

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: You're buggered without your health, Health Hub poetry from Graeme Williams, rural suicide prevention training update, enterprising rural women awards 2017 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](#)



RHĀNZ's five ways to wellbeing stand all ready to go at the Health Hub 2017

We thank our partners.



RURAL WELLNESS UPDATE

Commentary about Suicide Prevention training in NZ

Over the past few weeks there has been a lot of argy-bargy in the media about the Government's draft Suicide Prevention Strategy; arguments about this programme or that; what is funded, what is not; and talk of a dearth of government funded Suicide Prevention training programmes. There has been just as much said about the need for a review of mental health and addiction services.

This week, our Rural Mental Health Initiative team agreed that it was time we pointed a few facts out to journalists because to be fair, we've been so busy at the keep on keeping on that we've forgotten to tell our own story!

RHĀNZ members are doing some great stuff! The Rural Support Trusts have increased their profile and reach into rural communities. Farmstrong, Rural Women NZ, Dairy Women NZ, Farming Mums, Dairy NZ, Beef and Lamb, Fed Farmers... and so many more are all out there actively running Good Yarns, Healthy Thinking workshops, MH101, fun and educational social activities, providing support for each other face to face and by using social media and other ways to connect rural people to rural people.

In the past two years RHĀNZ has facilitated over 50 safeTALK workshops in some pretty remote areas. We've just finished developing the Safe Hands, Safe Plans workshop for health and social service groups and clinicians and facilitated 10 of these in the past 3 months in Southland, Hawke's Bay and on the West Coast. We plan to hold another 20 workshops in the year ahead – all of this is funded by the Ministry of Health.

We are working closely with Le Va (www.leva.co.nz) in their development of the National Suicide Prevention workshops - LifeKeepers. Together, we have ensured that LifeKeepers and Safe Hands, Safe Plans complement each other and meet the needs of different community groups and clinicians.

The Office of the Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisory, Professor Sir Peter Gluckman released his Youth Suicide in New Zealand: a Discussion Paper, 26 July 2017. It provides some interesting thinking about youth suicide in New Zealand and comments, in its opening point:

'that youth suicide is more than simply a mental health issue, and that with what we know at present, the focus must also include an emphasis on primary prevention starting from very early in life.'

Things are happening in the Suicide Prevention space even if not as quickly or as well funded as we might like. But, these are innovative fresh approaches to tackling mental health issues, and preventing suicide. With these pieces of the puzzle working together, rural NZ is working together to improve rural wellbeing, prevent suicide, and truly make a difference.

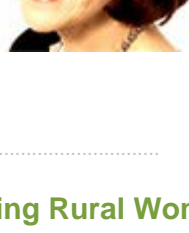
Links

For more information about [Safe Hands, Safe Plans](#)

Professor Sir Peter Gluckman, Chief Science Advisor [Youth Suicide in New Zealand: a Discussion Paper](#)

RHĀNZ Suicide Prevention Training [media release](#)

Mary Daly
Programme Manager



Entries now open for the Enterprising Rural Women Awards for 2017

Rural Women New Zealand is inviting entries from innovative and successful rural businesswomen, in horticulture, agricultural, dairy, tourism or any other rural sectors for this year's Enterprising Rural Women Awards.

Awards for 2017:

1. Emerging Enterprising Rural Woman Award
2. Innovative Enterprising Rural Woman Award
3. Entrepreneurial Enterprising Rural Woman Award
4. Supreme Award: Enterprising Rural Woman Achievement Award for standout business success in the rural sector.

Entries close **31 August 2017** and application forms are available on their web site <https://www.ruralwomen.org.nz>

Media Watch

Opinion: We all have a role to play in improving rural health – College of Health, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Professor Jane Mills and RHĀNZ Deputy Chair

The ongoing debate about the establishment of a medical school at Waikato University has shone a much-needed spotlight on the state of New Zealand's rural health services.

It is increasingly difficult for New Zealanders living in rural communities to access basic health services in their community. This doesn't just mean those in this community struggle to see a doctor; they struggle to see any healthcare professionals, be it a nurse, pharmacist or psychologist, for example.

The issue faced by rural communities is by no means new and ensuring those who live outside of metropolitan areas have access to healthcare is an issue the New Zealand Government has tried to tackle for more than a century. (Massey University)

[Read more](#)

Looking after the 'top paddock'

Doug and Wendy Avery came close to losing everything a few years ago. The farmers from Grassmere, in Marlborough, were hammered by drought for eight long years.

As the farm dried up, so did the bank account, and eventually Doug's hopes and ability to function under a cloud of depression.

Doug and Wendy talk with Radio NZ's Kathryn Ryan, about his new book and website "Resilient Farmer". (Radio NZ)

[Read more](#)

Small New Zealand towns that deserve more of your time

The "gumboot capital", the "kiwifruit capital", the place with the giant L&P bottle...

Lorna Thornber, a journalist for Stuff, encourages us to take a little more time on our next road trip to explore the small towns en route. She lists a selection of small towns she believes don't get the attention they deserve. (Stuff)

[Read more](#)

The Government could do more to resettle refugees in rural areas, campaigner says

As a tour promoting a refugee quota increase moves up the country, rural regions are saying they would be happy to host newcomers. Doing Our Bit campaign founder Murdoch Stephens said he had seen a lot of positive sentiment in places where refugees were not currently settled. (Stuff)

[Read more](#)

Centralisation leaves rural health

Rural Women New Zealand (RWNZ) believes centralisation has left gaps in health services for rural areas which need to be addressed. Centralisation is now a fact of life, but focus is needed on how to meet the ensuing shortfalls for rural areas, says Margaret Pittaway, RWNZ South Island board member and a retired nurse. (Ruralway)

[Read more](#)

GP workforce lurching toward further crisis

New Zealand needs to drastically increase funding for GP training or risk plunging the health sector into a deepening crisis. Dr Tim Malloy, president of the Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners (RNZCGP), will deliver that message to Health Minister Jonathan Coleman on Wednesday. (Stuff)

[Read more](#)

Train new NPs, not just GPs says nurse leader

A recent media report noted that graduate doctors' interest in working in small towns and provincial cities continues to decline, adding to ongoing concern about the sustainability of rural health services.

The New Zealand Doctor article went on to say that very few medical graduates want to live and work in towns with a population under 10,000, but rural health advocates point out these communities have increasing health needs as residents age.

Professor Jenny Carryer, Executive Director, College of Nurses, argues that an answer to the ongoing concern about rural GP shortages is in "plain sight" - stop the calls to train more GPs and invest more in training NPs instead. (Nursing Review)

[Read more](#)

Lance O'Sullivan sets up NZ's first virtual medical centre in town with no doctor

The town of Patea, doctor-less since its last physician left weeks ago, is opening the first pop-up virtual medical centre in New Zealand. Instead of seeing a doctor face to face, patients from the small South Taranaki town will instead sit in front of two iPads and a TV where they can talk directly to a doctor based in Kaitiāia, in the Far North. (Stuff)

[Read more](#)

Boarding allowance rise is key issue for rural voters

For rural folk there's a glaring omission in all the political parties' education policies announced so far - an increase in the school boarding allowance.

Federated Farmers President Katie Milne says the 'Access Barrier' boarding allowance for pupils from remote areas of \$3,200 hasn't increased in more than a decade. Fee rises have continued apace; it's not uncommon for boarding costs for state and state-integrated high schools to be \$8,000-\$10,000, and sometimes as high as \$15,000 a year. (Federated Farmers)

[Read more](#)

You're buggered without your health



Promoting good health and wellbeing for rural people was the overarching goal of the inaugural Health Hub, held as part of National Fieldays, in Hamilton back in June. The event was a partnership between RHĀNZ, Mobile Health and the New Zealand Rural General Practice Network.

None of us really knew what we were in for, but by the end of the four days we were truly exhausted. I can't recall ever being as cold as I was on the morning of the second day – and that's saying a lot for someone who is known as "Madame Merino" by all the layers she wears!

But that has all faded in to the distant memory as we've been warmed and re-energised by the feedback received. By all accounts the Health Hub was a resounding success with everyone keen to repeat the event in 2018. Here's a snapshot of the feedback:

- 87% of survey respondents were confident that their booth had made a difference to the lives of the people they talked to.
- Ten skin cancers were detected and many other people received reassurance their spots were benign.
- The MedTalks were considered excellent, with comments that they deserved far larger audiences.
- People commented on the friendly atmosphere across all booths which encouraged relaxed, informative and enjoyable conversations about health with visitors, and importantly, with each other.
- The Health Hub was high on the list of what people want to see more of in 2018.

The interactions between the Hub exhibitors themselves was especially pleasing to see, and I think in time will become one of the Hub's main strengths. A rural GP helping on our stand "5 Ways to Wellbeing" summed this up well. "I had a group of 30-40 years olds talk to me about mental health, one of whom raised the topic of prostate cancer. I was then able to take him across to the Prostate Cancer Foundation site and discuss further."

Graeme Williams, a farmer and bush poet, who worked alongside us in the Health Hub, kept us entertained with his wit. His poem about Laura's "Spiky Balls" had us in fits of laughter. The final poem he wrote is penned below – there is certainly no doubt that without our health we are buggered.

The Health Hub 2017

*Collectively we were all involved
And all on site to witness
The Health Hub at the Fieldays
Promoting the human warrant of fitness
Feedback was overwhelmingly positive
From all of those involved
With a resolution that by next year
Any minor problems would be resolved*

*There's no doubt a greater awareness
That you're buggered without your health
And of all the things you amass in life
It remains your greatest wealth
Awareness and early detection
Of any issue that may arise
Will hold you in far better stead
Than uncertainty and surprise*

*You can lead a horse to water
But you cannot make it drink
But if the horse is in the water
It's bound to make it think
I have no doubt of what I saw*

*The Health Hub sowed the seed
We've both a problem and solution
An answer and a need*

*So well done to all involved
To give it such a crack
Great to hear a majority
Are more than keen on coming back
The general consensus was positive
From here and everywhere about
And did you make a difference?
Bloody oath, without a doubt!*

Graeme Williams Farmer and Bush Poet,
June 2017

Best wishes always,
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

Media Watch

Farmer donations of hoggets to raise money for cancer society

Stock agents hope farmers will give a few hoggets from each pen sold at the Hogget Fair at Feilding to support cancer societies in southern North Island. Hogget donations are expected to raise thousands of dollars from sales at the Feilding saleyards on August 9.

The Cancer Society of New Zealand said it was committed to reducing the impact and incidence of cancer in rural communities. (NZ Farmer)

[Read more](#)

Students' plans to tackle quad bike injuries excite health bosses

Practical, hands-on advice rather than country-bang safety features is the key to lowering the whiz's rural quad-bike injury rate. Students from Wintec's Design Hub have been exploring solutions to reducing quad bike accidents on farms. Armed with trauma data collected by the Midland Trauma System, plus their own research, the students have devised a hands-on educational programme that reinforces quad bike safety. (NZ Farmer)

[Read more](#)

Guild congratulates Community Pharmacy of the Year, Waimauku Village Pharmacy

The Pharmacy Guild of New Zealand congratulates Waimauku Village Pharmacy for winning the Community Pharmacy of the Year award at the 2017 Pharmacy Awards held on Saturday night (22 July).

[Read more](#)

Research & Resources Watch

Implementation of oral health initiatives by Australian rural communities: Factors for success

This paper, published in Health and Social Care in the Community, considers factors significant in the success of community participation in the implementation of new oral health services.

The study concluded there is a role for community participation in implementing new community services if solid partnerships with relevant providers can be negotiated and services are seen to be relevant and useful to the community.

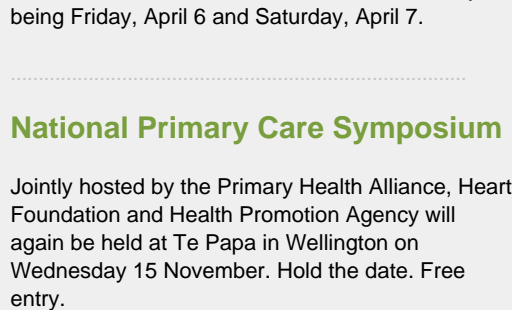
Events Watch

Doug Avery Resilient Farmer book tour

August-September 2017 across rural NZ.

[Click here to find locations and dates](#)

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.