



New Zealand Rural Hospital Network

May 2016 Newsletter

It's been a busy start to the year for the Rural Hospital Network. This included attending the 2016 National Rural Health Conference from 31st March – 3rd April in Dunedin. This conference attracted the highest number of registrations to date and feedback was unanimous that it was one of the best. The Rural Hospital Network had an exhibition stand and it was great to meet all our members who passed by.



Our AGM was also held at the Rural Health Conference along with the election of officers. They are as follows:

Chairman – Robert Gonzales (Waitaki)

Treasurer – Ray Anton (Balclutha)

Secretary – Andrea Cairns (Waitaki)

Committee members –

Jen Thomas (Dargaville), Sharon Wards (Tararua), Debi Lawry (Dunstan), Scott Wilson (Dargaville) and John Wigglesworth (Hokianga).

We look forward to this team working together to not only grow the Rural Hospital Network but provide advocacy and support for all rural hospitals throughout New Zealand.

On May 4th, Rural Health Alliance Aotearoa New Zealand member organisations came together in Wellington to workshop the key issues that they collectively feel are significant for the health and wellbeing of rural communities. Robert Gonzales (RHN chair) attended this on behalf of the Rural Hospital Network and his advocacy for Rural Hospitals throughout New Zealand saw this being included as one of the top 5 policy priorities which were taken to Parliament alongside Connectivity, Research and Policy, Rural Wellbeing and Workforce.

On the 22nd March the Mobile Surgical Bus carried out its 20,000th operation at Dargaville Hospital. The bus which visits rural communities throughout New Zealand, is a \$5.2 million customised truck and trailer which expands out hydraulically and contains a pre-operative area, a full operating theatre, a small recovery area and two utility areas. The bus provides day surgery – procedures such as general surgery, child dental, ophthalmology, colonoscopies and minor orthopaedic operations – to patients who are carefully selected to ensure they will be well enough to go home at the end of the day, when the bus leaves for the next town.

More news from the Dargaville area is that on the 25th February Dargaville Hospital celebrated its 60th birthday. 60 balloons were released by staff and well-wishers to celebrate the 60th anniversary of their opening.



The two cakes at the ceremony were cut by the longest-serving staff member, enrolled nurse Heather Carter, who began working at the hospital in 1966 when it was just 10 years old, and the most recent starter, clinical head Dr Scott Wilson, who joined late last year.



The Rural Hospital Network have formed a partnership with NZLocums and are able to offer discounted recruitment terms and conditions as a membership benefit for Rural Hospital Network corporate members. This includes an offer for members of a discounted rate of 10% recruitment commission fee for any permanent medical officer placements made to Rural Hospitals.

Also held in conjunction with the National Rural Health Conference was

our Clinical Directors Forum. There was mixed feedback on whether holding it in conjunction with the Rural Health Conference was a good idea as it restricted those who were able to attend. We will look at ways to ensure our Clinical Directors forums are maximised in the future as they are generally well attended and those who attend find them very beneficial



The Otago Community Trust agreed to sponsor 18 registrations to attend the National Rural Health Conference which was open to all Rural Nurses, Rural Midwives, Rural Allied Health professionals and Senior Admin staff Practice Managers from Rural Hospitals and Rural GP Practices within the Otago Region. We congratulate those who were successful with the sponsorship and by the reports received back they all found the conference very beneficial and were very fortunate to be able to attend.

Our website www.nzrhcn.co.nz is continuing to develop and is regularly updated to ensure relevant rural hospital related news is captured in a timely manner for our members' viewing. Our NZRHN Facebook page is also updated on a regular basis.