

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

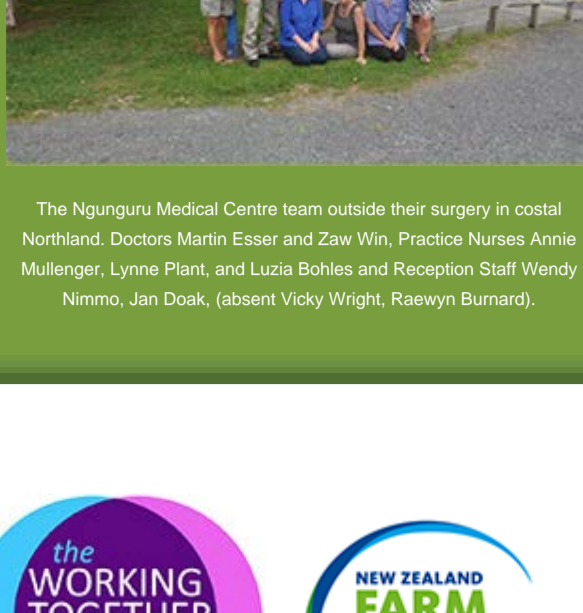
In this issue: Ngunguru Medical Centre wins Rural General Practice Team of the Year, Drs Chris Henry & Andrea Judd win the Peter Snow Memorial Award, the loss of two rural icons in short succession, gumboots, a report back on our safe Hands, Safe Plans workshops plus a selection of relevant media and 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.

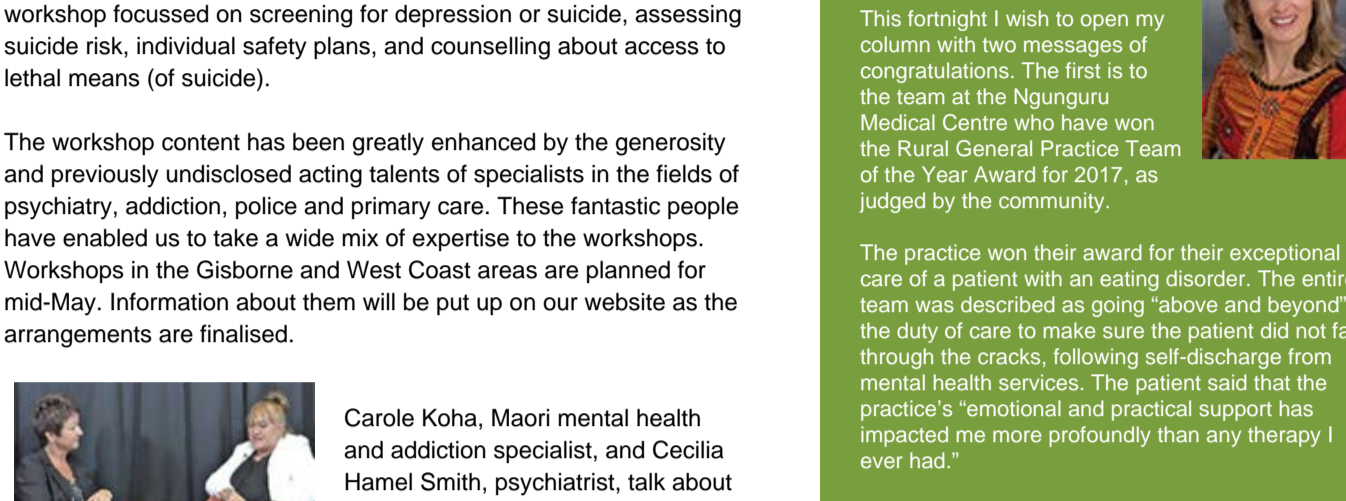
Visit our website

Ngunguru Medical Centre Rural General Practice Team of the Year 2017!



The Ngunguru Medical Centre team outside their surgery in coastal Northland. Doctors Martin Esser and Zava Win, Practice Nurses Annie Mullenger, Lynne Plant, and Luzia Bohles and Reception Staff Wendy Nimmo, Jan Doak, (absent Vicky Wright, Raewyn Burnard).

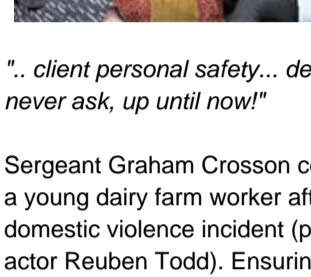
We thank our partners.



RURAL MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVES

Our programme of Safe Hands, Safe Plans workshops got underway this week in Manawatu and Southland. This is a skills-based workshop focussed on screening for depression or suicide, assessing suicide risk, individual safety plans, and counselling about access to lethal means (of suicide).

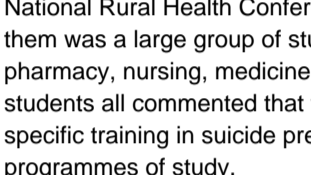
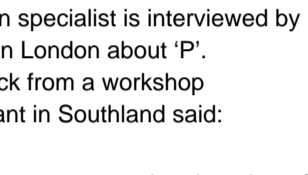
The workshop content has been greatly enhanced by the generosity and previously undisclosed acting talents of specialists in the fields of psychiatry, addiction, police and primary care. These fantastic people have enabled us to take a wide mix of expertise to the workshops. Workshops in the Gisborne and West Coast areas are planned for mid-May. Information about them will be put up on our website as the arrangements are finalised.



Carole Koha, Maori mental health and addiction specialist, and Cecilia Hamel Smith, psychiatrist, talk about working with whanau about suicide.

"... client personal safety... dealing with firearms, that's a question we never ask, up until now!"

Sergeant Graham Crosson counsels a young dairy farm worker after a domestic violence incident (played by actor Reuben Todd). Ensuring the young man was not left on his own in such a distressed state is the key message in this film.



Mary Freeman, a mental health and addiction specialist is interviewed by Dr Martin London about 'P'. Feedback from a workshop participant in Southland said:

"...information on Met. (drug P) was a better presentation than that of the Police presented in Invercargill this week, more informative"

Thirty people participated in a safeTALK workshop as part of the National Rural Health Conference in Wellington last month. Among them was a large group of students from Auckland who are studying pharmacy, nursing, medicine, and other allied health specialties. The students all commented that they got a lot out of the workshop as this specific training in suicide prevention is not included in their programmes of study.

Their youth, enthusiasm and humour contributed to an enjoyable afternoon of learning for all.

National Suicide Prevention Training Programme

Le Va is a national not-for-profit organisation that leads NZ's first national Pasifika suicide prevention programme. Whilst it has its own Board, Le Va is a member of the Wise Group – a family of charitable organisations working in the mental health and addiction sector across NZ. Le Va is working with three other national organisations, Te Rau Matatini, Walker Psychology Ltd, and Homecare Medical to develop and deliver a National Suicide Prevention Training Programme focussed on community education

It is my absolute privilege to be a member of the Expert Advisory Group for this project. The synergies between this work, and that of RHAANZ's own projects in this area will be enhanced through this opportunity to work together.

Ministry of Health Consultation – Draft Suicide Prevention Strategy

The Ministry of Health has released its draft Suicide Prevention Strategy for public consultation. Consultation opens today and will close on 12 June 2017.

The draft strategy can be viewed on the [Ministry of Health's website](#).

RHAANZ will undertake a process with its members to prepare a submission on the Strategy. We'll be in touch to invite your input as soon as we have set up a process to do so.

Marie Daly Programme Manager

RURAL CONNECTIVITY SYMPOSIUM, 2017, Tickets on sale now

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 (24 May) is the Emerging Tech in Health day brought to you by NZ HealthIT 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.

The draft programme for the Connectivity Symposium will be released shortly on our website but here's a heads up of the structure of the day:

- Session 1 - Scene setting including Minister's speech
Session 2 - Current and future plans - hear from network providers as well as a political panel plus a summary on the RBI2 bids which we know about
Session 3 - What did we learn from Kaikoura – from a health, farming and telco perspective
Session 4 - Improving rural outcomes - including the future of agriculture and health services

If you are associated with a RHAANZ member the cost has been discounted to \$149 including GST, which we think is excellent value. You can also take advantage of the special pricing to attend both days of this two day programme [register here](#).

There has been a bit of coverage in the media this fortnight about the proposed RBI2 bids. Here's one from [Vodafone, Spark & 2degrees](#).

Which we responded to in our [own press release](#).

[Here's another](#) from a new cluster of regional wireless ISP providers known as WISPA-NZ

Great to see this level of collaboration occurring for the good of rural NZ.

Media Watch

Attracting young pharmacists to the regions, and keeping them there
With New Zealand's cities becoming less affordable and more congested by the week, you could be forgiven for thinking there would be a stampede of people heading out to the countryside.

However, recruiting in rural areas, particularly for pharmacists, is still tough, with many potential employees preferring to remain in the main centres. (NZ Doctor – subscriber only).

[Read more](#).

Long-term plan lacking for problems facing rural general practice, doctors say
Almost a quarter of Kiwis will be at retirement age in 20 years' time and, with fewer GPs in remote parts of the country, the questions remains: who will look after rural New Zealand? (Stuff)

This story features last year's winner of the Rural General Practice Team of the Year – Martinborough Health Centre.

[Read more](#)

VetSouth farming bike rides relieve stress for farmers
Southland farmers have been getting off the farm and on their bikes as part of an initiative being organised by their vets. VetSouth has organised the Southland Rural Try-Cycle Series, involving three free 20km recreational rides, to encourage farmers to take a break from the tractor, managing director Mark Bryan said. (Southland Times)

[Read more](#)

Training key to improving rural mental health outcomes
Mental health and addiction outcomes in rural New Zealand will benefit from greater focus on workplace training for support workers in this field. Careerforce chief executive Ray Lind says workplace training is key to equipping mental health and addiction support workers to best care for their rural communities. (Scoop)

[Read more](#)

Shock: silent killer at work
Tragic accidents show 20 people are killed in farm and orchard accidents each year but up to 100 more are dying from exposure to hazardous airborne substances, an in-depth WorkSafe analysis has found.

It found 60 to 100 agricultural workers die annually from exposure to work-related airborne substances. WorkSafe NZ agriculture programme manager Al McCone said that was an unexpected finding of an in-depth report that analysed the causes and trends of workplace death and injury. (Farmers Weekly)

[Read more](#)

Wet weather possible cause for leptospirosis spike
Cases of the potentially deadly infection leptospirosis jumped by nearly half last year, compared to 2015. The latest public health surveillance report showed there were 93 notifications of the disease in 2016, compared to 63 in 2015. In the last three months of 2016 alone the number of reported cases doubled to 30, compared to the same period in the previous year.

Leptospirosis can feel like a bad case of the flu, but can also progress to rashes, kidney and liver failure, and sometimes death. Highly infectious, it is transferred to humans through infected animals' urine getting into cuts and cracks on skin or membranes such as the eyes, nose and mouth. (Radio NZ)

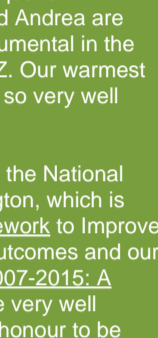
[Read more](#)

Sporadic landline poses a health and safety risk for Mackenzie District, Canterbury residents
A lack of reliable landlines may have posed a health and safety risk for dozens of people in the Mackenzie District, it has been claimed. For the past year, about 30 families along Clayton Settlement Rd, about 20 kilometres north-east of Fairlie, have been losing their landline connections for up to a week at a time.

This has forced some people to travel more than 10km to get mobile coverage for their phone lines were down. (Stuff)

[Read more](#)

Awards, Obituaries & Gumboots



This fortnight I wish to open my column with two messages of congratulations. The first is to the team at the Ngunguru Medical Centre who have won the Rural General Practice Team of the Year Award for 2017, as judged by the community.

The practice won their award for their exceptional care of a patient with an eating disorder. The entire team was described as going "above and beyond" the duty of care to make sure the patient did not fall through the cracks, following self-discharge from mental health services. The patient said that the practice's "emotional and practical support has impacted me more profoundly than any therapy I ever had."

On behalf of the Award partners, ourselves, NZ Doctor, The Health Promotion Agency and the New Zealand Rural General Practice Network, our warmest congratulations to the winning practice and the patient who wrote the winning nomination. Both receive very well-deserved prizes. Well done all.

The second message of congratulations goes to Drs Chris Henry and Andrea Judd who took out the Peter Snow Memorial Award in recognition of their efforts following the Kaikoura earthquake in November last year. Both Chris and Andrea are rural stalwarts and have been instrumental in the development and growth of RHĀNZ. Our warmest congratulations to the pair of you – so very well deserved.

These Awards were held as part of the National Rural Health Conference in Wellington, which is where we also launched our Framework to Improve Rural Mental Health & Addiction Outcomes and our Farm-Related Suicide Research 2007-2015. A coronial analysis. Both events were very well attended and it continues to be an honour to be associated with this work.

Two key note speakers who stood out for me were the back to back combination of Matt Shirtcliffe and Norm Hewitt. They were a powerful and emotional duo. Matt spoke about rural mental health and wellbeing, centering his talk around his wife, Mary, who lost her battle with depression two years ago. He carefully chooses not to speak about people dying by suicide, rather he says "it is depression and mental torment which take people's lives. People do not take their lives." He describes depression as an illness and not a weakness. Norm followed on talking about bullying and family violence and the profound impact this has had on his life. He spoke about the danger of people remaining silent when they see obvious signs of abuse. He also urged people to remain vigilant about animal welfare, commenting that "how the master looks after the dog will tell you how the family is being treated."

At the end of my Framework presentation I played a short video capturing some of the people we met along the way at regional workshops and some of the wise comments they imparted. I set this to music from the Footrot Flats movie, a Dog's Tale, as a tribute to the recent passing of Murray Ball - someone whom I think helped capture the very essence of rural life in NZ. Then this week, we suffered the loss of one of the other mighty rural icons, John Clarke, aka Fred Dagg. It has been heart-warming to see gumboots being left out all over NZ as a tribute to this outstanding New Zealander.

Speaking of gumboots, next month Skellerup – an iconic NZ company and one of our key strategic supporters, is launching a very special campaign to help raise funds to support our work helping make rural communities healthier. This is a very exciting campaign and more about this in the next issue.

In the meantime, have a lovely, safe and restful Easter break.

Cheers and best wishes, Michelle

New Members

We are delighted to welcome Fegan & Co as a member of the Rural Health Alliance Aotearoa New Zealand. Fegan & Co are a national rural recruitment and HR company and have a wealth of knowledge about the issues currently impacting the health and wellbeing of our primary industry workers and employers. We look forward to working with their named representative, Linda-Maree Drake, a Registered Nurse, and health consultant.

This brings our membership to 45 national organisations and we are very much looking forward to working with the team at Fegan & Co to help deliver on our promise of making rural healthier.

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 at [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

Rural people say boarding allowances are too strict
Rural parents have only until the end of this month to get their views in on boarding allowances and need more time to make a good decision, says Manawatu farmer Shelley Dew-Hopkins. Dew-Hopkins who farms at Rangiwahia said the biggest issue was fairness between urban and rural people and the time frame was too short for rural people to talk to each other and get information. (NZ Farmer)

[Read more](#)

Three-year drought did 'more harm' than quake
For north Canterbury farmer Richard Wilding, three years of drought has been worse than the Kaikoura earthquake that wrecked his home. The region has been in the grip of drought for three seasons and farmers say the 60mm of rain that fell last week does not mean their difficulties are over. (Radio NZ)

[Read more](#)

Patients travelling for treatment suffering financial fallout
The Cancer Society has criticised a national travel scheme, saying it is not working for many in the region and long travel distances are creating a heavy burden for Southland patients seeking specialist care. However, the Southern District Health Board says the National Travel Assistance Scheme works well for those who are covered by it.

Cancer Society Otago and Southland Division chief executive Rachael Hart said the criteria of the scheme had caused problems for patients within the region. The government have made it so difficult for patients to get financial assistance to cover the cost of travelling to treatment that in some cases patients are missing treatment.

[Read more](#)

RESEARCH & RESOURCES WATCH

'What does it cost to provide equity of access to high quality, comprehensive primary health care in rural Australia? A pilot study'
Many rural and remote communities are characterised by significant inequities in primary healthcare service availability, quality, performance and sustainability. This article investigates how best to ascertain the costs of delivering high quality primary healthcare services in rural locations of different population sizes, and to describe the methodological issues associated with such an exercise. Journal of Rural and Remote Health.

[Read more](#)

Events Watch

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).