

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: Promising signs from the Beehive, new Rural Health Commissioner for Australia, Grochem joins us as a strategic supporter 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.

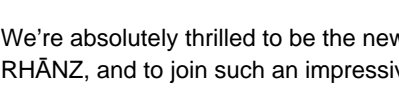
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We thank our partners.



NEW STRATEGIC SUPPORTER



We're absolutely thrilled to be the newest strategic supporters of RHĀNZ, and to join such an impressive line-up of New Zealand businesses in getting behind this important work.

As a leading supplier of innovative, sustainable solutions for growers including plant nutrition, insecticides, fungicides and plant growth regulators, we've seen rapid growth over the past few years. This has been driven by the needs of the horticultural industry in New Zealand, Australia and South Africa. While we're focused commercially on helping our industry meet the challenging demands of consumers and enabling crops to be grown more sustainably, we're also focused socially and looking for ways to impact growers in a positive way – improved access to health and wellbeing services in Rural New Zealand is one way to do this.

Although fruit growers in New Zealand make up a small proportion of our rural population, it's important that the horticulture sector is well represented when advocating for greater access to health and wellbeing services. Supporting RHĀNZ is an opportunity for Grochem to make that happen.

With the current devastating rate of suicide in New Zealand, we're particularly focused on improved services around mental wellbeing. It's not the first thing that comes to mind when one thinks about advocacy for growers, but it's important that we shed some light on this important issue.

'Rural wellbeing' is one of the five cornerstones of RHĀNZ's Rural Health Road Map, so we felt the fit with RHĀNZ was perfect.

George McHardy
Managing Director, Grochem



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

Opinion: NPs' call for voice to be heard

TVNZ's Seven Sharp show recently raised concerns about the lack of rural GPs. In response NP Diane Williams wrote pointing out that more GPs is not the only answer. Her letter is repeated here. (Nursing Review).

[Read more](#)

'Crazy' food imports likely as urban sprawl goes unchecked

We're paving paradise. Farmland is being swallowed up by urban development as the populations of Auckland, Hamilton and Tauranga grow. Between 2001 and 2016, about 10,000 hectares of horticultural land was lost, said Horticulture NZ chief executive Mike Chapman. Sixty per cent of that was in vegetable production and the remainder produced fruit. There are areas where we should be directing houses and areas where we shouldn't be directing houses and we should do a lot more planning for it," Chapman said. (NZ Farmer)

[Read more](#)

Rural maternity roadshow calls the midwife

Event organiser Christine Strydom said the annual Meet the Midwives roadshow will make its way around the mountain so rural families can learn more about free services. (Stuff)

[Read more](#)

Tim Malloy to head National PRIME Committee

Rural GP and Royal New Zealand College of GPs president Dr Tim Malloy has been appointed chairperson of the newly created PRIME National Committee. (NZRGPN)

[Read more](#)

Tiny Tararua town's initiative builds one of New Zealand's most remote petrol stations

A tiny Tararua town has blazed trails, broken ground and raised a quarter of a million dollars in a two-year passion project to bring back a village petrol station. In a New Zealand first, the people of Pongarua jointly funded and built one of the country's most remote petrol stations, which opened on Saturday.

[Read more](#)

Manawatu could be hit the hardest by "unnecessary" bank restructure

The wider Manawātū region may lose 17 jobs and a bank as four of the region's Bank of New Zealand branches come under review in what a union has described as an "unnecessary" move. BNZ has this week proposed a reduction in roles and hours for tellers in more than 30 BNZ branches nationwide. (Stuff)

[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 central North 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](#)

Research & Resources Watch

Americans Living in Rural Areas More Likely to Die by Suicide – report from USA Centres for Disease Control

According to a new federal report, suicide rates are significantly higher in rural areas of the country than urban areas. Researchers at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) looked at data from all 50 states and the District of Columbia between 2001 and 2015. They found that while suicide rates rose across all levels of urbanization, increases were steepest and rates were highest in rural areas.

During the study period, suicide rates were 17.32 in rural counties, 14.86 in medium/small metropolitan counties, and 11.92 in large metropolitan counties per 100,000 people.

The authors suggested that the negative effects of the economic recession, which are more prevalent in rural areas, may be associated with higher suicide risk. "The trends in suicide rates by sex, race, ethnicity, age, and mechanism that we see in the general population are magnified in rural areas," said CDC Division of Violence Prevention Director James A. Mercy. "This report underscores the need for suicide prevention strategies that are tailored specifically for these communities."

[Read more](#)

Promising signs from the Beehive



As part of election 2018, the Labour Party, NZ First and the Green Party all pledged a commitment to improving access to health services for rural communities. It is reassuring to see these promises reflected in the Labour-NZ First Coalition agreement and the subsequent allocation of ministerial responsibilities.

Of particular note, is the creation of the regional economic development portfolio and specific responsibility for rural communities. A commitment to reviewing the capitation funding model, improving mental health services and cancer treatment services for rural people, increasing support for rural health professionals and NZ First's promise to develop a national rural and provincial health services plan are especially welcomed.

The connection between good health and good productivity has long been recognised. Therefore, it is imperative that health infrastructure keeps pace with the intended economic development across regional/rural New Zealand.

This fortnight's selection of media articles indicates there is much work to be done rebuilding and reenergising our regions – more bank closures threatened, serious health workforce shortages and one small town having to fund and build its own petrol station – after their last garage closed four years ago creating a two-hour round trip to fuel up! How frustrating would that have been?

We will be seeking meetings with the new health and agriculture ministers, both of whom are familiar with our organisation and the priorities of our Rural Health Road Map. We are keen to work with the new Labour-NZ First Coalition Government to make good on its promises to rural New Zealanders – a constituency of vital importance to our nation's productivity, identity and overall economic wellbeing.

We will also be following with keen interest the appointment of Australia's first ever Rural Health Commissioner. Professor Paul Worley – a distinguished rural doctor and academic was appointed to the role last weekend.

This is a milestone event, it was an Australian election promise delivered good on. The role is described as a being strategic and long-term, with statutory powers. The central focus is to provide independent advice to the health minister and Government on rural health and wellbeing and has been described by David Gillespie, Assistant Minister of Health as "a really great asset for all of Australia".

Finally, to top off an exciting week in the world of rural health, we are delighted to announce that Grochem has come on board as a strategic supporter. Grochem is a leading nutrition, fungicide and insecticide supplier to kiwifruit and pip fruit growers – with a big emphasis on environmental sustainability - in New Zealand and Australia. Grochem has a long history of philanthropic partnerships, the most recent one being a UNICEF project where they raised \$92,000 for clean water and sanitation for 10,000 school aged children in Vanuatu, following Cyclone Pam. We welcome the Grochem Team, in particular, Managing Director, George McHardy and Grant Morrish, General Manager. See Lead Article for more information. Great to have you on board helping make rural NZ healthier.

Cheers and best wishes
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

New Member

We are delighted to welcome Dr Robyn Gedye as a Friend of the Rural Health Alliance Aotearoa New Zealand. Dr Gedye is a Registered Psychologist with over 25 years' experience working in the mental health field across DHB and NGO settings. She lives on a farm in Franklin. Welcome!

Events Watch

Breast Cancer Foundation NZ, webinar, Sex after breast cancer, 31 October, 2017, 7-8pm, free session: [Read more](#).

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

Breast Cancer Foundation NZ, Free Public Education Day, 12 November, 9:30am – 3:00pm, free event, AUT Auckland. Note: there is some limited financial support available for nurses and patients who are out-of-town. Please [contact Alice](#) for details. [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.