

Rural Bulletin

June 2009



Rural Women

NEW ZEALAND

www.ruralwomen.org.nz

Contents

Budget 2009: An Overview

The Big Picture	3
Government Revenue and Spending.....	3
Government core expenses	3
Cuts in spending.....	3
Environment/Conservation.....	3
Tourism/recreation	4
Sport	4
Primary Sector.....	4
Fisheries and aquaculture	4
Health	4
Workforce initiatives	4
District health boards.....	4
Other health spending	4
ACC	4
Education.....	4
NCEA.....	5
Tertiary education.....	5
Social Services.....	5
Superannuation/Vets Benefits.....	5
Community Housing.....	5
Insulating & heating homes.....	5
Transport: State Highways.....	5
Energy	5
Justice/Police.....	5
Community Law centres.....	6
Securities Commission.....	6
Government security agencies.....	6
Defence	6
Research & Development	6
Maori.....	6
Internet: Broadband.....	6
Arts, Culture & Heritage	6
Foreign Affairs	6

Consultation

National Education Standards.....	6
Electoral Finance: Issues Paper	7
Anti-counterfeiting Trade Agreement.....	7
Protecting Traditional Knowledge.....	7
Granting Patents.....	7
North Is Grid Upgrade: Update	7
Unpasteurised Milk Products	7
ICT: Managing Radio Spectrum.....	8
Re-allocating Some Radio Spectrum.....	8
Cigarette Safety Standard?.....	8
Wanganui or Whanganui?.....	8
Food Safety: Codex Review.....	8

Lake Rotoma: Action Plan.....	8
Religion in NZ Schools: Guide	8
Current IRD Consultations	8
Managing Mt Aspiring National Park.....	9
NZ Marine Mammals & Fish	9
Current ERMA Consultations	9

Rural

Cows Genetic Code Sequenced.....	9
Enterprising Rural Woman Award Winners	9
NZX Acquires Rural Publisher.....	9
Avoiding Farm Injuries.....	9
How to avoid injury	10

Environment

Landcare's CarboNZero Programme: World First	10
Managing NZ's Resources: Part II	10
Tiritiri Matangi: Top Restoration Site.....	10

Tourism

International Travel/Migration: April 2009	10
Working Holidays in NZ.....	11

Health and Welfare

Revised Health Targets.....	11
Fixing Eyes in the Pacific.....	11
OSH/DoL & Safe Workplaces	11
LPG Cabinet Heaters: Safe Use	11
Mothers and Children: Three Reports.....	11
Educating Mothers about Childbirth.....	11
Children: Love Goes a Long Way.....	11
State of the World's Mothers	12
Disability Issues: New Committee	12
Food Security: Two Resources	12

Education

Trades Academies for Secondary Students	12
Upskilling Future School Principals.....	12

Employment

Unemployment Rate Reaches 5%	12
Salaries and Wages	13

Transport

Road User Charges Review Report.....	13
Security on Domestic Aircraft.....	13



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Housing

NZ Property Market: Overseas Interest	13
Property Market Values Stabilising?	13
New Residential Tenancies Bill	13

Energy

Revised Electricity Commission Role	14
Commerce Commission Report: Electricity Pricing	14
2009 EECA Awards: Winners:	14
Electricity from Waves	14

State Sector

Redeployment Option for State Servants	14
CRIs and Workforce Planning	14

Justice/the Law

Review of Legal Aid System	15
Boy Racers: Two New Bills	15
Law Commission & Alcohol Laws #1	15
NZ Child and Youth Offending Statistics.....	15
Family Court: New Rules.....	15

Not-for-Profits

The Community Response Fund	16
Donating online: Check Your Website	16
ESOL Home Tutors Name Change	16

Parliament

Advance Voting: Mt Albert By-election.....	16
--	----

Business

Imports/Exports: April 2009.....	16
Primary Industries Benefit from R&D	16
Complying With Standards: SNZ Code.....	17
Record Fall in Retail Sales	17
Halal Products/Services: Big Business	17

Money Matters

Food Prices Down in April.....	17
Are You Entitled to a Rates Rebate?	18
The Price of Milk.....	18
New Tax System Working Group.....	18
SuperGold Card Benefits: Survey.....	18

Internet/ICT

NZers' Use of Broadcasting /Media	18
ICT Industry Continues to Grow.....	19
A Handful of Websites.....	19

Treaty Matters

Maori Aquaculture Settlement.....	19
-----------------------------------	----

Arts & Culture

More Locally Made TV	19
2009 Pacific Music Award Winners.....	20
Maori Television Service: Review	20
NZ Short Film: Cannes Award	20

Fishing

Setting Catch Limits: Case Dismissed	20
--	----

General

NZ's population 4.3 million.....	20
Life expectancy increases.....	20
Marriages, Civil Unions & Divorces.....	21
UN Report on NZ Human Rights.....	21
Matariki: Aotearoa/Pacific New Year	21
How to Spot Matariki	21
Volunteer Awareness Week.....	21

Maori Language Week.....	21
World Refugee Day	21
Some Conferences/Events.....	21
Financial Literacy 09.....	21
National Foster Care Conference.....	22
Treaty in the 21st Century Conference	22
SPELD NZ Conference	22
Mystery Creek Fielddays	22
NZ Institute of Food Science & Technology Conference.....	22
NZ Soil Carbon Conference	22
Bloom Her Business Forum.....	22
Effluent Management Training	22
Funding/Awards.....	22
Lottery Community Regional Committees.....	22
Lottery Environment and Heritage.....	22
Every Child Counts Awards.....	22
IHC Telecom Art Awards	22
EEO Trust Work & Life Awards	23
Essay Award for Young Economists	23
NZ Post Mansfield Prize 2010.....	23
National Schools Poetry Award.....	23
NZ Poet Laureate Award	23
Qantas Film and Television Awards.....	23
Appointments.....	23

Budget 2009: An Overview

The Big Picture

This upcoming year sees the first operating deficit in more than a decade - \$9.3 billion in the 2009/10 financial year, and the following is expected:

- ♦ surpluses are not expected again until 2016;
- ♦ because deficits mean more debt, the Government will borrow an extra \$34 billion over the next 4 years;
- ♦ gross debt – the difference between what we owe and what we own – will peak at 43% of GDP in 2017;
- ♦ the economy will shrink a further 1.7% next year; and
- ♦ unemployment will peak at 8% next year (70,000 more people will be out of work).

Government Revenue and Spending

Government's core revenue (\$56.8 billion) for the 2009/10 financial year comes from:

- ♦ individuals' income taxes - \$24.9 billion;
- ♦ GST - \$11.2 billion;
- ♦ corporate tax - \$8.3 billion;
- ♦ other indirect taxes - \$4.9 billion;
- ♦ other revenue - \$3.1 billion;
- ♦ other direct taxes - \$2.3 billion; and
- ♦ interest revenue and dividends - \$2.1 billion.

Government core expenses

Government's core expenses (\$65.3 billion) for the 2009/10 financial year go on:

- ♦ social security and welfare - \$21.2 billion;
- ♦ health - \$13.4 billion;
- ♦ education - \$11.3 billion;
- ♦ law & order - \$3.3 billion;
- ♦ core government services - \$3.6 billion;
- ♦ finance costs - \$2.5 billion; and
- ♦ other - \$7.8 billion.

Cuts in spending

- ♦ Government's review of state spending has found \$2 billion in cuts (over the next 4 years) which will be recycled into new policies. The main areas of savings, reprioritisation, and cuts are:
- ♦ the second and third rounds of planned tax cuts in 2010 and 2011 have been deferred;

- ♦ automatic contributions to the NZ Super Fund have been suspended until the operating balance excluding gains and losses (OBEGAL) returns to surplus (which could be at least a decade away);
- ♦ the annual operating allowance has been revised down to \$1.45 billion for 2009/10, compared with \$1.75 billion indicated in the Budget Policy Statement in December. It will be capped at \$1.1 billion in 2010/11 and adjusted by 2% in following years; and
- ♦ \$2 billion of the previous Government's planned spending has been re-prioritised.

This means:

- ♦ cuts in funding subsidies for some courses in adult community education - \$54 million;
- ♦ maintaining rather than reducing adult-child ratios in childhood education - \$275 million;
- ♦ cuts in tertiary education funding - \$55 million: some tertiary education projects from last year's Budget will not be funded, including: capability funding, scholarships for domestic and foreign students, increases to industry-training funds, and the development of some new training programmes;
- ♦ staff cuts at the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) - \$354 million;
- ♦ ending the enterprising communities subsidies - \$32.3 million;
- ♦ planned spending at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) is not proceeding - \$105 million;
- ♦ Conservation Department cuts - \$54 million;
- ♦ cuts in overseas development assistance - \$166 million;
- ♦ cuts at the Ministry of Economic Development (MED) - \$180 million;
- ♦ Sport and Recreation programme on children's and young people's nutrition and activity, "Mission On", has been scrapped (\$15.7 million to zero), along with some other nutrition schemes; and
- ♦ the budget for Ministerial Support Services (e.g., office admin, media advisers, accommodation) is being cut by \$2 million. Services to run Parliament and select committees are also been dropped by \$2 million – to \$17 million.

Environment/Conservation

Over the next 4 years there will be:

- ♦ an increase of funding for the reform of the Resource Management Act of \$9 million;
- ♦ increasing funding for developing the Emissions Trading Scheme, including international linkages, by \$6.9 million;
- ♦ increasing funding for the freshwater policy work programme by \$2.1 million; and
- ♦ additional funding of \$17.3 million for activities that would have been discontinued as a result of funding reductions in 2009/10. These activities relate to waste minimisation, Waikato River Settlement, and other policy advice.

Tourism/recreation

The NZ Cycleway Project gets \$50 million dollars over 3 years.

Sport

Sponsorship of Team NZ's next America's Cup attempt rises by \$750,000 to \$13 million.

Primary Sector

Key features of the "Primary Growth Partnership" include:

- ♦ \$190 million (over 4 years); and
- ♦ investments will be market-driven and focus on delivering economic growth and sustainability across the primary sectors, from producers to consumers: this includes pastoral (including wool) and arable production; horticulture; seafood (including aquaculture); forestry and wood products; food processing; and climate change initiatives.

Fisheries and aquaculture

Spending here includes:

- ♦ \$1.9 million in funding (over the next 4 years) to help develop sustainable aquaculture;
- ♦ \$4.2 million (over the next 4 years) to increase the honorary fishery officer network (from 172 to 250), and the full time fishery officers needed to support it (from 95 to 104);
- ♦ \$1.4 million more on a new catch-reporting system for charter boats that carry recreational fishers; and
- ♦ \$2 million more on developing estimates of recreational fishers' harvest for some key inshore species.

Health

Over the next 4 years, \$3 billion more spent in health (including \$750 million in 2009/10). Note: 40% of all new government funding in this Budget goes to health priorities.

Workforce initiatives

- ♦ 60 new medical training places in 2009/10, which is the first round of a plan to establish 200 new places annually (cost: \$25 million);
- ♦ 25 extra places for general practitioner training in 2009/10, increasing to 50 extra places per year (cost: \$17.5 million over 4 years);
- ♦ money for up to 800 additional health professionals over 4 years to increase services for people needing elective surgery (\$70 million over 4 years); and
- ♦ more training for health professionals in rural areas (\$4 million over 4 years).

District health boards

Just over \$2.1 billion extra (over the next 4 years) is to go directly to District Health Boards for services to their local populations. DHBs will be required to advance a number of initiatives from this funding:

- ♦ part one in a funding boost for subsidised medicines – \$138.8 million to DHBs;

- ♦ devolving some hospital services to primary care \$45.5 million; and
- ♦ improving quality and supervision in aged residential care facilities and respite care for those being cared for by others at home -\$89.5 million.
- ♦ extra maternity funding of \$103.5 million (over 4 years) to support: resources for increased birth rates - \$40 million; longer stays in birthing facilities - \$38.5 million; support services for parents - \$14 million for a 24/7 Plunketline telephone advice service and other advisory and information services to support the Well Child Framework; an extra visit to the GP or lead maternity carer in each trimester for mothers or babies at risk - \$9.9 million; and obstetrics retraining for GPs - \$1.1 million;

Other health spending

- ♦ \$60 million (over 4 years) for hospice and palliative care;
- ♦ \$37.2 million (over 4 years) to help to securely care and rehabilitate offenders with an intellectual disability outside of the criminal justice system;
- ♦ \$245 million (over 4 years) into capital infrastructure;
- ♦ \$15.3 million (over 2 years), starting in 2011/12, into voluntary bonding for hard-to-staff health professions and locations; and
- ♦ \$26 million over 4 years for treating eating disorders.

ACC

\$500,000 in new funding in 2009/10 goes towards a stock take of the Accident Compensation Corporation levy accounts – i.e., the work account, earners' account, motor vehicle account, and the non-earners' account.

Education

The main parts of education spending in this Budget include:

- ♦ \$523.3 million in operating and capital funding (over 4 years) for a "21st Century School Building Programme" to expand and future-proof existing schools and build new ones;
- ♦ \$80.1 million in additional funding for day-to-day school operations; \$36 million to support the "Crusade for Literacy and Numeracy"; \$16 million to fight truancy; and \$34 million to improve schools access to high-speed broadband;
- ♦ \$19.9 million to extend the Te Kotahitanga professional development programme for teachers to more schools and for professional development programmes for principals that focus on raising Maori students' achievement;
- ♦ a \$12.6 million reduction in the levy the Government charges schools for international students;
- ♦ more funding for educating students with special needs and behavioural issues, including \$51 million extra for "Ongoing Reviewable Resourcing Schemes", and \$8 million to increase the "Interim Response Fund" - which provides support to schools when a student's behaviour reaches crisis point;
- ♦ \$69.7 million for improving access to early childhood education (ECE) by expanding 20 hours ECE to

playcentres and kohanga reo and removing the six-hour daily limit; and

- ♦ \$169.1 million in 2009/2010 to pay increases in teacher salaries; and \$70 million (over 4 years) to cover salary increases for school caretakers, cleaners, and ground staff.

NCEA

Spending on the NCEA includes \$10.9 million to maintain the current number of NCEA moderators to ensure consistency of NCEA standards across schools; and \$8 million to ensure NCEA assessment tools are of a high-standard and well understood by teachers.

Tertiary education

The total amount of funding for tertiary education in Vote Education increases to \$2.78 billion in 2009/10.

Some \$127 million of that goes to inflation-adjust funding for tertiary institutions from 2010.

Social Services

Some of the announcements include:

- ♦ the Community Response Fund (announced before the Budget) makes up to \$40 million available in the first year to support voluntary sector groups delivering services in communities throughout NZ;
- ♦ an extra \$81.5 million (over the next 4 years) for the Fresh Start initiatives for young offenders (this will extend the current range of tools available for the youth justice system when dealing with serious and persistent young offenders);
- ♦ funding is being continued for several initiatives, including \$4 million of spending in 2009/10 for: Reducing Youth Offenders Programme, Kauri Centre, Teen Parent Service Coordinators, Family Violence campaign, and Early Years Service Hubs;
- ♦ \$370,000 (over 4 years beginning 2009/2010) for an information pack that would be sent to 20,000 people who care for their whanau and friends without payment; and
- ♦ Community Sector Taskforce: \$1.2 million (\$400,000 per year over 3 years) beginning in 2009/10, for refreshing the membership of the Taskforce.

In terms of social development spending the following get a funding increase: ReStart redundancy help (+\$32.7 million); grants to social services (+\$29.7 million); 9-day fortnight subsidies (+\$11.6 million); youth justice (+\$8.7 million); and Super held at 66% of wages (+ \$1.5 million). The following go down: Enterprising Communities gone (- \$5.6 million); and training allowance restricted (- \$2.0 million).

Superannuation/Vets Benefits

NZ Superannuation and Veteran's Pension: after-tax married rates are maintained at a minimum of 66% of the average after-tax wage.

Community Housing

Spending here includes:

- ♦ \$40 million more into housing services over the next 4 years (\$20 million of that into Housing NZ's Housing Innovation Fund);

- ♦ \$5 million for phasing in Maori development projects (complements the work under the Rural Housing Programme);
- ♦ \$12 million (over the next 2 financial years) for Housing NZ's Rural Housing Programme; and
- ♦ \$6.4 million (in 2009/10) for the Residential Tenancies Services.

Insulating & heating homes

Over 180,000 homes will have access to a grants scheme for insulation and clean heating (devices such as heat pumps and approved wood burners). Cost: \$323.3 million (over the next 4 years).

The scheme, which is open to owners and occupiers of houses built before 2000, will start on 1 July 2009. Goal is to see up to 60,500 homes being insulated each year by 2012/13.

Individual grants of up to \$1,800 will be made. The money will have to be paid back, but there will be payment options put in place (for instance, ability to pay it back through your power bill or rates bill).

For holders of Community Service Cards, additional funding will be available.

Transport: State Highways

The State Highway network gets almost \$3 billion in (over the next 3 years) for infrastructure work.

Energy

There will be a tax exemption for oil and gas exploration, and a new grants scheme will be set up to encourage biodiesel.

Justice/Police

Over the next 4 years, \$700.7 million in operating funding and \$255.7 million in capital funding, for initiatives including:

- ♦ \$182.5 million for 300 more officers in Counties-Manukau by the end of 2010, and 300 more officers across the rest of the country by the end of 2011;
- ♦ \$10 million for Tasers;
- ♦ \$61.3 million to increase criminal courts capacity in Auckland;
- ♦ \$9.8 million to boost court security;
- ♦ \$16.3 million to improve fines collection;
- ♦ \$385.4 million to increase prison capacity through double bunking at five prisons and plans for further additional capacity;
- ♦ \$133.8 million operational spending to recruit an extra 134 probation officers, 26 frontline managers, and 20 psychologists;
- ♦ \$103 million to improve parole and home detention management to recruit an extra 112 probation officers, three frontline managers, and three psychologists;
- ♦ \$2.3 million to introduce offender levy for victims; and
- ♦ \$600,000 in additional funding for the Independent Police Conduct Authority.

Community Law centres

Community law centres receive 17.1 million in operating funding in 2009/10 (including a \$7.2 million top-up for community law centres in 2009/10) to maintain access to justice services through community law centres and legal aid.

Securities Commission

Some \$11.7 million (over the next 4 years) goes to further strengthen financial regulations (as the new central regulatory body for financial advisers, the Securities Commission gets most this money).

Government security agencies

These agencies get \$91 million, a 5% increase on last year. The biggest slice goes to the Government Communications Security Bureau.

Defence

An extra \$52 million in 2009/10 (\$309 million over the next 4 years) will go on improving operations and strengthen the capability of the NZ Defence Force.

Research & Development

Overall spending in Research and Development has been increased this year by \$28 million (leaving NZ's per capita GDP investment in R&D unchanged at 0.52%, but still less than the OECD average of 0.68%). The former percentage also does not factor in that the R&D tax credit and Fast Forward schemes are not going ahead.

The main spending in R&D includes:

- ♦ an extra \$40 million (over 4 years) to the Crown Research Institute Capability Fund, for maintaining and developing CRI's nationally significant research;
- ♦ \$36 million (over 4 years) to the Marsden Fund to provide for investigator-initiated excellent research (the Fund is now \$47 million per year);
- ♦ \$32 million (over 4 years) for health research;
- ♦ new funding of \$4 million (over 4 years) for the Prime Minister's Science Prizes; and
- ♦ \$16 million, in 2010/11, for the Kiwi Advanced Research and Education Network (KAREN), to enhance NZ's high-speed telecommunications research connectivity and capability.

Maori

Te Puni Kokiri (TPK) plans to appoint welfare officers to identify Maori families who are struggling to make ends meet. Overall, TPK plans to spend \$174.4 million - \$8 million less than last year. Maori and Treaty initiatives include:

- ♦ an extra \$22.4 million (over the next 4 years) to settle all historical Treaty of Waitangi claims by 2014;
- ♦ Whanau Social Assistance Services will get \$32 million (over the next 4 years);
- ♦ the Maori Economic Task Force will get \$10 million over 2009/10 and 2010/11;
- ♦ new funding of \$2.6 million (over the next 4 years) to help establish the Maori Trustee as a fully independent

sustainable entity, with ongoing funding for enhanced services to Maori beneficial landowners;

- ♦ \$500,000 a year for 10 years to the Turanganui a Kiwa tribes to "enhance their capacity to lead local economic and social developments"; and
- ♦ \$4.5 million for whanau language development over the next three years.

Internet: Broadband

Ultra fast broadband gets \$290 million of initial implementation funding for the 2009/10 financial year. In addition, \$48 million into rural broadband infrastructure (details to be released soon).

Arts, Culture & Heritage

Two artistic and cultural organisations get a boost of \$10.5 million over the next 4 years:

- ♦ Creative NZ will receive an additional \$7.1 million to support key music, dance, and theatre companies; and
- ♦ the Royal NZ Ballet will receive an extra \$3.4 million.

Foreign Affairs

There is a \$50 million boost for trade-related work, and this now accounts for more than half of the MFAT budget, which rises 19% to \$492 million.

The Government has reviewed the 5-year \$621 million funding package announced in last year's Budget. Some \$9.5 million in the 2008/09 financial year, and \$298.6 million over the next 4 years has been cut from that figure, and the Ministry's network of overseas posts is to be reviewed.

Consultation

National Education Standards

Parents, families, whanau, teachers, principals, and school trustees can now have their say on draft National Standards for primary and intermediate students. These standards aim to lift achievement in literacy and numeracy by being clear about what students should achieve and by when. From 2010, parents will receive regular school reports showing how their child is doing against the National Standards in reading, writing, and maths.

The Ministry is also seeking submissions on examples of plain language reports for parents.

Maori Medium Standards are being developed as well: consultation on these will take place between August and September.

Submissions close on 3 July 2009. Online submission forms are at www.minedu.govt.nz, or you can send submissions to Freepost 203 656, National Standards, Ministry of Education, PO Box 1666, Wellington. For National standards information packs email orders@thechair.minedu.govt.nz or phone 0800 660 662 and ask for either the Parent or Education Sector pack.

Electoral Finance: Issues Paper

This issues paper represents the first stage of a review of electoral finance legislation which is being carried out in order to develop new rules about electoral campaigning and political party funding. The review follows the recent repeal of the Electoral Finance Act 2007 (temporary procedures are until place until then). It will lead to legislation enabling a new electoral finance system to be set up before the 2011 general election.

Historically, electoral law reform has been the subject of broad cross-party and public consensus and the review will be involving all parliamentary parties and the public.

Submissions on the issues paper close on 26 June 2009. They can be emailed to electoralfinancereform@justice.govt.nz, or posted to Freepost Authority No 224498, Electoral Finance Reform, Ministry of Justice, C/- PO Box 180, Wellington 6140. The Issues paper is at <http://www.justice.govt.nz/electoral-finance-reform/home.asp>

Anti-counterfeiting Trade Agreement...

Your views are sought on proposals in a discussion paper outlining intellectual property proposals relating to border protection, and civil and criminal enforcement provisions that are not currently part of NZ law. The paper has been published as NZ and trading partners Australia, Canada, the European Union, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Singapore, Switzerland, and the US discuss development of an Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA) covering intellectual property rights that countries could join voluntarily. This consultation covers intellectual property enforcement issues in the physical world. A further round of discussions is expected to include enforcement issues in the digital environment.

Submissions close on 29 June 2009. They go to trademarks@med.govt.nz. The discussion paper is at http://www.med.govt.nz/templates/Page____40774.aspx

...Protecting Traditional Knowledge...

The Ministry of Economic Development (MED) is currently seeking comments on NZ's participation in the "World Intellectual Property Organisation – Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore" (WIPO-IPG) - also known as "traditional cultural expressions". This committee, which is meeting at the end of this month, is working on (amongst other things) the development of objectives and principles for the protection of traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions.

MED is interested in hearing from Maori organisations, communities and individuals, and anyone else with an interest in this work.

Submissions are due on 5 June 2009. However, Rural Bulletin readers' submissions will be accepted until 19 June 2009. Submissions go to traditional.knowledge@med.govt.nz. Please write "WIPO IGC Submissions" in the subject bar. Written submissions go to: WIPO IGC Submissions Intellectual Property Policy Group, Ministry of Economic Development, PO Box 1473, Wellington. More is at http://www.med.govt.nz/templates/ContentTopicSummary____40804.aspx

...& Granting Patents

Public submissions are now being invited on the Patents Bill, which would replace the current Patents Act 1953. The aim of the Bill is to update the way patents are granted NZ, while continuing to provide a balance between supporting innovation, and making sure the interests of the public and the interests of Maori (in respect of traditional knowledge and indigenous plants and animals) are protected. The changes would bring the NZ system more in line with patent granting systems of most other countries.

A patent is a right granted over an invention. The grant of a patent gives the patent owner the exclusive right to make, use, and sell a patented invention. A patentable invention is an invention that is a "manner of manufacture" is new, involves an inventive step, and is useful. The right gives inventors the opportunity to make a return on the invention they have invested in. In return, the patent owner has to provide a detailed description of the invention. The right lasts for a maximum of 20 years, and once the patent has expired anyone can use the invention.

Submissions close on 2 July 2009. Two copies go to the Commerce Committee, Parliament Buildings, Wellington. The Bill is at <http://www.legislation.govt.nz/bill/government/2008/0235-1/latest/DLM1419043.html>

North Is Grid Upgrade: Update

The Board of Inquiry has released its draft report on Transpower's Upper North Island grid upgrade proposal, which involves 200km of 70 metre-high pylons running a 400kv line from Whakamaru in South Waikato to Auckland.

It says the benefits of the proposal outweighed the disadvantages, and has granted the resource consents subject to certain conditions. People to whom the draft report was sent are invited to comment on any aspect of the report and once these have been considered the Board will produce a final report.

Submissions close on 24 June 2009. More is at <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/rma/call-in-transpower/board-of-inquiry/report-and-decision/>

Unpasteurised Milk Products

At the moment, only a small variety of unpasteurised milk products are available in NZ. A recently-released discussion paper from the NZ Food Safety Authority (NZFSA) outlines proposals for a new way of assessing unpasteurised milk products that would enable unpasteurised products that pose a low level of risk to the general population to be produced, sold, imported, and exported. The proposals are for unpasteurised milk products to be grouped according to the hazards they pose. Producers would have to meet certain requirements relating to on-farm and processing techniques, and new specifications for some unpasteurised milk products. Imports standards would be revised, there would be specific labelling requirements, and educational material would be developed both for vulnerable consumers, and for producers and importers.

Submissions close on 3 July 2009. The discussion paper and details for submitting are at <http://www.nzfsa.govt.nz/dairy/publications/consultation/unpasteurised-milk-products/index.htm>

ICT: Managing Radio Spectrum

A discussion paper on spectrum management in the radio licensing system is available for comment. Radio spectrum managed under the radio licensing system supports a wide range of public and private uses including public safety, emergency, and defence services.

The discussion paper summarises the Ministry of Economic Development's (MED) views about the effectiveness of the current licensing system. It identifies some specific concerns, and MED is particularly interested to hear about any potential problems that have not been covered. Possible improvements to the system are also considered; your views are sought on these as well. No specific changes are proposed at this stage.

Submissions close on 19 May 2009. Email them to radiospectrum@med.govt.nz or mail them to: Spectrum Management in the Radio Licensing Regime, Radio Spectrum Policy & Planning, PO Box 1473, Wellington 6140. The discussion paper is at <http://www.rsm.govt.nz/cms> (go to "Whats New" and click on "Spectrum management in the radio licensing regime - discussion paper released")

Re-allocating Some Radio Spectrum

Another recently-released discussion paper outlines proposals for re-allocating radio spectrum in the 806-960 MHz band. The main changes proposed for this band are:

- ♦ allocating a new 8 MHz block of spectrum for radio broadcast studio-to-transmitter fixed links;
- ♦ changing a 6 MHz block currently used for these links, by permitting use by "short-range devices" like radio frequency identification systems, smart meters and broadband wireless networks; and
- ♦ putting most of the new band for studio-to-transmitter links up for auction as 20-year rights.

The non-cellular services and applications using this frequency range are land mobile radio, fixed links including radio broadcast studio-to-transmitter links, and short-range radio-communications. The band is also home to cellular spectrum held by Telecom, Vodafone and 2degrees Mobile.

Submissions close on 30 June 2009. Email them to radiospectrum@med.govt.nz (subject line: "806-960 MHz Band Replanning"), or post to: 806-960 MHz Band Re-planning, Radio Spectrum Policy and Planning, Ministry of Economic Development, PO Box 1473, Wellington. The discussion paper is at www.rsm.govt.nz

Cigarette Safety Standard?

Standards NZ is proposing to establish burning standards for cigarettes in a bid to prevent accidental fires, particularly bed fires caused by smokers who fall asleep. In a consultation paper, "Determination of the extinction propensity of cigarettes", it's noted that carelessly handled cigarettes caused around 12% of the fire deaths in Australia from 2000 to 2002.

Submissions close on 22 June 2009. The proposed standard is at <http://shop.standards.co.nz/drafts/DZ4830-4830PCdraftv2.pdf>

Wanganui or Whanganui?

What do you think?

Submissions close 17 August 2009. An online submission form is at <http://www.lin.govt.nz/placenames/consultation-decisions/a-to-z/whanganui/name-change-submissions.aspx>, or you can post one to Secretary for the NZ Geographic Board Nga Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa, c/- Land Information NZ, PO Box 5501, Wellington 6145, fax 04 460 0112, email info@lin.govt.nz. More is at <http://www.lin.govt.nz/placenames/consultation-decisions/a-to-z/whanganui/index.aspx>, or tel freephone 0800 665 463

Food Safety: Codex Review

In 2005, a strategy was developed guide NZ's participation in Codex. The main purpose of Codex - the Codex Alimentarius Commission - is to protect the health of consumers and ensure fair trade practices in the food trade.

The Codex strategy is being reviewed and updated because there have been changes both within the NZ Food Safety Authority (NZFSA - the lead agency for Codex), and in the Codex system.

Submissions close on 19 June. They go to M Casey, Policy Group, NZ Food Safety Authority, PO Box 2835, Wellington, email michelle.casey@nzfsa.govt.nz. More is at <http://www.nzfsa.govt.nz/consultation/review-of-2005-codex-strategy/>

Lake Rotoma: Action Plan

Monitoring has shown that the water quality Lake of Rotoma (located between Rotorua and Whakatane) is slowly deteriorating. The Rotorua Lakes Strategy Group (RLSG) is seeking public submissions on an action plan it has developed to deal with this. The plan requires the amount of phosphorus being discharged into the lake to be reduced by at least 35%, and the amount of nitrogen by at least 7%.

Submissions close on 3 July 2009. More is at <http://www.envbop.govt.nz/Water/Lakes/Lake-Rotoma.asp>

Religion in NZ Schools: Guide

A draft guide called "Religion in NZ Schools - Questions and Concerns" is going through a final round of consultations. The guide sets out relevant legislation and considers a number of issues around provision of religious instruction in schools. It has been developed as a resource for Boards of Trustees, Principals and the wider school community.

Submissions close on 30 June 2009. For more information/copies of the guide email nzdiversity@hrc.co.nz

Current IRD Consultations

The Department of Inland Revenue (IRD) is currently consulting on a number of draft items:

- ♦ a draft determination for Firewood Processors and Log Splitters;
- ♦ benefits by third parties - fringe benefit tax consequences - section CX 2 (2); and
- ♦ the relationship between section 113 of the Tax Administration Act and the second proviso to section 20(3) of the GST Act.

IRD wants to know whether you think these drafts are: technically accurate, fairly reflect taxation legislation, are in line with commercial reality, and useful in practical situations?

Send comments on all three drafts by 12 June 2009. You can either email them to public.consultation@ird.govt.nz, or post them to Team Manager, Technical Services, Office of the Chief Tax Counsel, Inland Revenue Department, PO Box 2198, Wellington. More is at <http://www.ird.govt.nz/public-consultation/current/>

Managing Mt Aspiring National Park

The Department of Conservation (DoC) is consulting on a management plan for Mt Aspiring National Park in order to protect the values that make it special and make sure people can enjoy them. Some of the issues that need to be managed so this can happen include: aircraft use, visitor pressures, protecting natural quiet, commercial activity in remote and wilderness areas, and introduced pests – and these are considered in the plan.

Submissions close on 30 June. They go to Mount Aspiring Management Plan Review, Department of Conservation, PO Box 176, Alexandra 9340, fax 03 440 204, email bhunt@doc.govt.nz. More, including an online submission form, is at <http://www.doc.govt.nz/getting-involved/consultations/current/>

NZ Marine Mammals & Fish

The Department of Conservation (DoC) is seeking submissions about any changes in the threatened species status of NZ's marine mammals and marine fish species. The information you provide will help DoC update marine fish and mammal lists in the NZ Threat Classification System.

Submissions close for both marine mammals and marine fish on 22 June 2009. They go to Scientific Officer (Species), Terrestrial Conservation Unit, email threatstatus@doc.govt.nz, or to Department of Conservation, PO Box 10-420, Wellington 6143. More is at <http://www.doc.govt.nz/getting-involved/consultations/current/new-listing-of-threatened-status-of-new-zealand-marine-species/>

Current ERMA Consultations

The Environmental Risk management Authority (ERMA) is also currently consulting on the following (closing dates for submissions are in brackets):

- ♦ the procedure and requirements for issuing a test certificate for the design for a stationary tank or process container (22 June);
- ♦ a single pack anti-fouling paint for use on boats (1 July);
- ♦ a vet medicine for the treatment of bacterial infections in farm animals (18 June);
- ♦ herbicide for the control of grass weeds in many broadleaf crops (15 June);
- ♦ a solution for the treating of timber and wood products at industrial treatment facilities (18 June); and
- ♦ manufacturing concentrates with fungicidal properties for use in the preparation of other mixtures (29 June).

More, including online application forms, is at www.ermanz.govt.nz/consultations/consult-apps.html

Rural

Cows Genetic Code Sequenced

Better disease resistance, higher quality meat, and less methane emissions are the possible spin-offs from completing the sequencing the genome* of a cow (specifically, a female Hereford cow named L1 Dominette) following six years of research by a consortium of more than 300 scientists from 25 countries.

Completion of the genome sequence paves the way for research into more sustainable food production, taking into account the needs of an increasing world population. The scientists involved in the project say the findings of this study may also provide the means to select animals with a smaller environmental footprint, particularly animals with less greenhouse gas emissions.

*The genome of an organism is its hereditary information encoded in DNA (the "building blocks" of life). The sequence of DNA encodes the necessary information for living things to survive and reproduce. Determining the sequence is therefore useful in fundamental research into why and how organisms live.

Enterprising Rural Woman Award Winners

A boutique Wairarapa tourism venture has won the Rural Women NZ Enterprising Rural Woman Award 2009. The Tora Coastal Walk, run by Jenny Bargh and Kiri and Kath Elworthy, is the first winner of the BNZ - sponsored award, which attracted 46 entries from all over the country.

Runners up were - Jan Bolton of Kaingaroa Roothing Contractors Ltd based in Murupara, and Beverley Forrester of "Blackhills", a paddock-to-catwalk sheep farming and designer wool operation based in Hurunui, North Canterbury.

Rural Women NZ set up the Enterprising Rural Woman Award to highlight the innovative ways women are contributing to the rural economy, and their determination to succeed in the face of the extra challenges presented by the difficulties in accessing technology and geographical location.

NZX Acquires Rural Publisher

The NZ Stock Exchange (NZX) is finalising an agreement to acquire Country-Wide Publications Ltd (CPL). CPL's products include The NZ Farmers Weekly, Country-Wide North and Country-Wide South, NZ Dairy Exporter, Deer Farmer, and Young Country.

Avoiding Farm Injuries

As we're nearly half way through the year, it is a good time to think about your farm's safety record and consider ways to maintain safe practices. Unless we improve agricultural practices, recent ACC statistics indicate that:

- ♦ 20 agricultural workers will lose their lives in the workplace during 2009 (one death every 18 days); and
- ♦ every day 13 people will be seriously injured on farms.

The following recent investigations are clear reminders of the importance of thinking and working safely:

- ♦ a Mangakino diary farmer slid under a cow and broke his leg when he tried to drop the cow in a paddock to treat suspected milk fever (he later agreed that this strategy was not recommended standard practice and he was looking to save time);
- ♦ an 80-year old man fractured his ribs and pelvis when he fell off logs while working with a chainsaw near Mahoenui;
- ♦ a 19-year old Wairoa woman received back injuries after a cattle beast kicked a gate onto her;
- ♦ a visitor to a South Head farm was knocked unconscious and received lacerations to his face and limbs after falling off a quad bike and being run over by a trailer; and
- ♦ a 77 year old man was airlifted to hospital after a tractor rolled over his lower legs at Mangatarata.

How to avoid injury

In a nutshell, taking practical action on your property to reduce risk can save many lives and injuries, including your own.

Ask yourself if you and your staff have the right skills and strategies to eliminate, isolate, or minimise safety hazards on your rural property. Consider all aspects of your farm (inside and outside), the machinery, and changing conditions (weather, soil etc). Then, ask yourself, what is the safest way to work?

Putting in place FarmSafe's Golden Rule will reduce the risk of injury: "4x2take 4 steps back and think for 2 minutes".

For more information visit www.farmsafe.co.nz

Environment

Landcare's CarboNZero Programme: World First

The CarboNZero programme Landcare Research manages is the first greenhouse gas certification scheme in the world to receive accreditation under the rules of the International Accreditation Forum. The programme provides an online calculator for organisations and households to measure their greenhouse gas emissions (or carbon footprint) and to understand their emission sources. Organisations which have reduced and accounted for unavoidable emissions can be certificated (subject to an audit) and use the information for their carbon labelling requirements.

Managing NZ's Resources: Part II

Following the first phase of checking the law relating to the way NZ manages its resources – the introduction of the Resource Management Act Amendment Bill into Parliament – a second phase of work is underway.

In this, economic and environmental outcomes relating to resource management will be considered, including:

- ♦ the management of aquaculture, infrastructure, urban design, and water;
- ♦ the relationship between the Resource Management Act and the Building, Conservation, Forests, and Historic Places Acts; and

- ♦ some RMA processes that were too complex to include in the first part of the reforms.

It will also involve the setting up of an Environmental Protection Authority.

Tiritiri Matangi: Top Restoration Site

Tiritiri Matangi Island in the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park has been named one of the top 25 ecological restoration projects in Australia and NZ. It was selected for its variety of restoration activities (which date back to 1984), the high level of community involvement, and the amount of restoration research undertaken by seven universities and polytechnics.

More information is at www.globalrestorationnetwork.org/countries/australianew-zealand/new-zealand/, and www.doc.govt.nz/top25

Tourism

International Travel/Migration: April 2009

The number of people visiting NZ in April 2009 (195,900) was up 16,500 (9%) from the previous April, according to Statistics NZ (SNZ). The timing of Easter, from March in 2008 to April in 2009, contributed to the increase. For the combined months of March and April 2009, visitor arrivals were down 2% on the same two months in 2008.

More people visited from: Australia (up 16,800), Hong Kong (up 1,400), and Germany (up 900), but fewer from Korea (down 3,200) and Japan (down 1,100). The 2.417 million visitor arrivals recorded in the April 2009 year were down 65,900 (3%) from the previous April year.

New Zealand residents went on 162,400 short-term overseas trips in April 2009, down 1,900 (1%) from April 2008. There were fewer trips to Fiji (down 1,500), China (down 1,100), and Japan (down 900). In contrast, more NZers went to Australia (up 2,900) and Samoa (up 900). For the April 2009 year, there were 1.940 million New Zealand resident departures, down 57,100 (3%) from the previous year.

Some 400 more people came to NZ (permanent and long-term) than left it in April 2009: in April 2008 1,300 more people left here than came here. The increase was mainly due to 1,600 fewer PLT departures of New Zealand citizens.

PLT arrivals exceeded PLT departures by 2,200 in April 2009, up from 1,700 in March 2009 and 1,600 in February 2009. These figures are all well above the average of 400 recorded for the 25-month period from January 2007–2009.

New Zealand's annual net PLT migration balance was a gain of 9,200 in the April 2009 year, up from 4,700 in the April 2008 year. The net PLT outflow to Australia was 32,000 in the April 2009 year, down from the record net outflows of 35,400 in both the December 2008 and January 2009 years.

PLT arrivals of New Zealand citizens numbered 24,500 in the April 2009 year, just above the average of 23,400 for the 1979–2008 December years (arrivals of New Zealand citizens tend to show little variation year-to-year).

Working Holidays in NZ

NZ has working holiday schemes with 30 countries which entitle 18 to 30-year-olds from those countries to holiday and do incidental work here for up to a year (two years for UK citizens). These visitors have also been able to complete a single three-month course of study during their holiday.

Changes coming up in July to this scheme mean that the restriction to one three-month course of study per holiday will be removed, and NZ will be able to negotiate with each participating country for the study entitlement to increase from three months to six months.

Health and Welfare

Revised Health Targets

A recently-revised short list of six health targets is aimed at enabling District Health Boards to focus on front line services, and reducing administrative monitoring and reporting requirements. The six targets are:

- ♦ shorter waiting times for emergency department treatment;
- ♦ smoking;
- ♦ immunisation;
- ♦ diabetes;
- ♦ cardiovascular services; and
- ♦ reduced waiting times for critical cancer treatment and elective surgery.

The list will be reviewed again next year.

Fixing Eyes in the Pacific

NZ is contributing \$5.6 million to a trans-Tasman project that will improve eye health, and treat blindness in the Pacific. It is estimated there 80,000 blind people and a further 250,000 with impaired vision in the Pacific, and that up to 75% of blindness is preventable.

Under the programme, to which Australia is contributing \$11.2 million to this project, the Fred Hollows Foundation NZ will train and equip at least 45 eye nurses and eight eye doctors throughout the Pacific and in Timor-Leste over the next three years. After training, each new eye doctor will be able to perform at least 200 cataract operations and see over 1000 new patients a year in their own country.

For more information visit www.hollows.org.nz or www.nzaid.govt.nz

OSH/DoL & Safe Workplaces

The Department of Labour (DoL) has set out the principles and policies it follows when enforcing the Health and Safety in Employment Act on its website. Under the policy, if non-compliance is minor and does not endanger anyone DoL could try to agree with the operator about how they can comply with the Act. However, if there is serious non-compliance, or there is a likelihood of someone being seriously hurt, it is more likely to use an infringement notice or prosecution.

More is at <http://dol.govt.nz/publications/research/keeping-work-safe>

LPG Cabinet Heaters: Safe Use

The LPG Association offers the following information on safe use of LPG cabinet heaters:

- ♦ when connecting a new or refilled cylinder, apply soapy water to the cylinder connections and turn on the cylinder. If bubbles appear you should close the valve immediately and contact an LPG service agent;
- ♦ keep your LPG heater at least 1 metre from anything that could catch on fire;
- ♦ put a safety guard around your heater if you have young children at home;
- ♦ open a window by 2cm when your heater is on: this removes emissions, reduces condensation, and keeps the air fresh – and never use an LPG heater in your bedroom or bathroom;
- ♦ if you smell LPG turn off your heater and cylinder straightaway and contact an LPG service agent; and
- ♦ take your heater and cylinder to an LPG service agent and have it checked yearly.

For more information about LPG safety to www.energysafety.govt.nz, or to www.lpga.org.nz, or tell 0508 377 463

Mothers and Children: Three Reports

They are:

Educating Mothers about Childbirth...

A recent Families Commission study describes women's access to, and perception of, childbirth education services offered by providers in the 21 District Health Boards (DHBs). The report says some new mothers are falling between the gaps as a result of poor information and access to services provided around the time of childbirth. It also shows that the quality of the information and services they are getting differs greatly between the health regions.

The study looks at questions around the professional antenatal and postnatal services in NZ like: How do these services measure up in NZ? Are the services provided equally accessible throughout the country? Do they meet women's needs? Are they culturally appropriate? And is there a smooth referral process from the providers of antenatal care to the providers of support for those vital first weeks of being a new parent?

Download the report, Childbirth Education Antenatal Education and transitions of Maternity Care in NZ" from <http://www.nzfamilies.org.nz/files/RF-Childbirth-Education.pdf>

...Children: Love Goes a Long Way...

The critical role of parents and caregivers in the physical development of children's brains has been highlighted in a Families Commission report, "Healthy Families, Young Minds and Developing Brains." The report shows how a child's experience of love, pleasure, and security - or the lack of these - has a major impact on issues as diverse as family violence, crime, social, and educational success and mental health.

Download the report from <http://www.nzfamilies.org.nz/files/RF-Healthy-Families.pdf>

... & State of the World's Mothers

Save the Children has released its 10th annual State of the World's Mothers, which focuses on the link between school success and investing in early learning opportunities for young children. The report shows that NZ has met six out of ten key benchmarks of suggested minimum standards for early childhood development in wealthy countries. Sweden tops the wealthiest countries in its commitment to early childhood development meeting all ten key benchmarks, while Australia meets two, and Canada and Ireland come last - meeting one benchmark.

The areas that NZ does not meet the minimum requirements are:

- ♦ parental leave of 1 year at 50% of salary;
- ♦ 1% of GDP spent on early childhood services;
- ♦ child poverty rate less than 10%; and
- ♦ near universal outreach of essential child health services.

The report also presents the annual global Mothers' Index which lists the best and worst places to be a mother. NZ comes in sixth place among the top ten best places with Sweden ranking first, followed by Norway, Australia, Iceland, and Denmark, then by Finland, Ireland, Germany, and the Netherlands.

The full report is at www.savethechildren.org.nz

Disability Issues: New Committee

The Government has set up a Ministerial Committee on Disability Issues to be responsible for the way the NZ Disability Strategy and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities "promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities..."* The committee will be chaired by the Minister for Disability Issues and it has other government ministers as members.

*Quote from the Convention on the rights of Persons with Disabilities: article 1.

Food Security: Two Resources

A new resource called "Food Security Among Maori in Aotearoa – Part II" is designed to give communities ideas about what they can do to improve their food security. Food security is not about personal choice alone – food security (or lack of it) can also be the result of environmental factors, such as the ease with which you can get to quality supermarkets and to fast - food outlets.

The resource includes ideas such as kohanga growing their own fruit and vegetables, a kura planting feijoa trees as a windbreak, a marae purchasing fruit wholesale and selling it on to whanau for no profit, and local health providers advocating for petrol stations to sell fruit instead of having "specials" on chocolate bars.

Research shows that households that are the least food-secure have people with the highest body mass index. This is because foods high in fat and sugar are the cheaper option. The toolkit was developed by Te Hotu Manawa Maori.

For more information tel 09 638 5803

The Obesity Action Coalition also recently released a report called "Food Security for Pacific Peoples in NZ". The report says that 46.6% of Pacific households with children stated that they could always afford to eat properly, compared to 86.1% of NZ European and other culture households. By comparison, in 1997, 60% of Pacific households with children reported that they could always afford to eat properly.

The report says that Pacific peoples have picked up the challenge of food security and that there is a lot of good work going on in this area, with many programmes in place.

However, the report also notes that these initiatives will be successful only if policies and local environments also offer support – because healthy food is more expensive than less healthy food, not as easy to access, and not always as tasty.

You can download the report at

<http://www.obesityaction.org.nz/pfsr/PacificfoodsecurityreportfinalMarch09.pdf>

Education

Trades Academies for Secondary Students

The Ministry of Education is to set up trade academies that will focus on delivering trades and technology programmes to secondary students in Years 9 to 13. The idea is to motivate more students to stay engaged in learning and training by providing them with a greater number of options for study; provide them with clear career pathways by giving them a head start on training for vocational qualifications; and improve the responsiveness of schools to business and economic needs.

Trades academies could be on-site at school, be made up of secondary, tertiary and business partnerships, or be virtual academies that facilitate students moving between standard school delivery, tertiary training providers, and industry-based experience and mentoring.

More is at

<http://www.minedu.govt.nz/educationSectors/Schools/Initiatives/TradesAcademies.aspx>

Upskilling Future School Principals

A new plan called the Professional Leadership Plan is now in place. Its aim is to give future principals the knowledge, skills, and support they need to lead effective teaching and learning for every student, and help teachers move more quickly into leadership positions in their schools. The plan, which focuses on hard-to-staff schools and on upskilling Maori and Pasifika teachers, follows on from a successful pilot programme.

The Professional Leadership Plan is at www.educationalleaders.govt.nz

Employment

Unemployment Rate Reaches 5%

In the March 2009 quarter, the unemployment rate increased for the fifth consecutive quarter, to reach 5.0%. Male unemployment rate increased to 5.1%, female unemployment rate to 4.9%. During the quarter, the number of unemployed

increased by 7,000 to reach 115,000. Since the March 2008 quarter, the number of people unemployed has risen by 30,000.

Salaries and Wages

Private sector salary and wage rates (including overtime) increased 3.1% in the year to the March 2009 quarter and 0.6% in the March 2009 quarter. Salary and wage rates (including overtime) for the public sector increased 4.3% in the year to the March 2009 quarter and 0.6% in the March 2009 quarter.

Salary and ordinary time wage rates rose 3.4% in the year to the March 2009 quarter and overtime wage rates increased 3.8% in the same period. In the March quarter, salary and ordinary time wage rates increased 0.6%, while overtime wage rates rose 0.8%.

The median increase for all surveyed salary and ordinary time wage rates that rose in the year to the March 2009 quarter was 4.2%. In the same year, the mean increase for all surveyed salary and ordinary time wage rates that rose was 5.7%.

Transport

Road User Charges Review Report

A report of the independent review of road user charges (RUC) makes no less than 32 recommendations. Amongst them are recommendations that:

- ♦ the current RUC system be retained for diesel vehicles, rather than moving to a diesel tax (because of costs that a diesel tax would impose on non-transport users);
- ♦ NZ move towards setting up an electronic RUC collection system; and
- ♦ six weeks notice be given for any future increases in RUC rates.

Officials have been asked for further advice on the workability of some of the recommendations.

More is at <http://beehive.govt.nz/release/road+user+charges+review+released+0>

Security on Domestic Aircraft

Following a review of aviation security, flight deck security on domestic aircraft is to be tightened to reduce the risk of interference with an aircraft mid-flight. Measures include strengthening existing cockpit doors on aircraft with more than 30 seats, and investigating the installation of cockpit doors for 19-seat aircraft.

Housing

NZ Property Market: Overseas Interest

In the year to April, real estate firm Realestate.co.nz recorded a 14% spike in the number of homes-for-sale search sessions initiated by site visitors living outside New Zealand - and a 17%

increase in similar offshore-based searches for kiwi rental properties.

The biggest increase in international rental search traffic came from Spain, which is up 248% over the year, followed by Ireland (up 172%), the Russian Federation (132%), and Singapore (up 130%).

In terms of overseas browsers investigating homes for sale, traffic from Spain is (up 226%), followed by China (up 211%), the Russian Federation (up 157%), and Taiwan (up 129%).

Of the top 20 overseas countries providing property search traffic to Realestate.co.nz, only two markets – Australia and South Africa – recorded a drop in traffic over the past year. Rental property search traffic from Australia was down 11% in the year to April, while rental searches originating from South Africa were down 55%. When it came to homes-to-buy searches, Australian traffic was down 9% and South African traffic was down 49%.

Property Market Values Stabilising?

The Quotable Value national residential property indicators for April showed a 9.2% decline in property values over the last year, a slight improvement on the 9.3% yearly decline reported during the previous month. This is the first time the trend in property values has improved since September 2007.

Property values in the main centres have begun to flatten over recent months. And, prices being paid for property in most provincial centres have been flat for the past few months.

New Residential Tenancies Bill

The Residential Tenancies Amendment Bill (No 2) introduced last year has been reviewed. It would now (amongst other things):

- ♦ extend the Act (including protecting access to advice, information and, dispute resolution services) to more people involved in renting, such as tenants in boarding houses;
- ♦ introduce principles to indicate when landlords or tenants are responsible for charges such as water or rates;
- ♦ introduce new processes for terminating and renewing tenancies, to provide an appropriate balance between flexibility and certainty of tenure;
- ♦ increasing fines and damages claims and introducing new penalties;
- ♦ provide for faster dispute resolution;
- ♦ require action to be taken when there are assaults, or threats of assault, by tenants' guests or associates; and
- ♦ require landlords to disclose whether the premises have had to be cleansed under a statutory order (e.g., because the premises have been contaminated due to methamphetamine manufacture).

Energy

Revised Electricity Commission Role

A recently-released Government Policy Statement (GPS) sets out objectives and outcomes expected from the Electricity Commission. It:

- ♦ emphasises security of supply;
- ♦ introduces a streamlined, simplified process for transmission investments under \$20 million in value; and
- ♦ signals a review of the NZ Energy Strategy, and assessment of any duplication with the NZ Energy and Efficiency Conservation Strategy.

Information on the revised GPS for Electricity Governance is available at www.med.govt.nz/electricity/gps/

Commerce Commission Report: Electricity Pricing

Following on from the Wolak investigation for the Commerce Commission in 2005 into electricity pricing, the Commission has found no evidence of breaches of the Commerce Act, although it will be issuing one warning regarding a risk of a breach.

The Commission says that each of the four largest generator-retailers – Contact, Genesis, Meridian, and Mighty River Power – is likely to have held substantial market power on a recurring basis, particularly during dry years. However, that behaviour does not meet the criteria of “taking advantage” of market power for a proscribed purpose, namely the hindering or deterring of competitors, under section 36 of the Act, and therefore it is not a breach.

The investigation followed complaints about high electricity prices, large company profits, a perceived low level of competitive activity, and allegations of anti-competitive conduct.

More is at <http://www.comcom.govt.nz/BusinessCompetition/Publications/Electricityreport/DecisionsList.aspx>

2009 EECA Awards: Winners:

The following were winners in the 2009 Energy Efficiency and Conservation Energy Awards:

- ♦ Supreme winner, Mick Ingram, of Radford Yarn Technologies;
- ♦ Shell NZ Transport Award: Auckland International Airport Ltd;
- ♦ Large Business Award (two winners) : Energy for Industry/Winstone Pulp International and NZ Steel Ltd;
- ♦ Eco Insulation SME Business Award: Winner: Yealands Estate Wines;
- ♦ Public Sector Award: Department of Conservation;
- ♦ Fujitsu General NZ Residential Award: Otago Regional Council;

- ♦ Innovation Award: Energy for Industry/Silver Fern Farms;
- ♦ Energy Management Award (two winners): Honeywell Ltd and University of Auckland;
- ♦ Renewable Energy Award: Radford Yarn Technologies Ltd; and
- ♦ the Outstanding Contribution to Sustainable Energy Award: High Achievement Awards went to Professor C. Gerry Carrington and Professor Ann Smith.

Electricity from Waves

A proposal to generate electricity from wave energy has been awarded \$760,000 under the Government's Marine Energy Deployment Fund. The WET-NZ project put forward by Power Projects Ltd and Industrial Research Ltd (the second to gain funding under the Fund) is a wave energy device that responds to changes in wave motion to create energy. It is moored, and sits below the seas surface. It has been tested in waters off the Canterbury coast and in Wellington Harbour.

State Sector

Redeployment Option for State Servants

A new scheme has been set up to help match State servants who are made redundant with other jobs in the State Services. It means that State servants who've been made redundant will now have the option of entering a pool during their notice period, and of then being considered when vacancies arise in other State organisations.

The process will be overseen by the State Services Commission and will be available for all agencies within the State Services, including Public Service departments, non-Public Service departments, and Crown entities.

CRIs and Workforce Planning

The Office of the Auditor-General (OAG) has reported on and audit of workforce planning in the nine Crown Research Institutes (CRIs - the largest providers of scientific research in NZ).

Workforce planning encourages organisations to understand the mix of skills and knowledge held by their staff. This enables organisations to identify whether they need to change that mix of skills and knowledge to support the delivery of their goals. It also allows organisations to adapt effectively when business needs change, and can help identify the staff with organisational knowledge that needs to be retained.

The OAG found that two CRIs had comprehensive and established systems to support effective workforce planning, five CRIs were developing their workforce planning, and two were in the early stages of carrying out their workforce planning.

Each CRI linked its delivery of research, science, and technology products to its ability to attract and retain skilled staff - and all were facing similar challenges in attracting and retaining suitably qualified and experienced researchers, scientists, and technicians.

The report is at <http://www.oag.govt.nz/2009/workforce-planning/>

Justice/the Law

Review of Legal Aid System

A review of NZ's legal aid system is being carried out. The aims are to make sure that:

- ♦ it delivers legal services to those who need them most in a cost - effective way;
- ♦ fits well with the way the justice system, especially the court system, works;
- ♦ is consistent with principles of natural justice and NZ's international obligations;
- ♦ is based on objectives of fairness, efficiency, effectiveness, and quality;
- ♦ provides value for money; and
- ♦ is simple to administer.

The reviewers are to take into account the projected fiscal environment, and are to develop alternative approaches to manage/reduce costs. They will look at all aspects of initial criminal legal services, legal information, education, advice and representation, and in particular at the areas of criminal, family, civil, and Waitangi Tribunal legal aid, all eligibility factors, contracting of providers, and issues, such as the assignment of cases. They will also consider spending in areas related to legal aid (for example, lawyers for the child, youth advocates, etc) and administration of the legal aid system. Public consultation is timed for August/September, and a final report is due in November.

Terms of reference for the review are at <http://www.justice.govt.nz/media/media-terms-of-reference.pdf>

Boy Racers: Two New Bills

Two Bills that give police, courts, and local authorities greater powers to tackle illegal street racers and crush their vehicles as a last resort have been introduced to Parliament.

The Vehicle Confiscation and Seizure Bill would: allow vehicles to be seized and destroyed as a new penalty for illegal street racing; allow vehicles repeatedly used by people with overdue traffic fines to be seized and sold to pay those fines; and enable Police and Courts to target illegal street racers who commit offences in another person's vehicle.

The Land Transport (Enforcement Powers) Amendment Bill will include provisions to: allow local authorities to create bylaws that prevent vehicles repeatedly "cruising" city street; allow the compulsory impoundment of vehicles involved in illegal street racing; and introduce demerit points for noise offences, licence breaches, and registration plate offences.

Law Commission & Alcohol Laws #1

The Law Commission has tabled its first (of three) reports on the reform of NZ's Alcohol laws.

In it, the Commission suggests that Parliament should no longer decide alcohol Bills on the basis of the conscience vote, and that party-based voting will produce laws that are more consistent and durable. The conscience vote developed in the 19th and early 20th centuries when the debate about alcohol was around religion and morality. The Commission says that

today, the emphasis is on achieving the right balance between harm minimisation and individual liberty: issues too important to be left to a conscience vote.

More is at <http://www.lawcom.govt.nz/ProjectPressReleases.aspx?ProjectID=154>

NZ Child and Youth Offending Statistics

A recent report "Child and Youth Offending Statistics in NZ: 1992 to 2007", examines trends in Police apprehensions of children aged 10 to 13, and youth aged 14 to 16, during 1995 to 2007. It also looks at trends in prosecutions of, and orders and sentences imposed on, young people from 1992 to 2007. An "apprehension" is recorded when a person has been dealt with by the Police in some manner to resolve an alleged offence. Apprehensions represent the number of alleged offences but not the number of individuals, as people who are apprehended for more than one offence are counted once for each offence. The main trends in Police apprehensions 1995 to 2007 are:

- ♦ child and youth apprehension rates for 2006 and 2007 were the lowest since 1995;
- ♦ child and youth apprehension rates for property offences in 2007 were the lowest since 1995; and
- ♦ from 1995 to 2007 period, population-adjusted violence apprehensions increased for children and youth, as they did for all age groups, with children recording the lowest increase.

And in terms of prosecutions, orders and sentences, the main trends during 2004 to 2007 are:

- ♦ from 2004 to 2007 the number of prosecuted cases involving young people (excluding non-imprisonable traffic offences) fluctuated, increasing overall by 1.9% (from 5,932 to 6,044);
- ♦ a Section 282 discharge, which means that the charge is deemed never to have been laid, was the most common outcome for prosecutions involving young people in the last four years; and
- ♦ overall the number of cases proved in the Youth Court has decreased in the last four years.

More is at <http://www.justice.govt.nz/pubs/reports/2009/nz-youth-justice-statistics-1992-2007/>

Family Court: New Rules

New rules affecting the reporting of Family Court proceedings are now in effect. They mean that news media may attend Family Court hearings, and that reports of the proceedings can now be published so long as there is no information identifying children or vulnerable people without leave of the judge. If the judge agrees, parties can bring a support person to the hearing, and other people will also be able to attend with the judge's permission.

The judge can ask anyone to leave the courtroom. Judges are able to direct registrars to appoint lawyers and specialist report writers, and registrars can issue a summons under the Domestic Violence Act and direct that additional people should be served with applications under the Family Protection Act.

The changes represent the first stage of the Family Courts Matters legislation. Other parts of the legislation yet to come

into force include changes to counselling for couples and parents under the Family Proceedings Act and the Care of Children Act, and the introduction of counselling for children and family mediation.

Not-for-Profits

The Community Response Fund

The Government has set up a Community Response Fund (CRF) of \$40 million in response to increased demand for community and voluntary sector organisations' services. The CRF, which will operate for two years, has two parts:

- ♦ it will provide crisis funding to providers of critical services that are having real trouble maintaining their services because of the impact of the economic downturn on their non-government funding; and
- ♦ it will provide funding to providers of critical services that are experiencing big increases in demand for their services from families, children, young, or older people because of the economic downturn.

Critical community-based social services including services for family violence, child abuse and neglect, budget and financial advice, sexual violence, early intervention for vulnerable and at-risk children and families, families under stress, and vulnerable and at-risk people, whether old or young.

The main priority will be given to supporting the delivery of extra services, while some funding will support innovative responses to demand.

It will be administered by the Ministry of Social Development (MSD), with up to 12 regional panels approving applications. The panels will include representatives from the Ministry of Social Development, Non-Government Organisations, and, where appropriate, representatives from the Ministry of Youth Development, Te Puni Kokiri, the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, and local government. They will start considering applications in July and then once every four months over the next two years.

Donating online: Check Your Website

American user research says many non-profit organisations could collect more donations from their websites if they stated what they are about and how they use donations. Usability studies described on Jacob Neilson's Alertbox show that some potential donors had problems when they visited sites to try to find out about NGO organisations' missions and goals - key factors in their decisions about whether to give money.

Well-designed non-profit websites are particularly suited for attracting new donors and efficiently supporting small-scale impulse giving. Websites are less effective at sustaining long-term donor relationships. For encouraging customer (or donor) loyalty, e-mail newsletters remain the Internet tool of choice.

More is at <http://www.useit.com/alertbox/nonprofit-donations.html>

ESOL Home Tutors Name Change

ESOL Home Tutors, which provides a range of English language and settlement services, has a new name: "English Language Partners NZ. With 23 locations, 200 staff, 3,000

volunteers, and 1,000 new volunteers trained each year, English Language Partners NZ is Aotearoa/NZ's largest organisation working with migrants and refugees.

For more information email natoffice@englishlanguage.org.nz, or visit <http://www.esolht.org.nz/news/news/nr1239253555.html>

Parliament

Advance Voting: Mt Albert By-election

This by-election is being held on 13 June. People can vote in advance if they can't get to a polling place on election day because they are out of the Mt Albert electorate, sick, working, or for any other reason.

There are five advance voting places in the Mt Albert electorate, and you can vote at Registrars of Electors' offices across the country or at the Chief Electoral Office in Wellington.

The easiest option for people overseas is to download their voting papers from the elections website www.elections.org.nz and fax or post them back so they are received by 7pm on election day. They can also vote in person at overseas posts in Australia, China, Cook Islands, England, India, and Samoa.

For more information on advance voting call freephone 0800 36 76

Business

Imports/Exports: April 2009

For the month of April 2009 compared with April 2008:

- ♦ merchandise exports were valued at \$3.6 billion, down \$176 million (4.6%);
- ♦ crude oil led the exports decrease, down \$204 million (61.3%);
- ♦ merchandise imports were valued at \$3.4 billion, down \$745 million (18.1%);
- ♦ almost two-thirds of the decrease in imports was due to large one-off capital items in April 2008;
- ♦ imports of vehicles, parts, and accessories decreased \$127 million (32.4%); and
- ♦ the trade balance was a surplus of \$276 million, or 7.5% of exports.

Primary Industries Benefit from R&D

Statistics NZ (SNZ) say that 19% of research and development (R&D) carried out in 2008 period was for the benefit of NZ's primary industries. Total R&D expenditure for 2008 was \$2.1 billion, an increase of 17% from the \$1.8 billion reported two years previously.

The business sector continues to carry out the most R&D, accounting for over \$900 million undertaken. Other areas set to benefit from R&D being undertaken are manufacturing,

health, environment, and information and communication services. Each of these represented 10% or more of R&D spending in 2008. The proportion of R&D funded by the business, government, and university sectors remained steady between 2006 and 2008, with the government sector funding 43%, just ahead of business at 40%.

A full report on the results of this survey will be published this month.

Complying With Standards: SNZ Code

Standards NZ has published a code to help organisations in both the public and private sectors to develop programmes which show they comply with legislation, industry codes, and organisational standards, as well as with standards of good corporate governance, ethics, and community expectations.

You can download the new compliance standards at <http://www.standards.co.nz/web-shop/>

Record Fall in Retail Sales

The total sales volume in the retail industries fell a record 2.9% in the March 2009 quarter, according to Statistics NZ. This is double the previous largest falls of 1.4% seen in March 1997 and June 2008. For the sixth quarter in succession, the biggest contributor to the fall in sales volumes was motor vehicle retailing, down 11.4% in the latest quarter. Sales volumes in core retailing, which excludes the vehicle-related industries, fell a record 1.2% in the March 2009 quarter. This is also double the previous largest falls of 0.6% seen in June 2007 and June 2008.

Volumes fell in 14 of the 20 core industries, led by appliance retailing (down 5.9%) and department stores (down 3.6%). Supermarket and grocery stores (up 1.9%) increased the most.

The trend in total retail sales volumes has been declining since the June 2007 quarter, falling 6.7% since then, the longest and fastest decline since the series began in September 1995.

The value of total retail sales fell 1.5% (\$236 million) in the March 2009 quarter. This was the fourth consecutive quarterly fall, and the largest since March 1997 when sales fell 1.6%. The biggest contributors to the latest fall were motor vehicle retailing, down 9.2% (\$156 million) and automotive fuel retailing, down 6.6% (\$112 million).

The value of core retailing rose 0.3% (\$41 million) in the latest quarter. Only 7 of the 20 core retail industries had sales increases, the largest coming from supermarket and grocery stores, up 3.3% (\$119 million). The largest offsetting decrease was in appliance retailing, down 6.1% (\$39 million). The trend in total retail sales values has been falling for the last year and is now 2.8% lower than in the March 2008 quarter. This is the longest period of decline since the series began.

In the month of March 2009, total retail sales fell 0.4% (\$22 million), led by a 7.4% (\$41 million) drop in automotive fuel retailing. Core retailing rose 0.5% (\$20 million), with sales up in 15 of the 20 core industries. The largest increase came from cafes and restaurants, up 4.4% (\$14 million).

Halal Products/Services: Big Business

According to the Halal Journal, a Kuala Lumpur-based magazine, the Halal food market has exploded in the past

decade and is now worth an estimated US\$632 billion annually - about 16% of the entire global food industry. If you add in the fast-growing Islam-friendly finance sector and the myriad other products and services — cosmetics, real estate, hotels, fashion, insurance — that comply with Islamic law and the teachings of the Koran, the sector is worth well over US\$1 trillion a year.

The world's 1.6 billion Muslims are younger and, in some places at least, richer than ever. Seeking to tap that huge market, non-Muslim multinationals like Tesco, McDonald's, and Nestlé have expanded their Muslim-friendly offerings and now control an estimated 90% of the global Halal market.

At the same time, governments in Asia and the Middle East are pouring millions into efforts to become regional "Halal hubs," providing tailor-made manufacturing centres and "Halal logistics" — providing systems to maintain product purity during shipping and storage. The increased competition is changing manufacturing and supply chains in some unusual places. Most of Saudi Arabia's chicken is raised in Brazil, which means Brazilian suppliers have built elaborate Halal slaughtering facilities. Abattoirs in NZ, the world's biggest exporter of Halal lamb, have hosted delegations from Iran and Malaysia. And the Netherlands, keen to maximize Rotterdam's role as Europe's biggest port, has built Halal warehouses so that imported Halal goods aren't stored next to pork or alcohol.

The movement's advocates envisage Muslim cars and Halal furniture built in accordance with Muslim finance, labour, and ethical principles. Citing the kosher and organic industries as successful examples of doing well by doing good, some entrepreneurs even see Halal products moving into the mainstream and appealing to consumers looking for high-quality, ethical products. A few firms that comply with the Shari'ah code — the religious laws that observant Muslims follow — point out that already many of their customers are non-Muslim. At the Jawhara Hotels, an alcohol-free Arabian Gulf chain run by the Islam-compliant Al Lootah conglomerate, 60% of the clientele are non-Muslims, drawn by the hotels' serenity and family-friendly atmosphere. And Dutch-based company Marhaba, which sells cookies and chocolate, says a quarter of its customers are non-Muslims, mostly people concerned not about religious edicts but about food safety.

The Halal Journal is at <http://www.halaljournal.com/>

Money Matters

Food Prices Down in April

Food prices decreased 0.6% in the April 2009 month according to Statistics NZ. The fruit and vegetable (down 2.0%), grocery food (down 0.4%), meat, poultry and fish (down 0.8%), and non-alcoholic beverage (down 0.9%) subgroups all fell. Restaurant meals and ready-to-eat food (up 0.4%) was the only subgroup to rise.

The most significant decrease came from the fruit and vegetables subgroup (down 2.0%), which was driven by lower prices for kiwifruit (down 54.8%). Kiwifruit is coming into season and large price falls usually occur in April and May. The most significant individual upward contribution came from tomatoes (up 26.2%).

Within the other subgroups, the most significant downward contributions came from lower prices for fresh chicken (down 3.4%), margarine (down 9.4%), and fresh milk (down 1.5%).

For the year to April 2009, food prices rose 7.6% with all five subgroups recording increases: grocery food (up 6.7%), meat, poultry and fish (up 11.5%), fruit and vegetables (up 9.9%), restaurant meals and ready-to-eat food (up 5.2%), and non-alcoholic beverages (up 7.5%). Within these subgroups, the most significant upward contributions came from higher prices for ready-to-eat food (up 5.3%), bread (up 12.8%), beef (up 12.5%), and soft drinks (up 7.2%). The most significant downwards contributions came from lower prices for cheddar cheese (down 15.7%), and tomatoes (down 15.8%).

Are You Entitled to a Rates Rebate?

Home owners on low incomes may be entitled to a rebate of up to \$530 off their council rates, through the Rates Rebate Scheme.

To be entitled to a rebate, a person needs to be on a low income and pay rates for the home they live in. The amount of rebate depends on a person's income, how high their rates are, and how many dependents they have. The higher a person's rates, or the more dependents they have, the higher their income can be before the rebate is reduced.

Most superannuitants and beneficiaries and many employed people on low incomes would be entitled to a rebate. NZ superannuation and most other Work and Income benefits are counted as income when assessing eligibility for a rates rebate. However, a number of benefits and allowances, such as the disability allowance, child disability allowance, family tax credits, and most war pensions (other than veteran's pension) do not count as income for rates rebate purposes.

So, for example, a couple who receive NZ Superannuation, with no other income and two dependents, would probably get the full \$530 rebate if their rates were \$1,782 or more.

The scheme is administered by the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) but ratepayers apply directly to their local council for a rebate. They must declare their income for the tax year preceding the start of the rating year (e.g. for the rating year 2008/09, they will need to declare their income for the year ending 31 March 2008). They must also get the application signed by an authorised person such as a council staff member, Justice of the Peace, solicitor, chartered accountant, or minister of religion.

There are also some specific rules about properties that are owned by trusts that can affect a ratepayer's eligibility, and ratepayers should check these with their local council before applying.

Last year councils approved around 111,000 rebates, and so far in 2008/09 more than 104,000 rebates have been granted.

To apply for a rebate for the current rating year applications must be lodged with the local council no later than 30 June 2009. For more information on the scheme visit www.ratesrebates.govt.nz

The Price of Milk

The Oily Rag Research Department has carried out an electronic survey of 600 people to find out how much they are paying for milk. The survey compared the cost of various kinds of two-litre bottles of standard blue stop non-organic milk. The researchers found that:

- ♦ there is a significant difference in the retail price. One person said they pay \$3.25 for milk at their supermarket which sells for \$4.60 at their local dairy;

- ♦ the same milk is bottled under different brands and sold at different prices;
- ♦ the retail price of milk processed by small independent producers is significantly cheaper than their much larger competitors;
- ♦ the lowest price for a standard 2-litre bottle was \$2.40 for Dairy Dale brand at a speciality food outlet in Manukau; and
- ♦ the highest price was \$5.20 for Anchor brand from a dairy in Wellington.

The Milk Report is on www.oilyrag.co.nz, along with a publication called "Living off the Smell of an Oily Rag in NZ"

New Tax System Working Group

A new Tax Working Group is to help the government consider the major tax policy challenges facing NZ. It is being co-ordinated by Victoria University's Centre for Accounting, Governance and Taxation Research, and will include private sector and academic experts, and Treasury and Inland Revenue officials.

Topics to be considered include the fiscal framework, and the structure of personal income tax, corporate tax, GST, and tax integrity.

SuperGold Card Benefits: Survey

SuperGold card users save about a dollar a day on average, according to a recent online poll carried out by the 50-plus website GrownUps.co.nz. Almost 500 GrownUps members who said they were SuperGold cardholders reported how often they used their cards, and what the value was to them.

The main poll findings are:

- ♦ 36% of respondents had never used their SuperGold card and 38% used it only once per month;
- ♦ 60% of card holders saved less than \$10 per month. 88% saved up to \$30 per month; and
- ♦ 56% said they'd be affected if the card was taken away, while 37% said they would not be affected.

Internet/ICT

NZers' Use of Broadcasting /Media

The Ministry for Culture and Heritage and Te Puni Kokiri recently commissioned Research NZ to carry out a public survey of media use in 2008. Amongst the findings:

- ♦ most people own or have access to a range of media equipment;
- ♦ there are very high levels of ownership or access to television, radio, DVD players, cell phones/PDAs, and computers with internet access (ranging down this list from 98 to 85% of those surveyed);
- ♦ 76% own/access a video recorder;

- ♦ ownership/access to Sky/TelstraClear pay TV, DVD recorders/hard drives, iPods/MP3 players, Playstation/X-box ranges from 55% (Sky) to 38% (playstations);
- ♦ Maori are more likely than non-Maori to own these kinds of equipment;
- ♦ People aged 15-24 (Maori in particular) are more likely than all other respondents to have recently purchased media equipment;
- ♦ NZers are making increasing use of new technology, but TV and radio are retaining their dominant role in households. Radio is particularly popular with older people;
- ♦ Internet use is extensive and growing. Maori respondents use the Internet for a wider range of activities than non-Maori - for social networking (54% Maori - 35% non-Maori), downloading music and videos (48% - 37%), and playing games (33% - 25%);
- ♦ Cell phone use is high, particularly among youth, who are more likely to use their phones to take photos, listen to music or watch video clips etc;
- ♦ TV is the most popular media source for news, weather, entertainment, and particularly sport for around three quarters of all respondents;
- ♦ a computer with internet access is used by three quarters of respondents for research/information;
- ♦ radio remains the main way people access music for just under half of respondents;
- ♦ 41% of respondents check local news/information through TV;
- ♦ multi-tasking is common, particularly among young people and Maori: half of all respondents reported using, for example, cell phones and/or internet) while watching television; and
- ♦ 50% of NZers regularly watch, listen to or read something in Maori, or about the Maori language or culture. Maori are more likely to do this daily, for a longer period of time and for a wider range of purposes.

For the survey 1827 people aged 15 years and older were surveyed.

The report is at <http://www.mch.govt.nz/publications/media-use-survey/report.html>

ICT Industry Continues to Grow

According to Statistics NZ, total sales of goods and services from NZ's information and communication technology (ICT) industry increased 3% to \$19.3 billion in the 2008 financial year. This was similar to the growth rate in sales of ICT goods and services reported the previous year.

Information from the "ICT Supply Survey: 2007/08" will be included in the OECD Science, Technology and Industry scoreboard - www.oecd.org/sti/scoreboard - which will be updated later in 2009

A Handful of Websites

The report of the Royal Commission on Auckland Governance is at [http://www.royalcommission.govt.nz/rccms.nsf/CONTENTPAGES/\\$first?open](http://www.royalcommission.govt.nz/rccms.nsf/CONTENTPAGES/$first?open)
The Government's response to the report of the Royal Commission on Auckland Governance is at [http://www.auckland.govt.nz/web/cms_rcauckland.nsf/weblivehome/\\$first?open](http://www.auckland.govt.nz/web/cms_rcauckland.nsf/weblivehome/$first?open)
A Viral Video Chart at <http://www.viralvideochart.co/> offers a comprehensive breakdown of the most popular virals, as well as interesting information about the kinds of people who are watching, and at what times the viewing peaked.
An online energy store, Powershop, is at <http://www.powershop.co.nz/> Its customers can buy online pre-paid power from a variety of suppliers, and can choose whether they want the cheapest or most environmentally friendly.
Information on recent changes to the way NZAID works and where it is housed are at <http://www.nzaid.govt.nz/library/publications/corporate/cabinet-papers.html>.
Two background papers and a number of Cabinet Minutes cover the changes to institutional arrangements, mandate, and policies of the agency.

Treaty Matters

Maori Aquaculture Settlement

The Crown recently signed a Deed of Settlement with iwi of the South Island for an early cash settlement of \$97 million in full and final settlement of all Crown obligations for "pre-commencement space"* obligations under the Maori Aquaculture Settlement.

The settlement covers the vast majority of NZ's current aquaculture development areas including the Marlborough Sounds, Tasman Bay and Hauraki Gulf, along with the remainder of the South Island.

This is the first Deed of Settlement to be signed by the new government.

*"Pre-commencement space" is aquaculture space that was approved between 21 September 1992 and 31 December 2004.

More about the settlement is at <http://www.fish.govt.nz/en/Maori/Details-of-++Settlement/default.htm?WBCMODE=Presentation>

Arts & Culture

More Locally Made TV

NZ On Air's "Local Content Report 2008" showed that more than 11,600 hours of local programming screened in 2008 on the six national free to air channels. This is the highest level recorded to date and a 7% increase on last year. Thirty-four percent of the free to air schedules feature programmes by Kiwis, for Kiwis. The progress in the last 20 years has been significant: in 1989 only 59 hours of drama screened (711 hours in 2008); for children's programmes 464 hours in 1989 (1,047 hours in 2008); and for documentaries 34 local hours in 1989 (691 hours in 2008).

To find out more go to http://www.nzonair.govt.nz/local_content_report_2008.php

2009 Pacific Music Award Winners

At these awards Nesian Mystik picked up the Nui FM Best Pacific Urban Artist Award, the Radio 531pi Best Pacific Group Award and the coveted Tui for the S3 Best Pacific Music Album for "Elevator Musiq.", and the APRA Best Song Award for the single "Nesian 101".

Other winners were:

- ♦ female hip hop and RnB artist, Ladi 6: Pacific Blue Best Pacific Female Artist for her debut solo album "Time is not Much";
- ♦ Devolo: the NZ Commission Best Pacific Male Artist for "Heaven & Hell";
- ♦ Oyster Music (various artists): Best Pacific Gospel Album for "The Gospel According to...";
- ♦ Tigilau Ness received the Manukau Institute of Technology Lifetime Achievement Award;
- ♦ "Sweet & Irie" received the Phillip Fuemana Award; and
- ♦ the South Auckland Community Church Band received the Manukau City Council People's Choice Award.

Maori Television Service: Review

A Review Panel has been looking at the effectiveness of the Maori Television Service (MTS) Act, five years after it came into force. The Panel has come up with a number of recommendations covering Maori language and culture; MTS's broadcasting platform; how broadcasting technology fits with other electronic media; MTS as multi-channel broadcaster; the focus of the service on the promotion of Maori language and culture; and legislation that might affect how well the service is provided.

The report is available at <http://www.tpk.govt.nz/en/consultation/mtsa/report/>

NZ Short Film: Cannes Award

NZ short film "The Six Dollar Fifty Man" has been awarded the Special Distinction in the Short Film Competition of the 62nd Festival De Cannes in France. The film tells the story of an eight-year-old boy who retreats into a make believe world to deal with playground bullying. According to the Cannes Director of Film NZ has had more short films chosen for Cannes than any other country in the world apart from France. João Salaviza's "Arena" from Portugal won the Palme d'Or.

Fishing

Setting Catch Limits: Case Dismissed

A majority of the Supreme Court has dismissed an appeal brought by two associations of recreational fishers against decisions of the Minister of Fisheries in the administration of kahawai fisheries. Kahawai is a species which is subject to the quota management system. The NZ Recreational Fishing Council Inc and the NZ Big Game Fishing Council Inc had sought judicial review of decisions made in 2004 and 2005 by the Minister of Fisheries setting the total allowable catch and the total allowable commercial catch for kahawai in several quota management areas.

The decision confirms that setting catch limits and the allocation of catch between the three fishing sectors - commercial, recreational and customary Maori - is ultimately the responsibility of the Minister of Fisheries.

Catch limits and the allocation of catch between the three fishing sectors in the kahawai fishery will now be reviewed, with any changes applying from 1 October 2010.

General

NZ's population 4.3 million...

Statistics NZ figures show the estimated resident population of NZ to be 4,306,400 at 31 March 2009. The population increased by 42,800 (1.0%) in the March 2009 year, compared with 40,800 (1.0%) in the March 2008 year. Population growth increased slightly from the March 2008 year level due to increased net migration.

The main contribution to population growth during the March 2009 year came from natural increase (excess of births over deaths) of 35,300, down 800 on the previous March year. Permanent and long-term arrivals exceeded departures by 7,500 in the latest year, up from a net migration gain of 4,700 in the March 2008 year.

At 31 March 2009, the median age for males was 35.5 years (half are younger, and half older, than this age). The median age for the female population was 37.3 years. The median age has increased 2.4 years for males and 2.7 years for females between the 1999 and 2009 March years.

In the March 2009 year, the growth rate was highest for the population aged 65 years and over (at 2.5%), followed by an increase of 1.6% for the population aged 40-64 years. The number of people aged 15-39 years increased by 0.4%, while the number of children (aged 0-14 years) increased 0.2% in the same period.

... Life expectancy increases...

A newborn girl can expect to live an average of 82.2 years and a newborn boy 78.2 years, Statistics NZ said recently. These levels for 2006-08 represent longevity gains of 1.1 years for females and 1.9 years for males since 2000-02. Since 1975-77, life expectancy at birth has increased by 6.8 years for females and 9.2 years for males.

There were 64,160 live births registered in the March 2009 year, up 910 (1%) from the March 2008 year. The birth rate was 2.2 births per woman in the March 2009 year, the highest rate of fertility since the March 1991 year.

On average, NZ women now have children about five years later than their counterparts in the mid-1960s. The median age (half are younger, and half older, than this age) of NZ women giving birth is now 30 years, compared with 25 years in 1969. The median age of women giving birth to their first child was 28 years in the year ended March 2009.

Births exceeded deaths by 35,010 in the March 2009 year. Natural increase has climbed from a low of 26,670 in 2002.

...& Marriages, Civil Unions & Divorces

- ♦ 21,900 marriages were registered to NZ residents during the December 2008 year;
- ♦ 2,000 marriages were registered to overseas residents in 2008;
- ♦ the general marriage rate was 13.7 marriages per 1,000 not-married population aged 16 years and over in 2008;
- ♦ 327 resident civil unions were registered in 2008, of which 78% were same-sex unions;
- ♦ 78 civil unions were registered to overseas residents in 2008;
- ♦ 9,700 orders for dissolution of marriage were granted in NZ during the December 2008 year; and
- ♦ there were 11.3 divorces for every 1,000 estimated existing marriages in 2008.

UN Report on NZ Human Rights

A NZ delegation presented the country's five-yearly report on how the country meets its obligations to the Convention against Torture (OPCAT) to the United Nations in Geneva at the beginning of May.

The UN Committee Against Torture's report welcomed the constructive dialogue with the NZ delegation and noted this country had made good progress in meeting its obligations under the Convention. The Committee noted a range of positive developments, including NZ's ratification of the Convention's Optional Protocol, to provide for independent monitoring of all detention facilities.

However, the UN Committee Against Torture has singled out four issues for which it requests progress reports within a year:

- ♦ the roll out of tasers by the NZ Police;
- ♦ conditions of detention in prisons;
- ♦ how the justice system deals with historic claims of abuse; and
- ♦ NZ's reservation about Article 14 of the Convention against Torture.

More is at <http://www.hrc.co.nz/home/hrc/newsandissues/unreportsonnewzealandcompliance.php>

Matariki: Aotearoa/Pacific New Year

Once a year, in the winter sky just before dawn, Matariki comes into view, signalling the Maori New Year. "Matariki" is the Maori name for the small cluster of stars, also known as the Pleiades or the Seven Sisters, in the Taurus constellation.

Various Maori tribes have celebrated Matariki at different times. Some held festivities when Matariki was first seen in the dawn sky in late May/early June; while others celebrated after the full moon rose or at the beginning of the next new moon. For all tribes, the importance of Matariki has been captured in proverbs and songs, which link it with the bright star Whanui (Vega). In recent times, it has become a special time of the

year to respect the land, celebrate NZ, and continue to share and grow with each other.

How to Spot Matariki

Matariki comes into view low on the north-eastern horizon, appearing in the tail of the Milky Way. The best time to see it is throughout June and early July before it disappears south on the horizon.

More about Matariki is at <http://www.teara.govt.nz/EarthSeaAndSky/Astronomy/MatarikiMaoriNewYear/1/en>

Volunteer Awareness Week...

Volunteer Awareness Week runs from 14-20 June. The week provides NZers with a chance to acknowledge the excellent work done by all the volunteers in NZ - and also discover opportunities to get involved in their communities. It's a great time for first-timers to give volunteering a go - whether it be in sport, the arts, civil defence, visiting the elderly, or simply helping a neighbour. The number of different voluntary roles available is vast - and anyone can be a volunteer.

To find out more about volunteering opportunities go to www.volunteernow.org.nz or call 0800 VOL CNTR

...Maori Language Week...

Maori Language Week, which has been celebrated for over 30 years, will be held from 23 July-2 August with the theme Te Reo i te Hapori - Maori Language in the Community. Te Taura Whiri i te reo Maori- the Maori Language Commission has a number of resources on its website for both learners and speakers of Maori, and also for businesses.

For more information see the Te Taura Whiri website at <http://www.tetaurawhiri.govt.nz/> and language resources are at <http://www.nzreo.org.nz/>

...& World Refugee Day

The global theme for this year's World Refugee Day on 20 June is "Real People, Real Needs". Refugee services throughout NZ are planning a number of events throughout the country to mark the day.

The average stay in a refugee camp is 17 years, and needs such as safety, housing, education, water, food, and medical care may not be adequately met in these camps. What's more, less than 1% of the over 11 million refugees worldwide are resettled in another country (NZ is one of the top ten countries offering resettlement as a durable solution: we resettle around 750 people a year).

More is at <http://www.hrc.co.nz/newsletters/diversity-action-programme/te-punanga/2009/05/world-refugee-day>

Some Conferences/Events

Financial Literacy 09

On 26 June the Retirement Commission is hosting Financial Literacy 09, a free one - day summit at the Iloft Theatre, Wellington Town Hall. It is for NZers interested in improving our population's financial literacy (financial literacy is the ability to make informed decisions about using and managing money).

More is at <http://www.retirement.org.nz/news-media/events>. Register at <http://www.retirement.org.nz/news-media/events/financial-literacy-09/Register>

National Foster Care Conference

The NZ Family & Foster Care Federation (NZFFCF) will be held in Napier from 26-27 June. Its theme is Me whakapakari kotahi tatau - Growing together, building together (starting now).

More is at <http://www.nzfostercare.org.nz/information#Conferences>

Treaty in the 21st Century Conference

This is being held in the Treaty Resource Centre, Manukau from 3-4 July. It is for people who are interested in applying the Treaty of Waitangi in the not for profit, public and private sectors, in local communities and in their own lives.

More is at <http://www.trc.org.nz/conference09>. Register at <http://www.trc.org.nz/online/registration>

SPELD NZ Conference

This conference, being held from 19-21 June 2009 has the theme of Going for GoLD.

More is at <http://www.newplymouthnz.com/VisitingNewPlymouth/EventsCalendar/ConferencesAndReunions/SPELDNZConferenceGoingforGoLD.htm>

Mystery Creek Fieldays

These are being held from 10-13 June at Mystery Creek (not far from Hamilton). This years theme is "My Land, Our Environment" putting a focus on safeguarding the future of NZ farming. The Fieldays first Cuisine Artisan Awards 2009 will recognise NZ's best artisan food and beverage. This year also marks the introduction of female bachelor challengers, when eight single women from the rural sector will be invited to challenge the blokes.

For further entry details visit http://www.fieldays.co.nz/index.php/pi_pageid/292

NZ Institute of Food Science & Technology Conference

This is being held in Christchurch from 23-25 June.

More is at www.nzfst.org.nz

NZ Soil Carbon Conference

This conference is being held in Napier from 23-25 June.

For more information go to www.soilcarbonconference.co.nz

Bloom Her Business Forum

The 11th annual BLOOM Her Business forum and marketplace is being held from 24-25 June at the Heritage Hotel, Hobson Street Auckland CBD. It will include presentation of the Her Businesswoman of the Year Awards.

More is at <http://www.herbusinessmagazine.com/Events/Bloom.html>

Effluent Management Training

"Dealing with Dairy Farm Effluent" is a new training package developed by the Agriculture Industry Training Organisation

with the assistance of DairyNZ, and support of Fonterra. The course aims to improve awareness amongst all farm staff of effluent as a valuable farm resource, and their role in its effective management. It caters to all levels of dairy worker experience.

For more information, see <http://www.agricultureito.ac.nz/Training/Dairy/Dealing-with-Effluent/dairyfarmeffluent.jasc>

Funding/Awards

Lottery Community Regional Committees

Lottery Community considers applications for developmental or preventative projects, welfare and support services, or projects that help to improve the wellbeing of people in the community. It will fund: activity, resource and programme costs; administration costs; care and support; domestic travel; projects encouraging people to participate in their communities; salaries (up to \$30,000); training and supervision; feasibility studies; one-off projects and new initiatives; regional and national gatherings; volunteer costs and expenses; community awareness; and minor capital works (up to \$30,000).

There are 11 Lottery Regional Community Distribution Committees serving the following regions: West Coast / Nelson-Marlborough; Canterbury-Kaikoura (including Chatham Islands); Otago – Southland; Northland; Auckland; Waikato; Taranaki; Bay of Plenty – Gisborne; Hawkes Bay; Manawatu-Wanganui; and Wellington.

Applications close on 1 July 2009. For more information/to register for a grant go to Grants Online at <http://www.cdgo.govt.nz/> For more information, tel freephone 0800 824 824 or email grantsonline@dia.govt.nz

Lottery Environment and Heritage

Lottery Environment and Heritage grants are for projects which promote, protect and conserve NZ's natural, physical and cultural heritage, such as: native regeneration projects/establishment of native plant nurseries; captive breeding programmes including animal release to enhance indigenous fauna; pest and predator eradication programmes; historical publications; museums, whare taonga and art galleries; conservation of historic buildings, structures, rolling stock, archeological sites, and waahi tapu sites.

Applications close on 10 July 2009. For more information/to register for a grant go to Grants Online at <http://www.cdgo.govt.nz/> For more information, tel freephone 0800 824 824 or email grantsonline@dia.govt.nz

Every Child Counts Awards

Every Child Counts/He Mana to ia Tamaiti is calling for nominations for two awards. The first is for an institution that has made a significant difference to improve the status and wellbeing of children during 2008-09. The second will go to a person who has made a difference by an action or role that improves the status and wellbeing of children in 2008-09.

Nominations close on 18 July 2009. They go to Every Child Counts 2009 Awards, PO Box 6434, Wellington 6141, email them to Barbara@unicef.org.nz. A nomination form is at: <http://www.everychildcounts.org.nz/docs/ECC2009AwardNominationForm.pdf>

IHC Telecom Art Awards

The IHC Telecom Art Awards were established in 2004 to encourage and recognise creativity from NZers with an intellectual disability – and over 650 people entered the awards

in 2008. There are regional and national awards with ten finalists being selected from each region. Prizes: overall winner - \$5000, second placegetter - \$2000, and two other winners - \$1000 each.

Entries close on 3 July 2009. Conditions of entry and entry forms are at <http://www.ihc.org.nz/Default.aspx?tabid=1540>

EEO Trust Work & Life Awards

A new award called the Skills Highway Award has been added to the Equal Employment Opportunities (EEO) Trust Work & Life Awards. The award, which is backed by the Department of Labour (DoL), recognises employers who take practical action to help staff improve their reading, writing and maths.

Entries close on 23 July 2009. For more information/entry guidelines go to <http://www.eeotrust.org.nz/awards/awards.cfm>

Essay Award for Young Economists

The World Trade Organisation (WTO) has launched a WTO Essay Award for young economists working on a PH.D. The paper must address issues related to the economics of the WTO (e.g., the design of trade agreements, contingent protection, trade facilitation etc). The aim is to promote high-quality research on WTO-related issues among young economists. The winner receives CHF (Swiss Franc) 5,000 and be funded to go to the European Trade Study Group (ETSG) where the award will be announced.

Entries close on 30 June 2009. Email them to Michele.Ruta@Wto.Org. More is at <http://www.mfat.govt.nz/Media-and-publications/Features/885-WTO-essay-competition.php>

NZ Post Mansfield Prize 2010

NZ creative writers are invited to apply for the NZ Post Mansfield Prize 2010 (previously called the Katherine Mansfield Fellowship). The prize offers a 6 - month residency in Menton, France.

Applications close on 26 June 2009. For more information email felicityb@creativenz.govt.nz, or tel 04 498 0735

National Schools Poetry Award

Entries for the 2009 NZ Post National Schools Poetry Awards 2009 for years 11, 12, and 13 students are now open. The awards celebrate young writing talent in NZ. Would - be entrants are encouraged to join the Awards Bebo group where a warm-up Haiku competition is taking place.

Entries close on 15 June 2009. An entry form is at <http://www.nzpost.co.nz/poetryawards>. More is at <http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/ED0905/S00065.htm>. The Awards Bebo site is at <http://www.bebo.co.nz/newz903>

NZ Poet Laureate Award

The National Library of NZ is seeking nominations for the 2009-2011 NZ Poet Laureate Award. Nominees will have made an outstanding contribution to NZ poetry. The Poet Laureate is committed to writing a publishable collection and to promoting NZ poetry through readings and other public events.

Nominations close 19 June 2009. Nomination forms are at www.natlib.govt.nz, email poet-laureate@natlib.govt.nz, or post to Poet Laureate Award, PO Box 1467, Wellington, 6104

Qantas Film and Television Awards

There are 64 of these awards across news and current affairs, general television, documentary, and film. The award programme is jointly organised by the Screen Directors Guild of NZ and the NZ Television Broadcasters' Council. It celebrates the best of the best in the NZ film and television industries.

The combined industries employ thousands of NZers and generated total gross revenue of \$2.7 billion in the 2008 financial year, up 11% on the previous year.

Entries close on 15 June 2009. More information is at www.qantasfilmandtvawards.co.nz

Appointments

Mark Ramsden will be NZ's new *High Commissioner to the Solomon Islands* and Heather Riddell will be NZ's next *Ambassador to Vietnam*.

Judge Craig Thompson has been appointed *Principal Environment Judge*. John Allen has been appointed as *Chief Executive and Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade*. Professor Peter Gluckman is the first *Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor*. Kristy McDonald QC has been appointed chairperson of the *Real Estate Agents Authority* (which will replace the Real Estate Institute of NZ as the oversight body for the real estate industry). Professor Grant Guilford will be the new *Dean of Science at the University of Auckland*. Greg Goulding has agreed to act as *Chief Executive and Chief Archivist of Archives NZ*. David Henry has been appointed *Chief Executive of the Electoral Commission*. Annabel Cotton is the new *Commissioner for Financial Advisers*. Bruce Pilbrow and Christine Rankin have been appointed as *Families' Commissioners*. John Angus has been appointed *NZ's Children's Commissioner*. Newly appointed *members of the National Infrastructure Advisory Board* are: Dr Rod Carr (Chair), Sir Ron Carter, Lindsay Crossen, Dr Arthur Grimes, Dr Terence Heiler, Rob McLeod, John Rae, and Alex Sundakov.

New NZTE Board members are: Peter Townsend, Charles Finny, and Julie Christie (and sitting Board members Craig Ellison and Lorraine Witten have agreed to renewed terms). Grant Kirby has been appointed as a *member of the Local Government Commission*. Pieter Burghout is the new *Chief Executive of the Building Research Association of NZ (BRANZ)*. *Parliament's new Kaumatua* is Rose White-Tahuparae from Whanganui. John Wood has been appointed the *Crown's lead negotiator in talks with Whanganui iwi on the settlement of historical claims*. Two new *parent community representatives to the Correspondence School Board of Trustees* have been appointed: Don Blakeney and Jacky Stafford (a member of Rural Women New Zealand's National Council, Jacky sits on its Education Committee, and is also Chairperson of the Rural Education Reference Group). Melanie Jones as the new *Director of News and Sport at RadioLIVE News*. *Manawatu District Council* has appointed Lorraine Vincent as *Chief Executive Officer*. Graeme Milne is the new *Chair of the Waikato District Health Board*.

Rural Bulletin is a free publication produced by Rural Women New Zealand. Its aim is to build community capacity by circulating relevant information, so people in rural and other communities have an opportunity to make informed decisions about, and have their say on, issues and changes that may affect them. Rural Bulletin may be copied in full and circulated, and individual items may be reproduced providing the source is acknowledged. If you would like more information about Rural Bulletin or its contents, please contact:

Craig Matthews/Paddy Twist

Editors Rural Bulletin
Tel: 04 473 5524
Fax: 04 472 8946
Email ruralbulletin@ruralwomen.org.nz

Noeline Holt

Executive Officer
Rural Women New Zealand
Tel: 04 473 5524
Fax: 04 472 8946
Email: enquiries@ruralwomen.org.nz

Jackie Edkins

Communications Officer
Rural Women New Zealand
Tel: 04 473 5524
Fax: 04 472 8946
Email: enquiries@ruralwomen.org.nz
Website: www.ruralwomen.org.nz

Disclaimer: While every effort has been made to ensure the information in Rural Bulletin is accurate, Rural Women New Zealand does not accept liability for error of fact or opinion which may be present, nor for the consequences of any financial decision based on the information. Any views or opinions expressed do not necessarily represent the views of Rural Women New Zealand.

Rural Women New Zealand has the aim of strengthening rural communities. It is a forum for the exchange of information on rural health, education, social issues and land issues. It advocates for legislative change that improves the wellbeing of rural families by making submissions and representations to the government of the day. The goals of the organisation are:

- To promote informed public debate on issues affecting rural communities;
- To participate in the formulation and evaluation of public policy that impacts on rural families and their livelihoods;
- To promote research and disseminate knowledge relevant to the wellbeing of rural New Zealanders;
- To support and encourage the development of a trained and effective rural workforce; and
- To be a strong and informed advocate for rural issues.

Membership of Rural Women New Zealand is open to all people who are interested in issues affecting rural communities. To become a member, contact Belinda Hunt at enquiries@ruralwomen.org.nz