

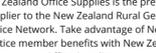
## Welcome to the New Zealand Rural General Practice Network e-zine for 21 June 2019



In this issue: Network Committee student rep gets national volunteer award ✓ NZRGNP at Mystery Creek National Fieldays 2019 - Rural Health and Wellbeing Hub ✓ PM visits Matamata Rural General Practice of the Year and much more...



Angel Flight NZ is a charity funded by Rotary, Private and Corporate donations.



New Zealand Office Supplies is the preferred supplier to the New Zealand Rural General Practice Network. Take advantage of Network practice member benefits with New Zealand Office Supplies.



The Network's health promotion partner.

### Network Committee student rep gets national volunteer award

Medical student Ben Alsop-ten Hove received the Outstanding Achievement for an Individual Youth Health Volunteer Award at Parliament on June 17.

The Minister of Health Volunteer Awards are an opportunity to recognise the thousands of unsung heroes who support New Zealand's health and disability services. Ben's award was presented by Health Minister Dr David Clark.

Ben is the New Zealand Rural General Practice Network's Student sub-committee Deputy Chairperson.

The award citation said: Ben has made a significant commitment and contribution to promoting rural health as a rewarding career choice. In 2018 when he was president of Grassroots, the University of Auckland Rural Health Club, his team ran the OGrow your own careers promotion programme for 1400 young people in 15 rural schools in Northland, Tairāwhiti and the Bay of Plenty, as well as rural health experience weekends and rural work experience programmes for health students. Ben is currently Deputy Chair of Students of Rural Health Aotearoa, the national interdisciplinary rural health students' network.

Ben was very humbled to receive the award. Rural health students across New Zealand have been working incredibly hard on interventions like the OGrow your Own program and they are now gaining significant traction. I think the award is an awesome recognition of the importance of rural health, and the importance of investing in the future of rural health for the good of our communities.

The program involves recruitment of a group of tertiary health students who then road trip around the country visiting rural high-schools and interacting with rangatahi (year 9 and 10 students) to promote health and health careers.

The NZRGNP really bought into the idea of rural schools visits after the 2018 success and now fund some organisational support. In the future I see the program expanding to include visits to senior high-school students, offering early tertiary mentoring and clinical student mentoring, Ben, who is a fifth-year medical student at the University of Auckland and comes from the small South Island town of Leeston, an hour outside of Christchurch.

Follow the link to visit the [Minister of Health Volunteer Awards 2019](#).

Ben is pictured with Minister of Health Dr David Clark at the awards.



### NZRGNP at Mystery Creek National Fieldays 2019 - Rural Health and Wellbeing Hub

For the third year in a row, the Rural Health and Wellbeing Hub at Fieldays in the Waikato provided an entertaining and informative opportunity to improve the health literacy of the estimated 25,000 people who stopped in over the four days (June 12-15). This is up from the 23,000 visitors to the Hub last year.

Mobile Health Services facilitates the Hub involving around 25 participating organisations, including the New Zealand Rural General Practice Network. Activities ranged from the Prostate Cancer Foundation's Consult room that showed a 30 second video of how to check testicles for lumps to RHAANZ's Ways to Wellbeing Challenge. Visitors could have their hearing checked, moles examined, and update their CPR skills under the guidance of the Waikato DHBs Emergency Care team.

The MC, John McBeth who is sponsored by NZRGNP, kept the event moving and provided a light-hearted commentary of the Fieldays Rural Catch of the Year health challenge where contestants deal with the scenario of a serious farm accident.

Network Chief Executive Dalton Kelly was delighted to host the Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern and several of the Labour Members of Parliament in the Hub for an hour on the Friday morning (June 14). The Prime Minister enthusiastically completed some of the activities and spent time talking with rural health staff, leaders and visitors to the Hub.

### PM visits Matamata Rural General Practice of the Year

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern delighted staff at the Matamata Medical Centre when she paid them a visit on July 13. Ms Ardern, who grew up in nearby Morrinsville in the Waikato, held a closed meeting with staff at the centre to discuss mental health in rural communities. Practice Manager Gillian Vincent said Ms Ardern spent about an hour with doctors discussing rural mental health issues.

In April this year the practice was named Rural General Practice Team of the Year at the Network's National Rural Health Conference in Blenheim. The award was for going above and beyond the call of duty in the mental health arena. Members of the Matamata team were at the April conference to receive the accolade.

### Mobile Health Clinic for healthier rural communities

National is proposing a mobile rural health clinic to provide a ŌWŌFŌ type health check-up in remote areas to ensure people in rural communities have easy access to quality healthcare, National's Rural Communities spokesperson Matt King says. (Media release)

Over 600,000 New Zealanders live in rural communities, and while it's accepted not everyone in rural New Zealand can live next to a hospital, it's important they have access to modern healthcare.

National wants to pilot mobile rural health clinics serviced by health practitioners which will travel to remote rural communities on a regular basis, where they can provide general health check-ups and mental health support for locals.

This initiative will make a tangible difference to those in isolated areas who too often simply ignore potential health warning signs because of their busy lifestyles and the lack of convenience.

To learn more about the Mobile Rural Health Clinic and National's stance on other matters in the primary sector I encourage you to read our recently launched primary sector discussion document.

The Primary Sector Discussion Document can be found [here](#).

### Nitrazepam 5 mg tablets (Nitrados) to be discontinued

PHARMAC has been informed by Douglas Pharmaceuticals that their brand of nitrazepam 5 mg tablets (Nitrados) is being discontinued in New Zealand. This means nitrazepam will no longer be funded when the current stock runs out in mid-2020.

About 1100 patients take nitrazepam. It is intended only for short-term use in insomnia due to the risk of dependence, but prescription claims data indicates that nitrazepam is prescribed long term for 70% of patients.

Prescribers will need to:

- ensure no new patients are started on nitrazepam
- review all existing patients and where appropriate for intermittent users of nitrazepam make a plan to gradually withdraw nitrazepam and provide supportive sleep hygiene advice
- identify patients who use nitrazepam long term and start transitioning them on to an alternative, such as diazepam.

PHARMAC has received clinical advice that for patients who use nitrazepam chronically, prescribers should consider transitioning them onto diazepam as it has a long half-life, so is less likely to cause withdrawal symptoms. Then on a case-by-case basis, consider these patients for a very slow withdrawal but only where this is clinically appropriate.

You can read further information regarding the [nitrazepam discontinuation](#) and anticipated timeframes is available on PHARMAC's [website](#).

If you have any questions, please contact PHARMAC at 0800 66 00 50 or [enquiry@pharmac.govt.nz](mailto:enquiry@pharmac.govt.nz)

### Karma giver's time to receive

When a Glenorchy resident was diagnosed with terminal cancer in early 2015, a Queenstown nurse decided to dip into her own pocket to provide some support. (Mountain Scene)

Four years on, his legacy continues - and she hasn't stopped.

[Read more.](#)

### A New Zealand treasure lost: only 15 Karitane nurses still working as demand skyrockets

Call for Karitane nurses to come out of retirement, as demand quadruples. (Scoop)

Karitane-trained nurses in retirement are being encouraged to consider their options as demand for the specialised service they offer skyrockets.

[Read more.](#)

### 'Shocking' maternity crisis: Mum gives birth on midwife's office floor

Kristi James, of Hawea Flat, had every intention of following expert advice to have her baby in Dunedin Hospital. (NZ Herald)

Instead, she had it on the floor of her midwife's office in Wanaka.

[Read more.](#)

ALSO read

[Mothers-to-be fear roadside births in frosty Southland after maternity service downgrade](#)

[Wanaka midwives support group rejects DHB's claims over office birth.](#)

[Details emerge of Wanaka's maternity hub after week of bad PR for DHB](#)

### An opportunity to lift the wellbeing of all New Zealanders

The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists (RANZCP) has welcomed the promise by the New Zealand Government of an independent commission to oversee mental health and addiction services. (Scoop)

Dr Mark Lawrence, Chair of the New Zealand National Committee, Tu Te Akaaka Roa, supports the government's response to the recommendations from the final report, [He Ara Oranga](#), of the Mental Health and Addiction Inquiry.

[Read more.](#)

### Conference 2020 Auckland & NZRGNP gets behind WONCA Asia Pacific



In 2020 the Network will join the Royal New Zealand College of GPs to host the WONCA Asia Pacific Regional Conference in Auckland. The dates are April 23-26 and the venue is the Aotea Centre.

The decision to join the College in 2020 means the Network's and the College's annual conferences will be held under the WONCA (World Organisation of Family Doctors) banner and under the same roof next year. The conference will have a rural stream as part of the programme, says Network Chief Executive Dalton Kelly.

Rural health professionals: doctors, nurses, midwives, pharmacists and other allied health professionals are invited to register for and attend the WONCA Conference in Auckland.

There will be a huge range of topics and speakers to choose from. Delegates are expected to come from all parts of New Zealand, Australia and the Asia Pacific Region, so this prestigious event will feature a diverse range of people, professions and learning.

The Network will hold its Committee meeting and Annual General Meeting at the 2020 conference.

Mr Kelly said the Network's regular National Rural Health Conference will resume in 2021 with a planned return to Christchurch as host city.

Family medicine theme

The theme of the 2020 conference will be 'Family Medicine leading the way towards an advanced world of equity, quality and compassion'. The essence of this theme is captured in the Māori whakatauki (proverb): Ko te pae tawhiti whāia kia tata, ko te pae tata whakamauia kia tina, which translates to 'Seek distant horizons in pursuit of excellence'.

Key themes of the scientific programme are:

Patient-centred care  
Rural Health  
Equity  
Mental health  
E-health; health technology  
Multi-disciplinary primary health teams.

Abstracts submissions are now open. To visit the official Asia Pacific WONCA website visit this [LINK](#).

### Conference 2019 & presentations and interviews online

To watch interviews with keynote speakers Professor Paul Worley, Himeomoana Elder, Michelle Boltz and Ruth Stewart follow the link [YouTube LINK](#) & Courtesy of Mobile Health.

Sessions discuss from the conference are now available on the Conference 2019 website. Visit <http://www.nationalruralhealthconference.org.nz/nrhrc19>

You can access each speaker's slides by selecting 'Presentation' under each session title within the programme menu.

### Report: rural contracting experiencing huge growth

DIY may be part of our DNA, but more and more farmers are going the way of outside rural contractors, avoiding high initial capital outlay for specialist equipment and ag-services. (ODT)

The result has seen prolific growth in the rural contracting sector over the past two decades, with a near doubling in size and a contribution to GDP now valued at \$1.5 billion.

[Read more.](#)

### NZ Doctor stories (log-in required)

#### Govt to look at rural training hubs and other proposals in coming weeks

The much-anticipated development of rural health training hubs may not happen quite as quickly as some people had hoped.

Rural primary care has been excited over the training hubs proposal since health minister David Clark made his surprise announcement at the National Rural Health Conference in Blenheim in April.

[Read more.](#)

#### Rural health push at Fieldays 2019

The New Zealand Agricultural Fieldays isn't the most likely venue for a midwife recruitment drive, but a Waikato pair were giving it a fair crack. Their sales pitch could do with work though. Especially when they produce a map showing the nine birthing centres that currently service a region stretching from the tip of the Coromandel Peninsula to just south of Taumaranui, and the talk about the difficulties in getting to pregnant women who have gone into labour.

[Read more.](#)

#### College right to thump the table for more GPs, says former president

The RNZCGP has released its 10 recommendations submitted to the government's Health and Disability System Review. The submission calls for a wide range of initiatives to reduce the current levels of inequity in the health system, including a review of DHB boundaries, repairing the shortfall in vocationally registered GPs, cultural competence and safety training becoming a core requirement for all health and disability workers, and finding cross-party agreement on a system that will deliver equitable outcomes.

[Read more.](#)

#### Ministry opts for compulsory change to GP funding despite 75% PHO opposition

The Ministry of Health is pushing ahead with its compulsory variation to general practice funding rates without consultation, despite more than three quarters of PHOs opposing the move. The ministry is issuing a Final Prescription Notice to DHBs to pass the compulsory variation on to PHOs. Ōto ensure the new rates can take effect from 1 July and front line general practice receives this benefit in a timely manner, deputy director-general, health system improvement and innovation, Keriana Brooking says in a statement.

[Read more.](#)

#### Modern building is icing on the cake of small-town GP life in Waimate

When she looks at her newly built health centre, GP Sarah Creegan feels a sense of belonging to the small Canterbury town of Waimate. ŌAs a rural GP you can go anywhere in the country, but this little town is understated and wonderful, Ō Dr Creegan says.

[Read more.](#)



### Not a member? Join the Network!

The Network is the only nationwide membership-based organisation in New Zealand representing the interests of rural general practice.

Visit our [website](#) for additional information and an online application form or contact Rob Olsen on 021 472 556.

### NZORD changes name to Rare Disorders NZ

The new name, Rare Disorders NZ, puts the people supported by the organisation first, it better reflects the modern, effective organisation of today with links to more than 130 support groups and partners, and it clarifies our purpose, Ō says Chief Executive Gill Greer. ŌWe are determined to make a difference for people living with rare disorders, especially as New Zealand lags so far behind other countries in providing a fair go for this vulnerable group. Ō

[Read more.](#)

### Links

Ministry of Health online bulletins, click [here](#).

Learning on Fence Posts, Otago University rural research blog, click [here](#).

Health Workforce New Zealand stakeholder bulletin, click [here](#).

Mobile Health news, click [here](#).

Medline (USA rural health) click [here](#).

Death Documents Project (Ministry of Health), click [here](#).

### Open your New Zealand bank account

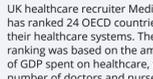
The Network's official banking partner.

### NZ's healthcare system on par with the UK's

New Zealand's healthcare system is ranked 18th place out of 24 countries - lagging behind a number of countries including Japan, Germany and even Australia. (NZ Herald)

UK healthcare provider Medical ID has ranked 24 OECD countries on their healthcare systems. The ranking was based on the amount of GDP spent on healthcare, the number of doctors and nurses, how many hospital beds they have and the average life expectancy. New Zealand was ranked 18th with a score of 60/100 and spending 9 per cent of its GDP on healthcare. It has 12,821 hospital beds and 62,843 doctors and nurses and the average life expectancy is 81.45.

[Read more.](#)



### Open your New Zealand bank account

The Network's official banking partner.

## TELL US YOUR STORY

We are looking for health sector-related stories from around rural New Zealand. People, places, achievements and challenges. If you have a good yarn to tell contact Network communications manager Rob Olsen, email [rob@rgpn.org.nz](mailto:rob@rgpn.org.nz) or 021 472 556.