

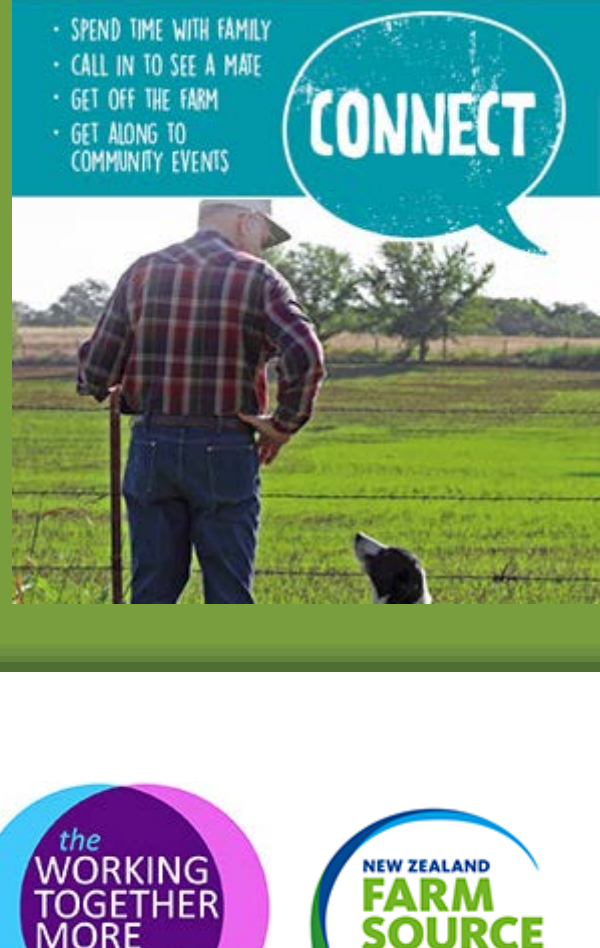
Nau mai. Haere mai. Ki te pānui o RHĀNZ mō tēnei wiki (Te Reo for welcome to the RHĀNZ Newsletter for this week).

In this issue: The integral role connectivity plays on rural health and wellbeing, pleasing RBI2 and MBS announcements, HPA's National Depression Campaign, St John 111 hub expansions plus a selection of relevant media and research articles....

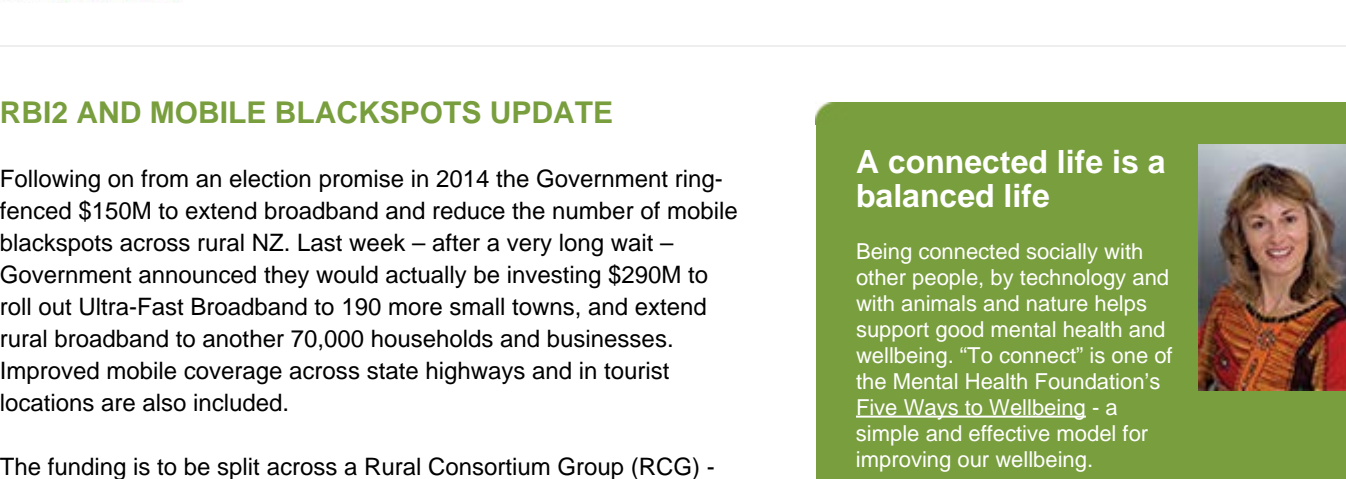
Who are RHĀNZ?

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.



RBI2 AND MOBILE BLACKSPOTS UPDATE

Following on from an election promise in 2014 the Government ring-fenced \$150M to extend broadband and reduce the number of mobile blackspots across rural NZ. Last week – after a very long wait – Government announced they would actually be investing \$290M to roll out Ultra-Fast Broadband to 190 more small towns, and extend rural broadband to another 70,000 households and businesses. Improved mobile coverage across state highways and in tourist locations are also included.

The funding is to be split across a Rural Consortium Group (RCG) - Vodafone, Spark and Two Degrees - with some funding for smaller Wireless Internet Service Providers (WISPs) to help rural areas where geography obstructs the roll out of fibre. Once these programmes have been completed it is claimed that 87% of New Zealanders will have access to fibre-like speeds by 2022. This still leaves 13% of New Zealanders – predominately rural – without access to 21st century telecommunication services. We will continue to advocate for these people as part of our Rural Health Road Map activities.

Craig Young, RHĀNZ Council Member and CEO of the Telecommunications Users Association of New Zealand (TUANZ) offers this useful update (on quite a confusing announcement!):

Funding breakdown:

This \$150M comes from the Telecommunications Development Levy and has been topped up by another \$30M from the levy to \$180M over the life of the project AND then another \$110M in additional funding has been allocated to the programme out of the returned UFB1 capital payback from the UFB partners. That makes \$290M available for RBI and Mobile Black spots.

What are we getting for this RBI investment:

- 70,000 more rural households and businesses to be covered by improved wireless broadband using 4G mobile technology and point-to-point wireless (by the Wireless ISPs).
- New mobile coverage for around 1,000kms of state highways
- New mobile coverage at 100 tourist locations (including some very hard to get to ones like Cape Reinga and Milford Sound)
- Improving national geographic mobile coverage from 50% today to around 70-80% at completion.

You can see maps and lists of proposed coverage on MBE's [website](#) or [CFH](#).

Actual coverage will now depend on the formal planning process, where sites can be leased, and whatever challenges they find as they roll out the programme. So key point here is that, rural communities still have chance to lobby the RCG on what actually ends up being delivered in their area. Perhaps this could be a central theme of our Rural Connectivity Symposium next year?

Where's the money going to?

- 1 \$250M has been contracted with the RCG and in addition the three mobile companies have tipped in some extra funding to extend coverage.
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 - [Gisborne.net](#) (Gisborne and North Hawke's Bay)
 - [Inspire.net](#) (Manawatu and Whanganui)
 - AonNet (King Country, Manawatu and Whanganui)
 - Primo Wireless (Taranaki)
 - Taylor Communications (in the form of NZ Tech Group) (Central Hawkes Bay)
 - Wiz Wireless (Wairarapa, Wellington)
 - AmuriNet (North Canterbury)
 - Ultimate Broadband (Central/South Canterbury)
 - Unifone (Otago)

A number of members issued a press release in response to the RBI2 Mobile Blackspot announcements. Here are a few that came across our network, including our own:

RHĀNZ:
[NZ rural health group mostly happy with government support](#)

Federated Farmers:
[Rural connectivity reassures primary sector of its value to New Zealand](#)

Rural Women:
[Faster rollout of broadband And mobile will improve connectivity to rural Homes](#)

INAUGURAL BROADBAND COMPARE AWARDS – Entries close tomorrow!

Are you a rural broadband provider or run a business related to rural internet?

Here at RHĀNZ we are passionate about improving health outcomes for rural people and believe that high quality broadband and mobile cell phone coverage – at affordable rates - are critical enablers for the wellbeing, productivity and sustainability of our rural communities. Our Chief Executive, Michelle Thompson, has been invited to join the judging panel for the inaugural Broadband Compare Awards.



Three categories are likely to be of interest to RHĀNZ members:

- The Best Rural Broadband Provider;
- The Best Regional or Small ISP; and
- The Best Broadband Innovation.

The entries close on September 5th 2017 and it is free for the first entry. If you are hoping to improve rural connectivity, we implore you to enter and help to celebrate with you on the awards night on November 2nd 2017.

More details available here: <http://www.broadbandawards.co.nz/>

NATIONAL DEPRESSION INITIATIVE UPDATE



The National Depression Initiative (NDI) is rolling out a new awareness campaign to promote the small steps people can take on the path to recovery from depression and anxiety.

The new campaign includes TV and digital advertising and shows a range of small steps to wellbeing and includes a call to action to the depression.org.nz website. HPA continues its relationship with Sir John Kirwan for the new campaign.

You can view the TV advertisements [here](#) and read more about the campaign by visiting www.hpa.org.nz.

The small steps shown in the advertisements are examples of activities that people who are experiencing depression and or anxiety may be finding difficult, or might have stopped, due to their reduced energy, loss of pleasure or increased anxiety. For example opening up to a friend, planting some vegetables, reading a book to the kids, listening to the sounds in the bush, opening the curtains to let the sun in.

You might like to promote the new campaign through your organisation's electronic channels. [Click here for jpeg images](#) from the depression.org.nz campaign that are suitable for electronic channels such as website, e-newsletters or social media.

ST JOHN 111 CLINICAL HUB EXPANSION ACROSS NEW ZEALAND UPDATE

St John and Homecare Medical are continuing with their expansion of the 111 Clinical Hub throughout New Zealand, including in the Whanganui, Taranaki and MidCentral DHB areas in the third quarter of 2017.

[Read more.](#)

NATIONAL RURAL HEALTH CONFERENCE 2018 – ABSTRACTS CLOSING DATE EXTENDED

The date for submitting an abstract for next year's National Rural Health Conference has been extended until 30 September 2017. There are five themes: clinical; nursing; management; community and research.

[Click here for more information.](#)

Media Watch

KPMG's Ian Proudfoot on challenges to primary producers

The global agribusiness leader for KPMG, Ian Proudfoot, says an agrarian revolution is happening worldwide and current farming models will have to change. He says producers need to think of themselves as protein or nutrient companies, not dairy or meat companies. (Radio NZ News)

[Read more](#)

GP visit funding boost welcomed, other rural health inequities remain

The announcement that an additional 600,000 low income New Zealanders will have the cost of their GP visit capped at \$18 is welcome news, however other longstanding health inequities that affect rural people still need to be addressed, says New Zealand Rural General Practice Network Chief Executive Dalton Kelly. (Scoop)

[Read more](#)

Lab-grown food a major threat

The threat to farming from new food technologies is real, says Landcorp chief executive Steven Carden.

Production systems that can make burgers in a lab or use plants to replace meat or milk are attracting huge investment, he says. But the biggest threat to New Zealand farming is complacency. (Rural News)

[Read more](#)

Treating the loneliness epidemic: elderly people visiting doctors for social interaction

Elderly people are visiting doctors' practices not for illnesses or injuries, but because they are lonely. A United Kingdom study, the Campaign to End Loneliness, shows one in 10 visits by older people to their GP are motivated by loneliness rather than physical malady. Wellington GP Dr Richard Medicott referred to the patients as 'Eleanor Rigbys', after the lonely woman in the Beatles song. (Stuff)

[Read more](#)

Rural Contractors Association donation funds gear for Lakes helicopter trust

A recent donation of more than \$18,000 will go towards essential equipment for a southern helicopter rescue service.

The Lakes District Air Rescue Trust, headquartered in Queenstown and covering the wider southwestern region of the South Island, took receipt of the donation from the Rural Contractors Association at its Te Anau operating base on Saturday.

Trust spokesperson Lloyd Matheson said donations of this sort were essential to the continued successful operation of the organisation.

"We provide a 24-hour, tier 2 helicopter rescue service to a wide and varied geographical region, covering everything from Police support to search and rescue and patient transfer. This incredibly generous donation we've received today from the Rural Contractors Association is one of many we accept throughout the year, that are fundamental to the way we exist and operate," he said. (The Southland Times)

[Read more](#)

Mobile surgical unit treats its 1000th Taumarunui patient

The Mobile Health's Surgical Bus has ticked off its 1000th procedures when it visited Taumarunui on Friday. Waikato DHB rural hospitals manager, Joanne Knight said the community and hospital staff benefited from the convenience and expertise of Mobile Health's procedures. Previously people had to travel to Waikato Hospital Hamilton. (Stuff)

[Read more](#)

Learner drivers should have to practise on rural roads before their test, charity says

Learner drivers should have compulsory lessons on rural roads to bring down the number of fatal accidents, a charity has said.

Four in five fatal crashes involving young drivers take place on rural roads, according to the most recent figures.

The road safety charity Brake says learners should be forced to practise on country roads, as part of a graduated licensing system which would make new drivers gradually build up new skills in stages. (The Telegraph)

[Read more](#)

A connected life is a balanced life

Being connected socially with other people, by technology and with animals and nature helps support good mental health and wellbeing. "To connect" is one of the Mental Health Foundation's Five Ways to Wellbeing - a simple and effective model for improving our wellbeing.

The model is backed up by extensive research in both NZ and overseas and the underlying premise is that if you incorporate a little bit of each of the following activities into your daily life you are on the road to a mentally healthy way of life:

- **Connect** – talk and listen, be there, feel connected
- **Keep learning** – embrace new experiences, see opportunities, surprise yourself
- **Take Notice** – remember the simple things that give you joy
- **Be active** – do what you can, enjoy what you do, move your mood
- **Give** – your words, your time, your presence.

As part of developing our *Framework to Improve Mental Health & Addiction Outcomes for Rural New Zealanders* last year, we held several regional workshops where we asked people what were some of things about living in rural NZ that helped in recovering from an episode of mental illness. Here is a sample of the types of comments we received:

- "We live in beautiful open spaces; working with animals can be healing; working physically can be healing; we know people who have been unwell and recovered"
- "We appreciate hearing presentations like John Kirwan, or the safeTALK workshops without having to drive for miles and give up half a day's work."
- "In little rural communities, far from a big town (sometimes more than an hour's drive away), neighbours and friends are very important and are more of a support service than the officials from away."
- "Being able to engage within the community as a volunteer and/or part of community groups."

Connecting and knowing how to take care of ourselves and each other lies at the heart of our *Framework*.

The Government's RBI2 announcements extending rural broadband to another 70,000 households and businesses and improving mobile cell phone coverage across our state highways and rural roads was welcomed news last week, and long overdue (see Lead Story). This will help improve access to virtual health services for our rural families when face to face options are not available in the timeframes required.

This coming Sunday, 10 September 2017, is *World Suicide Prevention Day* (WSPD) and this year's theme is "Take a minute, change a life." THE WSPD website asks us all "to look out for those who may be struggling, check in with them, and encourage them to tell their story in their own way and at their own pace. Offering a gentle word of support and listening in a non-judgemental way can make all the difference."

As part of our Rural Mental Health Initiatives contract with Government we are offering an advanced suicide prevention workshop, *Safe Hands, Safe Plans*, for our rural health professionals and other professionals who have a "duty of care". An expert team has worked really hard to put this programme together – it is based on evidence and front-line rural mental health and addictions experience.

The Chief Coroner recently released the suicide statistics for the year ended 30 June 2017 – 606 people died by suicide, the highest absolute number on record. While we don't yet know how many of these suicides were rural, or how the rural suicide rate per 100,000 compares to the urban suicide rate, what is shockingly clear is, our rate of suicide is stubbornly high and has remained so for at least the last decade.

That our work is strongly "connected" to evidence is important to us. The RHĀNZ Council met a fortnight ago and we all agreed with our suicide prevention expert, Dr Annette Baurtais, that, yes, we need to talk about suicide but this must be done in a cautious and controlled way. Most importantly, we need to talk about suicide prevention and not about suicide. We need a public messaging campaign to turn around the focus on suicide to a focus on suicide prevention, with helpful and hopeful messages - stories that show it is possible for people to get well again and to go on to live fulfilling lives.

Take a minute, change a life – is powerful stuff. Are you ready to rise to the challenge?

Best wishes always,
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

Farm leaders make water

A group of farming leaders has upped the ante over water quality, committing to having the country's rivers swimmable for their children and grandchildren.

The pledge was short on detail including a timetable but Federated Farmers president Katie Milne said it was a commitment from the sector to the public to work to improve water quality to swimmable standard. (Farmers Weekly)

[Read more](#)

New School of Rural Medicine 'very, very good news'

The announcement that the Government will establish a new School of Rural Medicine within the next three years is "very, very good news for our country", says New Zealand Rural General Practice Network Chief Executive Dalton Kelly.

"Rural New Zealand plays such an important part in the nation's prosperity and we need to ensure that the people who live and work in rural New Zealand have the very best health services available and this initiative will contribute hugely to achieving that.

"We want to ensure that this new school is multi-disciplinary and not just for doctors but also for nurses, pharmacists, midwives, physios and in fact for all the health disciplines needed to ensure the first class delivery of health services in rural New Zealand." (NZRGPN)

[Read more](#)

Agricultural organisations join to promote bee safety

Aerial and ground sprayers can protect bees from unintended exposure to agricultural products, by following some simple rules. Responsible use of products is the driver for releasing the bee responsible campaign by Agcarm, NZ Aviation in Agriculture, and Rural Contractors ... Agricultural organisations join to promote bee safety. (Scoop)

[Read more](#)

Research & Resources Watch

Perceptions and Knowledge of Nuts amongst Health Professionals in New Zealand

Despite their nutritional value, population-level nut consumption remains low. Studies suggest that individuals who live and work in rural NZ that help in recovering from an episode of mental illness. Here is a sample of the types of comments we received:

This cross-sectional study, published in *Nutrients*, aimed to examine the perceptions and knowledge of nuts and the predictors of nut promotion among health professionals in New Zealand.

Events Watch

Managing chemo and radiation side effects

This free webinar event is presented by Breast Cancer Foundation NZ with breast cancer survivor Hannah Dhanaraj, Nurse Chelsea Prout and Dr Ruth Angell.

[Tuesday September 12, 7-8pm.](#)

HiNZ (Health Informatics NZ) Conference, 1-3 November 2017, Rotorua (includes NZ Nursing Informatics Conference, 2 Nov) [Read more.](#)

Rural Women New Zealand, National Conference, 18-20 November, The Ascot Park Hotel, Invercargill [Read more.](#)

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 Agency, Heart Foundation and Health Promotion Agency, will again be held at Te Papa in Wellington on Wednesday 15 November. Hold the date. Free entry.