



## Media release

### Partnership a boost for rural health and wellbeing

**Auckland, 4 December 2017** Tackling health and wellbeing issues in New Zealand's rural communities has received a boost with the announcement today of a new collaborative partnership between the Rural Health Alliance Aotearoa New Zealand (RHAANZ) and life sciences company Bayer New Zealand.

A key focus of the partnership is supporting rural youth, especially those at risk from suicide.

Other initiatives include a rural youth health challenge, support of the RuralFest NZ event and tailored suicide prevention training for veterinary and rural health students.

RHAANZ chief executive officer Michelle Thompson says the organisation is thrilled to be working with Bayer New Zealand on initiatives targeted at improving rural health and wellbeing.

"The collaboration is our first major partnership of this kind and will significantly boost our ability to progress the top priorities outlined in our Rural Health Road Map – our 10-year plan for growing healthy rural communities in Aotearoa New Zealand.

"We are really impressed with Bayer New Zealand's community investment programme and believe it aligns well with our Rural Health Road Map – we are very much looking forward to working with the team at Bayer New Zealand to help make rural New Zealand healthier."

Bayer New Zealand managing director Derek Bartlett says the company has a close affinity with rural New Zealand.

"Two thirds of our New Zealand business is focused entirely on the rural sector, particularly animal health solutions and crop protection products.

"Many of our employees themselves have farms or lifestyle blocks; and we have a large team of veterinarians dedicated to supporting farmers.

"Many of the rural health issues RHAANZ is trying to resolve we come across every day. We want to make a difference to health and wellbeing too – it's a core value of the company, which is why we're delighted to lend our support to RHAANZ."

As well as an initial investment of \$80,000, Bayer New Zealand will support RHAANZ with educational material and initiatives on a wide range of health and wellbeing topics.

Thompson says the two organisations will also explore other opportunities where the two can work together.

“Our partnership is a purposeful collaboration, which is important as the problems facing rural communities are complex and have been a long time in the making.

“The solutions are bigger than any one organisation or government ministry. It will take a collective effort between RHAANZ members, government and industry groups to fix, but the new partnership with Bayer is a leap in the right direction.”

## **Ends**

### **About RHAANZ**

RHĀNZ was established in May 2012 and 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 [www.rhaanz.org.nz](http://www.rhaanz.org.nz). Our vision is that all people living in rural New Zealand will achieve optimal health and wellbeing through access to safe, effective and acceptable health services which honour the Treaty of Waitangi. Rural New Zealand is the heart of our country. It is vital for our economy, it is the focus of our leisure and it is central to our national identity. Simply put, we believe the best way to keep New Zealand healthy is to keep rural New Zealand healthy.

### **Bayer: Science For A Better Life**

Bayer is a global enterprise with core competencies in the Life Science fields of health care and agriculture. Its products and services are designed to benefit people and improve their quality of life. At the same time, the Group aims to create value through innovation, growth and high earning power. Bayer is committed to the principles of sustainable development and to its social and ethical responsibilities as a corporate citizen. In New Zealand, it supports numerous community and environmental causes, including United Way New Zealand, the Whangarei Native Bird Recovery Centre and the New Zealand Innovation Awards.

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