



New Zealand Rural Hospital Network

## NEWSLETTER

July 2012

Welcome to the inaugural New Zealand Rural Hospital Network (RHN) newsletter.

We officially launched the RHN in March 2012 at the New Zealand Rural General Practice Network (NZRGPN) Conference held in Queenstown.

### **New voice**

We have been established as an incorporated society to represent and support rural hospital staff nationwide. We are seeking membership from all professionals working in rural hospitals around New Zealand, as well as corporate membership from organisations that provide governance for rural hospitals.

The RHN provides a platform for rural hospital staff to express their views, represent all professional groups within rural hospitals, enable the sector to speak with one voice especially over national issues, lobby the Minister/MOH and other agencies, establish national standards, facilitate benchmarking and provide support to rural hospital staff.

### **Sister organisation**

The RHN has been modelled off the NZRGPN and will operate as a sister organisation to NZRGPN with similar membership rates as well as an option for dual membership.

### **Queenstown launch**

In Queenstown we held our first AGM. It was attended by approximately 25 people and great discussions took place on a number of subjects including:

## CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

- National Standards for Rural Hospitals – where do we start?
- The future structural options for Rural Hospitals – are IFHC's still the main focus?
- Extended roles for rural Hospitals and staff
- Advanced Diagnostics for the rural sector – how viable is CT for rural facilities

### **Interim executive**

The interim executive of the RHN will guide the organisation until the inaugural AGM that will be held in 2013. Please see our profiles on the following page. I would like to thank the executive team who have worked tirelessly over the last 5 years to see this Network come to fruition.

### **Membership**

If you work within a rural hospital setting I strongly urge you to join the network and talk to your organisation about the importance of joining up. Please print off the attached registration form and share it with your colleagues and do not hesitate to contact the Exec team for any further information.

**Jen Thomas**  
**Interim Chair**  
**Rural Hospital Network**



**Jen Thomas, Chairperson**

Jen.Thomas@northlanddhb.org.nz

Jen is the Operations Manager at Dargaville Hospital. She has worked at the hospital for 19 years and has been in the role of Operations Manager since 2006. Dargaville Hospital is one of three rural hospitals that are part of the Northland District Health Board. Dargaville Hospital has the local GP practice and Maori Health provider on site. Jen is passionate about the delivery of safe health care for the community she works in, and that the care delivery is seamless across the services.



**Ray Anton, Secretary**

Ray.anton@chf.co.nz

Ray is the Chief Executive of Clutha Health First (CHF) and has been in his position for over 10 years. CHF is a community owned integrated health centre, which includes an acute inpatient ward, maternity centre, a range of community services, as well as a large GP practice. More details can be found on our website [www.cluthahealth.co.nz](http://www.cluthahealth.co.nz). CHF is also a designated University of Otago Medical School rural teaching centre where we host 5th year immersion medical students.



**Robert Gonzales, Treasurer**

Robert.gonzales@healthotago.co.nz

Robert is the CEO of Waitaki District Health Services Limited, a Council-owned company that operates the Oamaru Hospital. He has a passion for Rural Health and supports the provision of hospital and community health services close to home. Oamaru Hospital is the first community-owned rural health provider to successfully install and operate a CT Scanner in New Zealand. Visit [www.oamaruhospital.co.nz](http://www.oamaruhospital.co.nz) for further information on the range of health services provided to the Waitaki population.



**Peter Rodwell**

elderslie@farmside.co.nz

Peter has had many years experience as a leading Emergency Physician in New Zealand and was a founding fellow of the Australasian College for Emergency Medicine and chair of the NZ faculty for 10 years. Peter has been working for the past 8 years in the field of Rural Hospital Medicine in Oamaru, alongside running a B&B and an organic farm on an historic property in the beautiful Waiareka Valley of North Otago.



**Sharon Wards**  
sharon.wards@thg.org.nz

Sharon is CEO of Tararua Health Group, an organization of over 100 staff comprising a hospital, two GP practices and community nursing services. She is based in Dannevirke but is responsible for provision of primary healthcare services across sites separated by 90 km in southern Hawkes Bay. She has a background in food science and business management with long experience in the dairy industry. She has worked in senior management positions in the health industry for the past 14 years and is passionate about rural health services. She is currently focused on the establishment of the Tararua IFHC. Sharon is an inaugural member of the rural hospital network.



**Norman Gray**  
Norman.gray@southerndhb.govt.nz

Norman is the Operations Manager of Lakes District Hospital in Frankton/Queenstown, which is a Southern District Health Board facility, and has been in this role since September 2006. Norman is a Registered Nurse with a Master of Science in Nursing, he also holds a Master of Science, Rehabilitation and a Bachelor of Social Work degrees. Norman is committed to ensuring that rural and semi-rural communities have the best care possible and "equity of access" by advocating for consumers of health services in the Queenstown/ Lakes District.

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## RHĀNZ UPDATE

The Rural Hospital Network has played an active part in the formation of the Rural Health Alliance Aotearoa New Zealand (RHĀNZ) which is an alliance between Rural Health provider groups and consumer groups.

RHĀNZ is now an Incorporated Society with an RHN representative on its Council. This gives us an excellent and powerful platform to influence provision and outcomes for rural health in New Zealand for which rural hospitals are a significant part.

It is less than a year since the topic of a Rural Health organisation was discussed at the 2011 Rural Symposium in Wellington with Dr Jo Scott-Jones of the NZRGPN and Ray Anton from Balclutha Hospital sharing their vision.

The team have worked hard to get this far with excellent encouragement from the Rural Health Alliance of Australia who already play a very influential role in their own country and have supported us strongly with this development.

There is still much work to do in the strategic planning but so much to gain. We believe we will hear much from this organisation in the not too distant future. We wish Sharon Wards (Tararua Health) the best as she represents us in this important development.

## BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

The New Zealand Rural Hospital Network's primary aims include the promotion and enhancement of rural hospital services nationwide, the promotion of equal access to health care services regardless of age, race, gender or ability, the provision of advocacy, support and leadership for the rural hospital workforce and the provision of health care in accordance with the Treaty of Waitangi.

The RHN will promote a coordinated health and disability care service for all rural hospital users irrespective of age, race, gender or sexual orientation, and their families, that is of the highest possible quality and efficiency, accessible, and culturally appropriate and acceptable.

It will promote and encourage the coordination of the training and educational requirements of the rural hospitals workforce, to ensure that the workforce is professionally safe, competent and the workers themselves remain healthy

It will make proposals and submissions, to provide support, encouragement, protection, assistance or representation, either through the Society or any agent employee of the Society to any government department or government minister or any other body or organisation able to effect or assist in obtaining these objectives.

It will ensure that healthcare and related matters are provided in accordance with the values and concepts of the Treaty of Waitangi so that the Society can properly recognise the Treaty of Waitangi.

It will also strive to provide effective representation and leadership on rural hospital and health issues.



NZMedics is a division of The New Zealand Rural General Practice Network Inc (NZRGPN) a not-for-profit incorporated society providing recruitment services for medical professionals throughout New Zealand.

At NZMedics, we pride ourselves on being able to offer you a comprehensive and stress free service which makes us the **medical recruitment agency of choice**.

Our team of highly skilled and knowledgeable staff, who have an excellent understanding of and empathy for New Zealand, are key to the success of our services.

We are committed to providing you with a professional and personalised service tailored to meet your needs.

What's more, NZMedics is proud to offer all RHN corporate members a discounted rate on recruitment services, so contact us now to find out more.

Email: [Kerryg@nzmedics.co.nz](mailto:Kerryg@nzmedics.co.nz) or

Phone: 04 472 3901

**The establishment of the New Zealand Rural Hospital Network was made possible by seeding funding support from the Waitaki District Health Services Trust**  
<http://www.oamaruhospital.co.nz/?trust>