

Rural Bulletin

December 2007



Rural Women
NEW ZEALAND

<http://www.ruralwomen.org>

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Editorial

Nga mihi o te Tau Hou. Anei tatou kua mai nei ki te ra e whakanuitia ai te whanau o te Kaiwhakaora o te ao. It's time to celebrate Christmas. Seasons greetings to you all

Our 2007 survey showed clearly that many readers are passing on information from their Rural Bulletin in a wide variety of ways with information from each respondent's copy being accessed by an average of 305 other people. This is a unique example of community co-operation, and of how well an information partnership between organisations and communities can work. It keeps a lean, mean machine operating, and saves trees and planets.

Thank you, to you all.

This Rural Bulletin is the final one for 2007: the next issue will be published by Rural Women New Zealand in February 2008.

Our Christmas present to you this year is to respond to the suggestions readers made in our August survey, and:

- we are working on making Rural Bulletin file size as small as possible;
- from next February we will be adding hyperlinks for section headings so there is not so much scrolling down;
- we will be emailing only the pdf version of Rural Bulletin each month, and this should make downloading Rural Bulletin much easier;

- we will be posting both the pdf and word versions on Rural Women New Zealand's website at www.ruralwomen.org. People who want to cut and paste information from Rural Bulletin into other documents will be able to do so from this site, and people who want to download the full pdf Rural Bulletin will be able to do that from there, as well;
- where we can obtain an email address we will be moving the people on the postal mailing list who clearly have access to advanced computer technology to the email mail list. For accuracy in this we remind you to email us (including in the email your postal details); and
- people who do not have access to advanced computer technology will continue to receive Rural Bulletin by mail (but don't hesitate to email ruralbulletin@ruralwomen.org.nz including your postal address if you find a brand new computer or a broadband package under your Christmas tree...).

Most readers specifically asked that we retain the current content and format so these will stay the same.

Keep safe and well this summer.

Paddy Twist and Craig Matthews
Editors Rural Bulletin

Consultation

Calculating the Rates on Properties

Land Information NZ has published a paper for comment called "Rating Valuations Rules 2008". This paper outlines proposals for the rules that territorial authorities are required to comply with under the Rating Valuations Act 1998 (RVA), when they maintain their district valuation rolls, or revalue or process objections.

Under the RVA, the Valuer General has to set minimum quality standards and specifications necessary for the maintenance and upkeep of district valuation rolls so that we have a nationally consistent, impartial, independent, and equitable rating valuation system. The Valuer-General can make rules that set these standards and specifications.

Among proposed changes in the paper are a requirement that the valuer must make contact with an objector when the reviewed valuation varies by 15% or more from the values submitted by the objector, and one that means valuers must now inspect both a sufficient number of sold properties and a sufficient number of leased properties to support their revaluation basis.

Online submissions close 21 December. More information/the rule/submission forms are at <http://www.linz.govt.nz/apps/rglpublicationssearch/DocumentSummary.aspx?document=181> or tel 04-460 0110

Easter Trading: Should Sunday be a Public Holiday?

A discussion paper on Easter trading and holidays considers different legislation that affects Easter trading and proposes a number of options for possible change. The main questions it covers are:

- what should happen to the Shop Trading Hours Act Repeal Act 1990 and Sale of Liquor Act 1989, particularly in regard to Easter Sunday;
- what should happen with the status of Easter Sunday;
- whether the systems in place for enforcing the Shop Trading Hours Act Repeal Act 1990 need amending; and
- how employees/leaseholders can be adequately protected against being made to work/trade on Easter Sunday.

None of the options propose to reduce the holiday weekend.

The issue has been the focus of public attention for a number of years and employers, and the views of unions, industry groups, individuals and other groups are sought.

Submissions close 14 December The full discussion document is available at www.dol.govt.nz/consultation/shoptrading

Draft Curriculum for Te Reo Maori Schools

A draft curriculum has been released for Maori-medium schools. Called "Te Marautanga o Aotearoa" it sets the direction for teaching and learning for the 17,500 students in NZ's 350 primary and secondary Maori-medium schools (these schools use te reo Maori for all communication, including teaching).

Te Marautanga aims to increase Maori achievement in all parts of the education system, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics; to increase the number of bilingual and multilingual students in NZ; and to strengthen kaupapa matauranga Maori.

Feedback is sought to make sure that the needs and aspirations of Maori are reflected in this curriculum document, and that it is fully aligned with the Maori education strategy "Ka Hikitia".

Submissions close 22 April 2008. More information is available from the Ministry of Education at <http://www.minedu.govt.nz/> Educators are encouraged to lead discussions in their local communities about Te Marautanga, and a series of regional workshops will be held to get feedback from these communities

Biofuels Bill

Public submissions are now being invited on the Biofuel Bill. This Bill sets up the compulsory use of biofuels by introducing the biofuels sales obligation (BSO) policy and by regulating engine fuel, including biofuels and blends.

Submissions close on 31 January 2008. They go to the Local Government and Environment Committee, Parliament Buildings, Wellington (no stamp required). All select committees require 2 copies of each submission if made in writing. People who want to include any information of a private or personal nature in these submissions should first discuss this with the clerk of the committee, as submissions are usually released to the public. People who want to also make an oral submission should state this clearly, and provide a daytime telephone contact number. Please supply postcode and email address (if you have one). The Bill is at http://www.parliament.nz/NR/rdonlyres/3BC3D2CE-41A4-4F95-B539-345C905B990E/67749/DBHOH_BILL_8317_5409.pdf

Education (Establishment of Universities of Technology) Amendment Bill

Public submissions are also being invited on the Education (Establishment of Universities of Technology) Amendment Bill. The purpose of this Bill is to amend the Education Act 1989 to provide for the establishment of a new category of institutions, a "university of technology".

The addition of such a category will help to bridge a significant legal gap within the current structure of the tertiary education sector.

Submissions close 3 March 2008. Send two copies to the Education and Science Committee, Parliament Buildings, Wellington (no stamp required) The Bill is at http://www.parliament.nz/NR/rdonlyres/9967A44A-FC62-421D-A261-9D6ADC08038E/69454/DBHOH_BILL_7731_39796.pdf

Law Commission: Draft Report on Public Inquiries

The Law Commission has released a draft report on public enquiries, which reviews and makes proposals about the law relating to public inquiries, including commissions of inquiry, royal commissions and non-statutory ministerial inquiries.

In its paper the Commission proposes to do away with royal commissions and commissions of other types. Instead all commissions of inquiry would come under a new Public Inquiries Act, which would provide the authority and processes to establish inquiries into "any matter of public importance".

Submissions close on 31 January 2008. They go to the General Manager, Law Commission, PO Box 2590, Wellington, tel 04-473 3453, email inquiriesproject@lawcom.govt.nz. A copy of the publication is available on the Law Commission website at <http://www.lawcom.govt.nz/ProjectIssuesPaper.aspx?ProjectID=127>

Charitable Donations Consultation

It might soon be easier for people to donate to their favourite charities and other non-profit causes. A discussion paper from the Department of Inland Revenue (IRD) explores the possibility of introducing a voluntary payroll-giving which would enable donors to have donations deducted automatically from their pay and forwarded to their chosen charity by their employer. In turn, they would receive immediate, real-time, tax relief reflected in their normal pay, based on the amount they donate.

Similar systems are already operating in Britain and Australia.

Submissions close on 25 January. A copy of the discussion paper can be downloaded from <http://www.taxpolicy.ird.govt.nz/publications/files/payrollgivingdd.pdf>

Draft Coastal Shipping Plan

"Sea Change" is a draft strategy for revitalising coastal shipping services in NZ. At present about 15% of freight is carried by coastal services, including the Cook Strait ferries and the plan is for at least 30% of all inter-regional freight to be carried by sea by the year 2040.

In the next 10 years, the amount of domestic freight that will have to be moved around the country is expected to double. The trickle-down implications of this will be significant for the NZ transport sector. International shipping is also expected to continue a trend towards larger ships calling at fewer ports. Unless freight can be transferred to coastal vessels, pressure on road and rail transport will build. Another factor is the high dependence of the transport industry on fossil fuels and the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Overseas evidence indicates that sea is the most energy-efficient way to move freight

The strategy proposes four steps to help transform domestic freight services:

- establishing a Maritime Liaison Unit (MLU) within the Transport Ministry;
- addressing the barriers to coastal shipping interests accessing government funds;
- increasing the supply of skilled workers; and
- gathering information to provide a clear picture of services, their performance and required improvements.

Submissions close on 19 December 2007. More information is at <http://www.transport.govt.nz/seachange/>. Electronic submissions are welcomed: they go to seachange@transport.govt.nz. You can also send your submission by post to T Craig, Ministry of Transport, PO Box 3175, Wellington

Managing Pests in Ballast Water

MAF Biosecurity (MAFBNZ) is seeking submissions on managing the risk of marine pest organisms being introduced to NZ in ships' ballast water.

The discharge of ballast water is one of the main ways marine pests can be introduced to NZ's marine environment - each year almost three million tonnes of ballast water sourced from outside the Exclusive Economic Zone is discharged at NZ ports. MAFBNZ says that if not properly managed, the water is more likely to contain eggs and larvae of marine organisms which would be able to establish here.

In a discussion paper, MAFBNZ says that although NZ introduced its own controls on ballast water discharges in 1998, the most effective way to address shipping related issues is through a standardised, international control system. The paper suggests it is "now timely" to decide whether NZ should join the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships Ballast Water and Sediments.

Submissions close 21 December. They go to MAF Biosecurity NZ, MAF, PO Box 2526, Wellington, attn: A Bauckham, email allan.bauckham@maf.govt.nz. Download the discussion paper from <http://www.biosecurity.govt.nz/files/strategy/consultation/mafbnz-discussion-paper-07-04-ballast-water.pdf>

The Future of Tobacco Displays?

A consultation paper on the future of tobacco display in NZ seeks feedback on three options for the future of tobacco displays:

- current requirements with enhanced education and enforcement;
- further restrictions on tobacco displays; or
- a total ban on displays altogether.

The consultation paper is accompanied by a youth-focused version, "Tobacco Displays - Tell Us What You Think!"

The last changes to tobacco display requirements were made in 2003 as part of the Smoke-free Environments Amendment Act, which allows retailers to display 100 packets of tobacco or 40 cartons of tobacco products. There are also controls on how displays are set up and their proximity to children's products.

Submissions close on 15 February 2008. The document can be downloaded from the Ministry of Health website: www.moh.govt.nz

Raw Milk Regulations: Consultation

The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) has published a discussion paper on the Raw Milk Regulations which control the market for raw milk.

These regulations (issued under the Dairy Industry Restructuring Act 2001) are there to protect companies that previously bought raw milk from either Kiwi Cooperative or the NZ Dairy Group (these two companies merged to form Fonterra in 2001). They also protect domestic consumers (by providing raw milk to independent processors for the domestic market); and provide a way for new people to enter the milk processing industry.

The review will be in two stages. The objectives of the first stage are:

- to clarify what the regulations intend, looking at the purposes and intentions as set out in the Dairy Industry Restructuring Act 2001; and
- to canvas industry concerns about the way the regulations currently work, so that these can be assessed against the intentions in the regulations.

In the second stage (scheduled to take place next March), MAF will develop options for addressing the concerns identified.

Submissions for stage one close 14 December 2007. The discussion paper: "Review of the Dairy Industry Restructuring (Raw Milk) Regulations: Clarifying Industry Concerns and the Regulations' Intent" is at <http://www.maf.govt.nz/mafnet/publications/dairy-restructuring-review/>. More information: MAF Policy, tel 04-894 0580

The Use of Whale Bone: Discussion Paper

When whales die as a result of stranding, the bone is often collected, and traded, gifted or exchanged. The provisions of the Marine Mammals Protection Act governing these activities are difficult to use and enforce and this means that much of the current domestic trade in whale bone could be illegal.

The Department of Conservation (DoC) says that a system for controlling domestic trade in whale bone could be developed to:

- allow for changes in the ownership of whalebone, without reducing the protection for whales; and
- also maintain NZ's international obligations and uphold our reputation as a country concerned about the protection of whales.

Under the system a unique identification number would be assigned to any dead whale to make sure that the bone can be permanently identified, and that whale bone traded within NZ has come from a legitimate source.

Tangata whenua are actively involved in whale strandings and the removal and preparation of bone: a framework for the involvement of iwi/hapu in the management of whale stranding events could be included in the Marine Mammals Protection Act.

The new rules would apply to the domestic trade in whale bone only. The international trade in whale bone comes under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES) and is controlled by a separate permit system.

Submissions close 1 March 2008. An online submissions form is at <http://www.doc.govt.nz/templates/form.aspx?id=45155>. Other submissions go to Whale Bone Review, Department of Conservation, PO Box 10420, The Terrace, Wellington 6143, or email whalebone@doc.govt.nz. More information is at <http://www.doc.govt.nz/templates/MultipageDocumentPage.aspx?id=45162> or tel 04-471 3118

IRD: Relocations/Meal Allowances - Not Taxable?

A recently released issues paper seeks feedback on the details of proposed changes to legislation that would mean employer payments for employee relocation expenses and overtime meal allowances would not be taxed.

For relocation expenses, the issues paper looks at what constitutes relocation, as opposed to, say, employees merely moving closer to their existing workplace, and what expenses should qualify as relocation expenses. For overtime meal allowances, the issues paper suggests a number of limitations for them to be tax-free - such as requiring the employee's contract to specify that he or she is eligible for a meal allowance when working overtime, and distinguishing in law between 'overtime' and other occasions for which meal allowances may be paid.

Submissions close on 14 December 2007 (however late submissions from Rural Bulletin readers will be accepted up to 21 December). Submissions go to: Relocation and Overtime Meal Allowances Project, C/- Deputy Commissioner, Policy, Policy Advice Division, Inland Revenue Department, PO Box 2198, Wellington. Submissions can be made electronically - "Relocation and Overtime Meal Allowances Project" should appear in the subject line. The electronic address is policy.webmaster@ird.govt.nz. The paper is at <http://www.taxpolicy.ird.govt.nz/publications/index.php?catid=2>

MAF: Draft Standards for Imported Pork

MAF Biosecurity has issued four draft health standards for pork being imported from Canada, The United States, Mexico and the European Union. The draft standards are based on an import risk analysis on "porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome" (also called the PRRS virus) in pig meat. This is a virus we do not yet have in NZ, but in 2001 there was an association between the disease and pig meat, and some provisional measures were put in place.

Submissions close on 18 February 2008. They go to V Dalley, Border Standards, MAF Biosecurity NZ, PO Box 2526, Wellington, email vivian.dalley@maf.govt.nz. More information/the draft standards: <http://www.biosecurity.govt.nz/strategy-and-consultation/consultation/pig-meat-ihs>

Facilities for Vision-impaired Pedestrians: Proposals

A recently published guideline describes design, installation and performance standards of pedestrian facilities for blind and vision-impaired people. Around 3% of our total adult population is blind or vision-impaired. Crossing roads is a hazardous activity for this section of the population, which needs to be able to reliably detect where the footpath ends and the road is about to be entered.

The guideline would apply to new facilities as well as facilities that need to be upgraded.

Submissions officially close on 10 December (late submissions from Rural Bulletin readers will be considered up until the end of the year). The proposed guidelines can be downloaded from <http://www.ltsa.govt.nz/consultation/rts-14/docs/draft-rts-14-revision-2007.pdf> and there is an online submission form at <http://www.ltsa.govt.nz/consultation/rts-14/submission-form.html> Online submissions are preferred, but you can also send them to Land Transport NZ, PO Box 13 364, Christchurch, email Tim.Hughes@landtransport.govt.nz

Navigating Our Ports and Harbours Safely

Currently, port and harbour safety is managed largely through a voluntary code. A Port and Harbour and Navigation Safety Management discussion paper looks at the safety issues involved and invites comment on how we might deal with them in the future. The paper also seeks views on whether we should improve arrangements for dealing with navigation safety in areas outside port and harbours.

Submissions close on 19 December 2007. Email them to portandharbour@transport.govt.nz or sent to R Brown, Ministry of Transport, PO Box 3175, Wellington. The discussion paper is at <http://www.transport.govt.nz/assets/NewPDFs/portandharbourweb.pdf>

National Research Plan: Feedback Sought

The Ministry of Science Research & Technology (MoRST) is seeking feedback on its draft NZ Research Agenda from scientific organisations, practising scientists and researchers and users or potential users of research, science and technology. This paper covers the directions and priorities for national research, science and technology investment and activities through to 2020.

Apart from funding its current areas of research (Energy; Nanoscience and Nanotechnologies; Biotechnology; Environment), MoRST proposes to develop further "roadmaps" in the areas of food and beverage (already underway), advanced materials, environmental technologies and health.

Submissions close on 18 January 2008. More information/the discussion paper/online response forms are at <http://www.morst.govt.nz/current-work/nzra/> and you can also tel 04-917 2900

Marine Environmental Conventions: Should We Join?

A consultation paper discusses whether NZ should become party to one or more of the following international maritime environmental conventions:

- The International Convention on Civil Liability for Bunker Oil Pollution Damage, 2001 (Bunkers Convention);
- The Protocol of 1996 to amend the International Convention on the Limitation of Liability for Maritime Claims 1976 (LLMC Protocol) - against ship-owners and salvors;
- The Protocol Relating to Intervention on the High Seas in Cases of Pollution by Substances other than Oil 1973, as amended (Intervention Protocol); and
- The Protocol on Preparedness, Response and Co-operation to Pollution Incidents by Hazardous and Noxious Substances 2000 (OPRC-HNS Protocol).

Submissions close on 19 December 2007 They go to email 4conventions@transport.govt.nz, or to D Weinstein, Ministry of Transport, PO Box 3175, Wellington. The discussion paper is at <http://www.transport.govt.nz/assets/NewPDFs/MaritimeConventionsFINAL.pdf>. For a hard copy tel 04-439 9095

Petroleum Mining: Tax Rules

The tax rules for petroleum mining expenditure are to be overhauled. A "consultative paper" from the Department of Inland Revenue (IRD) proposes legislative changes designed to remove "uncertainty and disincentives" to exploration and mining investment. Among the suggested changes would be to allow an expenditure deduction for failed production wells.

Submissions close on 17 January 2008. A copy of the consultative paper can be downloaded from <http://www.taxpolicy.ird.govt.nz/publications/files/petroleumcp.pdf>

Reminder: Protected Disclosures Amendment Bill

This Bill is designed to give the Ombudsmen an enhanced guiding, reviewing, and investigating role in relation to disclosures of serious wrongdoing (whistleblowing), with the Office of the Ombudsmen facilitating a collaborative cross-agency approach. The Office would also have more explicit information-requesting and advising powers to facilitate disclosures and their appropriate investigation. The Bill also aims to clarify and extend the group of people who can make disclosures of serious wrongdoing and come under the protection of the Protected Disclosures Act 2000 (for example, volunteers and board members would be treated as employers for most of the Act's purposes).

Submissions close 25 January 2008. They go to the Government Administration Select Committee, Parliament House, Wellington (no stamp required). The Bill is at http://www.parliament.nz/NR/rdonlyres/E8D3783D-8153-43F8-83BB-7C266FFAD168/68921/DBHOH_BILL_8295_53598.pdf

Rural

Future Challenges for Primary Sectors

Climate change, the end of cheap oil, and emerging tensions over water as existing supplies dry up, are among the future threats and opportunities facing NZ's primary sectors, says a new publication released today by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF).

"Future Focus: Signposts to Success for NZ's Primary Industries" identifies six "global drivers of change" likely to impact on the primary sectors over the next 10 to 15 years. They are global warming, climate change, and extreme weather; energy cost and supply; geopolitical power shifts, and international trade and investment; ecosystem degradation, and water quality and availability; demographic shifts; and technological advances.

The document says the increasing pace of change means that the sectors will need to be flexible and agile in the future, and must build resilience into their businesses now. Possible opportunities canvassed include sustainability branding, emission mitigation technologies, and innovative foods.

Future Focus is available online at www.maf.govt.nz/mafnet/publications/future-focus/

Dairy Industry Production Hits New Record

The 2006/07 season was the most productive on record for the NZ dairy industry, according to statistics released by the Livestock Improvement Corporation. NZ Dairy Statistics 2006/07 show that 15.1 billion litres of milk and 1.32 billion kilograms of milk solids were produced by NZ dairy companies in 2006-2007. That equates to a 3.9% increase on the 1267 million kilograms processed in the previous season.

The figures show NZ cows are producing more, with each cow producing an average of 330kg of milk solids in 2006/07 compared to 325 kg milk solids last season. The production per hectare and per cow was also the highest on record. The average milk solids per effective hectare was 934 kg this season compared to the previous season's 907 kg.

The number of dairy herds continues to decline nationally but the average herd size has increased considerably and more than doubled over the past 20 years. Currently there are 11,630 dairy herds in NZ, which represents 253 fewer than in the previous season.

Nationally cow numbers have increased by 84,000 putting the total population at 3.917 million, an increase of 2.2%, compared to a decrease of 0.9% in the previous season. The statistics show herds between 650 and 699 cows have highest production per cow.

One third of all dairy herds are located in the South Auckland region, while there are now one million cows in the South Island. The average herd size in the South Island is the highest on record, while the highest average per herd and per hectare production was recorded in South Canterbury. Highest average per cow production was recorded in Southland.

South Taranaki district has the most herds at 1132 and cows at 308,388 followed by Matamata-Piako. Waimate in South Canterbury has the highest average herd size at 793 cows, while Holstein-Friesian cows produced the highest milk solids (kg).

Accessing Telecom's Lines: Charges Set

The Commerce Commission has made a final determination on local loop unbundling. The determination set the monthly rental wholesale charges that Telecom and its competitors will pay to access Telecom's lines running from its exchanges to homes and businesses at \$19.84 a month for urban areas, and \$36.63 for rural areas.

Possum Fur Gold?

The prices being paid for possum fibre have jumped, with demand for clothing made from blends of fine wool and possum fibre driving up the price paid for possum fur to more than \$100 a kilogram.

The possum fur industry reached its peak in the 1970s and 1980s, but went into decline from the time of the 1987 recession. After research in the early 1990s showed that the hollow fibres of possum fur could be blended with merino wool to form a light, stable and strong yarn with superior heat retention, prices for suitable possum fur doubled. They have continued to rise.

Environment

NIWA Climate Summary November 2007

November was extremely dry in many regions, especially in the South Island, with totals of less than 10 mm throughout much of Nelson, Marlborough, and central Otago.

Rainfall: rainfall was less than 25% of normal in Nelson and Marlborough, less than 50% of normal in many other South Island and most eastern North Island regions. Rainfall was also below normal in Taranaki, Wellington, and coastal areas of South Canterbury, Otago, and Southland. Horowhenua was wetter than usual.

Temperature: mean temperatures were about 0.5 °C below average in many regions overall, but at least 1.0 °C below average in north Taranaki. In contrast they were 0.5 °C above average in Nelson.

Sunshine: sunshine hours were well above normal in Taranaki, Manawatu, Kapiti, Golden Bay, Nelson, Marlborough, north Westland, and inland areas of Canterbury, and also above normal in Gisborne, along the Canterbury coast, Otago, and Southland. Cloudy skies prevailed in the Far North.

The main centres: Auckland was the warmest and wettest, Christchurch the sunniest, and Dunedin the driest of the five main centres.

International Report Urges Action on Climate Change

In its latest report on global climate change (it is the fourth and final 2007 report) the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) again states the need for concerted and urgent action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The report confirms the increasing pace of climate change, and the serious impacts NZ and the rest of the globe may face if we do not get greenhouse gas emissions under control. It also repeats that, with technologies that are available and affordable today, or that are currently being developed, NZ, along with the rest of the world, can cut emissions and avoid the worst of the projected impacts of climate change.

It's cheaper to take action on climate change than not. Even at the household level, simple steps can cut vehicle fuel and energy bills significantly, and improve people's health while cutting emissions. Many of the measures the IPCC lists as being effective and affordable are already in place, including an emissions trading scheme, measures to put a price on carbon, increasing the uptake of energy efficiency measures, developing more renewable energy and expanding the use of biofuels.

The IPCC's first report in February confirmed that climate change is happening and that it is very likely human activity is responsible for much of it in recent times. The second, in April, painted a clear picture of climate change impacts that the world, including NZ, is already experiencing and those that it is very likely we will face from now on. The third one spelt out that practical and cost effective measures to reduce emissions are available.

For details of the IPCC 'Climate Change 2007' Report, see: www.ipcc.ch

Paying \$ to Deal with Climate Change: Survey

A new international survey has found that millions of people around the world are willing to make personal sacrifices, including paying higher bills, to help deal with climate change. The survey found 83% of those questioned believed lifestyle changes would be necessary to cut emissions of climate warming carbon gases.

The survey was conducted by two polling organisations for the BBC World Service, and it covered 22,000 people in 21 countries.

In 14 of the 21 countries from Canada to Australia, 61% overall said it would be necessary to increase energy costs to encourage conservation and reduce carbon emissions. People responded positively to the idea of climate taxes if the money from the tax was used solely on measures to raise energy efficiency or develop clean energy sources. There was also a greater acceptance of higher "green" taxes if they were offset by other cuts in taxation so that the effect on the pocket was neutral.

The poll suggests that national leaders could succeed in introducing a carbon tax on energy, with the main requirement being that the resulting tax revenues will be invested in addressing climate change by increasing energy efficiency and developing cleaner fuels.

More information: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/bsp/hi/pdfs/25_09_07climatepoll.pdf

Carbon Footprint of Primary Sector to be Measured

NZ is to take a lead in measuring the impact on climate change of its primary industries so it can respond to competitors pointing the finger on environmental grounds. The dairy, wine and kiwifruit industries will be the first primary producers to have their total impact on greenhouse gas emissions measured in the new \$6 million initiative under the Government's sustainability drive.

The project will measure the "greenhouse gas footprint" of 65% of land-based primary exports by July next year. The work is described as a world first because of the detail of the coverage (from farm right through to export destinations, and in some cases further). The dairy, wine and kiwifruit studies would be completed by July with studies on lamb, forestry, and on-farm beef and venison well under way by then.

Livestock & Greenhouse Gas Emissions: Research

NZ is to lead an international network which will measure greenhouse gas emissions from livestock, through the Livestock Emissions and Abatement Research Network (LEARN).

LEARN proposes to cover research into methane emissions from ruminant livestock and nitrous oxide emissions from grazed grassland, and it will be assessing an integrated approach to reducing emissions across an entire farm, and a national inventory of agricultural emissions.

The network will also help develop cost-effective and practical ways to reduce emissions.

The idea for the network was raised at side events on agriculture and land use at the United Nation Framework Convention on Climate Change meeting held in Bonn in May this year. The inaugural LEARN meeting was held in Christchurch on 1 December.

Exhaust Emissions Rule Introduced

The Government is introducing exhaust emissions standards for used imported vehicles from 3 January next year. Vehicles entering NZ from that date will have to meet minimum emissions standards under the new Land Transport Vehicle Exhaust Emissions Rule 2007. The Rule imposes higher minimum emission standards on all new and used vehicles entering the fleet, bringing NZ in line with Japanese and European standards.

Under the Rule all used vehicles will now be tested before entering NZ to ensure their emissions control equipment is working. It will also be illegal to modify any new or used vehicles' equipment that could cause their emissions to worsen.

The full Rule is available online at: <http://www.landtransport.govt.nz/rules/vehicle-exhaust-emissions-2007.html>

South Island High Country: Protecting Lakeside Land

Under recently announced measures, some 65 lakeside pastoral lease properties in the South Island high country are to be protected from inappropriate subdivision and development. Of the lakeside properties 38 are currently in tenure review (tenure review leads to part of a pastoral lease being freeholded, with the rest of it being restored to full Crown ownership and control as public conservation land). Tenure reviews will be completed for two of these. The other lakeside properties may be considered for tenure review if lessees are prepared to meet certain conditions, including lakeside land being retained by the Crown, or the lessee accepting restrictions on the land's future use and development.

Rents for pastoral leases are set every 11 years. They have increased as market demand has driven up land values, and lessees are able to apply for rent adjustments to manage the increases. In exchange, they can offer enduring public access through the land, for example from public roads to lakes, rivers or public conservation land. Lessees can also offer activities such as enhanced pest and weed control, erosion control, or cultural heritage protection.

The "High Country Pastoral Leases Review 2005-2007" and relevant Cabinet papers and minutes are at www.linz.govt.nz/home/news/items/20071115-lakeside-leases-rents/index.html

City Council Selling Carbon Credits

The Palmerston North City Council is offering its 2006 carbon credits from the Awapuni Landfill gas project on TradeMe through Carbon Market Solutions Ltd, a NZ carbon trading company.

Known as "verified emission reductions" (or VERs) they are being offered in two parcels of 20 tonnes and one parcel of 200 tonnes for interested households and small businesses. Twenty tonnes represents the average emissions of a typical NZ household and 200 tonnes represents the average emissions for a typical small NZ business with 5-10 employees.

In 2005, the council sold carbon credits from the Awapuni project to the Austrian Government for \$1.3 million.

Recycling Facilities for Public Places

The Government has allocated \$4.6 million over three years to establish around 600 public recycling bins in public places throughout NZ. The first four groups of these are to be set up in Wellington City Council, Far North District Council, Kaikoura District Council and Christchurch City Council. The move follows tourism industry surveys of overseas visitors' experiences that show that the lack of good public waste disposal facilities is one of the most common criticisms received.

World Wetlands Day 2008

World Wetlands Day 2008 - 2 February - will be emphasising the strong relationship between maintaining functioning wetland ecosystems and human health. Wetlands perform a vital function

in filtering and purifying freshwater, removing nutrients and preventing "eutrophication" (a process which gradually increases chemical nutrients in water) in surface and ground waters. It is a cleansing role that protects downstream environments, especially urban and rural communities relying on streams and rivers for drinking water. Some of the positive effects on human health of maintaining healthy wetlands are clean water, provision of food, recreational opportunities, mental well-being and pharmaceutical products.

Tourism

New Tourism Plan

The recently released NZ Tourism Strategy 2015 aims for NZ tourism to be valued as the leading contributor to a sustainable NZ economy to 2015. The objectives of the strategy are to:

- deliver a world class visitor experience;
- lift the value of our tourism businesses and increasing investment; and
- lock in the benefits of tourism for our communities.

The work to be done includes:

- co-ordinating off shore marketing;
- developing a domestic tourism plan;
- improving infrastructure;
- developing and recruiting a skilled workforce;
- making tourism research more relevant, accessible, timely, and high quality; and
- contributing to local government planning processes.

A plan for applying the strategy will cover:

- increasing visitor satisfaction;
- increasing visitor spending;
- delivering environmental best practice;
- creating positive community outcomes; and
- developing the domestic tourism market.

Tourism is one of the most significant contributors to the NZ economy, bringing in \$18.6 billion a year to the local tourism market.

The NZ Tourism Strategy 2015 is at <http://www.tourism.govt.nz/strategy/index.html>

Short-term Accommodation Guest Nights Increase

New figures from Statistics NZ show that the number of guest nights increased 4.1% or by 89,000, in September this year com-

pared with September 2006. Most regional tourism areas recorded more guest nights, with the Auckland region showing the largest increase.

An increase in total guest nights in commercial accommodation flows on to increases in spending on food and activities.

Health & Safety

NZ's Quality of Care: OECD Figures

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) figures show that for quality of care, NZ and Australia have the best immediate (30 day survival) rates for treatment of heart attack in the OECD. NZ also rates above average in survival rates for cervical cancer and bowel (colorectal cancers) and just above average for eye checks for diabetes patients.

However it's not all good news: avoidable hospital admissions and deaths from asthma, hospital deaths from strokes and breast cancer survival rates are still below the OECD average.

Mental Illness: Reducing Discrimination

The recently released "Like Minds, Like Mine National Plan 2007 - 2013" is a six-year plan to reduce stigma and discrimination against people with mental illness. The plan outlines a number of ways we can improve the way people understand and deal with mental illness, both at the community and at the national level.

The "Like Minds, Like Mine" programme has been operating for 10 years and research has shown it has successfully changed attitudes towards mental illness in many areas. A 2004 survey found people with mental illness were seen as more employable than a previous survey in 1997. A 2007 survey found that attitudes have improved and changed for the better, but also that some discrimination still exists and that needs to be addressed.

Discrimination is recognised as one of the biggest barriers to recovery for people with mental illness.

The plan is on Likeminds site at <http://www.likeminds.org.nz/> and also on the Ministry of Health's site at <http://www.moh.govt.nz/moh.nsf/indexmhl/like-minds-like-mine-national-plan-200713?Open>

Can Breastfeeding Raise IQ?

Breastfeeding can have a positive effect on the IQ of children when combined with the right genes, according to a University of Otago study that was recently published in the journal "Proceedings of the National Academy of Science".

Previous studies have shown that breastfed children average higher IQ scores than non-breastfed children. However, not all breastfed children show this higher IQ score: they also need a certain version of a gene called FADS2.

The FADS2 gene is inherited from both the mother's and father's side, and it comes in two versions: C and G. Children inherit either two of the "C" version, one each of "C" and "G", or two of the "G" version. The "C" version of the FADS2 gene is associated with more efficient processing of the omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids found in breast milk. This may help brain development and function, though the exact link is not yet known.

Bioethics Council: Who Gets Born?

The Bio-Ethics Council has opened an online public debate on the issues arising from pre-birth medical testing.

These days foetuses can be tested for all sorts of possible illnesses, diseases and physical disorders such as cystic fibrosis, Down syndrome and HIV. And most babies in NZ do get tested before they are born. However, the pace of scientific and technological progress is such that the range of things we can test for is expanding. How far should we go with pre-birth testing? Who has the right to decide what happens afterwards? What might be the consequences of testing too much or too little?

People participating in the debate are offered four approaches to pre-birth testing developed earlier this year during a public issue framing exercise. They then have an opportunity to explore them further in online discussions.

To join the debate go to <http://nzbioethics.dialoguecircles.com/>

Take Action on Family Violence

The Campaign for Action on Family Violence is a \$14 million campaign, which has the message: family violence is not ok, but it is ok to ask for help. The campaign has three parts:

- communications including mass media advertising, an 0800 number, a website, media advocacy and resource development;
- community action including a Community Action Fund and partnerships with non-government organisations and the corporate sector; and
- research and evaluation of the campaign.

A freephone is available to provide support, information and access to services to help people understand the impact of family violence and how they can make changes in their lives. The website has links to the many government and non-government websites that have a connection to family violence, such as Women's Refuge, Relationship Services, The Family Violence Clearing House and Preventing Violence in the Home.

The Ministry of Social Development and the Families Commission are jointly leading the campaign.

The 0800 Family Violence Information Line is at 0800-456 450. For information on the campaign or help on family violence issues, visit www.areyouok.org.nz

Plunket Call: "Five Years for Under Fives"

Plunket has published a briefing paper which provides background on its focus for the future. The main points in the paper - "Five years for Under Fives" - are:

- Plunket will provide a universal support service for NZ families that emphasises wellness; and
- in order to make the biggest difference to children, government, business and our communities we should be focusing on, and investing in, the first five years of children's lives, in order to benefit families, societies and NZ as a whole.

This year Plunket celebrates 100 years of providing support and advice to NZ families to give children the best possible start in life.

Contact your Plunket office for copies of the briefing paper

All About NZ Children: Long-term Research

Long-term research into NZ families and children beginning in 2008 will follow the lives of 7,600 children born in the Auckland and Waikato regions. The aim of the study, which will follow the children through to adulthood, is to help identify opportunities to improve children's lives by studying parenting behaviours, health and environmental factors, child development, education, nutrition and social interactions.

Led by the University of Auckland, it will be the first NZ study to start before the children are born. It will also be the first study to cover the full ethnic diversity of NZers, by involving Maori, Pacific peoples, Asian and Pakeha children and their families.

The study builds on successful studies conducted in Christchurch and Dunedin.

Natural Disasters: Your Getaway Kit

Due to its location and environment, NZ faces many potential disasters. All disasters have the potential to cause disruption, damage property and take lives. A getaway kit will include:

- family documents: birth and marriage certificates, drivers' licences and passports, insurance policies, and family photos;
- personal items: towels, soap, toothbrush and sanitary items, a change of clothes;
- food and water: enough for 3 days or more, bottled drinking water (at least 3 litres per person per day), water for washing and cooking;
- non-perishable food (canned or dried), can opener;
- a primus or gas barbecue to cook on (check and replace food and water every 12 months);
- other emergency items: waterproof torches and spare batteries, AM/FM radio and spare batteries, first aid kit and essential medicines, toilet paper and large rubbish bags for an emergency toilet, face and dust masks, pet supplies, blankets or sleeping bags, wind and rain proof clothing, strong shoes for outdoors, sun hats and sunscreen (check all batteries every three months);
- supplies for babies and small children: food, formula and drink, change of clothing and nappies, favourite toy or activity; and
- special supplies: hearing and sight aids, batteries, mobility aids, asthma and respiratory aids, special food needs.

A website at <http://www.getthru.govt.nz/> shows you how you how to get ready, so you'll get through

New Health Careers Publication

A new publication called "A Career Framework for the Health Workforce in NZ" describes career pathways for different occupations in NZ's health sector. It was developed by a Ministry of Health and District Health Boards collaborative team and, as well as being useful for health workers, it can be used by organisations for workforce planning, and for promoting careers in the health sector.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates an emerging global shortage of four million health workers. In NZ, estimates are that the country could face shortages of 40,000 to 70,000 health and disability workers in the next two decades.

Download the career framework from [http://www.moh.govt.nz/moh.nsf/pagesmh/6945/\\$File/Career-Framework-Oct07.doc](http://www.moh.govt.nz/moh.nsf/pagesmh/6945/$File/Career-Framework-Oct07.doc)

Education

New School Curriculum

The new NZ Curriculum launched last month represents a shift away from focusing on knowing facts and figures to knowing also how to use knowledge effectively and apply it outside the classroom. It contains eight areas of knowledge, covering English, mathematics, languages, technology, science, the arts, social sciences, health and physical education. It also includes a range of key competencies young people need to acquire such as thinking; using language, symbols and texts; managing oneself; relating to others; and participating and contributing.

Features include:

- clearer and simpler subject statements (the rationale for, and structure of, each learning area is clearly described);
- more emphasis on statistics as part of mathematics, and on learning a second language;
- clarifying the place of history, geography, and economics within the social sciences at senior school;
- Te Reo Maori, and NZ Sign Language being added as official languages;
- a greater focus on sustainability, to teach students about climate change and the environment; and
- all students having the opportunity to acquire knowledge of Te Reo Maori, and Tikanga Maori, and to learn about the Treaty of Waitangi.

Schools will be supported to implement the new curriculum over a three year period from 2007 to 2010 with workshops, online resources and other school-based support.

NZ Reading Skill Levels

The reading performance of NZ primary school children has dropped from 13th to 24th in the world in an international study involving children aged about 10 in 40 countries. Russia, Hong Kong and Singapore were the top three countries. English children's reading performance also fell, from third to 19th.

But despite dropping on the list, NZ students have maintained a consistently high standard of reading in the past five years. Their average reading score was 532, higher than the study's international average of 500. NZ girls continued to do better than boys in the latest study, following a worldwide trend. NZ females had an average score of 544 and males an average of 520.

The Progress in International Reading Study takes information from pupils, parents and teachers. It is done every five years - data for the latest study was gathered last year - to measure literacy and gather information about home and school factors associated with learning to read. Nearly 2500 NZ students from 156 schools were tested in the survey.

Correspondence School Has Pre-school Places

The Correspondence School (TCS) currently has a number of early childhood places available. TCS has excellent early childhood services to offer, individually tailored to meet the abilities, interests and family situation of the child, under the NZ early childhood curriculum framework.

The minimum enrolment period is 12 weeks. There is no charge, although donations of \$30pa or more are welcomed. For further information call 0800-65 9988 extension 8402, email infoech@correspondence.school.nz, or go to the website www.correspondence.school.nz

Money: Figure It Out

A recently released set of "Figure It Out" booklets offers information to students on how to be enterprising and innovative with money, financially literate and able to plan for a healthy financial future. The contents cover both bright business ideas and financial dilemmas, and students are encouraged to think how they would resolve problems.

The books, which will be distributed free to all state/integrated primary and intermediate schools, are the latest in the Figure It Out series of books being published as part of the Numeracy strategy.

Energy

Making Available Separate Line/Energy Information

The Electricity Commission and the Ministry of Consumer Affairs want to change the way required information about separate line and energy charges on consumers' invoices is set out in the model domestic contract between electricity suppliers and households.

In a recently released paper called "Model contracts - Transparency of line and energy charges on invoices" the Commission proposes that the relevant clause in the model contract be amended to require the retailer's invoice to state where the information on separate line and energy charges is available, rather than actually providing the breakdown on each invoice as is currently required.

Each consumers invoice would have to state that information on separate line and energy charges is available, and include an 0800 number and a web address for people who want to obtain it.

A formal consultation paper on the proposed changes is planned for the New Year.

The paper is at <http://www.electricitycommission.govt.nz/pdfs/opdev/retail/model/Transparency-of-line-and-energy-charges.pdf>

Oil Stocks Agreement Signed with Japan

NZ and Japan have signed a treaty which allows NZ to hold some of its emergency oil reserves in Japan (NZ has an obligation as a member of the International Energy Agency (IEA) to hold 90 days of emergency petroleum stocks).

We currently hold contracts for reserve stocks in Australia, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. The contracts provide the Government with an option to purchase petroleum in the event of an IEA-declared emergency.

Housing

Overhaul of Real Estate Industry

Government decisions on reforming real estate law include an end to the industry's self-regulation and a range of new consumer protection measures such as an independent complaints body and compensation for people who are ripped off by agents.

The changes include:

- removing regulatory functions from the Real Estate Institute of NZ (REINZ) - this means that agents would no longer be required to be members of REINZ;
- creating an independent Real Estate Agents Authority, to oversee licensing, complaints, disciplinary and enforcement processes and provide information for consumers (the Authority will have wide investigative powers and will be able to order a wide range of penalties and remedies);
- creating a Disciplinary Tribunal to deal with serious cases and be able to order the cancellation of licences and award compensation;
- establishing a public register of real estate agents and salespeople that records any breaches of the industry standards against the names of those involved;
- requiring licensees to undergo ongoing professional development training; and

- requiring real estate professionals to give consumers educational information provided by the Authority about their rights, plus a written statement to disclose any conflicts of interest that they may have before they sign either an agency agreement or a sale and purchase agreement.

Legislation is likely to be introduced by the end of the year, with the aim of passing the legislation next year.

New Housing Insulation Rules

The Ministry of Building & Housing has published a booklet, "Your Guide to Smarter Insulation", to explain new insulation regulations which came in to effect in early November.

The tougher thermal performance standards apply to all new houses and small buildings (less than 300m² floor area) in the South Island and the North Island's Central Plateau (Taupo District, Ruapehu District and northern part of Rangitikei District). The requirements will be introduced in other areas of the country during 2008.

You can download the booklet from <http://www.dbh.govt.nz/UserFiles/File/Publications/Building/consumer/your-guide-to-smarter-insulation.pdf>

Nationally, the labour force participation rate is 68.3% in the September quarter 2007, the second highest rate recorded since surveying began in 1986.

Regionally, Taranaki has shown the strongest labour force participation growth rate, increasing from 66.9% for the year to September 2006, to reach 69.7% by September 2007. Taranaki also saw the largest rise in employment rates, up from 64.4% for the year to September 2006 to 67.5% at September 2007. Bay of Plenty also saw strong growth in employment (up 8.9% from the year to September 2006) and Waikato (up 8.5%).

The lowest annual average unemployment rate was 2.6% in Southland. The annual average rate of unemployment declined in eight of the 12 regions between September 2006 and September 2007. All South Island regions recorded unemployment rates at or below 3.5%.

The largest falls in unemployment rates were in Bay of Plenty (from 4.1% for the year to September 2006 to 3.3% at September 2007), Northland (from 5% for the year to September 2006 to 4.3% at September 2007) and Wellington (from 4.6% for the year to September 2006 to 4% at September 2007).

The reports are available at: <http://www.dol.govt.nz/publications/lmr/regional/joint/index.asp>

Employment

Flexible Working Arrangements Bill Passed

The Employment Relations (Flexible Working Arrangements) Amendment Bill passed its third reading last month. The Bill amends the Employment Relations Act 2000 to provide employees with young and dependent children the statutory right to request part-time and flexible hours, and a framework in which they can negotiate reduced working hours.

Unemployment Falls to Record Low

According to Statistics NZ, NZ's unemployment rate fell to a 20-year low of 3.5% in the September quarter - putting NZ's jobless rate among the lowest in the world. However, while unemployment is down from 3.6% in the June quarter, actual employment was also down by 0.3%.

The number in work was 2.15 million in the September quarter, the second highest level since the survey started in 1986. In the past three months, 6000 more people moved into part-time work, but 10,000 full time jobs disappeared. Maori unemployment remained at 8%, with Pacific Islanders on 4.9%, and at 2.4% for European NZers.

Regions Show Strong Employment Growth

Recent Department of Labour/Ministry of Social Development Quarterly Regional Labour Market reports show that some regions of NZ are experiencing record growth.

Money Matters

Stealing from Work: Economic Crime in NZ

According to a Global Economic Crime Survey for 2007 released by PricewaterhouseCoopers, economic crime is significantly higher in NZ than in the Asia-Pacific region and globally, costing businesses nearly \$70 million in 2007

For the survey, 5,428 leading organisations were interviewed globally, with 894 in the Asia-Pacific region and 78 in NZ.

Asset misappropriation remains the most likely economic crime to be suffered by NZ organisations, with 59% of victim companies suffering the theft of assets such as money or equipment.

The threat of intellectual property infringement is also present in NZ with 18% of respondents regarding this as the most likely threat to their businesses, and 16% reported being a victim of this crime with an average loss of more than NZ\$1 million.

The survey results show 67% of respondents in NZ have experienced an economic crime incident, which is significantly higher than in the Asia-Pacific region and globally.

For NZ respondents that suffered from an economic crime, the total loss was more than NZ\$69.5 million, with an average loss of NZ\$1 million.

Around 48% of the money lost by NZ organisations via economic crime has never been recovered. In addition, many appear to have poor insurance policies to cover losses and costs from

economic crime. Sixty-eight percent of respondents say they have these, but those who have suffered losses have only recovered an average of 6% of the lost funds from insurance.

^In NZ, 66% of economic crime involves a person inside the business or organisation. A "typical" perpetrator in NZ is male, has been in his position and with the organisation for less than 2 years, is below middle management level, has a high school education or less and is aged between 31 and 40.

More is at <http://www.pwc.com/extweb/home.nsf/docid/29CAE5B1F1D40EE38525736A007123FD>

A Fresh Start for Some Consumers in Debt

A new insolvency law which came into effect this month will see some consumers with no assets able to wipe their debts, reorganise their finances and make a fresh start. The No Asset Procedure (NAP) would only apply to people who owe less than \$40,000 in unsecured debt (e.g. debt relating to credit cards, garages, store cards, loans from relatives, unsecured bank loans), who have no assets and no way of paying the debt. It will enable these people to go in and out of bankruptcy within 12 months. They will not be able to apply for hire purchase or credit over \$1000, without declaring they are on the NAP scheme. Failure to declare will result in prosecution and full bankruptcy, where financial failure is recorded for seven years.

People who are not eligible for the NAP procedure include previous bankrupts, people with assets and those whose debt is a student loan, a court fine, reparation, or child support.

In the year to June 3593 people were bankrupted (up 16% on the previous year) and nearly 1000 of them were under 29 years of age. Almost 30,000 families are registered with the Federation of Family Budgeting Services. They collectively owe around \$150 million.

Family Tax Credit Increase

Low-income working families will be eligible for a \$416 increase in their minimum family tax credit from 1 April next year. The minimum family tax credit provides a guaranteed minimum family income to families who are in work, and currently recipients are guaranteed a net income of \$18,044 a year. This will rise to \$18,460 from 1 April 2008.

Around 2,400 families received the tax credit this year.

NZ Income Survey: June 2007 quarter

Statistics NZ (SNZ) says that in the June 2007 quarter, the average weekly income for all people from all sources was \$667. This is an increase of 9.4% over the June 2006 quarter average of \$610, and it is the highest annual percentage increase since the June 2002 quarter.

Increases in the number of wage and salary earners were similar for men and women, up 2% and 1.3%, respectively. For people receiving wage and salary income, the average weekly wage and salary income increased more for men (up 8.7%) than for women (up 6%). The larger increase for men was due to a combination of factors, including more men being represented at the higher wage

and salary income levels, and more men in full-time employment.

Median (half receive more, and half receive less than this amount) hourly earnings for people receiving income from wages and salaries rose from the June 2006 quarter to the June 2007 quarter, up \$1.00 to \$18.00 (5.9% increase). Men's earnings increased by \$0.97 to \$19.10 per hour and women's by \$0.90 to \$16.78 per hour. All industries and occupations experienced increases in both average and median hourly earnings compared to the same quarter of the previous year.

Over the year, average weekly investment income for those receiving investment income increased by 29.1% (to \$137). Age groups with the highest average weekly investment income were the 60- to 64-year age group and the 55- to 59-year age group (\$265 and \$232, respectively). Both these age groups also received the highest average weekly investment income for all people.

Business

Household Economic Survey for the Year

The average weekly household net expenditure was \$956 for the year ended 30 June 2007, with housing-related costs making up the largest component, Statistics NZ said recently. In fact, 23% (\$224) of the average weekly household expenditure was on housing-related costs such as mortgage and rent payments, council rates and energy costs. Households in the Wellington region had the highest proportion of household expenditure on housing and energy costs, at 27%.

Nationally, the next largest components of average weekly household expenditure were food (16%) and transport (14%). Average household spending on food was \$156 per week, with 44% of this expenditure going on grocery items. Transport costs averaged \$136 per week per household. Petrol was the single largest item of expenditure within this group, accounting for \$38 of transport costs.

Other survey results showed that average household income increased 10.2% in the three years since the last Household Economic Survey in 2003/04. The average annual income for the 2006/07 year was \$67,973. The increase was driven primarily by wages and salaries, investment income and government benefits.

The survey also showed that most people (75%) reported they were satisfied or very satisfied with their material standard of living, regardless of their geographic location or level of income.

Manufacturing No Longer the Biggest Employer

According to recent Statistics NZ figures, property and business services replaced manufacturing as the biggest employer for the first time - they registered 238,200 filled jobs during the September 2006 year.

The manufacturing industry now has the second largest number of filled jobs with 237,000 (the textiles, clothing, footwear

and leather manufacturing part of the industry significantly contributed to the decline in filled jobs in manufacturing).

Total filled jobs across all industries was 1,751,450 in the September 2006 year. This was an increase of 1.7% from the previous year and 17.4% in the five years to September 2006. The mining, construction, electricity, gas and water supply industry grouping had the highest filled job growth rate of 7.3% in the year to September 2006 and 51.8% in the five years to September 2006. The construction industry was the key contributor to the increase in filled jobs within this industry grouping.

Agriculture, forestry and fishing and manufacturing were the only two industries to report a decline in filled jobs (2.0% and 1.9%, respectively) in the year to September 2006.

Exporters: New Bond & Capital Guarantees

The NZ Export Credit Office is offering two new products targeted to a specific gap in the market for the provision of trade finance and risk management. They are a broader contract bond guarantee and a targeted short-term working capital guarantee. The guarantees will be provided to commercial bond providers and banks to enable them to support the additional growth of successful export companies. A \$100 million contingent liability has been established for exporters needing bonds and/or working capital. Access to the money will be on a first come, first served basis, but as the guarantees expire, the funds will be accessible once more, so the facility will be revolving.

The guarantees will be available from April 2008. More information is on the NZ Export Credit Office website at www.nzeco.govt.nz

Changes Made to Market Development Scheme

Changes have been made to the Market Development Scheme to make it easier for NZ businesses to develop export markets. The threshold for claiming reimbursements under the scheme has been halved to \$10,000.

Nearly 600 Kiwi companies have had half of their investment in developing international marketing initiatives approved for reimbursement in the last 12 months, and during that period over \$48 million has been approved to businesses operating offshore.

More is at <http://www.nzte.govt.nz/section/14187.aspx>

Our Food: Made in NZ?

In the past NZers have generally assumed pretty much everything in the supermarket, especially the fresh produce, is home grown, high quality, NZ made food. However, import figures sourced by Horticulture NZ from Statistics NZ indicate this is no longer the case.

Last year NZ imported food valued at NZ\$2 billion. About \$580 million, just over a quarter of the total, was fresh or processed fruit and vegetable product.

For example, in 2006 we imported:

- \$50 million of fresh and processed fruit and vegetable products from China;

- \$15 million of fresh and processed fruit from Chile;
- \$10 million of processed vegetables from Italy;
- \$7 million of fresh and processed fruit and vegetable products from South Africa; and
- \$6 million of fresh and processed fruit and vegetable products from India.

China's figures of \$50 million has doubled in three years, from just under \$24 million in 2003. Most of this food is processed - NZ imported 535,000kgs of jam and marmalade from China, a 420% increase on the 102,000kgs imported in 2003. We only import two fresh items from China, garlic and Ya (white) pears.

More Trade Briefs from NZTE

Recent Trading Briefs from NZ Trade and Enterprise (NZTE) for exporters contemplating these markets include:

Germany

Germany is NZ's seventh largest export market and NZ's second largest European trade partner after the UK. Strong commercial and cultural relationships between Germany and NZ are based on wide ranging contacts and common interests. NZ is a popular destination for Germans, for example, with about 62,200 tourist and 2,700 student visas issued each year.

Download the Germany Country Brief can be viewed at: <http://www.marketnewzealand.com/MNZ/services/14431.aspx>

Canada

Canada is now NZ's 12th largest export market with exports of NZ\$553 million in the 2006 calendar year. The brief makes the point that both countries enjoy a close relationship and that the business culture in Canada is similar to NZ's.

Download the Canada Country Brief from <http://www.marketnewzealand.com/MNZ/services/14431.aspx>

Pakistan

While Pakistan is a small market for NZ exporters, it has shifted from NZ's 64th to 48th largest market in the last three years. This is mainly due to increasing exports of milk powder, although exports of wood pulp, sugars and manufactured industrial goods have also shown strong growth. The latest 12-page Pakistan Country Brief highlights opportunities and challenges, and provides an overview of regulatory issues.

Download the Pakistan Trading Brief from <http://www.marketnewzealand.com/MNZ/services/14431.aspx>

Latest Ngai Tahu Financial Results

Tourism, fishing and property businesses are being credited for a \$70 million turnaround in the fortune of Ngai Tahu. The tribe's commercial arm, Ngai Tahu Holdings, made a net surplus of \$80.3 million in 2005-06, against \$9.3 million the year before. The value of the property portfolio rose by \$64.5 million.

Treaty Matters

Central North Island Land Claims: A Joint Approach

The Government has been working with central North Island iwi on proposals for a collective approach to claims over Crown forest land in the region. The initiative is led by Ngati Tuwharetoa Ariki Tumu te Heuheu, and it includes a number of iwi with interests in licensed Crown forest land, including Ngati Tuwharetoa, Ngai Tuhoe, and Te Arawa iwi and hapu not covered by the Affiliate Te Arawa settlement.

The Affiliate Te Arawa iwi and hapu and the Crown have agreed that the introduction of settlement legislation should be delayed to allow the collective process to run its course. They have also agreed that the Crown will no longer be declared the beneficiary of accumulated rentals for the licensed Crown forest land the Affiliate Te Arawa iwi and hapu will purchase as part of their settlement. Instead, the funds will be held by the Crown Forestry Rental Trust on trust until a specific use and entity is identified that will use the funds for Maori development.

Discussions with iwi representatives are still at an early stage.

lished a TDR Council, made up of half industry and half consumer representatives, to provide the overall governance of the service.

It is being offered through a specialist dispute resolution company, Dispute Resolution Services (DRS), which has been operating since 1999.

For more details go to www.tdr.org.nz or call 04-918 4919

Digital Advisory Group Coming

Following consultation with ICT business, community and government interests a new advisory information, communication and technology (ICT) group is to be set up in 2008. Its job will be to:

- provide advice to Ministers;
- provide research and information to ICT groups; and
- support new digital programmes.

The advisory group will include government, business and community representatives, and it will be supported by an executive secretariat.

Information on Cabinet decisions related to this announcement is available at www.digitalstrategy.govt.nz

Internet/ICT

New Telecommunications Dispute Resolution Service

A new consumer dispute resolution process called "Telecommunication Dispute Resolution" (TDR), has been set up.

The service is available to residential and small business customers of NZ's telecommunication and ISP companies who have not been able to resolve a complaint after discussing it with their telecommunications company.

A total of 98% of telecommunications companies are participating in the scheme and the service is free.

TDR will handle complaints about services or products of the participating telecommunications companies, including land-line phones, data, internet, mobile phone, pre-pay mobile phone, and digital and cable television. The complaint must have occurred within the past 12 months and it must be about something specific. Complainants must have discussed the problem with their telecommunications provider first, and given them the chance to reply. If they are then still not happy with the outcome, or it has taken more than six weeks to resolve, TDR can get involved.

There are some things TDR doesn't cover, like the telecommunication company's prices, content in Yellow Pages advertising, 111 calls and network coverage.

The service was established by the Telecommunications Carriers' Forum (TCF) - a collective of telecommunication companies - and leading consumer advocates such as Consumers' Institute, TUANZ and Citizens Advice Bureaux. The TCF has also estab-

Open Source Technology: Awards

"Open source" refers to any software program which is available for use or modification as other users or developers see fit. This technology is usually developed collaboratively and made freely available, unlike the technology of companies who have owned/manufactured software. The systems that support NZ's democratic processes - the Register of Electors and the Electoral Management Systems - are both built on open source technologies.

Winners of the first NZ Open Source Awards are:

- Open Source Ambassador: Peter Harrison;
- Open Source Contributor: Chris Cormack;
- Open Source Software Project: NZ Open GPS;
- Open Source Use in Government: State Services Commission (ICT Branch);
- Open Source Use in Business: Zoomin/ProjectX;
- Open Source Use in Education: NZ Summer of Code;
- Open Source Use for Community Organisations: Vet Learn;
- Open Source for Creativity: Select Parks;
- NZ Open Source Society Special Awards: NZOSVLE and Open Polytechnic; Michael Koziarski.

Government Departments: Verifying Your Identity Online

Inland Revenue (IRD) is setting up a new service to enable to verify their identity to government departments online and in real time.

Government departments cannot provide services that involve the exchange of money or personal information unless they are sure about who they are dealing with. Currently, proving who you are can require people to provide multiple documents, which can take time. Also, different departments may require different forms of identification.

The verification service will enable people to prove who they are via the Internet in a way that is quick, safe, and easy while protecting their privacy at the same time. It won't replace other methods of establishing identity, though, so if people prefer they can use other ways of establishing their identity, like visiting the relevant government agency office or sending in information by post.

A list of frequently asked questions and answers about the proposed service is at http://www.dia.govt.nz/diawebsite.nsf/wpg_URL/Resource-material-Identity-Verification-Service-Questions-and-Answers?OpenDocument

The Anti-Spam Law: How It Works

The recently passed Unsolicited Messages Act 2007 prohibits electronic spam with a NZ link (i.e. messages sent to, from, or within NZ). A message is only spam if it fits all three of the following criteria:

- the message is electronic;
- it is commercial; and
- it is unsolicited.

How It Affects Not-for-profits

Not-for-profit organisations are not exempt from the requirements of the Anti-Spam Act. This means if you send commercial electronic messages then you must have the consent of the people you are sending them to. However, the communications of not-for-profits are generally in the form of publications like newsletters that are not commercial. Also, not-for-profit groups generally only send electronic messages to supporters and subscribers, in which case, even if their messages were commercial, the organisations have either "express consent" or can reasonably infer the consent of the recipients because of the nature of the relationship with them.

How It Affects Local Authorities

The Act provides that an electronic message that provides the recipient with information about the goods and services of a government body is not a "commercial electronic message". "Government body" in turn is defined as the core government departments and crown entities. Local authorities do not fit into this exemption and must therefore be compliant with the Act by ensuring all commercial electronic messages:

- have the consent of the recipient;
- clearly identify the sender and how they can be contacted; and
- include a functioning unsubscribe facility.

More information is at <http://www.antispam.govt.nz/>

Social Networks and Sports Most Googled In 2007

Google has released its first ever "Zeitgeist" for NZ which lists the most popular and fast-rising search queries being typed into google.co.nz. The 10 fastest rising NZ searches of 2007 in order were Facebook, Rugby World Cup, Americas Cup, YouTube, Cricket World Cup, Grabaseat, Bebo, Kiwisaver, Heroes, and Vector Arena. The most searched for NZ shares were Burgerfuel shares, AMP shares followed by Telecom shares.

The most searched TV shows were Home and Away, American Idol, Heroes, Lost, Greys Anatomy and Coronation Street. Paris Hilton topped the most searched for celebrities in NZ, followed by Britney Spears, Justin Timberlake, Vanessa Hudgens, and Perez Hilton.

Rugby World Cup was the most searched for sport followed by the Americas Cup, All Blacks, NRL, Super 14 and then Cricket World Cup. The top searches with the word "kiwi" in them were Kiwi Bank, Kiwisaver, Kiwi careers, Kiwi experience, Kiwi online, Kiwi bird, and Kiwi baby. People searching for relief for something sore typed in sore throat, sore tongue and sore neck as the top three searches. And when it comes to Helen, Prime Minister Helen Clark was the most "googled" followed by Helen Keller and then NZ fashion designer Helen Cherry.

Social Lending: Online Moneymatching Service

A "peer-to-peer" online social lending service called Nexx is planned for early next year. Based on British and American models, it will connect people who need money to people who have some to spare and are looking for a good rate of return. Nexx says it is not a finance company, but rather an online money match-making service that allows borrowers to list their financial projects online and lenders to pledge funds at an interest rate acceptable to them - just like an online auction. With no bank or finance company in the middle, the interest rate paid by borrowers is the same as the rate that lenders receive. Current interest rates for personal finance can be as much as 22% - plus up to for finance company 3% fees. Nexx plans to charge both lender and borrower 0.5% of the funds lent for the listing service it will provide.

Defaults on social lending in the schemes in the UK and US have been described as "remarkably low".

The Nexx Blog is at <http://blog.nexx.co.nz/>

The Securities Commission has a new website aimed at helping people make better investment decisions at www.looklearninvest.org.nz. The website offers answers to questions like: What kinds of investments are available? What does risk have to do with investing? Why is my personal financial situation important when I plan to invest? Where can I get information about investments? What should I expect from an investment adviser? How does the law help investors in NZ?

The Legal Services Agency's LawAccess database at www.lawaccess.lsa.govt.nz now includes printable information sheets that address commonly asked questions on areas of the law, such as accident compensation; adult relationships; the Bill

of Rights; care and protection of children and young people; domestic violence; discrimination; employment agreements; neighbour disputes; privacy etc. Their addition means you can now search this database for information sheets, for resources from the 150 contributing organisations, for freephone numbers, or for contact details for community law centres, Citizens Advice Bureaux, and lawyers.

A new website providing information to car buyers - www.rightcar.govt.nz - provides searchable information to car buyers on how different makes and models rate for safety and sustainability. It covers vehicles that have been sold in NZ since 2005. A six-star rating system is used for each category based on vehicles' test results, adherence to standards or design features. The site was developed by Land Transport NZ with the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority, the Ministry of Transport and the Ministry for the Environment.

The *Tangata Whenua, Community and Voluntary Sector Research Centre* is at <http://www.communityresearch.org.nz/sendResource.htm>. This is a web-based research clearing house where people can access good community research and researchers. The site will offer free access to research, promote a code of practice for researchers, connect people to research, allow groups to find researchers, and it has the potential for email lists, virtual conferences, and a 'how-to' section, etc. The clearing house is currently building its initial knowledgebase of research, so is seeking researchers with research they want to share online.

If you missed the *regional census seminars covering the range and use of Statistics NZ (SNZ) data* go to www.stats.govt.nz/census/about-2006-census/2006-census-seminars.htm. The site covers the presentations made at the SNZ seminars held throughout the country in October and November.

Arts and Culture

Open Door - Community Documentaries for TV3

Morningside Productions is once again offering people the opportunity to make a documentary for television. It is seeking applications for the Open Door documentary series 9, and will be shooting the series through to October 2008.

The company is looking for people with firmly held opinions and an energetic commitment to a matter that they're actively involved in. The key to the success of the process is having a clear idea of what you want to say to the people of NZ about an issue - be it social, sexual, political, family, or whatever else.

Open Door enables groups and individuals to speak for themselves. Only people directly involved in the issues appear on the screen, rather than "experts" and commentators, or outside observers. The programmes are made using the expertise and equipment of the production team but with the participants taking editorial control: nothing appears in the program that that the documentary maker is not happy with.

The programmes, which are fully funded by NZ On Air, will be broadcast by TV3 (who have the final say on which 10 are chosen).

There is no closing date for applications (but they should be in as soon as possible). More information is at www.opendoor.net.nz. You can apply to make a programme directly from the site, or send a brief outline of your interest or issue to: Morningside Productions Ltd, PO Box 108, Kaukapakapa, tel 09-835-9285, email: morningsideproductions@xtra.co.nz

WriteMark Plain English Awards: Clear Messages

Five NZ government organisations and businesses have been awarded the WriteMark NZ Plain English Awards for 2007 for making government, financial, and legal information clear and understandable.

The premier award, for Plain English Champion-Best Organisation, went to Castalia, a NZ -owned international economics consultancy. The prize, valued at \$10,000, was awarded to the firm for "their outstanding progress in creating an organisation-wide plain English culture in an industry more typically known for jargon and impenetrable text".

Other winners included:

- ACC - for People's Choice-Best Plain English Document;
- PHARMAC - for Best Plain English Document-Public / NGO Sector;
- IAG NZ Limited for Best Plain English Document-Private Sector; and
- National Library of NZ for Best NZ Plain English Website.

A Brainstrain prize was awarded to the NZ Qualifications Authority (NZQA) for their Unit Standard 9734: Management - developing and coordinating people. The document was described by the judges as full of jargon and meaningless phrases (the prize for this category was a stainless-steel rubbish bin filled with sour worms). Finalists in the Brainstrain category included: Tournament Parking's Terms and conditions; and the Ministry of Education's call for tenders for their over-arching strategy for dissemination and use of best evidence synthesis (BES) iterations.

The awards entries were judged by David Russell, former CEO of Consumers' Institute; Rachel McAlpine, web content specialist; and Jacquie Harrison, Senior Communications Lecturer AUT University.

Radio NZ International Wins Award

Radio NZ International has won the International Radio Station of the Year Award the Association for International Broadcasting (AIB) Media Excellence Awards in London, beating international heavyweights like BBC World and the Middle Eastern Broadcasting Network. It was also described as the AIB's "Most innovative partnership between a local and international broadcaster" in recognition of its close work with Pacific radio stations and local Pacific journalists.

Radio NZ International broadcasts in short wave from Papua New Guinea to French Polynesia, covering all the Pacific nations in between. It broadcasts Pacific news and current affairs (in seven languages), business sports and feature programmes as well as relaying Radio NZ National.

Office of Film and Literature Classification: Report

The 2007 Annual Report shows that the Office of Film and Literature Classification classified more material than ever before, mainly because of an increase in the number of submissions from law enforcement agencies.

Censorship law requires the Office to protect society from the harm caused by restricted and objectionable publications. To do its job, the office has to guard its independence by balancing competing views.

Censors have to be aware of broad (but often quietly spoken) public opinion and resist capture by narrow but often loud lobbies. For example, the office found that demands to ban the computer game "Bully" for allegedly glorifying bullying were unfounded after examination of the game revealed its anti-bullying stance. On the other hand "The Peaceful Pill Handbook" was banned after the Office found that it encouraged criminal activity instead of simply offering advice and advocating law reform as its authors claimed.

The office made decisions on 2,762 publications in 2006/07, 6% more than in 2005/06. It banned 14% of the publications it classified, restricted 74%, and classified 12% as unrestricted. The largest proportion of banned material dealt with the sexual exploitation of children.

It also carried out research into public perceptions of offensive language; spread information about censorship; and targeted magazine, games and DVD outlets, advising them of their legal obligations where restricted material is concerned.

The website of the Office of Film and Literature Classification is at <http://www.censorship.govt.nz/>

Justice/The Law

Provocation No Excuse for Murder

A recent Law Commission report called "The Partial Defence of Provocation (NZLC R98)" recommends that the partial defence of provocation should be abolished, considering it preferable for provocation to be dealt with by judges solely as a sentencing issue.

The Commission has considered the implications of repeal for battered women, and the mentally ill or impaired, and it found that provocation is successfully relied upon by very few such defendants. Over a five-year period, provocation was successfully relied upon in only four out of 81 murder cases. Two of the four - half - were so-called "homosexual advance" or "homosexual panic" cases.

It emphasises that intentional killing in anger in any circumstances is inexcusable: even when very angry, no ordinary person responds to any provocation by deliberately killing.

If provocation is repealed, defendants who would formerly have relied upon it would be convicted of murder instead of manslaughter.

The provoked, by legal definition, are intentional killers, and all other intentional killers are convicted of murder. Any relevant mitigating circumstances can be considered at sentencing. Because the life sentence is no longer mandatory for murder in NZ, sentencing judges have discretion to impose a finite sentence.

The Commission says that every law reform body that has considered what should be done about provocation since 1976 has recommended repeal.

The report can be downloaded free of charge from the Law Commission website <http://www.lawcom.govt.nz/ProjectReport.aspx?ProjectID=138>

Companies (Minority Buy-out Rights) Amendment Bill

A recently-introduced Companies (Minority Buy-out Rights) Amendment Bill would amend the Companies Act 1993 to provide dissenting shareholders who have unsuccessfully opposed a fundamental change to the structure or operation of a company a system for exiting. The principle behind the changes is that shareholders are entitled to have shares acquired before the change was decided on purchased by the company at a fair price.

An earlier Law Commission report published in 2001 concluded that the Companies Act was defective in its failure to set out a workable method of valuing a minority shareholding when the minority shareholders had elected to have their shares purchased by the company under section 111(2) of the Act.

The bill is at http://www.parliament.nz/NR/rdonlyres/E00A4801-6838-4E03-A21D-79F42421FC8C/68822/DBHOH_BILL_8338_5565.pdf

Law Commission's Review of Privacy Begins

The Law Commission is undertaking a privacy review in four stages. As a starting point in Stage 1 it has published an exploratory paper with the aim of establishing a way of thinking theoretically about privacy, and assessing (in a practical way) the present legal systems relating to privacy.

The Commission says that this will enable some assumptions to be put on the table as a basis for constructive discussion.

Download the exploratory paper from http://www.lawcom.govt.nz/UploadFiles/Publications/Publication_129_368_MP%2019.pdf and you can find out more general information about the Commission's review of privacy at <http://www.lawcom.govt.nz/ProjectGeneral.aspx?ProjectID=129>

Protection of Personal & Property: New Resource

The McKenzie Trust has funded a new self-help resource on making applications to the Family Court for orders under the Protection of Personal and Property Rights Act.

These orders could be for welfare guardianship or property management. They are needed when someone has lost the capacity to act for themselves and there is no enduring power of attorney in place.

This guide is particularly relevant to elderly persons or parents of disabled children who need to make such an application when their children reach 18 (in fact the case study in the resource covers just such a scenario).

E-copies (Word document) of the resource can be downloaded free from the "Factsheets and Guides" section of the Coalition of Community Law Centres Website at www.communitylaw.org.nz/A-Guide-to-makin.43.0.html#c400

Fishing

Managing NZ's Shared Fisheries

NZ's "shared fisheries" are the fisheries used by customary, amateur and commercial fishers. Most shared fisheries are inshore fisheries (including snapper, blue cod, kahawai, rock lobster and paua), but they also include offshore fisheries such as game-fish and freshwater fisheries such as eels.

A Shared Fisheries Project at the Ministry of Fisheries aims to improve the management of these fisheries when it comes to valuing commercial and non-commercial fisheries and developing systems for allocating commercial, amateur and customary catch. New moves agreed by Cabinet include:

- Te Ohu Kaimoana, the Seafood Industry Council and the NZ Recreational Fishing Council are to work together to provide advice and develop joint policy proposals on NZ's shared fisheries. The group will receive some funding for this work, and it is expected to provide its recommendations in April next year;
- recreational fishing charter boat operators will be consulted on the introduction of fishing activity and catch reporting;
- scientific research will be expanded to fill gaps in our current knowledge about key fish stocks; and
- an amateur fishing trust is to be set up.

More is at http://www.fish.govt.nz/en-nz/Shared+Fisheries/default.htm?wbc_purpose=Basic&WBCMODE=PresentationUnpublished+

General

NZ's Population: Recent Statistics

Statistics NZ says that the resident population in NZ increased by 1% in the year to the end of September to 4,239,300 people. The population increased by 42,700 in the September 2007 year, compared with 50,700 or 1.2% in the September 2006 year.

Population growth during the September 2007 year was mainly due to an excess of births over deaths (or natural increase) of 34,400. Natural increase was higher in the September 2007 year compared with the previous year of 31,000 because of a rise in the number of births. Permanent and long-term arrivals exceeded departures by 8,300 in the latest year, down from a net migration gain of 13,200 in the September 2006 year.

Significantly more NZers are living into their 90s than a decade ago. In the decade to the end of September 2007, males and females aged 90 years and over recorded the largest growth rate at 74.5% and 57%, respectively. This was followed by increases in the 80-89 year group of 52.3% for males and 27.4% for females.

At 30 September 2007, the median age (that is, half of women are below this age, and half above) for males was 35.3 years and the median age for the female population was 36.9 years. The median age has increased by 2.8 years for males and 2.9 years for females between the 1997 and 2007 September years.

The number of children aged 0-14 years remained about the same at 30 September 2007, compared with the previous year. In the ten years ended September 2007, the number of children has increased just 1.9%, compared with respective increases of 13.6% and 21.2% for the 15-64 year and 65 years and over age groups.

Statistics NZ says the age composition of NZ's population has changed over the past decade. Between the 1997 and 2004 September years, the number of children aged 0-14 years increased by 21,300 or 2.4% to reach 892,800. At 30 September 2007, children in that age group accounted for 20.9% of the NZ population, compared with 23% at 30 September 1997.

The population aged 15-64, which accounted for two-thirds of the NZ population at 30 September 2007, increased by 338,800 or 13.6% between the 1997 and 2007 September years. Over the same decade, the population aged 45-64 years recorded a larger percentage increase at 33.4% than the 15-29 year age group, which increased by 6.4%, and the 30-44 year age group which increased by 3.1%.

During the September 2007 year, the population aged 65 years and over increased by 14,700 or 2.9%. Between the 1997 and 2007 September years, their number increased by 92,700 or 21.2% to reach 529,600. The proportion of the population aged 65+ increased to 12.5% at 30 September 2007, up from 11.5% ten years earlier.

Among age groups within the 65 and over category, the population growth rate was consistently higher for males than that for females between the 1997 and 2007 September years.

Latest Births and Deaths Figures

Statistics NZ says births exceeded deaths by 34,220 in the September 2007 year, the highest natural increase since 1991. Women averaged 2.1 births per woman in the September 2007 year, which was a level of fertility last reached in 1992.

There were 62,360 births registered in NZ in 2007, up 5.5% from the September 2006 year. There were more births to women in all age groups compared with 2006.

In the September 2007 year, women aged 30-34 years had the highest fertility rate, followed by those aged 25-29 years. In 2007, 53% of all newborn babies had a mother aged 25-34 years and 89% of newborns had a mother aged 20-39 years.

The median age of NZ women giving birth was just above 30 years and has been relatively stable since 2002. The median age

of women giving birth to their first child was 28 years in the year ended September 2007.

A newborn girl can expect to live 81.9 years, and a newborn boy 77.9 years.

Deaths registered in the September 2007 year totalled 28,150, of which 300 were infant deaths. The infant mortality rate of infant deaths per 1,000 live births was 4.9 in the September 2007 year, down from 6.9 per 1,000 in 1997.

In the September 2007 year, the European ethnic group gained 43,630 babies, Maori, 18,170, Pacific peoples 9,500, and Asian 6,740,

The total fertility rate for Maori, women in the September 2007 year was 2.87 births per woman, up from 2.72 in 2006 and well above the rate for the total population of 2.11 births per woman. Maori, women giving birth tend to be younger, with a median age of 25.8 years in the September 2007 year.

World Gender Gap Index: NZ Improves

NZ has moved two places up the latest World Economic Forum Gender Gap Index to fifth place in the world with a score of 0.7649.

This index measures the gap between men and women in four areas: economic participation and opportunity; educational attainment; political empowerment; and health. The countries ahead of NZ on it include Sweden (0.8146), Norway (0.8059), Finland (0.8044), and Iceland (0.7836).

The index is at <http://www.weforum.org/en/initiatives/gcp/Gender%20Gap/index.htm>

UN Elimination of Racial Discrimination: NZ Moves

Three of four urgent matters in NZ that were raised by the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in August have now been addressed. They are:

- Parliament has decided not to proceed with the Treaty Principles Deletion Bill;
- the Treaty of Waitangi is included in the new school curriculum; and
- access to schooling for children whose parents' immigration status is not legitimised is to be addressed through the Immigration Bill currently before Parliament.

The fourth urgent matter raised by the UN Committee is a call for renewed dialogue between the Crown and Maori, about the Foreshore and Seabed Act.

New Zealand is required to report back to the United Nations on the urgent matters in August next year.

Perceptions of Asia Report

A new Asia NZ Foundation report suggests that NZers' increasing contact with Asian people is linked with more positive perceptions and friendlier feelings towards people from the region.

The Perceptions of Asia survey shows that NZers with the most contact with Asian people are more likely to agree that Asian people bring valuable cultural diversity to NZ. It also

shows that NZers who have little or no contact with Asian people are more likely to perceive Asian people as un-likeable.

However nearly half (48%) of NZers have 'a lot' or 'a fair amount' of personal involvement with people from Asia, a percentage that has been steadily increasing since 1998.

The Asian region with 71% is rated as more important by NZers than Europe (65% rated this region as important), North America (50%), South America (20%), and Africa (11%). Only the South Pacific region (which includes Australia) is rated as more important to NZ's future than Asia (84%).

The majority of NZers see the key benefits as economic ones and they are also positive about Asia as a tourist destination. NZers are also more positive about the impact of Asian cultures, traditions, and immigration on NZ's future; 60% of those surveyed think Asian cultures and traditions will have a positive impact on NZ's future and 75% believe Asian immigration will have a positive or neutral impact on the country's future.

For a copy of the report email abutcher@asianz.org.nz.

Age Concern Report on Wellbeing of Seniors

Age Concern has consulted older NZers as part of the 'Towards a Positive Future' process. Towards A Positive Future sets out the current situation for NZ seniors across ten major goals of the Positive Ageing Strategy. The three top concerns for seniors are:

- adequacy of income;
- access to quality affordable healthcare; and
- issues around loneliness and lack of community support.

The report also presents Age Concern NZ's policy priorities.

More information is at www.ageconcern.org.nz/?advocacy/policymanifesto

SOEs & Corporate Social Responsibility

The Government has set up a "corporate social responsibility" system for state-owned enterprises (SOEs). The State Owned Enterprises Act requires SOEs to show a sense of social responsibility and to have regard to their communities as part of being a successful business.

Examples of social responsibility work currently being undertaken in this area by SOEs, are the Genesis Oncology Trust, and the distribution of 1 million freepost envelopes last year to community groups by NZ Post.

The new system will mean that SOEs will now be measured on social responsibility in much the same way as they are for financial performance. Each SOE will be required to assess its impact on the society and environment in which it operates, and to adopt social responsibility programmes. Any breaches of corporate social responsibility standards will have to be reported in company annual reports.

The cabinet paper is available on www.ccm.govt.nz/key-documents.html

Young NZer's Challenge: Duke of Edinburgh's Award

The Young NZer's Challenge is a voluntary programme of practical, cultural and adventurous activities operating throughout NZ. The Challenge is designed to support the personal and social development of young people aged 14-25, regardless of gender, background or ability. It is non-competitive: the participants design their own programme and take as long as they need to complete it.

Award Groups are run by adults, many of whom are volunteers, including youth workers, teachers, employers, trainers, instructors, assessors and other people, all of whom are keen to share their skills, enthusiasm and organising abilities to help young people reach their potential.

The Challenge has four sections with three progressive levels: bronze (for those aged 14 and over); silver (for those aged 15 and over); and gold (for those aged 16 and over).

The four sections are:

- service: helping other people in the local community;
- expeditions: training for, planning and completing a journey on foot or horseback, by boat or cycle;
- skills: covering almost any hobby, skill or interest;
- physical recreation (sport, dance and fitness); and
- residential project: gold award only - a purposeful enterprise in a residential setting with people not previously known to the participant.

You need to fill out a registration form and receive a record book before you can count any activities towards The Challenge. More information is at <http://www.challengenz.org.nz/Site/About/default.aspx>, or telephone the National Young NZers' Challenge Office, tel 04-568 4091 or 0800-69 29 27, fax 04-568 4092, email info@challengenz.org.nz

A Chance to Give in the Christmas Spirit

In an expanding scheme called "Adopt a family" you can buy personalised gifts for families who may well not otherwise have presents or a special meal at Christmas.

"Adopt a family" was originally developed five years ago when a South Auckland lawyer and her family realised at Christmas that they had everything they needed and asked the Salvation Army to identify a family that could really use a special Christmas.

Under the scheme people can approach the Salvation Army and they will be given the first names and ages of the children in a family that would otherwise not receive presents at Christmas. They then take the personalised presents they have bought (which may also include Christmas dinner ingredients) back to the Salvation Army, which delivers them. Donors and recipients remain anonymous.

The scheme is currently operating in Auckland, Tauranga, Rotorua, Hamilton, Wellington and Christchurch.

More information is at tel (09) 262 2332, email manakausa@xtra.co.nz, or contact your local Salvation Army office - see your White Pages.
Note: people joining the scheme are urged to get their gifts to the Salvation Army as early as they can before Christmas Day

Some Funding Opportunities

New Fund for Significant Community Projects

A new Lottery Significant Projects Fund will provide \$16 million a year over the next three years for major projects of importance to the wider community, region or nation. The grants will be large enough to enable completion of projects with a capital expenditure of at least \$1 million. As well as being significant, projects will also have to demonstrate that they are community-based, have considerable support from the community and have exhausted all other avenues of funding.

The Fund will be open for applications from February next year. For more information on lottery grants see www.dia.govt.nz

Environment and Heritage Committee

This committee makes grants for projects that promote, protect and conserve NZ's natural, physical and cultural heritage.

Applications close 25 February 2008. More information about the Lottery grants application process is at <http://www.cdgo.govt.nz/available-grants/downloads.aspx>

National Community Committee

This committee makes grants for projects that encourage or enable community self-reliance, capacity building and stability, or opportunities for social, civil or cultural participation and reducing or overcoming barriers to such participation. Committee priorities include projects that have a community/social service focus, for example developmental or preventative projects, welfare and support services, or projects that help improve the well-being of people in the community.

Applications close 18 January 2008 More information is at <http://www.cdgo.govt.nz/available-grants/downloads.aspx>

Reminder: Sustainable Farming Fund

Applications to the Sustainable Farming Fund close on 11 February 2008

More information is at: www.maf.govt.nz, or tel 0800-100 087

Appointments

NZ's next *High Commissioner to India* will be Rupert Holborow. Scientist David Wratt has been appointed to the *Climate Change Forum*, which now has 32 members. Polly Schaverien has been appointed to the *Board of Meridian Energy*. Bryan Gould is the new *Chair of the Foundation for Research, Science and Technology Board*. Patrick Strange has been appointed *Chief Executive* of the state-owned national grid owner/operator, *Transpower Ltd*. Simon McNee, currently Chief Executive of the Pharmaceutical Management Agency, has been appointed as *Chief Executive of the Ministry of Fisheries*. Susie Staley has been reappointed for a two-year term as the *Chair of Maritime NZ*, and Adrienne Young Cooper has been reappointed as a

Member for a second term of three years. Michael Glading is a new member of the *NZ On Air board*. Two new members of the *Alcohol Advisory Council (ALAC)* are Anne Hobby and Dr Helen Moriarty. Darryll Park and Susan Hughes QC have both been reappointed as Members of the *Civil Aviation Authority of NZ Board* for three-year terms. Dr Janet Stephenson has been reappointed as a member of the *Land Transport NZ Board* to 30 June 2008. Garry Evans has been reappointed as the *Maritime Appeal Authority* for a three-year term. *The Meat Industry Association* has appointed Tim Ritchie as *Chief Executive Officer*. Ken Warren has been re-appointed to the *Accounting Standards Review Board (ASRB)*, which is responsible for reviewing and approving NZ's financial reporting standards. Yvonne Sharp is the new *Chair of the Road Safety Trust Board* and Tony Knight has been reappointed as the *NZ Automobile Association Trustee*

on the Board. Recent *National Animal Ethics Advisory Committee (NAEAC)* appointments include Dr Justine Stewart, Dr Martin Kennedy, and Margaret (Peggy) Burrows. Dr Roger Marchant has been reappointed to *NAEAC*.

Craig Matthews and Paddy Twist
Editors
Rural Bulletin

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.

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