

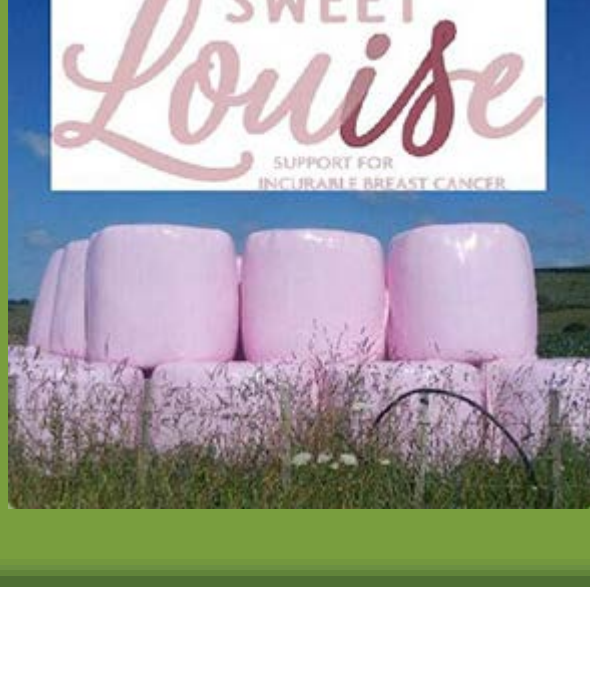
Nau mai. Haere mai. Ki te pānui o RHĀNZ mō tēnei wiki (Te Reo for welcome to the RHĀNZ Newsletter for this week).

In this issue: New interim chairperson announced, our new workshop "Safe Hands, Safe Plans" takes shape, rural health events galore plus a selection of relevant media and research articles...

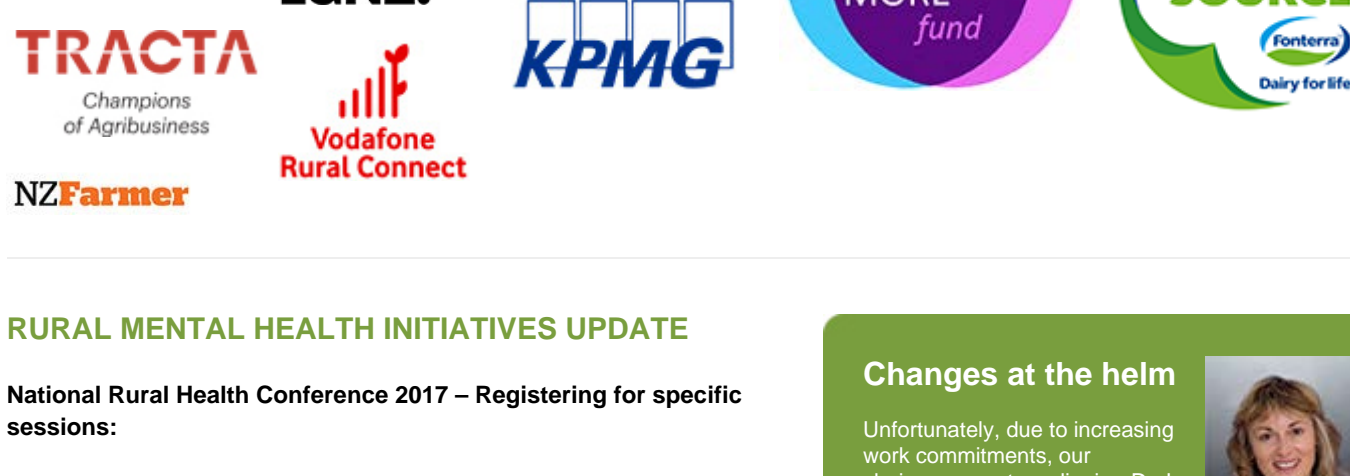
Who are RHĀNZ?

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.



RURAL MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVES UPDATE

National Rural Health Conference 2017 – Registering for specific sessions:

RHĀNZ is holding three significant mental health and wellbeing events as part of the NRHC 2017:

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.

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.

There is no charge to attend these events but you will need to register. The link and process to register for these events follows: innovators.eventsair.com/nrhc-2017/registration/Site/Register

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.

Phase 2 workshop- 'SAFE HANDS, SAFE PLANS'

Yes! The full day workshop that RHĀNZ has been contracted by the Ministry of Health to develop, that we have all been calling the 'Phase II workshop' has finally been given a name:

'SAFE HANDS, SAFE PLANS'

This full day workshop was born out of requests from the hundreds of people who participated in last year's programme of safeTALK workshops who wanted a workshop to help them provide care and support for people who are mentally distressed, in crisis and may be at risk of suicide.

Through fantastic support from many RHĀNZ friends and colleagues, the workshop is in the final stages of development. We are currently putting together a programme of 10 workshops that will be held during April and May 2017 and will let you know about these as soon as the details are finalised.

Mental Health and Addiction Workforce Action Plan 2017 – 2021

The Ministry of Health has released its Mental Health and Addictions Workforce Development Action Plan 2017. The Action Plan identifies priority areas and actions that will contribute to enabling people to thrive and experience wellbeing wherever they live and whatever their circumstances.

It places a focus not only on the ongoing development of the mental health and addiction workforce but across the overall health workforce. It recognises the importance of a strong and capable primary care sector and enhanced community workforce to improving outcomes.

While it is disappointing that the Action Plan does not specifically speak of the unique needs of rural communities, we can be confident that the RHĀNZ Rural Mental Health Initiatives, are well aligned to its overall direction.

The challenge to RHĀNZ members, friends and colleagues is to ensure that the implementation of the Action Plan is inclusive of the needs of our rural health and social sector workforce.

The equitable delivery of initiatives and associated resourcing and investment across priority populations including rural NZ is where the integrity of any health and social sector strategy is truly tested.



Please feel free to keep us up to date with how this Mental Health and Addiction Workforce Action Plan, 2017 comes to life in your area.

Marie Daly
Programme Manager

National Rural Health Conference – 26 days to go!

There are 26 days left before this flagship rural health event takes place. [The programme](#) is finalised and there is a great line up of speakers organised.

There is also a good selection of pre-conference workshops on Thursday 30 March. Two in particular are the safeTALK workshop profiled above and the Rural Research Day. [Click here](#) to view the research day programme.

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 – 7 days to go until nominations close

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:

<http://www.rhaanz.org.nz/ruralgp/>

Sweet Louise - #pinkbales photo competition

Sweet Louise www.sweetlouise.co.nz - an organisation supporting women with incurable breast cancer - is once again running their Pink Bales Photo Competition.

Be in to win....take your best photo of #pinkbales and use hashtag #pinkbales or #sweetlouise. The one with the most likes will win @Skellerup Red Bandol for the family, wine and @Loaf goodies.

Good on you Agpac, Skellerup and Loaf for making this competition happen.

Media Watch

Regions must face challenge of population decline – report

A report predicts populations in many regions will drop or stagnate within three decades. While centres such as Auckland, Hamilton, Wellington, Nelson, Canterbury and Queenstown are set for growth, the report painted a bleak picture for most other regions.

These included Rotorua, Taupō, Gisborne, Hawke's Bay, Kaipara, Southland and the West Coast.

Maxim Institute chief executive Alex Penk said the government's regional development programmes focused solely on economic growth - but the population trends posed a big challenge on that front.

[Read more.](#)

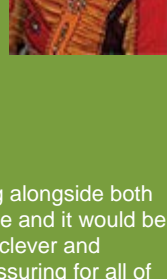
Water quality at the heart of healthy rural communities

The quality of New Zealand's waterways and drinking water cannot be compromised and the health and wellbeing of people in rural communities must not be put at risk, even in the short term, says New Zealand Rural General Practice Network chairperson Sharon Hansen.

Ms Hansen was commenting following the recent (February 23) freshwater announcement by Environment Minister Nick Smith, which set a target of 90 per cent of New Zealand's lakes and rivers meeting swimmable water quality standards by 2040, alongside releasing new policy, regulations, information maps and funding to help achieve the new goal. (Voxy)

[Read more](#)

Changes at the helm



Unfortunately, due to increasing work commitments, our chairperson extraordinaire, Dr Jo Scott-Jones, has decided to step down from the role, effective next Monday. As an interim measure Council has appointed Dr Martin London, a rural GP from the South Island, to the role through until the AGM in May this year.

I have had the pleasure of working alongside both Jo and Martin over the past decade and it would be hard to find two more passionate, clever and committed rural stalwarts. It is reassuring for all of us to know that the mantle is being passed to safe hands. Many of you will know Martin through his work as our Medical Director, where he provides guidance for our rural mental health initiatives including oversight of our network of clinical champions, and through his attendance at key events like RuralFest NZ.

Jo describes Martin as "in many ways the progenitor of RHĀNZ. He is a long-standing advocate for the need for community groups with interests in rural communities to share ideas, strategies and energy – just as they do every day in all rural communities – to build rural resilience and community cohesion at national level."

"RHĀNZ has been a passion and I have been really privileged to be part of its start and to help it grow to be successful in so many ways. I know Martin will do a great job, there is a strong executive committee and council and Michelle Thompson as CEO is amazing. I feel confident RHĀNZ will play a significant part in ensuring rural New Zealand thrives as it should."

Thanks Jo for your comments above and for your extraordinary efforts over the past decade helping to get our organisation up and running. We simply could not have done this without you and while your executive role with RHĀNZ has ended we look forward to staying in touch with you as a rural health advocate and in your work as Medical Director for Pinnacle Midlands Health Network. We are all looking forward to farewelling you properly at the National Rural Health Conference in Wellington at the end of the month.

Welcome aboard Martin and happy March everyone.

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

Stratford GP gives up sole practice, claims too much work, too much worry

Working until midnight and dealing with fallout from overloaded hospitals has led to a sole practitioner in Taranaki closing his doors at the end of the month. (NZ Doctor – subscriber only).

[Read more](#)

Plan to redress rural GP shortage

GP shortages in rural areas are a huge, escalating problem and bold solutions are needed, says Dr Nigel Murray, Waikato District Health Board (DHB) chief executive.

Setting up a new medical school, specifically aimed at training rural doctors, is one of the most "powerful tools", to respond to that need, he says.

[Read more](#)

Exercise experts get flexible for rural heal

The rise in agritech is making it tough for farmers to stay in prime shape and as a result, personalised exercise programmes in rural communities are in high demand, Exercise New Zealand (ExerciseNZ) says.

New Zealand's rural community has a population of around 600,000 people driving the country's largest industry, primary productivity. The fast growing agritech sector is helping to lift rural sector profitability but with this comes a rise in automation which could have substantial implications for the health of farmers.

[Read more](#)

Taranaki woman's lifetime of work in Maori health and midwifery celebrated

Mina Timutimu has become a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit. Throughout her career, Timutimu has been at the forefront of developments in the Maori health field.

She was the first Maori representative on the National Committee of the New Zealand College of Midwives. She also became a honorary member of this organisation in 2008.

In 2003, she was appointed to the inaugural Midwifery Council of New Zealand and during her time there she developed cultural safety standards which were incorporated into the New Zealand College of Midwives practice handbook.

Along with another midwife, she also helped set up Taranaki's first Maori community maternity service in 1995, called Nga Puna Ora Te Atiawa, as well as other support networks, including a kaumatua group in Waitara.

Now residing in Whakatane, the 82-year-old is a regular visitor to Waitara, where Owae Marae, in particular, held a special place in her heart. (Stuff)

[Read more](#)

Rural police patrols in a post-quake world

Police patrols in rural Marlborough have become equal parts crime prevention and emotional reassurance. Rural constable Beau Webster shows reporter Jeffrey Kitt how the earthquake has impacted his job.

[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).

