

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: Rural connectivity stepping up a notch, National Travel Assistance policy under review (have your say), child oral health campaign launched, final phase of St John's 111 Clinical Hub expansion rolled out plus a selection of relevant news and research articles....

Who are RHĀNZ?

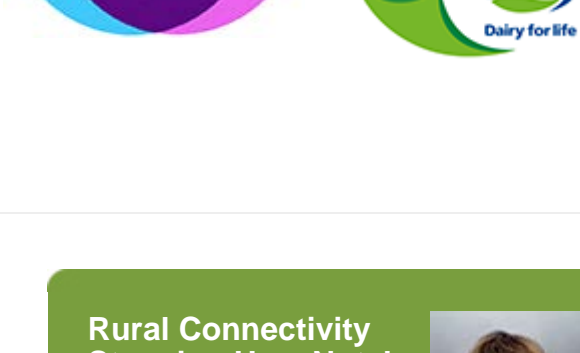
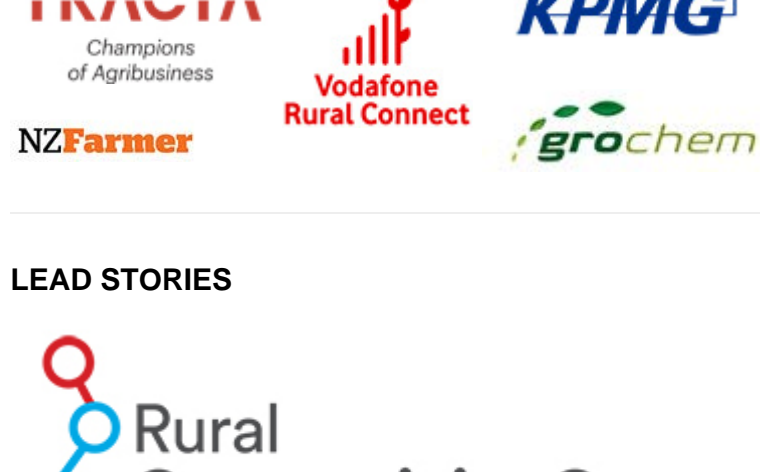
The Rural Health Alliance Aotearoa New Zealand represents a united voice from across multiple rural sector organisations. Our aim is to provide solutions and influence policy affecting the health and wellbeing of rural communities.

[Visit our website](#)



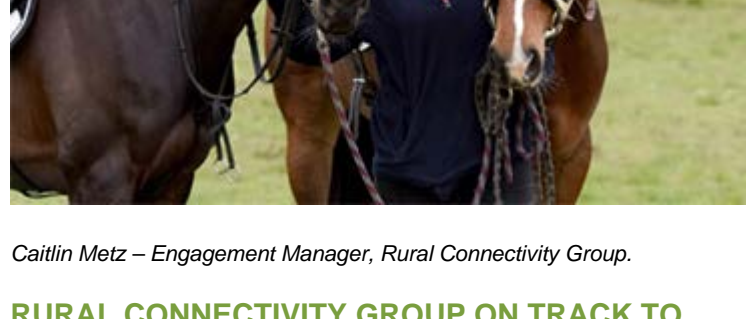
Credits: Left to Right, Craig Young, TUANZ, Michelle Thompson, RHAANZ, Bill Smale & Miro Sudzum, Wirelless Nation - Winners of the Best Rural Broadband Provider for 2017

We thank our strategic partner and supporters.



LEAD STORIES

Rural Connectivity Group



Caitlin Metz – Engagement Manager, Rural Connectivity Group.

RURAL CONNECTIVITY GROUP ON TRACK TO DELIVER BETTER CONNECTIVITY

In August the Rural Connectivity Group (RCG), in a unique partnership with the government, was given the go ahead to bring better connectivity services to at least 70,000 rural Kiwi homes and businesses over the next five years.

This programme will see the RCG in partnership with Crown Infrastructure Partners build a minimum of 400 new cell sites – which will also bring a further 1000+ kilometres of state highways within reach of mobile coverage. And in a boost for rural businesses that rely heavily on tourism, at least 90 tourist blackspots will be targeted as part of the plan.

This is a unique programme where the three mobile network operators (Vodafone, Spark and 2degrees) have come together to work very closely with government and developed a funding model to deliver these critical services for rural New Zealanders.

The RCG will bring access to world class services, and the shared goal is to stretch the investment capital as far as it can go, to deliver as much as we can for rural New Zealand.

Having worked to bring better connectivity to rural communities for many years, I have witnessed first-hand the incredible difference it has made to homes, business and farming practices. It can be life changing with far reaching positive impacts every day. These range from simplifying health and safety compliance and managing business banking needs online, to having the freedom to access real time information on the go – such as the weather forecast and water pump usage.

For many, mobile and broadband is a critical need, more than anything else. We are all motivated to build this connectivity as quickly and efficiently as possible, and our chief task for the next few months is to build a great team, develop partnerships to deliver the technology and get back out into the community and get stuck into the detail.

I look forward to getting out there to have these exciting conversations with the communities that are set to benefit the most from what's coming. Feel free to reach out to me directly as I'm keen to hear your ideas of how you can help us build quickly and go further within your community. caitlin.metz@theRCG.nz or phone 021 033 1116.

NATIONAL TRAVEL ASSISTANCE SCHEME – SURVEY – IMPORTANT PLEASE COMPLETE

At long last, the Ministry of Health is reviewing the policy underpinning the National Travel Assistance Scheme. Marie Daly, our Programme Manager, will be representing us on the expert leadership group overseeing this work. This is a really important scheme for rural people and their families and we have been advocating for some time now for it to be reviewed to make sure it actually works for rural people, especially those dealing with mental distress.

As preparatory work for the review the Ministry has set up a survey on its website to gather information on people's experience of the scheme, and how it can be improved.

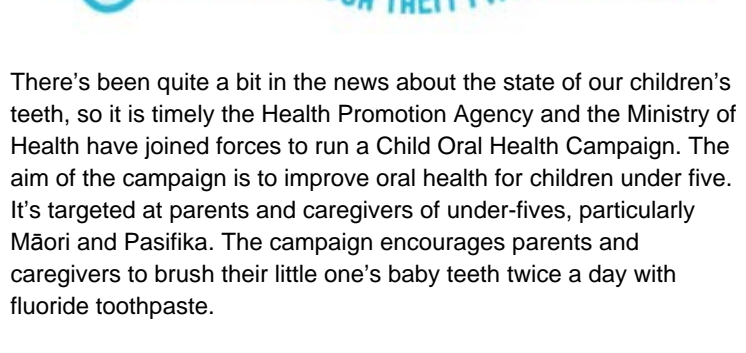
Anyone can complete the survey. There is one for people who have used the NTA or have been a support person - and one for professionals and organisations who work with the NTA.

We urge you to complete the survey and/or pass it on to anyone you know it would be valuable to hear from. The Ministry is particularly keen to hear from patients and their families.

Here is the link to the surveys and further detail about when they close.

[Read more.](#)

CHILD ORAL HEALTH PROMOTION INITIATIVE UPDATE



There's been quite a bit in the news about the state of our children's teeth, so it is timely the Health Promotion Agency and the Ministry of Health have joined forces to run a Child Oral Health Campaign. The aim of the campaign is to improve oral health for children under five. It's targeted at parents and caregivers of under-fives, particularly Māori and Pasifika. The campaign encourages parents and caregivers to brush their little one's baby teeth twice a day with fluoride toothpaste.

Click here to read more about the campaign and to download campaign materials relevant to your own members/community.

[Read more.](#)

Update on the St John 111 Clinical Hub expansion across New Zealand

As previously communicated, St John and Homecare Medical are pleased to advise the final phase of the 111 Clinical Hub rollout is underway, which includes the West Coast, Southern, South Canterbury and Canterbury DHB areas. This last phase will complete the full rollout of the 111 Clinical Hub across New Zealand by the end of 2017.

[Read more.](#)

Media Watch

What has ripped out the heart of healthcare in the heartland?

An exasperated Levin GP says a big chunk of what he deals with are mental health issues, and in his experience, suicide is the tip of a distress iceberg which is growing. Glen Colquhoun said suicidal thoughts are not an uncommon disclosure by patients at Youth One Stop Shop (YOSS), a free youth health care clinic based in Horowhenua where he works.

After digging deeper and asking questions, many have emotional, spiritual or mental health issues - often affecting their physical health as well. (NZ Herald)

[Read more](#)

330 NZ schools sitting half empty

The ministry said 330 schools, or 14 percent of the 2430 state and integrated schools, were at less than 51 percent of their capacity in March 2017.

They include 102 in rural or isolated areas, 54 integrated schools, and seven recently built in areas where rolls were expected to increase. The highest percentage of under-capacity schools was in Northland, while Taranaki/Whanganui/Manawatu had 45 under-used schools, and Auckland and in Otago/Southland had 41. Canterbury had the fewest. (Radio NZ)

[Read more](#)

Lack of connectivity has Taranua midwives struggling to deliver

Call the midwife. It sounds easy, but for many families living in remote rural areas, it's often anything but easy.

There is no doubt rural communities without district-wide connectivity across all platforms, struggle with delivery of all community health services.

The announcement of the permanent closure of the Manawatu Gorge and the lengthy wait before a new highway is built is adding even more to the pressure on the Taranua District's already stretched health services.

Added to the Gorge closure, the serious lack of connectivity via cellphone and internet in the district and the result is an untenable situation. (Hawke's Bay Today)

[Read more](#)

Climate change predicted to take big toll on Kiwis' mental and physical health

Allergies will become more prevalent and their symptoms worse, drinking water will be less reliable, and poisonous pests may find a new home in New Zealand's warmer climate.

These are just a few of the effects climate change is expected to have on human health, according to a newly-released Royal Society report. Kiwis may have to contend with more intense heat waves and extreme weather events, including flooding and fires, which would take a toll on mental health. (Stuff)

[Read more](#)

Training scheme underway for Marlborough's first PRIME team

Crashes on rural highways are a reality for many who live in the provinces, with help often hours away. But a new initiative has been set up in Marlborough to deliver a speedier response, and ultimately save lives. Four of Marlborough's registered nurses and one doctor are undergoing specialist training on rural emergency responders under a scheme known as Prime Response in Medical Emergency, or PRIME. (Stuff)

[Read more](#)

Clutha Health First expansion doubles chemotherapy treatment area

More Clutha District people undergoing certain types of chemotherapy are able to get their treatment at Balclutha rather than having to travel to Dunedin hospital. In its ongoing expansion, Balclutha-based medical facility Clutha Health First recently doubled its capacity to administer chemo drugs from two patients to four. (Stuff)

[Read more](#)

2,000 Family Doctors Coming to New Zealand

The Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners has won its bid to host the 2020 WONCA Asia Pacific Region Conference, which would bring approximately 2,000 family doctors to New Zealand.

WONCA is the World Organisation of Family Doctors. The College's bid was presented to the WONCA Asia Pacific Regional Council on Tuesday 31 October [9.30pm New Zealand time] by College President Dr Tim Malloy and Chief Executive Helen Morgan-Banda, during the 2017 Asia Pacific Region Conference in Pattaya City, Thailand. The 2020 conference would be held in Auckland on dates proposed from 28 July – 1 August. The theme would be Family Medicine: An advanced world of equity, quality and compassion. (RNZCGP)

[Read more](#)

Rural mayors back McDonald's facility

Three southern mayors have joined forces to slam public health authorities over their stance on a possible Ronald McDonald House in the new Dunedin Hospital.

Central Otago Mayor Tim Cadogan, Waitaki Mayor Gary Kircher and Clutha Mayor Bryan Cadogan have written to Southern District Health Board (SDHB) commissioners urging them to "listen to the voices" of those in their three rural Otago districts, who the mayors say would be most affected by the "movement against Ronald McDonald House".

"The value of Ronald McDonald houses already established throughout New Zealand to families in our districts has been demonstrated time and time again," the mayors said. "The tyranny of distance adds significant emotional and financial burdens to those affected by illness or injury in their children requiring hospitalisation. (Otago Daily Times)

[Read more](#)

Rural Connectivity Stepping Up a Notch



Last week I had the pleasure of attending the Inaugural Broadband Compare Awards in Auckland. Both Craig Young (Chief Executive Officer of TUANZ and RHANZ Council member) and I were part of the 8-strong judging panel, which included representatives from Consumer NZ and the NZ eSports Federation. It was a great night on several counts.

- First, an event acknowledging the fundamental importance of fast, reliable and affordable connectivity for all New Zealanders;

- Two, a special category acknowledging the extra challenges of providing connectivity to our rural and remote regions (i.e. it is not the same as urban); and

- Third, our strategic supporter, Wireless Nation, won the Best Rural Broadband Provider for 2017!

The team at Wireless Nation have been with us from almost day one. They have been staunch supporters of our rural connectivity symposia and their ongoing support is helping us progress the five priorities of our Rural Health Road Map, especially the Connectivity priority.

Our warmest congratulations to Bill, Miro, Tom, Andy and everyone at Wireless Nation for this wonderful accolade. [Click here](#) to view the other winners.

Another important RHANZ strategic supporter, Vodafone Rural Connect, is part of the Rural Connectivity Group (RCG) which has been charged with delivering the lion's share of the Government's RB2 and Mobile Blackspot programme. Caitlin Metz, Engagement Manager for the RCG provides an update on this exciting and much needed work in our latest article.

Caitlin is currently out and about in rural NZ and is keen to hear from rural New Zealanders as to ways they can help the RCG build quickly and go further with your community. Her contact details are at the end of her article.

Staying with the Connectivity theme, last month Graeme Mitchell, Chief Executive and Nick Manning, General Manager, Government and Industry Affairs, from Crown Infrastructure Partners (previously known as Crown Fibre Holdings) met with the RHANZ Council. They provided a comprehensive overview of the UFB and RB2/Mobile Blackspot programmes across the country. Both Graeme and Nick confirmed they are keen to work with RHANZ members in a number of areas. They have also given permission for us to share their presentation with members, which I'll do via separate email.

Great to see some decent "connectivity" coordination and recognition underway at last for our rural communities, rural businesses and rural ISP providers.

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.ca@rhanz.org.nz

Media Watch

Tararua nurse first in rural nursing to get certificate in rural nursing

A Tararua woman is the first in the country to walk away with a new rural qualification in nursing. Rowena Panchara said her passion for her rural area led to her completing a graduate certificate in nursing practice, with a rural nursing speciality. (Stuff)

[Read more](#)

Encourage rural students to become GPs, says health expert

Encouraging rural high school students to consider a medical career could be one way to overcome the shortage of general practitioners in the bush, according to one health care expert... But the thing that predicts whether someone is going to remain in rural is whether they grew up in rural, educated in rural and then whether they had their medical education in rural. (The Daily Advertiser)

[Read more](#)

Farmers urged to check handling of hazardous substances

Farmers are being urged to check their handling and storage of hazardous substances ahead of changes to health and safety regulations. New rules aimed at reducing the harm from work-related activities involving hazardous substances come into force on December 1 and key changes would help ensure farmers were doing their duty to protect people from harm, WorkSafe NZ chief inspector Darren Handforth said. (NZ Farmer)

[Read more](#)

Mopping up more than the weather

National Rural Support Trust chief Neil Bateup isn't sure what's top-of-mind for farmers right now – the unrelenting wet, or the feeling of being undervalued and uncertain about the future. Probably both given his farmer support service is averaging one phone call a day this year, says the Te Hoe dairy farmer as the region's skies open yet again. "A lot of it is driven by the weather. It's been a particularly tough year. But farmers are also feeling undervalued and unsure of the future." (NZ Farmer)

[Read more](#)

Patient scans being sent from ambulances in new trial

Images of patients' injuries are being sent from ambulances to a hospital emergency department in a trial involving the European Space Agency.

The technology allows hospital-based specialists to assess patients' condition and their needs before they arrive at A&E. Paramedics are able to send scans and videos from their vehicles to Raigmore Hospital in Inverness. (BBC News)

[Read more](#)

Health Needs Re-engineering From the Top Down

Blog from Friend's Member [Ernie Newman](#).

Ernie identifies 5 top tasks why the health sector is lagging behind IT trends taking place in other industries. He offers solutions for each, including the rather drastic one of dis-establishing the Ministry of Health.

Vensa wins top NZ health IT award

Cutting-edge, life-changing Auckland mobile solutions developer Vensa Health has won the top New Zealand Health IT accolade. Vensa, which has an innovative online patient portal platform for general practices in New Zealand, has been named overall winner of the New Zealand Health IT (NZHIT) annual innovation awards in Rotorua. For large parts of New Zealand's remote and rural population Vensa services ensure people get better access to their GP. More than 70 percent of GP clinics around the country use Vensa's current solutions for more than three million Kiwis a year. (Scoop)

[Read more](#)

Resources & Research

Remote rural women's choice of birthplace and transfer experiences in rural Otago and Southland New Zealand, Midwifery Research Review. Authors: Patterson J et al.

Reference: *Midwifery* 2017;52:49-56 (subscriber only for full article)

This study looked at the birth place decisions and the labour and birth experiences of women living in remote rural areas of the lower South Island of NZ. The women talked about the transfer to a base hospital as being stressful, uncomfortable and impacting partners and families.

The findings raise questions about: sustaining practice when working rural or remotely; better organising services so the women are able to meet the back-up midwife and those that may be involved in their care; conversations regarding transfer, especially where transfer time is long, and ensuring voices of partners and significant others are heard as care is handed over to colleagues at the base hospital.

[Read more](#)

Events Watch

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.