

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

In this issue: Nominations for the RGPToY Award now open, key dates for RHĀNZ members confirmed plus a selection of relevant media and research articles...

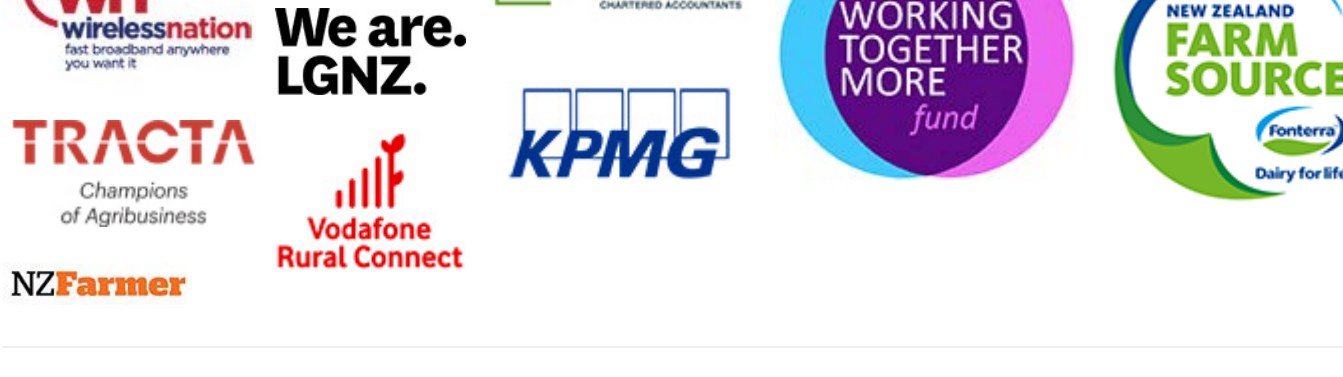
Who are RHĀNZ?

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.



IMPORTANT EVENTS FOR RHĀNZ MEMBERS 2017

The next four months are set to be busy with RHĀNZ and rural health related events. We'll be providing more information on each over the coming weeks. However, in the meantime, please note dates in your diaries and circulate amongst your colleagues/networks.

RuralFestNZ – 25 May 2017

RuralFest NZ 2017 will be held in Wellington on Thursday 25 May 2017 and all Named Representatives are required to attend. Being election year, the day's format will be slightly different to last year's event. The focus will be on working together to keep our five top priorities "hot" as we lead up to the general election in September. We will also be looking at how the RHĀNZ network can help keep your organisation's top priorities alive. The day will once again be held in partnership with Federated Farmers and will incorporate our AGM, followed by dinner and drinks. Please hold this date in your diaries.

Rural Connectivity Symposium – 23 May 2017

Improving rural connectivity is one of our top election priorities and the Rural Connectivity Symposium, to be held in Wellington on Tuesday 23 May, 2017 provides us with the perfect platform for bringing the issues and solutions to the fore. We'll be interacting with politicians, economists, internet service providers, farmers and other rural entrepreneurs as well as rural health professionals. The Rural Connectivity Symposium will be held in partnership with TUANZ and NZ Young Farmers. The next day, Wednesday 24 May, 2017 New Zealand Health IT and Health Informatics NZ are holding their "Emerging Tech in Health" day. While the programmes will be separate there will be overlaps and synergies, plus a good discount available for those wishing to attend both events. The five CEOs are all working together to ensure a two-day Health IT/Connectivity bonanza. We'll let you know as soon as registrations go live for these two events. In the meantime, pencil your diaries.

Fieldays 2017 – Health Village, 14-17 June 2017

This year's Fieldays at Mystery Creek, Hamilton will see the creation of an exciting new Health Village. Mobile Health is leading – and underwriting – the Health Village with organisational assistance from RHĀNZ and the New Zealand Rural General Practice Network.

We are now looking for organisations with a vested interest in the health & wellbeing of rural communities to join us in the Health Village. The costs of the site, marquee, landscaping and furniture will be covered by Mobile Health. However, in order to secure space, you will need to come up with an informative and interactive display. There are also opportunities to be involved with our live talks in the specially created health "auditorium."

For further information please see the attached [flyer](#) or contact Michelle Thompson at ce@rhaanz.org.nz or Mark Eager at Mark@mobilehealth.co.nz

RURAL GENERAL PRACTICE TEAM OF THE YEAR AWARD 2017 – Nominations now open!

The search is on for New Zealand's best Rural General Practice Team of the Year as judged by the community. We are looking for stories from patients which demonstrate how their rural general practice teams go "above and beyond" the call of duty in providing health services to their rural communities.

We are delighted once again to be offering this award in partnership with the New Zealand Rural General Practice Network (NZRGPN), the Health Promotion Agency (HPA) and New Zealand Doctor. The award, now in its third year, will be announced at the National Rural Health Conference in Wellington as part of the formal Awards ceremony on 31 March 2017.

The winning practice will receive a prize up to the value of \$1500 and the winning nominator will receive a prize up to the value of \$500. All entries received electronically will also go into a draw to win a \$100 voucher.

Entries are open until close of business on Friday, March 10, 2017. Please encourage your family, friends and colleagues to make a nomination for this very worthy Award. All rural general practices have been supplied with postcards or entries can be made online here: www.rhaanz.org.nz/ruralgp

Media Watch

Hurunui's recovery plan tackles anxiety in quake affected kids

Rural children in North Canterbury are suffering from quake-related anxiety, sleepless nights, and separation struggles. Three months after the Kaikoura quake rocked the country, the Hurunui District Council has partnered with the Brainwave Trust Aotearoa, to address increasing reports of anxiety among children and young people. Hurunui District Council Deputy Mayor Marie Black said the earthquake recovery was much about supporting people, as it was about fixing roads and buildings. (Stuff)

[Read more](#)

Govt loosens restrictions on medicinal cannabis

Approval for cannabis-based products for medicinal use will no longer require ministerial sign-off, under changes announced by the government. Associate Health Minister Peter Dunne has delegated decision-making for the prescribing of all cannabis-based products to the Ministry of Health. (Radio New Zealand)

[Read more](#)

Sir Owen Glenn makes \$5 million pledge to Waikato medical school proposal

Sir Owen Glenn is pledging \$5 million towards the creation of a medical school in Waikato. The 76-year-old philanthropist made the announcement at a function at Waikato University on Tuesday. The medical school proposal, a joint initiative by Waikato University and the Waikato District Health Board, aims to reverse a shortfall of primary care doctors, especially in provincial and rural areas. (Stuff)

[Read more](#)

New Zealand rural urban divide alive and well – opinion piece, Doug Edmeades

The writer argues both urban and rural people need to take responsibility for keeping rivers clean. Less finger pointing and more acknowledgement of our similarities is key. (NZ Farmer)

[Read more](#)

Rural sector to answer critics

Farming leaders are discussing a co-ordinated response to the increasingly frequent and strident attacks on the rural sector. Few details were being released but Federated Farmers president William Rolleston confirmed he met sector leaders before Christmas to discuss developing a more co-ordinated response.

"We need to make sure we're not all duplicating our efforts and that we're doing things each player is good at doing," he said.

Attacks on the sector had been coming thick and fast, ranging from allegations of mistreatment of bobby calves, the use of water for irrigation, the degradation of waterways, claims, subsequently proven to be incorrect, that farmers had taken vast areas of Crown-owned land on the banks of rivers and opposition to rodeos.

KPMG global agribusiness head Ian Proudfoot said in his home city of Auckland any talk about the primary sector was negative. (Farmers Weekly)

[Read more](#)

Banks supporting drought-hit farmers

Most major banks are offering some assistance for drought stricken farmers. ANZ Bank was first off the blocks, announcing an assistance package for Northland farmers after the drought declaration. (Dairy News)

[Read more](#)

Extra police to make rural communities safer

Minister for Primary Industries, Nathan Guy, talks to NZ Farmer about his priorities for rural NZ over the coming months - more earthquake support and law enforcement are top of the list. (NZ Farmer)

[Read more](#)

New mobile something to grin about

A new state-of-the-art mobile unit has joined MDHB's fleet, and is set to spread healthy grins throughout the district. The new single chair unit, was christened with the name In for a Grin, following in the footsteps of similarly named units such as Tooth Booth and Teeth R Us.

This mobile unit has several key benefits over the previous model it replaces. Clinical Director of Dental Services Dr Philip Marshall says: "This new mobile unit will serve the young people of our district well. The bigger size alone is a great improvement, with more room making it more comfortable for patients, and giving staff more room to do their work. (MidCentral DHB)

[Read more](#)

Dr Tom: Don't suffer alone, talk to someone

My first patient on my first shift working at the Emergency Department for 2017 had the diagnosis "suicidal" on the hospital screen. While many of us celebrated bobby calves, and family, others harboured dark thoughts of escaping this mortal coil. Feelings of isolation and loneliness can be made worse at this time of year and many factors contribute to someone thinking about taking their own life. (Stuff)

[Read more](#)

Three of my colleagues have killed themselves. Medicines dark secret can't go on

A junior doctor in Sydney writes about the crushing pressure experienced by doctors in training. In the year it has taken for me to complete my training as a junior doctor three of my colleagues have killed themselves. These are just the ones I've heard about. (Stuff)

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Important Diary Notes



This fortnight it gives me great pleasure to announce some important RHĀNZ and rural health related events happening between now and June this year. We've set the dates for RuralFest NZ, the Rural Connectivity Symposium and the inaugural "Health Village" at Mystery Creek Fieldays. We've also launched the Rural General Practice Team of the Year Award for 2017. Details are provided across the page as part of our lead story.

Please make sure you diarise the dates and let your colleagues know as well. Attendance at RuralFest NZ is a requirement for Named Representatives.

Extra pleasing about these events is that we are fulfilling our promise of working together to utilise the substantial expertise within our broader membership and other key organisations.

NZRGPN, TUANZ, Mobile Health, NZYF, Federated Farmers, NZHIT, HINZ, HPA and NZDoctor – it's a pleasure to be working alongside you to host events over the next four months. And of course, none of this would be possible without the support of all our members and strategic supporters.

The learnings, sharings and collaborations possible within our networks are significant and we shouldn't lose sight of the power of a united rural voice, ever, but especially not in election year.

This week I came across two media articles (included in Media Watch) expressing concern about the growing divide between rural and urban communities in New Zealand. In particular, the increasingly negative talk amongst city dwellers regarding the primary sector. The authors are calling for less finger pointing by all of us and a more coordinated, non-emo-tive response to the important issues facing the health and wellbeing of our people, animals and land. This is sage advice. We inhabit a wonderful country, with a population size that of Sydney. Surely there is a constructive way forward here and while RHĀNZ wasn't set up initially to tackle these issues, when you consider the growth and composition of our membership in 2017, perhaps it is not impossible to think we could be part of – or broker - these bigger discussions and solutions.

Be interested in your thoughts.

Cheers and best wishes, 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

Subscribe

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

Media Watch

NZ Rural Singles - helping rural people find love

Aimee Smith is hoping to bring people together with her Facebook page devoted to helping rural folk find love and companionship.

Aimee herself is a dairy farmer and no stranger to the difficulties this can bring when trying to find that special someone. (NZ Herald)

[Read more](#)

NZ Post stamps out Saturday letter service for rural families

Saturday's stroll to pick up the mail at the letterbox will be a largely fruitless exercise for rural families on April 1. New Zealand Post will discontinue Saturday letter deliveries because letter volumes have dropped. The state-owned postal service was given consent by the Government to move to five day delivery in rural areas in 2013.

Initially about a quarter of rural delivery customers were put on five day deliveries from Monday to Friday and the rest retained a six day delivery service. From April, all letter deliveries or mail pickups on Saturdays will cease for rural customers. (NZ Farmer)

[Read more](#)

Research & Resources Watch

'Disparities in dental health of rural Australians: hospitalisation rates and utilisation of public dental services in three communities in North Queensland'

This study examined hospitalisation and public dental service records and found that residents of rural communities in Queensland, Australia, experience poorer oral health and are a greater risk of hospitalisation for dental conditions compared with the whole of Queensland. Although public dental services account for a small proportion of all dental care across the state, service utilisation data provide a unique insight into the population groups that may not be accessing public dental services.

In the rural context, more effective use of the local workforce and a flexible approach to funding models could have a positive impact on access to dental care.

[Read more](#)

'Remote eye care screening for rural veterans with Technology-based Eye Care Services: a quality improvement project'

This article reports on the introduction of an asynchronous telemedicine partnership (TECS) that allowed rural veterans to receive eye screening in their primary care office, rather than travelling to a specialist center. The program increased access and reduced healthcare costs for both the healthcare provider and the veteran.

[Read more](#)

Ibobbly mobile health intervention for suicide prevention in Australian Indigenous youth: a pilot randomised controlled trial

Rates of youth suicide in Australian Indigenous communities are 4 times the national youth average and demand innovative interventions. Historical and persistent disadvantage is coupled with multiple barriers to help seeking. Mobile phone applications offer the opportunity to deliver therapeutic interventions directly to individuals in remote communities.

This pilot study, published in BMJ Open, aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of a self-help mobile app (ibobbly) targeting suicidal ideation, depression, (psychological) distress and impulsivity among Indigenous youth in remote Australia.

[Read more](#)

Events Watch

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

[Read more](#)

A World of Rural Health, International Conference, Cairns, Australia, 26 April – 2 May 2017

[Read more](#)