

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: Announcing the Rural Aotearoa Research Network, importance of getting "every sore throat checked", a new type of dangerous E.Coli illness putting rural pre-schoolers at risk, special offer to RHĀNZ members to attend a Cybersecurity in Health Seminar plus a selection of relevant media and research articles...

Who are RHĀNZ?

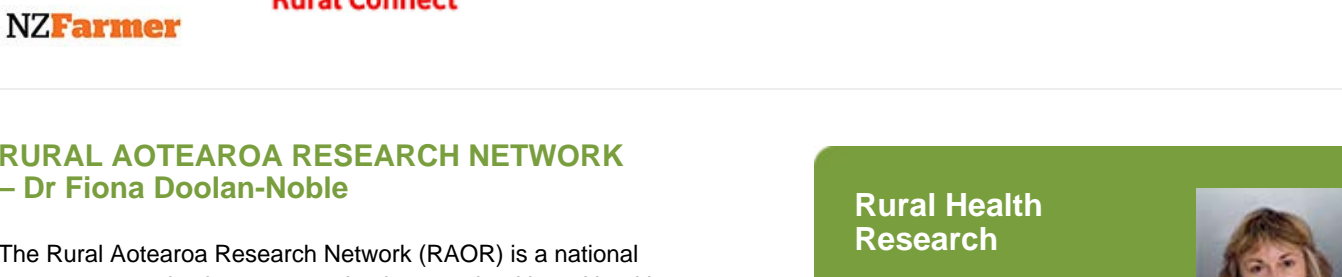
The Rural Health Alliance Aotearoa New Zealand represents a united voice from across multiple rural sector organisations. Our aim is to provide solutions and influence policy affecting the health and wellbeing of rural communities.

[Visit our website](#)



Dr Fiona Doolan-Noble and Ms Georgina Richardson after receiving the Research Development Award for the establishment of a rural research network.

We thank our partners.



RURAL AOTEAROA RESEARCH NETWORK – Dr Fiona Doolan-Noble

The Rural Aotearoa Research Network (RAOR) is a national emergent organisation, purposed to improve health and health care for rural people by strengthening synergies between research teams, rural organisations, iwi/communities and health providers, making rural research more meaningful for the communities it serves. Its co-governance strategy for research processes aims to optimise these relationships. The focus will be on facilitating high quality, translatable rural research that can make a difference to the wellbeing of rural communities and increase the job satisfaction of rural health professionals in a timely manner.

[Read more.](#)

Taking the Rheumatic Fever message 'Get every sore throat checked' into hard to reach rural communities – Sarah Bain, Health Promotion Agency

A strep throat can lead to rheumatic fever if it's left untreated. Rheumatic fever is very serious and can cause heart damage. You can't tell if it's a strep just by looking, so it's important to get every sore throat checked as soon as possible to prevent a strep throat turning into rheumatic fever. If antibiotics are prescribed, it's important that children take them for the full 10 days, even if they feel better, to stop it turning into rheumatic fever.

In New Zealand, Māori and Pacific children and young people aged 4 to 19 years in parts of the North Island – particularly those who live in crowded homes and who have a family history of rheumatic fever – are more likely to get strep sore throats and therefore, rheumatic fever.

The Health Promotion Agency has been working with the Ministry of Health to raise awareness of rheumatic fever and its link to sore throats. Their national Rheumatic Fever Awareness Campaign, using TV, radio and online advertising to promote the sore throat messages, ends on 31 July. From August, rheumatic fever ongoing awareness activities will be led by the 11 District Health Boards (DHBs) with a high incidence of rheumatic fever.

RHĀNZ members are welcome to promote the rheumatic fever key messages in your workplaces, websites, electronic newsletters or social media channels. Several resources are available to help with this.

To access these resources and learn more, [click here](#).

CYBERSECURITY IN HEALTH 2017 - SPECIAL OFFER FOR RHĀNZ MEMBERS

Cybersecurity in Health 2017
The Maritime Room, Princes Wharf, Auckland CBD, Tuesday 1 August 2017

Symposium 9am to 5pm, followed by networking from 5pm to 7pm.

The safety of your organisation and its clients depends on it. Programme includes:

- Who is trying to hack you?
- What the future and new technologies will bring
- You've been hacked! Recovery and remediation
- What does an Incident Response Plan look like?

You will hear about the latest Government policies and tactics, developing an incident response plan, practical case studies, AI/machine learning, blockchain, cloud, mobile devices, IoT, and the pros/cons of outsourcing and insurance. Plus there will be lots of audience interaction - so you can ask questions and get expert answers.

Special offer from NZHIT:

Due to the importance of the whole area of cybersecurity in health we've been able to secure a special opportunity for RHĀNZ members to attend this event at a specially discounted rate of \$169.00 (incl GST), which is a whopping \$200 reduction. If you'd like to take up this offer then please email Talie Schmidt-Geen at admin@nzhit.nz and she will assist you to register at the discounted rate for MTANZ members"

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR PARENTS OF RURAL PRE-SCHOOLERS

STEC is a new type of E.coli illness to New Zealand. It spreads easily and is life threatening in one in ten cases. Children under five living on and around farms are most at risk.

[Read more.](#)

Media Watch

Rural nurses from top to tip of NZ elected to working party

Eight nurses from the Far North to Stewart Island have been elected to the Rural Nurses NZ working party including four nurse practitioners. Nominations were called for in April for a working party to up the profile of rural nurses after the idea was first mooted at the National Rural Health Conference in March. (Nursing Review)

[Read more](#)

Stress levels rising as Manawatu Gorge closure stretches primary healthcare

The boss of a Tararua primary health provider says the closure of the Manawatu Gorge is putting a strain on staff and patients, which she fears could have long term impacts for healthcare in the region.

Tararua Health Group chief executive Sharon Wards says some staff at the group's four health centres and Dannevirke community hospital have faced arduous journeys to get to and from work during the three-month gorge closure caused by a massive slip in April. And there's no end in sight for them or their patients. (NZ Doctor - subscriber only)

[Read more](#)

Elderly abandoned by banks in rural Waikato

Elderly small-town residents continue to languish after banks shut up shop. Last year saw bank branches in small Waikato towns close, including Raglan, Te Aroha, Paeroa, Putaruru and Ngaruawahia. Residents of Raglan and Putaruru said it was tough on the whole community, but the elderly - often wary of internet banking - have been hit the hardest. (Stuff)

[Read more](#)

Taranaki town left without a doctor as GP shortage bites

A small Taranaki town will get two new doctors to help fill a massive shortage of GPs in the area, but residents will have to wait more than three months before they arrive.

The doctors will step in after the only full-time doctor at the Patea Health Centre left earlier this week. The replacement doctors, a couple from England, won't arrive until October and they're only on a three month contract. (Radio NZ)

[Read more](#)

Earthquake support appointed in Kekerengu after Kaikoura quakes

An isolated earthquake support navigator, as promised by the Government after the Kaikoura earthquake. Kekerengu and Clarence are about an hour's drive south of Blenheim down State Highway 1, near the slips that have blocked the route to Kaikoura.

Living in such isolation makes going to the doctor, seeing specialists and managing insurance claims difficult But Kekerengu resident Chris Wilson has taken on the role of navigator, tasked with linking residents with agencies and services. (The Marlborough Express).

[Read more](#)

HWNZ scratches eight-year itch in review of voluntary bonding scheme

Rural health leaders are calling for the Voluntary Bonding Scheme to be widened and targeted at areas of highest need in a wide-ranging review being done by Health Workforce New Zealand. Both Ms Hansen and Rural Health Alliance Aotearoa New Zealand chief executive Michelle Thompson want the scheme to be widened to include nurse practitioners. (NZ Doctor – subscribers only)

[Read more](#)

Mobile app picks up skin cancer amongst Fieldays punters

A mobile app which allows users to check for skin cancer picked up 10 cases at Fieldays. The New Zealand-made app, Firstcheck, was showcased at the country's premier agri-show following its launch late last year. Co-founder Hayden Laird said the app appealed to Fieldays-goers, many of whom admitted they had put off getting skin lesions checked.

[Read more](#)

Rural Health Research



Last month Government released the "New Zealand Health Research Strategy". This 10-year strategy is described as a first for our country, which brings "together science, health, research and innovation to form a more cohesive system that will have the greatest impact on the lives of New Zealanders".

There are four guiding principles for the system:

- Research excellence;
- Transparency;
- Partnership with Māori; and
- Collaboration for impact

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE), the Ministry of Health (MoH) and the Health Research Council (HRC) will lead the implementation of these priorities. As with many such strategic documents, it is hard to find fault with the overarching goals and principles. It's also good to see multiple government agencies and ministers working together on such an important topic. However, once again, there is no mention of "rural" and "rural communities" anywhere in the strategy.

If we are not regarded as a population deserving of equitable access to health services and equitable health outcomes, then we are completely on the back foot and it is hard to see how we can gain meaningful traction with our policy makers. If, as Lincoln University claims, one in every four dollars generated in the New Zealand economy comes directly or indirectly from our primary industries (Land and the Brand, AERU Research Report no.339) and you add to this, Government's goal of doubling the value of our primary exports by 2025 (not to mention the value of rural tourism and linkages to our national identity etc.), it behoves Government to ensure that rural New Zealanders are healthy and well so that they are able to fulfil on its expectations.

However, the reality is that we know very little about the health status of rural New Zealanders. We still do not have a nationally agreed definition of rural for health and health research purposes. Neither the MBIE nor the MoH can currently report their data by rural/urban analysis. The New Zealand Health Research Strategy goes on to say that by 2020, annual investment in the Health Research Council is set to increase to \$120 million, which "will ensure that HRC funding and other resources invested in health research have the greatest impact."

Give me strength. Last month, the HRC announced the successful applicants for its \$60m funding round. Only two of which were for research involving rural people/geographic location. They each got \$1M. That's a total of \$2M out of \$60M, which in my book is disgraceful. At the very least rural NZ should receive public health research funding commensurate to our population size. At a minimum of 600,000 people - equivalent to NZ's Second. Largest. City. - that would equate to a minimum of \$8M from the latest funding round.

Despite these many frustrations, there are some good happenings on the horizon, one of which is the establishment of the Rural Aotearoa Research Network. It's new director, Dr Fiona Doolan-Noble, and Otago University's named representative for RHĀNZ, explains in our Lead Story over the page, what the Network is about, what it hopes to achieve and how you can be involved.

RHĀNZ has been involved with the development of this Network and is a founding member – as are several other RHĀNZ member organisations. We look forward to its continued growth so that, together, we can help kickstart a coordinated approach to rural health research (across humans, animals and the environment) in Aotearoa New Zealand. And in the process, start holding our policy makers to account for equitable health outcomes for rural communities.

Happy Days!
Michelle

Subscribe

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

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

MEDIA WATCH

Katie Milne chats to Kathryn Ryan

New Federated Farmers President & RHAANZ Board member, Katie Milne, talks with Kathryn Ryan, Radio New Zealand, about her new role, farming, environmental issues, mental health and wellbeing and rural living in general.

[Read more](#)

RESEARCH & RESOURCES WATCH

The effectiveness of emergency nurse practitioner service in the management of patients presenting to rural hospitals with chest pain: a multisite prospective longitudinal nested cohort study

Health reforms in service improvement have included the use of nurse practitioners. In rural emergency departments, rural practitioners work to the full scope of their expanded role across all patient acuties including those presenting with undifferentiated chest pain. This study, published in BMC Health Services Research, explores the effectiveness of emergency nurse practitioner service in rural emergency departments in Australia.

[Read more](#)

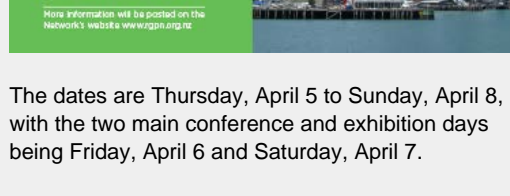
Breastfeeding peer support in rural New Zealand: the views of peer supporters

New Zealand has a high rate of breastfeeding initiation, declining sharply during the first six months. Although there is a range of support available to breastfeeding mothers, access can be problematic in rural areas. To extend the accessibility of breastfeeding support to rural women, a Primary Health Organisation established a breastfeeding peer supporters programme (Mum4Mum – Mum4M). The objective of this study, published in the Journal of Primary Health Care, was to gain an understanding of the impact of the breastfeeding peer supporters training programme on participants, as well as understanding how they utilised the information, both personally and in their communities.

[Read more](#)

EVENTS WATCH

Hold the date – National Rural Health Conference, Pullman Hotel, Auckland, 5-8 April 2018.



The dates are Thursday, April 5 to Sunday, April 8, with the two main conference and exhibition days being Friday, April 6 and Saturday, April 7.

National Primary Care Symposium, jointly hosted by the Primary Health Alliance, Heart Foundation and Health Promotion Agency will again be held at Te Papa in Wellington on Wednesday 15 November. Hold the date. Free entry.