

**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: Bayer NZ and RHĀNZ partner to boost rural health and wellbeing, registrations go live for NRHC 2018, the expert leadership group meets for the first time to review the NTA Scheme, details of the Voluntary Bonding Scheme 2018 released 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](#)



Derek Bartlett, Managing Director, Bayer New Zealand

**We thank our strategic partner and supporters.**

**Strategic Partner**



**Strategic Supporters**



**LEAD STORIES**

**NATIONAL RURAL HEALTH CONFERENCE**



Early bird registration is open for the 2018 New Zealand Rural General Practice Network National Rural Health Conference. From now until February 16, 2018 discounted rates apply.

Everyone who registers and pays by close of the early bird option will enter a draw to win a FitBit. For more details on the programme, registration information and to book accommodation, visit the official conference website by clicking this [LINK](#).

Auckland's Pullman will host next year's conference from April 5 – 8. The theme is "Healthy Rural Communities – Mauri Ora, Whanau Ora, Wai Ora".



John Wakerman



Kyle Eggleton



Siouxsie Wiles

The exciting line-up of nine keynote speakers include Kyle Eggleton ("Addressing health inequity through community, practice, person and self"); Maori child and infant health panel featuring Professor David Tipene-Leach and Dr Rawiri Jansen; Amohaere Tangitu, (Maori child and infant health); Adele Robertson and Leonie Howie ("A World of its Own - Great Barrier Island"); Siouxsie Wiles, (Antimicrobial resistance and antimicrobial stewardship); John Wakerman (rural and remote health research collaboration in Australia); Mark Bryan, (Global health issue: AMR resistance/One Health); a PRIME panel update (What's been achieved one year on and where to next?); and an opening political keynote session (Friday, April 6).

[Read more](#)

**MOH NATIONAL TRAVEL ASSISTANCE SCHEME**

At long last, the Ministry of Health is reviewing the policy underpinning the National Travel Assistance (NTA) Scheme. Marie Daly, our Programme Manager, is representing RHĀNZ on the expert leadership group overseeing this work, and provides the following update:

- The aim of the review is to provide advice to Government on how the NTA Scheme can better meet the needs of people who are most in need of financial support to access secondary health services.
- The first meeting of the Group was in late November. It identified ways in which the NTA Scheme has not achieved the overall aim of increasing access to secondary services, but also identified examples where it has. It was widely agreed that where patients are aware of the NTA Scheme, and are able to complete the administrative processes required, it is a useful and effective tool in reducing financial barriers to accessing treatment services. The keys issues were:
  - A lack of awareness of the scheme across low income groups.
  - Arduous application and administrative requirements that are not easy for those who have lower levels of health, and general literacy.
  - Eligibility criteria that have not kept up with changes in treatment protocols, and the increasing move to regionalized specialist services.

The MoH has set up an online survey to gather users experience of the NTA Scheme – either as a patient or support person, or as professionals or organisations whose patients use it. The survey will remain open until at least February 2018 and the National Leadership Group was asked to encourage people in their networks to participate. RHAANZ will maintain [the link to the survey](#) in our e-zine until it closes.

The first National Leadership Group meeting ended on a positive note with high level brainstorming of ways to address the issues discussed throughout the day. The Group looks forward to reconvening in February to explore these in greater depth.

**VOLUNTARY BONDING SCHEME**

**Voluntary Bonding Scheme – 2018 intake information**

The Minister of Health has confirmed the health professions, communities and specialties that will be eligible for the Voluntary Bonding Scheme in 2018.

[Read more](#)

**Media Watch**

**South Australian Virtual Emergency Service SAVES**

New afterhours telemedicine service to support rural health workforce in South Australia.

[Read more](#)

**Virtual medical clinic gets funding boost**

A virtual medical clinic model helping to provide health services to people in isolated areas is to set receive \$1.4 million in funding. Over the next two years, Navillus Medical will receive the funding from the Ministry of Health and ACCU to develop its MaiHealth model.

Navillus Medical is led by 2014 New Zealander of the year Lance O'Sullivan who also developed iMoko, a virtual medical service to help vulnerable children.

Dr O'Sullivan said he constantly heard about patients not having access to doctors in isolated locations.

"These people aren't coming in with trivial problems, it just goes to show we need to redesign how we allow people to get access to health.

[Read more](#)

**Why small towns can't attract workers**

The tiny town of Taumarunui has struggled to find anyone to take on a job with a \$150,000 salary. It's not the first time this has happened to a small town.

In 2016, another small town had been battling for two years to fill a doctor's position paying \$400,00. Then there's the Otago town of Kaitangata, with a population of about 800. Its hunt to find new residents went viral last year. Other regions have begged migrants to move there. (Stuff)

[Read more](#)

**'Slap in the face' as ANZ abandons another NZ small town**

ANZ is replacing its Pahiatua branch with a smart ATM, but a union is calling the move a "slap in the face" to the staff who have worked hard to keep it open. Three part-time and one fulltime staff will lose their jobs and ANZ customers will have to rely on mobile and internet banking, once the branch closes on Friday next week. (Stuff)

[Read more](#)

**Rural towns must do better to attract long-term rural doctors**

Rural folk are under pressure to attract more doctors by making their rural towns more attractive to work. Rural New Zealand is suffering a severe shortage of rural doctors, with 29 per cent of Canterbury's medical practices with a vacancy, and 93 per cent of West Coast practices with a vacancy. Thirty per cent of Canterbury's doctors intend to retire within five years and this rises to 32 per cent in South Canterbury. (Stuff)

[Read more](#)

**Rural schools struggle to fill key high school teaching jobs**

A rural school principal says he won't be able to relax over summer because he has been unable to fill key positions for high school teachers at his school. Michael Williams said rural school vacancies won't be able to be filled until more teachers are trained.

He said his organisation alerted the government to the looming teacher shortage for two years.

"We haven't been able to get any traction. A new government hasn't helped because at a critical time when we should have had things being done government was changing. We were promised a package of things but at this stage it's a bit late for a package to solve the problems for next year." (RNZ)

[Read more](#)

**Busy year for rural support trust**

South Canterbury Rural Support Trust has experienced one of its busiest years in recent history. The organisation, which supports rural communities in times of need, has been in demand throughout the year, particularly after the Mycoplasma bovis outbreak.

South Canterbury Rural Support Trust chairman David Hewson said the team had been especially busy since August, assisting people affected by the outbreak, making it one of the busiest years since his involvement. (Otago Daily Times)

[Read more](#)

**Partnership a boost for rural health and wellbeing**



This fortnight we are absolutely delighted to announce our new strategic partnership with Bayer NZ.

This partnership is our first significant collaboration with an industry corporate and will enable us to advance our *Rural Health Road Map* priorities as well as supplementing our rural mental health and wellbeing initiatives with Government.

A key focus of our collaborations will be supporting our rural youth, especially those at risk. In 2018 we are planning: a rural youth health challenge as part of the Health Hub at National Fielddays; an extension to RuralFest NZ; and some tailored suicide prevention training for veterinary and rural health students. See our [press release](#) for more information.

This is an incredibly exciting collaboration on many fronts. We have worked hard over recent years to become a cross-sector alliance as we need a replicated response across government precisely because our issues and solutions are bigger than any one ministry can solve.

A truly effective cross-sector alliance requires combined effort, resourcing and friendship across multiple members, government and industry groups. This partnership is a significant step in our vision and we thank Derek Bartlett, Managing Director and William Malpass, Communications Manager, Bayer NZ, for making this partnership a reality.

We are all looking forward to working with the team at Bayer NZ over the coming year to really boost rural health and wellbeing.

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](mailto:ce@rhaanz.org.nz)

**Resources & Research**

**Rural Aotearoa Research Network**

The Rural Aotearoa Research Network has just released its first contestable funding round aimed at supporting quality improvement initiatives within rural – rural general practice, rural communities, rural businesses including farms or rural hospitals. The emphasis behind these awards is to grow capability and capacity in rural by linking rural health professionals or rural community members to an appropriate academic who can support them with their quality improvement idea.

In addition, they are running an inaugural photo competition.

If you are part of a large organisation, such as a primary health organisation, a network or a Māori provider, or a rural hospital please circulate this information to your members.

Also, if you know of any community groups in your area who have an idea they want to explore, for example around water quality or support for Mums and babies in rural, please forward this information to them.

Information about both these initiatives can be found at the following links.

- [Link to contestable funding.](#)
- [Link to photographic competition.](#)

**Poverty in Rural & Remote Australia – Fact Sheet**

Poverty and deprivation are among the adverse social and economic determinants of health experienced by people who live in rural and remote areas. In Australia today, all the population groups at higher risk of poverty are present in greater proportion in rural and remote parts of the country.

[Read more.](#)

**HiNZ 2017 conference proceedings - available now**

The 2017 HiNZ & NZNI Proceedings publication is now available for download on the HiNZ website. This 200 page document can be browsed in alphabetical order by author's name and by submission title. It includes case study and scientific paper submissions to HiNZ and to NZNI (nursing informatics).

[Download the HiNZ & NZNI conference proceedings.](#)

**Rangatahi Tū Rangatira: innovative health promotion in Aotearoa New Zealand**

Rangatahi Tū Rangatira (R2R) is a national health promotion programme in Aotearoa New Zealand which aims to promote cultural and physical wellbeing for rangatahi (young people) and their whānau (family).

Grounded in tikanga Māori, the programme focuses on total wellbeing, leadership and cultural awareness providing rangatahi opportunities to increase their participation in physical activity and cultural knowledge through ngā taonga tākarō (Māori ancestral games).

This paper, published in Health Promotion International, focuses on an evaluation of this innovative health promotion programme focussing on the delivery of R2R by a local iwi provider in a rural area.

[Read more.](#)

**Events Watch**

**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.

[Click here to register now](#)

**6th RRHS Symposium will explore current research in rural and remote health**

The 6th Rural and Remote Health Scientific Symposium, Outback Infront, is being held in Canberra on 11-12 April 2018 and [registration is now open](#).

With its sights fixed on the future, the Symposium program will reflect the breadth and depth of current research in the rural and remote health sector today.