

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: Dr Chris Henry reports back from Kaikoura, Don Cameron, Mayor of Ruapehu and wife assaulted, Latest update on Telecommunication networks after recent Quakes, Agrarian revolution is on way to farms, 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](#)



We thank our partners.



Don Cameron, Mayor of Ruapehu and wife assaulted

Our thoughts and best wishes go out to Don and Phyl Cameron who were pointlessly attacked on Tuesday evening. They were both left with cuts and bruises after trying to stop thieves making off with props for a community play. Don is the Mayor of Ruapehu and a much valued member of RHĀNZ. Awful stuff.

[Read more](#)

Latest update on Telecommunication networks after recent Quakes

Last week I gave an update on the restoration of services to Kaikoura and surrounding district as it was then (Wed 16th). Since then the telco's successfully patched Kaikoura into the Aqualink cable and all broadband and voice services were restored (with a few minor tweaks after the event) by 11pm that night - the 16th.

Service to the Waiau exchange was also repaired after a 1km fibre replacement cable was helicoptered in. We should recognise that as pretty good going given it was only 3 days after a very significant event cutting off the town. All three mobile companies have since advised that all their sites are up and running either using the new link, or with microwave or satellite backhaul in place temporarily.

Chorus advise that they only have a couple of outstanding issues with 2 DSL cabinets which should be restored today (Thursday 24th) and a couple of remote CMAR (Country Multi-Access Radio) links which they are using helicopters to get to today as well.

One network we didn't mention last week was the Vocus network. Remember they have the fibre transmission network they acquired when they purchased FX Networks. That network runs inland rather than along the coast so wasn't as affected as the other networks. Some of their sites lost power but with generators for backup they remained up and running.

One word sticks out through all this - diversity. So, if you're an organisation that relies on your comms channels (and who doesn't these days) perhaps now is a good time to ask your provider about how their network provides you with diversity and surety of supply.



Craig Young
CEO of TUANZ and
RHĀNZ Deputy Chair

In fact - as part of our 2020 Project we interviewed Dr Clare Barber of Spark and she mentioned diversity - you can get a preview of her interview as part of the video shown at our recent 30th year celebration here (you may need to be logged into a Google account to see it) prior to it being part of the new website we will be launching in December.

Media Watch

Agrarian revolution is on way to farms

Interesting article by KPMG's agribusiness head, Ian Proudfoot. He talks about farming practices being turn on their heads within a few years as a consequence of "the megatrends unseating conventional commodity-driven production from agricultural countries".

He also talks about health systems groaning under the chronic disease burden and how Governments around the world are acknowledging the value of keeping people healthy (of which food consumption is key) rather than curing them in later life. (Farmers Weekly NZ)

[Read more.](#)

Medical student an asset to the regions

Practising medicine in rural New Zealand has proved a memorable experience for Gisborne woman Makere Beale, who graduated as a doctor last week. Ms Beale, born and raised in Gisborne, has cultural ties to Ngati Porou and Te Whanau-a-Apanui.

In her fifth year of medical training at the University of Auckland, she was part of the Pakawakawa programme at Whangarei Hospital from January to October last year. (Gisborne Herald)

[Read more](#)

Rural women back schools against online study

Rural Women New Zealand is worried changes to legislation around education will see children choosing online teaching over rural schools. The group has issued a submission to the Government expressing concerns about the impact of the Education (Update) Amendment Bill for rural schools.

"The risk of online charter schools diverting both students and much-needed Government funding away from rural schools is something we are concerned about." said national president Wendy McGowan. "Rural schools perform a vital role in their communities, yet many are struggling to cope with the unique challenges of providing education in isolated areas. (The Country)

[Read more](#)

Kids face three hours on school bus as some new routes prove 'undriveable'

Changes to rural school bus routes mean young pupils will spend three hours a day on winding country roads, which a worried principal says will leave them tired and less able to learn.

Changes to the bus commute at the start of next year are expected to affect 23 schools around provincial New Zealand, after the Ministry of Education quietly changed the rules to allow buses to pick up kids as early as 7am. (Sunday Star Times)

[Read more](#)


Research & Resources Watch

Antimicrobial resistance in New Zealand: the evidence and a call for action NZ Med J. 2016 Oct 28; 129(1444):103-110.

AMR has been cited as the most significant health issue of the 21st century with potentially serious consequences for the health of global populations, including New Zealand, and its health system. Proactive approaches to combating AMR through better understanding of the causes will inform measures required to reduce potential threats. The Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP) identifies three pathogens where increased resistance is of concern and recommends collaborative responses to prevent emerging threats to New Zealand populations. An international best practice AMR programme would include antimicrobial stewardship (AMS) building on evidence, policy, organisational support, multidisciplinary teams and patient experience. The planned Ministry of Health-led collaborative approach to developing a national strategy and programme will provide sector direction. Implementation will require extensive engagement with the health sector and communities to develop joint solutions that prevent further increases in AMR.

[Read more](#)

Rural Voters



Last Thursday Council members were all set to present our Election 2017 Rural Health Road Map to politicians but Mother Nature had other plans. Following the impact of the Kaikoura earthquake on the capital and the subsequent weather bomb, we all agreed that it would be better to postpone our Day in Parliament until the New Year.

We are in the process of rescheduling for February and have decided to delay the public release of our Rural Health Road Map until then.

There is certainly a keen interest to hear from us and so there should be.

Chris Lewis, Waikato Federated Farmers President, wrote an interesting [opinion piece](#) recently titled "politicians should listen, or expect a rural backlash". Chris says the "big political swings seen in the UK and USA were the revenge of the rural voter and that politicians need to connect with rural voters if they are to avoid an anti-establishment vote in next year's general election". Indeed.

Kudos to Rod Dury, Xero CEO, who recently [announced his plans](#) to establish an office in the Hawke's Bay saying that "creating jobs in the regions is an obligation for all Kiwi businesses" and that "If we want New Zealand to be better we've got to get the regions strong". We couldn't agree more.

A region under immense pressure at the moment is North Canterbury. This morning I spoke with Dr Chris Henry, Council member and one of the lead GPs in Kaikoura for an update 12 days on from the magnitude 7.8 earthquake. Chris reports great support from a whole range of people and organisations, including the DHB, with good numbers of doctors, nurses, administrators and mental health services on the ground. He paid special tribute to rural clinicians who, with their breadth of professional experience and understanding of rural realities, are able to deal with anything that comes through the door.

Determining rosters is particularly challenging at the moment as it's impossible to anticipate demand. Keeping on top of business as usual is hard enough but there is now huge amounts of anxiety about house damage, ground damage and tourist industry damage.

One of the key differences between the Christchurch earthquake of 2011 and this one, is the relatively small house damage but the enormous land damage – much of which is uninsurable. This is a further burden – financially and emotionally – for rural families just coming off the back of the worst drought in New Zealand's history.

Transport issues have had a major impact on farms, as have broken irrigation pipes, kilometres of destroyed fences and huge earth movement. There are still pockets of North Kaikoura where access is very difficult. Chris reports that farmers from all over the country have been helping out their South Island farming mates and it is reassuring to see so much good will.

However, he cautions that the earthquake may have been a mortal blow to some older farmers. Farmers who have worked the family farm for decades, having retired to the family homestead and who have now seen the land so badly damaged they believe it won't be recoverable in their lifetime.

Having the energy to "start again" may be beyond some people and this will need careful monitoring and support.

Such is the scale of land movement and road blockages in the top of the South Island, Chris believes that Government urgently needs to give the Canterbury District Health Board and the Nelson Marlborough District Health Board the power and flexibility to work outside their mandated boundaries.

Tomorrow Chris and his family begin an epic 10 hour drive (circling the top of the South Island in order to get back down to the Clarence Valley) to see what is salvageable from their home. We wish them all the very best for what will surely be a harrowing trip.

We leave the last word to Chris' daughter, Chessie, who has written a most [poignant story](#) about how going home will never be the same.

Arohanui
Michelle

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

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Events Watch

National Rural Health Conference, Wellington, 30 March to 2 April 2017. [Find out more](#)

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