

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: Doctors given the right to prioritise own health along with that of their patients, our rural wellness initiatives, Australia welcomes the imminent announcement of their new rural health commissioner, 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.

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We thank our partners.



LEAD STORIES



RHĀNZ's *Safe Hands Safe Plans* suicide prevention programme is targeted at rural health and social service professionals. It complements Le Va's Life Keepers suicide prevention programme which has been especially designed for communities. It is hoped that these programmes will work together to better equip our communities and health providers to meet increased mental health needs.

Safe Hands Safe Plans is open to health and social service professionals working in rural NZ who have a duty of care to act in a mental health crisis (e.g. GPs, nurses, midwives, pharmacists, community based mental health & addiction workers, ambulance staff, Police, Clergy, allied health and counsellors). Workshops available this side of Christmas will be held in Northland, Dannevirke and Hastings. CPD points will be available for clinical staff.

If you satisfy the eligibility criteria please click here for more information and to register for a [workshop](#).

Media Watch

From potatoes to broadband: The man connecting King Country

A potato farmer who built his own radio site to provide broadband to his property has just won a government contract to provide wireless internet to the King Country. After the success of his personal project, Hawke's Bay-based farmer Lachlan Chapman established AoNet Broadband in 2014, which now has six staff.

The company has just won the Wireless Internet Service Provider to service the King Country, as well as a small portion of the \$150 million the government has dished out to improve broadband in rural areas around the country. (RNZ)

[Read more](#)

Calls to fund rural rest homes differently

The Government needs to fund rural rest homes differently to larger establishments - or they won't continue to provide a service. That's the view of Chief Executive of the Aged Care Association Simon Wallace.

It's after revelations that Blenheim's Aberleigh Rest Home is changing the title of some of their workers, to avoid paying them more under an agreed settlement.

Mr Wallace told Rachel Smalley government funding is based on average care statistics in rest homes around the country, which is where smaller, rural services are missing out. (Newstalk ZB)

[Read more](#)

Southern nurses part of rural network

Four southern nurses are among the nine newly elected officers and members of the Rural Nurses New Zealand (RNNZ) group. The group was formed in response to an identified need, during the New Zealand Rural General Practice Network's Rural Health conference in Wellington earlier this year.

Rhonda Johnson, of Clyde, is the group's chairwoman, while Kate Stark, of Gore, is a communications officer. (Otago Daily Times)

[Read more](#)

Federated Farmers urges rural Kiwis to reach out about mental illnesses

The proportion of people living in rural areas who have taken their own lives is up to 50 per cent higher than those in urban areas.

It's Mental Health Week and Federated Farmers is encouraging rural New Zealanders struggling with mental health issues to reach out for help.

President Katie Milne said it's a timely reminder to touch base with your priorities and your health. (NZ Herald)

[Read more](#)

Call to destigmatise rural suicide, depression

A farmer who recently lost a family member to suicide is calling for changes to the way mental health is talked about. Sandra Faulkner farms just out of Gisborne and a member of her extended family took their own life last month.

The family and community were still reeling, and the farming sector needed to change the way it discussed mental health, she said.

Using the words "brain health" rather than "mental health" may help to remove the stigma and emotion around the topic, she said.

"I distinctly dislike the word mental. For my generation it has very negative connotations, and for generations either side of me as well, I suspect. (Radio NZ)

[Read more](#)

Drones carrying blood could be the future of rural medicine

A drone flew chilled human blood for 160 miles over the hot Arizona desert — smashing records for transport of biological samples on a remotely operated vehicle. The blood was still in good condition after the three-hour flight, which means that the growing role of drones in rural medical care really could have the potential to save lives. (The Verge)

[Read more](#)

Taumarunui peaks in smoking and obese pregnant women

Three poor rural towns are home to some of the most vulnerable pregnant women in the country. And one point of that northern Island triangle is especially worrying. In Taumarunui, 70 per cent of pregnant women are overweight or obese. (Stuff)

[Read more](#)

Future rural leaders encouraged to enter programme

The prestigious Kellogg Rural Leadership Programme has a long and proud 39-year history of transforming and developing leaders for the Agri-food and Agri-business sectors. Many influential graduates have gone on to higher achievements including innovating on farm, governance in key industry groups, senior executive roles in business or becoming Members of Parliament.

As applications open for another course programme leader Anne Hindson, CEO for NZ Rural Leadership Trust joins the Rural Exchange team to discuss the course and how people can be part of New Zealand's most recognised leadership brand - a 'Kellogger'. (Radio Live)

[Read more](#)

First save yourself

Looking after yourself, so that you can best help others is sage advice. It's what we are advised to do in case of an emergency, it is a cornerstone of the Farmstrong programme and the Mental Health Foundation's 5 Ways to Wellbeing. In Chicago this week, it has also been enshrined into the modern Hippocratic Oath, thanks to the efforts of a New Zealand doctor, Sam Hazledine.



This unanimously approved resolution by the World Medical Association, adds to a doctor's professional promise of "first, do no harm" to also look after their own health alongside that of their patients.

According to Dr Hazledine, "half of all New Zealand GPs have said in surveys they are either burnt-out or approaching it". He believes "doctors are really struggling... there are a lot of factors that contribute to that and one of the main things is just the reality of medicine and the responsibility we have."

Interestingly, when I heard this announcement I was sipping a cup of tea (one of many restorative brews over the weekend) while trying to catch up on the rather enormous pile of rural papers that seem to breed on our kitchen table each week. The exact article I was reading at the time of the radio announcement was by Lindy Nelson, from the Agricultural Women's Development Trust. Lindy was talking about the power of a few – with vision and bravery - to affect change and as part of her story, she quoted educationalist Margaret Mead "never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, concerned citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever does."

Dr Hazledine has affected a simple yet powerful change and it feels good to know he was a Kiwi.

The standing ovation he received from his colleagues at the World Medical Association was very well deserved.

Cheers and best wishes
Michelle

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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

Research & Resources Watch

The National Rural Health Commissioner: a champion for rural healthcare

This article featured in a recent edition of Partyline, the NRHA Australia's magazine, penned by Peta Rutherford of the Rural Doctors' Association of Australia, welcomes the imminent appointment of Australia's first National Rural Health Commissioner.

[Read more](#)

Media Watch

Rural Women's bid to help fund parish nurse for community

Four members of the Awatere branch are hard at work preparing for an important fundraiser, one which they hope will benefit the whole community. A special Hats and Handbags fundraiser has been organised in a bid to fund Awatere Valley parish nurse Rachael Westenra to work more official hours. (Stuff)

[Read more](#)

Outreach clinic opens in Marlborough's Wairau Valley

Families in a rural Marlborough community will finally be able to visit the doctor without having to schedule a trip into Blenheim. Renwick Medical Centre is launching a weekly outreach clinic to see patients at Wairau Valley, west of Blenheim, for people who would otherwise put off getting an appointment and risk their illness getting worse. (Stuff)

[Read more](#)

Events Watch

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 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.