



October 2015 Newsletter

Dear members

Firstly, a big THANK YOU to all for your ongoing support of NZRHN. Membership renewals over the last three months have been very encouraging in both individual and corporate categories, which enable our network to progress goals and strategies for the coming year. We warmly welcome new members from Wairoa Hospital and Waitaki who recently joined the network. 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 RHN. Application for Membership Forms are available through our website.

We continue to maintain national representation of Rural Hospitals through our ongoing participation and involvement with the Rural Health Alliance Aotearoa NZ.

RHAANZ has recently secured a contract with the Ministry of Health to upskill rural health professionals in suicide prevention strategies and to strengthen rural sector linkages over the next six to nine months, as part of the Government's emergency response to this issue. We would accordingly encourage Rural Hospitals throughout NZ to participate in this initiative as the opportunity arises.

Our website www.nzrh.co.nz is continuing to develop with the recent addition of a 'recruitment' section that members can use to advertise vacancies. It is also regularly updated to ensure relevant rural-hospital-related news are captured in a timely manner for our members' viewing. More webpage enhancements are currently being considered, such as the addition of an "about us" and "blog" features. Our RHN Facebook page is also updated on a regular basis.

The RHN Clinical Director's Forum held in Wellington on 8th September 2015 has been well attended and a great success, again thank you to Dr Scott Wilson and his team for making this happen.

Our officers continue to work well together and all are looking forward to our annual face to face committee meeting in Wellington on 6th November 2015 to review our Network goals and strategies, discuss any pertinent issues, and plan for the upcoming national rural health conference which will be held in Dunedin in March 2016.

During the week of 23rd November 2015 Ray our Secretary, Sharon our Committee member and I will be visiting 7 rural hospitals including Te Puia Springs, Wairoa, Taupo, Tokoroa, Te Kuiti, Taumarunui and Hawera to promote the network and also gain understanding on the varying models of care delivery in these rural hospitals. We so look forward to forging new relationships with our colleagues in these parts of rural NZ.

Ka kite and more power to you all,
Robert, NZRHN Chairman

The 2015 Rural Clinical Director's forum took place on September 8th and was well attended by delegates from around the country. A range of topics were discussed and explored, and some useful solutions proposed. Feedback was positive and the attending delegates felt that more frequent meetings were desirable, so from 2016 the forum will meet twice a year with an additional meeting co-inciding with the national conference.
Dr Scott Wilson

In September, the community based Hokianga Hospital in Rawene Northland was finally connected to the fibre optic network under the Rural Broadband Initiative (RBI). This achievement followed four years of correspondence, lobbying and negotiation. Hokianga Health Enterprise Trust CEO John Wigglesworth said that it had been a long and tortuous journey that required patience, persistence and fortitude. When the

Government announced the sites for the first tranche of the RBI, Hokianga Health noticed that there were no rural hospitals or health services on the list. So Hokianga Health wrote to the Communications Minister, Hon Steven Joyce, and asked how the RBI priorities had been set, whether there was an intention to support rural health organisations under the RBI, and if so how could Hokianga Hospital get on the list. The Minister referred the Trust to Chorus who subsequently answered in a positive fashion and eventually Hokianga Hospital was placed on the list for the second tranche.

In August 2012, technicians from Chorus visited the hospital to discuss where the trench to the hospital server room would go, measured up and gave assurances that the work would be completed within six months. A year later, there was still no communication from Chorus but a white and blue post had mysteriously appeared at the hospital gate.

The National IT Board assisted the Trust to relay enquiries to Chorus at a higher level. Eventually Mr Wigglesworth was invited to an RBI roadshow meeting in Whangarei, where Chorus staff informed him that the fibre had been installed to the gate of the hospital, but also that the situation had changed – there was now an expectation that the hospital would need to work through its Internet Service Provider (ISP) to arrange for an agent of Chorus to dig the trench for the fibre connection to the server room. The cost for the connection would also need to be met by the hospital – in the end this turned out to be not insignificant.

Communicating now through the hospital's ISP, the Whangarei based Ubertnet Group, Chorus were initially confused about the location of the hospital site, and would not commit to a start date for the project. Hokianga Health decided to move the project along by digging the trench, running conduit through it and feeding the correct specification fibre optic cable.

The cable had to be removed so that Chorus could finally come and put their own cable through the hospital's conduit. A series of specialists arrived about two months apart to do various components of the connections, and eventually it was done. Ubertnet switched us on

to the new service and today we are enjoying internet speeds of close to 60 mbit/sec. The hospital can now look at options for Voice-Over-IP, Video Conferencing, data systems, and Tele health.

Ray Anton from Clutha Health First recently attended the Ministry of Health National Maternity Conference. Below is a summary of this conference:

Day One launched the refocused MQI and MQSPs, updated the sector on the 2014 Consumer Surveys, 2013 Clinical Indicators and MQSP Evaluation findings and elicited feedback on what direction we need to take maternity quality and safety in the future. Equity of access to maternity care continues to be a major focus in the years to come, as does access to acute mental health care for pregnant women. New issues such as how to educate women on the impact of BMI during pregnancy will also steer us in the future. You looked to us to consider how we can improve access to oral health care for pregnant women, and provide a toolkit for clinical audits. We heard presentations on great quality and safety innovations across the DHBs including the development of a breastfeeding app, led by the Midlands DHBs and how the Wairarapa are engaging consumers in their MQSP.

Day Two focussed on the barriers and enablers to effective rural and primary maternity service delivery. We were incredibly fortunate to have Professor Jane Sandall from the UK present on Birthplace's collaborative group study on intrapartum and early neonatal mortality and morbidity by planned place of birth in women judged to be 'low risk'. We all agreed there were many learnings that could be adopted in the New Zealand setting, particularly around collaborative working relationships. The day was very interactive, with lots of discussion on how the capability and confidence of everyone involved in rural and primary maternity can be strengthened. There was a call for national leadership and the suggestion of a strategy group to promote primary services and ensure equity for rural women was heartily supported. Other recurring themes from the day included:

- ensuring student midwives, obstetricians and all those involved in the maternity sector get experience in primary units
- the need for a national campaign around the safety of normal birth, including positive media stories and consumer driven resources
- a focus on improving emergency primary response and transfer services
- a review of the funding model.

Day Three supported the sector to implement the National Consensus Guideline for Diagnosis and Management of Gestational Diabetes Mellitus. Each of the six key recommendations of the report were addressed in a presentation by a subject matter expert. Feedback and discussion followed each presentation, giving DHBs the opportunity to confirm expectations and raise any implementation or ongoing issues with those who know the guidelines best.

Taranaki and Waitemata also gave presentations on how they implemented the guidelines in their DHBs, which was useful for those DHBs who are still in the process of applying the guidelines to practice

The Rural Health Conference 2016 will be held in Dunedin March 31st to 3rd April. Details of the conference and programme can be accessed via this link

<http://www.nationalruralhealthconference.co.nz/nrhc16>

There are still some speakers and details to be confirmed, but most of the programme is in place.

There are a range of plenary speakers that we hope will interest all attendees. Roger Strasser is one of the world foremost authorities in rural, socially accountable medical education. Nigel Latta will challenge our thinking and entertain us at the same time. Other plenary speakers of note are Donna Mataparae, Alison Dewes, Lesley Elliot and Matt Vickers.

There will be several clinical workshops on Thursday 31st March and then a plethora of concurrent sessions on Friday and Saturday.

We will enjoy the return of the Pat Farry Trust fun run and walk on Saturday morning. The RHN AGM will be held on Saturday at lunchtime.

This promises to be an excellent conference and we hope all our RHN members will want to attend!

Recently both Clutha Health First in Balclutha and Waitaki District Health Services Ltd in Oamaru reached the milestone of 1000 surgeries on the Mobile Surgical Bus since it started in March 2003. This is a great service that provides minor surgery for rural people.



Staff involved with the Mobile Surgical Bus at Clutha Health First



Jacqui Dean Waitaki MP, Dr Stu Gowland Managing Director of mobile health services and Robert Gonzales CEO Oamaru Hospital / RHN Chairman join in on the celebrations