Find out more](#)

**National Rural Health Conferenc., Wellington, 30 March to 2 April 2017.**

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