

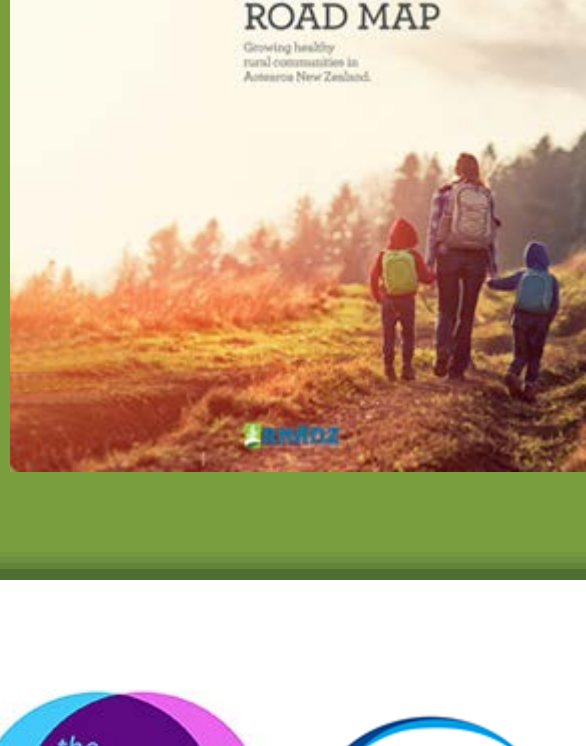
**Nau mai. Haere mai. Ki te pānui o RHĀNZ mō tēnei wiki (Te Reo for welcome to the RHĀNZ Newsletter for this week).**

**In this issue:** Making rural health a key election issue in 2017, registrations open for the Rural Connectivity Symposium and the Emerging Tech in Health Symposium, one week out from the National Rural Health Conference 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.



### Registrations open for the 2017 Rural Connectivity Symposium & the Emerging Tech in Health Symposium

Over the last five years the current Rural Broadband Initiative (RBI) has been in the process of being rolled out by Chorus and Vodafone, bringing better broadband capability to those living and working outside urban centres. The programme has the promise of connecting over 95% of rural schools to fibre, and fixed wireless broadband capable of 5 Mbps to over 85% of rural households and late in 2015 the rural connectivity target was increased to 50Mbps by 2025. However, rural NZ is yet to see the full impact of improved RBI capability and there remain gaps in coverage and uptake.

This year's Rural Connectivity Symposium, combined with an election year, gives you the perfect opportunity to help shape the future of rural connectivity. The focus of the 2017 event is to hear from a range of speakers of how connectivity is helping improve emergency and disaster responses in rural New Zealand, rural health outcomes, rural business opportunities and rural living in general. We look forward to you joining us in this critical event.

In 2017 the Rural Connectivity Symposium is also part of an exciting programme where two individual days are being linked together to strengthen the message of the need to ensure communities and individuals are able to "live, work and play well" where they choose in NZ. Providing services and care "Closer to Home" demands that we address the many challenges this places on us to think at least 10 years ahead and work back from there.

Day two (24th May) is the Emerging Tech in Health day brought to you by NZ Health IT and Health Informatics NZ and challenges us to look at how healthcare will be provided in ten years' time, especially closer to home, what part technology will play in this and the need for the country's infrastructure to support all of this. People living in rural communities have specific challenges when it comes to their healthcare and the providers of this care are having to design and implement new ways that meet the demands of a diverse population whilst facing chronic workforce shortages and increased pressure to perform. The solutions for rural communities are also transferable to urban areas and technology is the conduit by which all of this can be brought together.

You can choose to [register here](#) for the Rural Connectivity Symposium, as well as take advantage of the special pricing to attend both days of this two day programme. Click on the button "tickets" to do this.

You can also [register here](#) for the Emerging Tech in Health Symposium here, as well as take advantage of the special pricing to attend both days of this two day programme. Click on the button "tickets" to do this.

We also have some excellent sponsorship opportunities associated with both these events. If you're interested please [click here](#).

### Mobile surgical bus celebrates 15 years on the road

It may look almost like any other truck - but inside there's an operating theatre. More than 21335 people have been operated onboard - in 24 different towns. New Zealand's mobile surgical "bus" has just celebrated 15 years' serving rural communities - where accessing health care can often present with issues. Watch this [neat video](#) by New Zealand Herald, Local Focus Journalist, Kaysha Brownlie.

### NATIONAL RURAL HEALTH CONFERENCE 2017

The National Rural Health Conference 2017, 30 March to 2 April 2017, Wellington is just over a week away. There is a fantastic programme lined up including some excellent pre-conference workshops. Check out the [Friday programme](#) which incorporates the RHAANZ concurrent sessions, including the launch of our Framework to Improve Mental Health and Addiction Outcomes in Rural NZ and our Farm-related suicide research in NZ.

We are also holding a safeTALK workshop as part of the pre-conference workshops. These three events are free to attend but you must register. Details and times below.

**- Framework to Improve Mental Health and Addiction Outcomes in Rural NZ – Friday 31 March – 1.15-1.55pm**  
We look forward to sharing the recently completed Framework with RHĀNZ members and Conference delegates at this session.

**- Farm related Suicides in New Zealand – 2007 – 2015 - Friday 31 March – 2 – 2.40pm**  
Dr Annette Beautrais will be releasing the key findings on her analysis of coronial records relating to farm-related suicides over the past decade.

**- safeTALK workshop – Thursday 30 March -1:00- 5pm**  
For those of you who haven't managed to attend one of our rural suicide prevention workshops, Dr Annette Beautrais has kindly agreed to hold a special safeTALK workshop as part of the pre-conference workshop programme.

[Click here](#) for the link and process to register for these events. This will take you to the first page of registration. Once you have completed some personal details, choose the option "Thursday Workshop Only" then select safeTALK workshop or choose the last option on the page "RHĀNZ sessions" to register for the Friday afternoon launch of the Rural Mental Health and Addiction Framework and Farm-related suicide research findings.

Any problems registering for these events please contact us. The other pre-conference workshop of note to RHĀNZ members is the **Rural Research Day, 30 March 2017**. This event is all day and there is a cost to attend. [Click here](#) to view the research day programme.

### Media Watch

**Rural internet moves to be slow**  
Rather than being a revolution in data speed and coverage the next generation of mobile is likely to be an evolution coming to rural New Zealand later rather than sooner. Telecommunications Users Association (TUANZ) chief executive Craig Young had an insight to the advances in 5G mobile after attending the giant Mobile World Congress in Barcelona.

"There was a fair bit of discussion on 5G and you got two sides of the technology, the urban and the rural issues. "For rural, what was being talked about was its application with the Internet of Things (IoT) being the big driver for it." (NZ Farmers Weekly)

[Read more.](#)

**Tribunal to hear claims of Crown treaty breaches harming Maori health**  
Maori doctors are to get their day in the Waitangi Tribunal, nine years after lodging a claim of Crown treaty breaches damaging to Maori health. Many health-related Treaty of Waitangi claims will be advanced this year under one overarching Health Services and Outcomes Kaupapa Inquiry. (NZ Doctor - subscriber only)

[Read more](#)

**New national school of rural health proposed to address chronic shortage of rural health professionals**  
The creation of a new national School of Rural Health (SRH) is being investigated by New Zealand's two medical schools at the University of Otago and The University of Auckland, in association with the Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners (RNZCGP) and the New Zealand Rural General Practice Network (NZRGPN) in a joint initiative which has the potential to begin to address the country's chronic shortage of rural health professionals.

Professor Peter Crampton, Pro-Vice-Chancellor of Health Sciences and Dean of the Otago Medical School at the University of Otago, Professor Warwick Bagg, Head of the Medical Programme at The University of Auckland and Dr Tim Malloy, President of RNZCGP announced the initiative today.

"Vibrant rural communities provide a rich learning environment for educating our health professionals and working in those communities during training will attract new graduates and returning health professionals to the rural sector," said Professor Crampton.

The vision is for rural communities, including iwi, to be at the centre of rural health professional education and research. (RNZCGPs)

[Read more](#)

**Mobile surgical bus marks 15 years and 21,300 operations**  
New Zealand's mobile surgical bus tomorrow marks its 15-year anniversary after more than 21,300 operations in 24 towns. The mobile operating theatre marked its first day of surgery at Te Puia Springs, 100km north of Gisborne back on March 8, 2002.

A report by health consultants, Sapere Group, found up to 300 patients annually would probably miss out on surgery if it was not for the mobile surgical unit, with its state-of-the-art surgical operating theatre. The bus receives \$4 million annually from the Ministry of Health.

The bus runs on a five-week rotation system around New Zealand, carrying out operations at Kaihi, Parkarewa, Warkworth, Pukekohe, Te Puia, Wairoa, Taumarunui, Waipukurau, Taihape, Hawera, Levin, Dannevirke, Kapiti, Featherston, Takaka, Motueka, Buller, Waikari, Rangiora, Oamaru, Clyde, Queenstown, Balclutha and Gore. (Voxy)

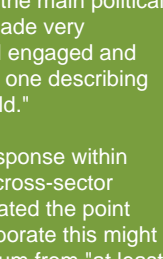
[Read more](#)

**Lack of jobs for spouses keeping young GP workforce out of regions and rural NZ**  
A lack of jobs for partners, financial instability and a lack of experience may be keeping young doctors in New Zealand's cities and away from smaller hubs. (NZ Doctor – subscriber only)

[Read more](#)

### Making rural health a key election issue in 2017

Last Thursday, 16 March 2017, a delegation of RHĀNZ Council members took our [Rural Health Road Map](#) into Parliament.



The Rural Health Road Map presents the top issues impacting the health and wellbeing of rural communities in NZ – as determined by members at last year's RuralFest. We outlined the solutions required to address the issues and made some bold calls to action for Government.

We met with representatives of all the main political parties and in all cases we were made very welcome. The politicians were well engaged and were enthusiastically positive, with one describing the Rural Health Road Map as "gold".

With regard to a cross-sectorial response within Government – so as to mirror the cross-sector nature of our Alliance – all appreciated the point and had varying views on how elaborate this might be. Responses covered the spectrum from "at least a rural desk in the Ministry of Health" to "A ministry of Rural Affairs", with one politician saying that the latter suggestion was one of the best ideas he'd heard in a long-time.

We received significant national media coverage of our day in Parliament, including making the lead story on [TV1 News that night](#). Our chairperson, Dr Martin London, made the [TV1 Breakfast Programme](#), requiring a wakeup call more suited to dairy farming. We also followed up with another [press release](#) on Sunday morning which again had us run off our feet.

All parties are keen for follow up, with some requesting further meetings. We are in the process of seeking individual meetings with the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Health and the Minister for Primary Industries. We will need to keep the focus on rural health and wellbeing individually and collectively between now and September 23rd. The proof of our success will be when we see our issues and solutions being reflected in this year's election policies.

We will be continuing these discussions and ways of making our issues "hotter" leading up to the election at RuralFest NZ. If you are the named representative for your organisation please make sure you can be in Wellington all day Thursday 25th May 2017, including dinner. The 25th May is also Budget Day (clever that) which gives us another excellent opportunity to strengthen our messaging.

Cheers and best wishes,  
Michelle

### Named Representative for Whakatane District Council

We welcome Alison Silcock as the new Named Representative for Whakatane District Council. Alison lives on a dairy farm in Galleatea and is a relief teacher in her spare time. Welcome Alison and a big thank you to Judy Turner, Deputy Mayor for holding this role since our inception back in 2012.

### 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)

### Subscribe

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

### Media Watch

**Kawhia GP a rarity that University of Waikato med school could fix**  
Kawhia GP John Burton is a rarity. A scion of Auckland's private school system, he has spent his career in a rural community. Today, only 15 per cent of New Zealand medical graduates choose to become a GP. Even fewer opt to work in a rural practice. That's something the Waikato University, together with the Waikato District Health Board, is proposing to fix with the country's third medical school, now pending government approval. (Stuff)

[Read more](#)

**Rural Women to be on new gun council**  
Rural Women New Zealand is pleased to be included on the recently formed Firearms Safety Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, according to Rural Women New Zealand national president Fiona Gower.

The Firearms Safety Council of Aotearoa New Zealand includes shooting clubs, associations and affiliated organisations like Rural Women New Zealand (RWNZ) concerned about community safety with firearms.

[Read more](#)

**Ian McKelvie: Games a celebration of rural heritage**  
Rural and provincial New Zealand got to show off last weekend. According to Margaret Kouvelis, whether you live in the city or you live in the country, it's important to celebrate our agribusiness. The aim of the rural games is to give back something of our legacy to the next generation.

A lot of what makes us who we are is based on our rural roots and values. It's our "give it a go" attitude, our Kiwi ingenuity, our No8 wire mentality, our sense of fun and adventure - it's even the modesty that is reflected by our great athletes.

[Read more](#)

**Beautiful countryside hides ugly truth of social isolation, poor health and poverty, report says**  
Rural communities are being "neglected" in the face increasing digital exclusion and a breakdown in social networks and transport links, a report has warned.

The view that people who live in the countryside are rich and enjoy a rural idyll masks pockets of deprivation and poor health — both of which have been exacerbated by lack of access the Internet — according to the study by the Local Government Association (LGA) and Public Health England (PHE).

[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](#)

**Dairy Women's Network Conference, Queenstown, 11-12 May 2017.**  
[Read more](#)

**Rural Connectivity Symposium 23 May 2017, Westpac Stadium Wellington.**  
[Read more](#)

**Emerging Tech in Health - 24 May 2017, Westpac Stadium Wellington.**  
[Read more](#)

**RuralFestNZ - 25 May 2017, Federated Farmers, Wellington (for named representatives only).**