

July 2015 Newsletter

The New Zealand Rural Hospital Network (NZRHN) would like to extend a warm welcome to all our new members. It is always great to increase our membership whether clinical, non clinical or corporate so please encourage your colleagues working in a rural hospitals around New Zealand to join the NZRHN.

In May we elected our officers of the committee. Our current exec members are:

Chair: Robert Gonzales (Waitaki)

Treasurer: Ray Anton (Balclutha)

Secretary: Andrea Cairns (Waitaki)

Exec Members:

Sharon Wards (Taranua)

John Wigglesworth (Hokianga)

Jen Thomas (Dargaville)

Debi Lawry (Dunstan)

Scott Wilson (Ashburton)

We continue to maintain strong links with the Rural General Practice Network (RGPN) and Rural Health Alliance of Aotearoa New Zealand (RHAANZ) and have membership on both these boards. Ray Anton holds a position on the RGPN board and Sharon Wards is on the RHAANZ board.

We have also recently welcomed Dr Scott Wilson, Clinical Director, Ashburton Hospital, to our exec team. Scott and his colleagues established the Rural Clinical Directors Forum in 2014. RHN recently amalgamated with the Clinical Directors Forum, adding strength to our network. This is an exciting development and we look forward to working alongside Scott and the Clinical Directors group. This year's New Zealand Rural Clinical Directors Forum will be held in Wellington on September 8th. Invitations will be sent out soon.

One of our exec members, Debi Lawry also has a position on the organising committee for the 2016 Rural Health Conference to be held in Dunedin. We look forward to feedback from Debi on her involvement with this.

It has been a worrying time for the rural hospitals within the Southern DHB. The SDHB have proposed funding cuts of 5% to the rural hospitals. This could mean downgrading of services in rural hospitals within the Southern Region. Rural communities need ongoing support for local health services. The deteriorating financial position of the SDHB is very concerning. A Commissioner has now been appointed and we all wait anxiously to see what the future may hold.

On a brighter note, congratulations to Dr Katharina Blattner a rural hospital doctor based in the Hokianga. Dr Blattner has received the Peter Snow award. This was announced and presented at this year's annual conference in Rotorua in March. The Peter Snow Memorial Award was set up to honour the life and work of Dr Peter Snow who passed away in March 2006. Dr Snow was a rural general practitioner based in Tapanui.

Rural Hospital vacancies can be advertised on our website www.nzrhn.co.nz. This comes free as part of RHN membership. Please email any adverts to Andrea.Cairns@southerndhb.govt.nz (RHN Secretary) to have them published for 1 month.

Don't forget to like our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/NewZealandRuralHospitalNetwork>

We welcome any networking and discussions so please do not hesitate to post your message and share.

If you would like anything added to our next newsletter due in October please contact Andrea Cairns to have this included Andrea.Cairns@southerndhb.govt.nz