

Rural Bulletin

June 2008



Rural Women
NEW ZEALAND

<http://www.ruralwomen.org>

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Budget 2008

The Big Picture

For almost a decade, NZ has enjoyed a period of economic expansion; however, 2008 sees challenges arising from the global economic slowdown. Treasury's outlook for growth going forward is slower than previously forecast with growth to March 2009 expected to bottom out at 1.5% before rising to 2.3% in 2010 and 3.2% in 2011. Treasury also expects the rate of inflation to generally fall within the 1-3% target band during the forecast period.

The Big Budget 2008 Item: 1 October Tax Cuts

1 October this year marks the start of a three-year programme of tax cuts costing \$10.6 billion, and boosts to Working for Families Family Tax Credits to take account of inflation (costing a further \$1.1 billion over four years).

The programme will see a couple on the current average household income of \$72,000 (split two thirds/one third), with two children aged 11 and 8, better off by \$2223 a year (\$43 a week) from 1 October, rising to \$4397 a year (\$85 a week) from 1 April 2011. When it is fully up and running, the programme will cut personal tax by roughly one quarter at the current level of the full-time minimum wage (\$1130 per year), one sixth at the current level of the full-time average wage (\$1670 per year) and one eighth at \$80,000 a year (\$2870 per year). It includes:

- a new low tax rate of 12.5%;
- a lifting of the 21% threshold by \$10,500 to \$20,000;
- a lifting of the 33% threshold by \$4,500 to \$42,500;
- a lifting of the 39% threshold by \$20,000 to \$80,000;
- a boost to the Family Tax Credit and an increase to the Working for Families Tax Credit income threshold from 1 October, worth \$14 per week for a family with two young children on the average wage; and
- a further expected increase to the Family Tax Credit and income threshold from 1 April 2011, worth an additional \$16 per week for this same family.

Families

There are a number of measures across a range of areas that have been developed to meet the needs of NZ families.

Health

An extra \$3 billion (\$750 million per annum) is being spent on the following health package:

- increased health spending: The biggest single item is a \$2 billion inflationary adjustment to boost District Health Boards (DHBs) spending, in line with the increased costs of goods and services;
- district health boards: DHBs will also receive \$172.3 million to improve the efficiency of their services, and progress towards their health targets;
- wellness and public health: \$52 million over four years to fight obesity, and an additional \$80 million over four years to implement next steps of the primary care strategy;

Where Your Taxes Go

This "payslip" shows what a person on \$45,000 is currently paying in taxes and where these taxes go.

John Smith

Pay Period: 16/5/2008 to 22/5/2008

Annual Salary: \$45,000

Weekly Salary: \$865.00

ACC levy: \$12.00

Tax: \$186.00. This goes to

- Health \$36.90
- Benefits and Working for Families \$33.70
- Education \$29.70
- NZ Superannuation \$22.70
- Capital (excl Transport) \$12.10
- Law and Order \$9.10
- Industrial Services \$5.50
- Transport and Communication \$8.30
- Finance Costs \$7.00
- NZ Superannuation Fund \$6.60
- Other \$14.40

- cervical cancer vaccine: \$164.2 million over the next five years for Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine, which protects women against cervical cancer;
- more surgery: \$160 million to provide more elective surgery and reduce waiting lists, including 5000 more life-improving elective treatments next year and better access to primary care for 10,000 extra patients;
- the health workforce: \$37.6 million to provide staff training, \$10.4 million to extend the Pacific Provider Development Fund, and \$12 million to improve the capability of the Maori Nursing Workforce;
- oral health: \$79 million to improve child and adolescent oral health services; and
- healthy housing: \$30 million to create healthier living environments to reduce the risks of infectious disease.

Education

- \$182 million in operating and \$33.5 million in capital funding to reduce Year 1 class sizes to one teacher per 15 students;
- \$63.6 million in operating to increase early childhood funding rates;
- \$1.8 billion over five years (\$619.1 million in Budget 2008 and the remainder from Budget 2007 and Budget 2009) for teachers' wage settlements and key collective agreements;
- a 5% increase to schools' operational funding, costing \$171.6 million over four years, plus \$20.8 million in operating and \$74.7 million in capital funding over the next three years to improve school facilities and build new schools. This spending includes \$65.3 million over four years to help meet the cost of Information Communications Technology (ICT); and
- special education spending of \$18.4 million over four years for students with high needs, and \$7.3 million of operating and \$659,000 of capital funding over four years to expand the

newborn hearing screening programme. A further \$6.1 million over four years of existing operating funding will be redirected to provide extra specialist staff to support blind and vision impaired students.

Non-government Organisations/Social Services

- \$446.5 million over the next four years to improve its partnership with community-based social services to help deliver essential services to support children and families, including parenting and family violence programmes, and mentoring at-risk youth. Note: Out of the \$446.5 million, \$133.1 million is funded through reprioritising existing spending.

Justice

- \$180 million in operating and \$9.5 million capital funding for 1000 additional sworn and 250 non-sworn police;
- \$216.3 million in capital and \$35.6 million in operating funding for replacing Mt Eden Prison;
- 89 additional probation officers for managing offenders doing community-based sentences, from \$23.8 million capital and \$67.9 million operating funding;
- \$4.7 million operating to speed up cases at the Independent Police Conduct Authority;
- \$14.9 million in operating and \$2.3 million in capital funding, to ensure Maori Wardens are sufficiently resourced and trained;
- \$5.8 million in operating funding over four years to establish a Sentencing Council which will produce inaugural Sentencing and Parole Guidelines in 2008/09;
- \$6 million in operating funding and \$4 million in capital over four years to provide enhanced security for Police data; and
- \$11.2 million in operating funding in 2008/09 for legal aid remuneration, with an accompanying review of innovative ways of developing the legal aid system.

Housing

- \$220 million over the next 10 to 15 years to upgrade Wellington City Council's social housing;
- \$35 million in capital funding over the next two years (\$9.4 million of which is expected to be repaid between 2010/11 and 2011/12) for a shared equity programme to help modest income earners buy houses; and
- the first stage of a major housing development at Hobsonville. The development will be undertaken in five phases and will involve over 3,000 homes, one third of which will be reserved for state housing or affordable housing.

Caregivers for Children

- a \$24.6 million boost to assist 7,500 caregivers caring for more than 10,000 children. This new funding enables the Unsupported Child's Benefit and Orphan's Benefit (UCB/OB) to match the Foster Care Allowance (FCA) weekly rates from 1 April 2009.

Older NZers

- net payments of NZ Superannuation will increase from 1 October 2008 as a result of personal tax cuts. The increase for a married couple would be \$45.88 per fortnight and \$23.84 for a single superannuitant living alone. This increase is in addition to the annual adjustments made to reflect increases

to living costs. As the tax cut package is rolled out there will be further increases to the rates of net NZ Superannuation on 1 April 2010 and 2011;

- \$72 million over four years to provide free off-peak travel for SuperGold Card holders on all forms of public transport and \$18 million over four years to increase the subsidy for hearing aids; and
- \$6.7 million over four years to pay NZ Superannuation and the Veterans' Pension overseas.

Tertiary Education

A student support package valued at \$130.8 million in operating funding and \$24.4 million in capital funding over four years includes:

- a 10% increase in the parental income threshold for a full student allowance from 1 January 2009 (benefiting 12,000 students a year);
- lowering the age limit for student allowances parental income testing to age 24, and lifting the maximum rate of student allowances for those aged 24 to the level for students aged 25 years and above (benefiting more than 5,000 students a year);
- indexing the student loan living cost component to inflation from 1 April 2009, following a one-off increase from \$150 per week to \$155 per week on 1 January 2009; and
- a 50% expansion of the Bonded Merit Scholarship Scheme to 1500 scholarships per year (benefiting 500 high-achieving undergraduate students each year).

Energy Efficiency

A total of \$23.3 million operating and \$22.4 million capital funding over four years goes towards energy efficiency investments to assist businesses, households, motorists and consumers. The \$22.4 million capital goes towards insulation and clean heating retrofits for state houses (see the section on pre-Budget announcements). The funding includes:

- \$9.3 million for energy saving programmes for businesses;
- \$6 million over four years for another 32,000 insulation retrofits for low-income families in homes;
- \$3 million for energy performance labelling on consumer appliances;
- \$1 million for the Vehicle Fuel Economy Labelling programme;
- \$4 million contingency is set aside for additional energy efficiency initiatives; and
- an additional \$5 million in 2008/09 (through the Electricity Commission) goes towards the interest-free loans programme, which provides insulation and clean heating retrofits for middle-income households.

Partnerships with Community Groups

- \$2 million over four years to support strong ethnic communities, to expand participation and capacity, and support advice forums and events;
- \$1 million in 2008/09 for the Royal NZ Returned Services Association (RNZRSA) to support veterans' welfare; and
- \$368,000 for the newly established Vietnam Veterans and Their Families Trust.

Economic Transformation

Innovation

- new \$700 million in capital for research, development and innovation to transform NZ's food and pastoral industries through targeted investments and matching industry support; and
- \$205.4 million to boost NZ's level of research, to improve business performance and international competitiveness. This includes \$24 million to build new industries in high tech manufacturing, ICT, new materials and sophisticated engineering, and \$64.5 million for research into sustainable primary production and renewable energy.

Skills

- \$168 million in operating to lift literacy, language and numeracy skills of NZ workers to create a more educated, productive workforce; and
- \$591 million operating over five years and \$15.5 million capital for universities and polytechnics. In addition, \$130.8 million operating over four years, plus \$24.4 million capital, for a student support package.

Infrastructure

The broadband package is designed to boost access to fast, affordable broadband so that NZ can better compete internationally.

It's planned to spend around \$500 million in the next five years, targeting high speed open access urban fibre networks, improved rural connectivity and improved international links. The broadband package includes an additional \$325 million of operating funding between 2008/09 and 2012/13, and \$15 million of capital funding in 2008/09 to support the roll-out of high-speed broadband.

The new, contestable Broadband Investment Fund - see www.med.govt.nz/broadbandinvestment - will be used to accelerate broadband investment in three critical areas (consultation closes on this Fund on 30 June 2008):

- facilitating high speed broadband to businesses and entities such as municipalities, universities, schools and hospitals in urban centres;
- extending the reach of broadband into underserved regions; and
- improving the resilience of NZ's international connections.

About \$160 million over the next five years will go on connectivity in the health sector, the education sector through the KAREN network - <http://www.karen.net.nz/home/> - and through the Government Shared Network.

Other Budget 2008 details include:

- an extension of the Digital Strategy by the Community Partnership Fund of \$6 million in operating funding in 2008/09;
- \$500,000 in operating funding in 2008/09 to implement Digital Strategy 2.0; and
- \$2.9 million in operating funding over the next five years to support the establishment of the new Digital Development Council and Forum.

Other Infrastructure

- \$690 million in capital funding in 2007/08 for the purchase of Toll NZ's rail business (announced pre-Budget);

- \$28 million in operating to upgrade and maintain our rail network;
- \$65 million between 2007/08 and 2008/09 capital funding for ONTRACK to renew tracks and meet land release costs;
- \$15 million in capital to boost aviation passenger safety and security infrastructure at airports; and
- \$33.5 million of capital to contribute towards the ten-year Canterbury Transport Regional Implementation Plan, and \$30 million of capital over three years for regional transport development initiatives in Northland and Tairāwhiti.

International Connections

Extra funding is being provided to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) and NZ Trade and Enterprise (NZTE) to strengthen links with the rest of the world. It includes:

- \$138.9 million operating plus \$26.1 million capital to provide increased support to NZ firms operating internationally, and boost market access for firms operating at home; and
- \$26.6 million to support NZ's participation at the 2010 Shanghai Expo.

Environmental Sustainability

- \$23.3 million operating and \$22.4 million capital over four years towards energy efficiency investments, including funding for EnergyWise Homes projects and upgrading state houses;

- \$43.9 million over four years to contribute to a ten-year plan to clean up the most seriously degraded Rotorua lakes. In total, the Government has committed \$72.1 million over ten years; and

- \$37.4 million over five years (including 2007/08) plus \$5.6 million capital funding to deliver the Emissions Trading Scheme and link it to international markets.

Other funding under the Economic Transformation theme includes:

- \$164.6 million towards the redevelopment of Eden Park to host the 2011 Rugby World Cup; and
- \$13.2 million in 2007/08 operating and \$10.1 million capital for the National Animal Identification and Traceability and FarmsOnLine systems, which provide comprehensive information on rural properties, animal identification and traceability.

Business

Investor Protection

- \$6.1 million of operating funding over the next four years and \$2.9 million of capital funding on putting in place new laws to improve the supervision of financial advisers and institutions. The funding will allow financial service providers to be registered and set up dispute resolution schemes, and will enable the Securities Commission to undertake a role in the licensing of financial advisers.

Tax-Related Compliance Costs

- Legislation to be introduced to Parliament next month will reduce tax-related compliance costs. The proposed legislation particularly targets small and medium-sized enterprises, which represent a large portion of the

economy and tend to bear a disproportionate tax compliance cost burden.

- \$4.8 million over four years is to be spent on enhanced weather forecasting for severe weather events.

Taxing Offshore Income of NZ Businesses

- The same proposed legislation also aims to improve the competitiveness of NZ's international tax rules by bringing them into line with the relevant rules of our main competitors. The central feature of the reform, announced in Budget 2007, is the introduction of a tax exemption for active income from the offshore operations of NZ-resident businesses.

Maori

- \$40.5 million in capital funding into Maori Business Aotearoa NZ (MBANZ) in 2008/09, who will establish services for Maori including providing business support, identifying opportunities for Maori economic development, and some facility for loans to Maori businesses;
- \$1.4 million to Te Mangai Paho for preserving historical Maori footage, and \$2.7 million in operating funding over the next four years to help the Maori Land Court/Waitangi Tribunal to access and preserve physical records;
- \$5.3 million to help the Office of Treaty Settlements meet the 2020 settlement deadline; and
- \$19.4 million and \$4.4 million capital to increase the services of the Maori Trustee.

NZ in the World

- the Defence Funding Package will invest \$276.4 million to develop military and organisational capability;
- \$165.2 million operating and \$32.9 million capital will strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, including boosting international work on climate change and building effective institutions in the Pacific and Asia;
- \$960,000 to fund the development of a wind farm at Scott and McMurdo Bases; and
- the Pacific Cooperation Foundation gains \$5.5 million in baseline funding over four years, while the Asia NZ Foundation receives \$2.5 million for outreach initiatives in 2008/2009.

Environment/Conservation

- \$13 million to maintain the capability of the Department of Conservation;
- \$5.3 million to control the threat of weeds and animal pests on conservation and Crown land; and
- \$5.6 million over two years to fund an ocean survey in the Bay of Islands, to collect geographical and biological information on the marine environment.

Climate Change

- \$37.4 million over five years, plus \$5.6 million in capital funding between 2007/08 and 2008/09, goes towards delivering the Emissions Trading Scheme and linking it to international markets;
- a further \$1 million over four years will assist communities and local government to adapt to the physical impacts of climate change; and

Rural Water Supplies

- an additional \$40 million over five years for the Sanitary Works Subsidy Scheme. This scheme, introduced in 2003, aims to cover capital costs of both sewerage systems and drinking water fluoridation for small, largely rural communities who have difficulty funding the necessary upgrades to meet public health and resource consent requirements.

Arts, Culture & Heritage

- additional baseline funding of \$12 million over four years goes to Te Papa. Te Papa has been the most visited museum and gallery in Australasia for the past five years;
- an increase of \$7.7 million over four years to the NZ Historic Places Trust. One-off additional capital funding of \$500,000 has been provided for upgrades to IT systems in 2008/09.
- Government House (the official residence of the Governor-General) is to be renovated and conserved. Construction will start in December this year and the total project is expected to cost \$46.6 million in capital and \$800,000 operating funding over four years;
- an extra \$4.4 million baseline funding over four years for the NZ Symphony Orchestra. This enables the NZSO to tour a minimum of 20 communities per year, perform to at least 100,000 people, and continue its commitment to performances of NZ compositions;
- an extra \$27.8 million over four years goes to the NZ Film Commission. It will administer a new Screen Production Incentive Fund for eligible NZ films and television productions;
- extra baseline funding of \$4.8 million over four years is allocated to the NZ Music Commission, so that it can continue to promote Kiwi music internationally and locally, and undertake market and business development;
- an extra \$2 million over four years goes to the NZ Authors' Fund to compensate authors for loss of royalty income on books lent by public libraries;
- Radio NZ will receive \$10.9 million extra over four years to maintain its core services. Additional funding recognises the broadcaster's significant and successful public service role domestically and internationally with its internet service; and
- \$7 million (in 2007/08 to 2008/09) to erect and restore the 1870s Mataatua Whare, a rare example of a 19th century meeting house, in Whakatane.

Pre-Budget Budget Announcements Made in May

- elective services: an extra \$160 million over the next four years. New annual funding of \$35 million will see around 5000 more people receive elective services treatment each year. Also included is money for around 12,000 extra patients in primary care greater access to specialist assistance; and a one-off spend of \$20 million (over two years) for DHBs that have both a high level of specific need in their community and the capacity to deliver extra services (such as cardiac or spinal surgery);
- cervical cancer immunisation: \$164.2 million new funding over five years, to enable the human papillomavirus (HPV) immunisation programme to be offered free to more than 300,000 young women aged 12 to 18 years;

- home-based support: an additional \$46.5 million over four years to non-agency providers of home-based support (mostly friends and family members of injured people who have given up aspects of their own lives to care for the injured person). The types of care covered include attendant care, child care and home help;
- information for prescribing medicines: over the next four years, \$8.8 million for the development and ongoing maintenance of a national electronic medicines "formulary". The national formulary will provide prescribers with sound up-to-date information about the use of medicines, including information about guidelines and alerts, dosage, adverse reactions and interactions, contraindications, and whether the medicine is listed on the Pharmaceutical Schedule;
- schools' operational funding: being raised by 5%, or \$171.6 million, over the next four years (included in this is \$65.3 million over four years for meeting the costs of Information Communication Technology - ICT). Note: The total investment in schools' operational funding is \$4.7 billion over the next four years;
- shared home equity pilot: \$35 million in capital goes to the pilot to assist up to 700 households into starter homes. Pilot will be restricted to homes in regions with the highest house prices: Auckland, Wellington, Nelson, Christchurch and Queenstown. Note: pilot being launched 1 July 2008;
- state house insulation programme fast-tracked: a further 21,000 state houses to be insulated within five years. Cost: \$22.4 million in new funding over four years, a further \$1 million in the fifth year and \$30 million in reprioritised spending. Note: about 16,500 houses have currently been insulated;
- Toll NZ's rail and ferry business buy-back: the government will pay a purchase price of \$665 million for the rail and ferry business with settlement on 30 June 2008;
- local transport: the Canterbury region will receive \$33.5 million in funding over the next four years (2008-2012) to invest in transport infrastructure. Over the next ten years, the government will be putting \$244 million into the project;
- Mt Eden Prison to be replaced. A new prison to be built but heritage features of old building to be retained. Cost: capital investment of \$216.3 million and operating expenditure of \$35.6 million over the next four years; and
- racing prize money lifted: \$9 million over the next three years for co-sponsorship arrangements that will see substantially higher prize money offered by the most important NZ races. Top harness and greyhound races will also receive a lift in stakes.

Public consultation closes Monday 14 July 2008. To learn more and make a submission, individuals or organisations are encouraged to go to www.stats.govt.nz/census2011

Royalties for Visual Artists? New Bill

The Copyright (Artists' Resale Right) Amendment Bill was recently introduced into Parliament. This Bill would entitle visual artists to receive a royalty payment each time an original art work is resold commercially, through any auction house, gallery, dealer, or other intermediary or professional involved in the business of dealing in works of art. It does not apply to private art sales or to sales of less than \$500 value. A 5% royalty would be created for the artist who created the work, and they would receive a payment when and if the work was resold for \$500 or more. Royalties would be due on artistic work sold during the artist's lifetime, and on works sold for 50 years after the artist's death - the same period that applies to copyright under the Copyright Act 1994. They could be left to others under the artist's will.

The royalties would be collected by a single agency that will be entitled to request information from those selling or buying works of art. Similar systems operate in a number of countries overseas, including most of Europe and in the United Kingdom.

Submissions close on 4 July 2008. They go to the Government Administration Committee, Parliament House, Wellington. More is at <http://www.mch.govt.nz/projects/culture/resale-royalty.html>

Abolition of the Serious Fraud Office

Public submissions are now being invited on the Serious Fraud Office (Abolition and Transitional Provisions) Bill.

The Bill disestablishes the Serious Fraud Office and provides for the transition of its functions and powers to a Serious Fraud Taskforce within the new Organised and Financial Crime Agency of NZ, a department of the NZ Police.

Submissions close on 20 June 2008. They go to the Law and Order Committee, Parliament House, Wellington. The Bill is at http://www.parliament.nz/en-NZ/PB/Legislation/Bills/5/b/d/00DBHOH_BILL8519_1-Serious-Fraud-Office-Abolition-and-Transitional.htm

Consultation on ECE Strategy

Consultation on the best way to deliver the key quality improvements contained in the early childhood education strategy, "Pathways to the Future: Nga Huarahi Arataki", is beginning this month.

A consultation paper seeks your feedback on matters such as: improving adult-child ratios; regulating teachers' registration targets; progressively improving adult-child ratios and reducing group size; and legislating Te Whariki as the curriculum for all early childhood education services.

Submissions close on 23 July 2008. The consultation paper "Review of Regulation of Early Childhood Education" and details of the consultation meeting dates and venues are at www.minedu.govt.nz/goto/ecereviews

Consultation

Proposed Changes to Census Content

Statistics NZ is proposing several changes to census content for the 2011 Census of Population and Dwellings that are not covered by other reviews. The aim of this census consultation is to assess the impact of proposed changes on users, and achieve the best possible design of those changes.

Managing the Security of NZ's Electricity Supply

The Electricity Commission (EC) is responsible for managing the security of NZ's electricity supply, and it is required to develop a standard that measures the capacity to meet peak electricity demand.

The Commission has published two papers outlining proposals for this standard called "Development of a Capacity Adequacy Standard Overview" and "Development of a Capacity Adequacy Standard - Consultation Paper". Your comments are invited on the consultation paper.

Submissions close on 13 June 2008 (electronic submissions preferred). They go to M McGregor, Electricity Commission, PO Box 10041, tel 04 460 8860, fax 04 460 8879, email info@electricitycom. The consultation paper is at <http://www.electricitycommission.govt.nz/consultation/capacity-adequacy/view>

Agricultural Compounds & Veterinary Medicines Act Consultation

The NZ Food Safety Authority (NZFSA) has begun reforming administration of the Agricultural Compounds and Veterinary Medicines Act 1997 (the ACVM Act). NZFSA has published the first of a series of discussion papers that will be released for public consultation as part of the reform process.

One of the main reasons for the reform is that some regulatory arrangements need to be updated because amendments were made to the ACVM Act in 2007. It is also an opportunity to reconsider the way that the ACVM Act is working and seek feedback from stakeholders.

The ACVM Act controls agricultural compounds and veterinary medicines used in association with animals and plants. Its purposes are:

- preventing or managing risks to public health, trade in primary produce, animal welfare, and agricultural security associated with the use of agricultural compounds;
- ensuring that the use of agricultural compounds does not result in breaches of domestic food residue standards; and
- ensuring the provision of sufficient consumer information about agricultural compounds.

Submissions close on 1 July 2008. They go to Policy Group, NZ Food Safety Authority, PO Box 2835, Wellington, fax 04 894 2583, email policy@nzfsa.govt.nz. More is at <http://www.nzfsa.govt.nz/consultation/acvm-act/page-01.htm#TopOfPage>

Post-Compulsory Education Unique Identifier Code

Your views are sought on a proposal from the Privacy Commissioner to revoke the Post-Compulsory Education Unique Identifier Code 2001, because she believes it has been superseded by Part 30 of the Education Act 1989.

This code provides certain agencies involved in the post-compulsory education area with a potential exemption from infor-

mation privacy principle 12(2), when those agencies reassign a unique identifier to people in this area.

Submissions close on 4 July 2008. They go to email code@privacy.org.nz, or to: J Harrison, Office of the Privacy Commissioner, PO Box 10094, The Terrace, Wellington 6143. The discussion paper is at <http://www.privacy.org.nz/post-compulsory-education-unique-identifier-code/>. For more information email code@privacy.org.nz, or call 0800 803 909.

Environmental Standard: Ecological Flows & Water Levels

A discussion paper on developing a national environmental standard (i.e. regulations) on ecological flows and water levels is available from the Ministry for the Environment (MfE).

The aim of the standard is to bring about more consistency to the way decisions about having enough variability and quantity of water flowing in rivers, ground water systems, lakes, and wetlands are made. It will do this by:

- setting provisional limits on alterations to flows and/or water levels for rivers, wetland and groundwater systems that do not already have limits imposed through regional plans; and
- providing a system for choosing how best to evaluate ecological flows and water levels in the rivers, lakes, wetland and groundwater systems.

Submissions close on 31 July 2008. They go to MfE, PO Box 10362, Wellington, email standards@mfe.govt.nz. The discussion paper is at <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/laws/standards/ecological-flows-water-levels/public-notice.html>. Copies are also available from MfE, 23 Kate Sheppard Place, Thorndon, Wellington, tel (04) 439 7535, email publications@mfe.govt.nz

Families Commission: Carers Survey

The Families Commission's latest poll is for carers who are looking after a family member or friend, or helping them with daily tasks. The Commission is gathering information on who is cared for, the types of things that are done for them, and how this affects the carer's life and wellbeing.

The responses will help the Commission feed back information to the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) who has just launched the new Carers Strategy.

Visit <http://www.thecouch.org.nz/poll/takequestionnaire/26> to log in and take the poll/questionnaire.

International Bipolar Survey Underway

PatientView (in association with the World Federation of Mental Health - WFMH - and GAMIAN-Europe, and the European family and carer federation, EUFAMI) is carrying out an international survey for people with bipolar and their carers. The survey aims to gain a patient/carer perspective on some important issues. The information gathered will help with the creation of a global website for, and designed by, people living with bipolar depression.

The survey is being conducted online via a specialist survey website to make sure that the responses of all contributors remain anonymous, and results - due in September - will be available to the participants.

The survey closes on 30 June 2008. More information: L Oatham on 0044 (0)1547 520 965 or info@patient-view.com

New Oteake Conservation Park...

The Department of Conservation (DoC) has published a discussion paper on the proposed Oteake Conservation Park. The park would be formed from existing conservation areas, land obtained through tenure review outcomes, and whole property purchase. It would take in large sections of the St Bathans, Hawkdun, Ida, Ewe and St Mary Ranges, and would cover 64,950 hectares.

Submissions close on 14 July 2008. They go to B Hill, Otago Conservancy, Conservation House, 77 Lower Stuart Street, Dunedin 9016, tel 03 477 0677, email fbhill@doc.govt.nz More is at <http://www.doc.govt.nz/templates/page.aspx?id=46519>

...& Conservation Park at Two Thumb Range?

A new park is proposed for mid-Canterbury that brings eleven pieces of conservation land together across the Two Thumb Range. The total area of around 93,800 hectares goes from the Rakaia headwaters in the north, to the Godley Macaulay Conservation Area in the west, down to Mt Dobson Conservation Area adjoining Tekapo. The park would also include Clayton Conservation Area in the east and land from Mesopotamia Station in the northeast. Te Runanga o Arowhenua has suggested the name "Te Kahui Kaupeka" for the new park, which translates generally to "Gathering place of waters".

Submissions close on 4 July 2008. They go to The Conservator, Department of Conservation, Private Bag 4715, Christchurch, attn: Steve Sharman, email ssharman@doc.govt.nz. A discussion paper is at <http://www.doc.govt.nz/upload/documents/getting-involved/consultations/current-consultations/Two-Thumb-discussion-document-web.pdf>

International Timber Agreement: NZ Membership?

New Zealand is proposing to become party to the International Tropical Timber Agreement 2006. This agreement supports the International Tropical Timber Organisation (ITTO). We have been a "consumer member" of ITTO since 1992, and it has been an important international forum for pursuing NZ interests in the environment and forestry sectors. The issues that the ITTO addresses that are of particular interest include: illegal logging; increasing the focus of the timber trade on, and improved management of, planted forests; and researching and attempting to reduce non-tariff barriers and subsidies. There is also a fund for capacity building projects.

Submissions close on 16 July 2008. They go to the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee, Parliament House Wellington. More information is at <http://www.parliament.nz/NR/rdonlyres/B6A4E035-C308-4759-980C-0EF5818B3FB4/84535/ITTA2006NIA20NovInternationalTropicalTimberAgreement.pdf>

Te Tapui Tokotoru Conservation Management Plan

Te Tapatoru a Toi (a joint management committee) has developed a draft Conservation Management Plan (CMP). This plan provides for a management structure for Te Tapui Tokotoru, which is made up of Moutohora (Whale Island) Wildlife Management Reserve, Ohope Scenic Reserve and Tauwhare Pa Scenic Reserve. The plan will help achieve the purpose of the Ngati Awa Claims Settlement Act 2005, which required the Minister of Conservation to delegate certain reserve management powers in order to recognise Ngati Awa values and relationships with the three areas making up Te Tapui Tokotoru. It will also meet the requirements for reserve management planning under the Conservation Act 1987.

Submissions close on Friday 18 July 2008. They go to: Bay of Plenty Conservancy Office, 99 Sala Street, Rotorua 3010, tel 07 349 7400, fax 07 349 7401, email bayofplenty@doc.govt.nz, or mrdavies@doc.govt.nz. The draft plan and a submission form are at <http://www.doc.govt.nz/templates/page.aspx?id=46521>

Standards NZ: Current Consultations

Standards NZ is currently consulting on:

- an upgrade of the specifications for liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) management (submissions close on 2 July 2008);
- the specification for reticulated natural gas - Amendment 2 (submissions close on 14 July 2008); and
- the specification for the performance of windows - a revision (submissions close on 17 July 2008).

For more information/to comment go to <http://www.standards.co.nz/draft-standards/new-zealand-standards/?action=browseDrafts&draftTypeId=1&mod=drafts>, or email jono.east@standards.co.nz

Why Are Some Consultation Timeframes Getting Shorter?

We keep an eye out for consultations because of the opportunities they afford for rural and other people to have their say on issues and proposals that could affect the way they live.

For this issue we are minus at least a dozen consultations of significance to some folk out there in the rural hinterland. This is because they were allotted a short consultation - well under one month. Several of the consultations closed on 30 May, and that would have been fine if we had received information about them in time to include them in the May issue (copy closed on 5 May) - but we had not seen any publicity about them by that date. Some were published on 12 May with submissions closing on 6 June.

We are hoping that this is just an election year blip?

Even a full month is a very short time for public consultation. Many voluntary organisations only meet once a month and daily and weekly media often do not publicise current consultations. The organisations that consult may be relying on their own networks and their websites, so their consultations may be limited to those with a specialist interest.

The perspectives of people in rural NZ and in the not-for-profit sector are especially valuable because these sectors face different challenges from those in the public service, business or urban sectors, and they have their own hands-on knowledge of the impact of policies on them.

We think they should have the opportunity to give their view and those short timeframes mean this may well not happen. So we are putting in a plea to people in government and non-government organisations who are carrying out public consultations to aim for a consultation timeframe of at least six weeks duration. The policies are bound to be the better for it.

We would also be grateful if consulting agencies would email us at ruralbulletin@ruralwomen.org.nz with details of their public consultations, so we can publicise them...and if Rural Bulletin readers have information about a current consultation they could email us using the same address.

Paddy and Craig

Reducing Quadbike Accidents: Research Results

Quadbike accidents are responsible for hundreds of injuries and several fatalities on NZ farms every year. Associated insurance costs have more than doubled in the past five years, standing at \$8.3 million in 2007 for ACC alone.

Recently completed research by an ergonomics scientist with Scion's Centre for Human Factors and Ergonomics (COHFE), is helping farmers and industry bodies reduce fatalities and injuries resulting from work-related quadbike accidents on NZ farms.

The researcher believes that many problems stem from quadbikes originally being designed for recreation rather than as a vehicle tailored for farm tasks, and because they look more "error tolerant" than they actually are. For example, unlike larger wheel-based vehicles, the quad will often tip before it slides, potentially trapping the operator. He suggests that overseas manufacturers need to look more closely at what he sees as the need for greater error tolerance to be built into the design of quadbikes used in a wide diversity of off-road situations.

Some 71 areas have been identified where quadbike safety could be improved through modification, training, regulation or reorganisation of farm work and management. ACC, the Department of Labour, and the Agricultural Health and Safety Council (AHSC) are now looking to adopt some of the suggestions made in the study into their own policies and guidelines, for example, the fitting of reversing beepers.

More research is being carried out in conjunction with these organisations to further investigate these areas. Targets for the follow-on research include training for riders new to the industry, improvement of investigation methods for off-road incidents, and improving rider attention to the route ahead while working with stock.

Sheep & Deer Down, Dairy, Grapes & Kiwifruit Up

Statistics NZ's (SNZ) Agricultural Production Census results show that the national sheep flock decreased from 39.6 million in 2002 to 38.5 million in 2007. North Island sheep numbers, at 18.5 million, are at a similar level to those recorded in 2002, but South Island numbers have fallen from 21.1 million in 2002 to 19.9 million in 2007.

The national dairy herd numbered 5.3 million in 2007, up 2% on the 5.2 million recorded in 2002. Dairy milking cows and heifer numbers reached 4.2 million, up 8% from 2002. North Island numbers, at 2.9 million, are at a similar level to 2002, while South Island numbers have increased 31%, from 1.0 million to 1.3 million.

Deer numbers fell from 1.6 million in 2006 to 1.4 million in 2007. The number of female deer mated (680,000) was 8% fewer than in 2006.

The total area planted in wine grapes increased to 29,620 hectares, up 71% on 2002 and more than four times the 1994 figure. Almost 60 percent of plantings are in Marlborough, which had 17,170 hectares planted in 2007. Plantings in Marlborough increased 128% between 2002 and 2007. Canterbury had a 125% increase, taking its plantings from 750 hectares to 1,680 hectares.

Kiwifruit plantings covered 13,250 hectares, up 12% since 2002. Most of the new plantings took place in the Bay of Plenty, which now has three-quarters of all kiwifruit plantings.

Rural

Keeping the Power On...

Rural people now have more certainty about access to electricity following a review of Section 62 of the Electricity Act. This section ensured that that electricity lines companies maintained services to connections established as at 1 April 1993, but it was due to expire on 31 March 2013.

The Act is now to be revised so that the obligation to supply places with those connections will no longer expire in 2013.

An obligation to supply will be able to be met by using either lines or using electricity supplied by alternatives. The move is aimed at continued certainty of access to potentially affected consumers, and at encouraging negotiation between distributors and consumers to assess whether an obligation can be met in a more cost-effective way (e.g., by using on-site renewable resources or improving efficiency).

More information, including a Cabinet paper outlining the proposed revisions to the Electricity Act, is at <http://news.business.govt.nz/news/energy/article/5484?COMPANIESOFFICE=30aa13e6338790f5feb6d5abaefae46>

Hectares of exotic forestry harvested in 2007 amounted to 40,800, a level similar to the harvests of 2005 and 2006. In 2007, harvested areas replanted amounted to 33,000 hectares and new plantings to 2,600 hectares. New plantings have fallen steadily from the 33,700 hectares recorded in the 2002 Agricultural Production Census.

The 2007 Agricultural Production Census is the first since 2002, and it involved all farmers, horticulturists and foresters in NZ.

More is at <http://www.stats.govt.nz/NR/rdonlyres/F8CB3A2D-1A4E-4B89-821F-7F7318380A87/0/agriculturalproductionstatisticsfinaljun07hotp.pdf>

Rural Women NZ: Recent Moves

Rural Women NZ (RWNZ) has:

- recently developed a RWNZ manifesto setting out its concerns and recommendations in the areas of education, social issues, health and land issues;
- announced the Enterprising Rural Woman Award 2009, which is aimed at encouraging small rural businesses and celebrating the success of rural women entrepreneurs;
- raised \$87,500 for new research into leptospirosis, NZ's most significant occupationally-acquired disease, which is caught by humans through exposure to infected animals; and
- been seeking examples of flexible working hours working well in rural areas (the Flexible Working Hours Bill is due to become law on 1 July).

At its recent national conference, RWNZ passed the following remits:

- That RWNZ request the Ministry of Transport to reduce the speed of vehicles passing schools between the hours of 8am-9.30am and 2.30pm-4pm and that appropriate signage be erected to indicate a school zone.
- That RWNZ requests the Minister of Health to set up a National Register and fund free prostate screening every two years for men over the age of 45 years.
- That the Ministry of Social Development is asked to raise the amount that beneficiaries may earn over and above their benefit to \$150.00 without penalty per week, from \$80 per week.

Emailed examples of flexible working hours in rural areas go to noeline.holt@ruralwomen.org.nz. For more information on the other items/copies of the RWNZ manifesto: RWNZ National Office, 30 Hawkestone St, Thorndon, Wellington, tel 04 4735 524, freephone 0800 256 467, email enquiries@ruralwomen.org.nz, website www.ruralwomen.org

Increased Wood Supply Forecast

The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) has just released new wood availability forecasts for the Central North Island that indicate a steady increase in supply over the next 12 years.

Between 2008 and 2016 the availability of wood from the region is predicted to increase from 7.5 million cubic metres to around 10.2 million cubic metres per year. After 2016, the in-

creases are expected to result in increased log supply, and this has the potential to significantly increase the volume to around 12.7 million cubic metres per year after 2020.

The Central North Island is the largest forestry region in NZ. It is estimated that around 8 million cubic metres was harvested in the region for the year ended 31 March 2007 - that's around 40% of the total NZ harvest for the year.

The wood availability forecasts are available online at: <http://www.maf.govt.nz/mafnet/publications/wood-availability>

Varroa: New South Island Controlled Area

MAF Biosecurity NZ (MAFBNZ) has established a new South Island Controlled Area to protect beekeeping operations in the West Coast, Canterbury and areas further south from varroa that was recently found at St Arnaud.

The new area, now in force, covers the northern part of Westland; Grey, Buller; Tasman; Nelson; Marlborough; and part of north Canterbury. It is a temporary measure (on the future of which stakeholders will be consulted).

Report on 2006 Canterbury Snow Storm

A new report called "The Resilience and Response of Farm Households in the Aftermath of the 2006 Canterbury Snow Storm" documents the social impact on farm households and their communities of the Canterbury snow storms of June 2006. The findings highlighted issues raised in interviews with 31 farmers and seven officials in the Canterbury region.

They demonstrate that the "hollowing-out" of rural NZ and the disintegration of many traditional community structures have increased the vulnerability of the population. At the same time, increasing farm size, increased fragmentation of farm blocks, a decrease in the number of full-time residential farm workers and an increasing reliance on electronic communications have resulted in a new technological dependency. All of this results in a decreased capacity to respond to adverse events and an increased sense of isolation and vulnerability when telecommunication links fail.

The report emphasises that increasing resilience requires recognition that the modern farm remains both home and business, and that any support provided needs to recognise this. The authors also stress the need to support community vitality (or rebuilding) because the snow of 2006 showed that in any adverse event, self-reliance and mutual support are primary components of resilience.

This snow storm has prompted many households to take better precautions to minimise the impact of future adverse events and there is some acceptance that production systems (or land use) may have to change. There is no evidence that farmers who had taken appropriate preventative measures have been disillusioned by experiencing the snow storm or its aftermath.

The report is at <http://www.maf.govt.nz/mafnet/rural-nz/emergency-management/snow/farm-response-to-2006-canterbury-snow/>

New Wool Company Formed

PGG Wrightson has signed an agreement to combine the majority of its wool business with a new growers' co-operative, Wool Grower Holdings Ltd, formed by the Wool Industry Network (WIN). The new entity, which has the interim name The Wool Company, is expected to begin operating on 1 July 2008.

The list of woodburners authorised by MfE is at <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/laws/standards/woodburners/authorised-woodburners.html>. For more information email woodburners@mfe.govt.nz. Information on the National Environmental Standards for Air Quality is at <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/laws/standards/air-quality-standards.html>

Environment

Results of National Garden Bird Survey

Just two native species, silvereyes and fantails, feature among the top 10 birds counted during NZ's first nationwide garden bird survey, conducted from 14-22 July last year.

For the survey, participants spent an hour watching birds in their home gardens, local parks, or school grounds, and a total of 2064 survey forms were returned, recording 90 species.

Blackbirds were the most widely distributed species, being present in 90% of home gardens, followed by house sparrows in 86%, silvereyes 81%, starlings 61%, song thrushes 52%. Silvereyes were recorded in the greatest numbers (average 10.2 per garden). House sparrows averaged 9.4, starlings 3.1, blackbirds 2.7, greenfinches 1.2. Gardens in which people fed birds - on sugar-water, bread, fat and/or seeds - had greater numbers of birds, and the largest numbers of tui and bellbirds were in gardens where the birds were fed sugar-water. One survey participant who puts out sugar-water in lots of locations around his garden recorded 35 tui, 45 bellbirds, and 35 silvereyes. Results from parks and school grounds were similar to home gardens.

The top ten bird species in NZ gardens are: 1: silvereye; 2: house sparrow; 3: starling; 4: blackbird; 5: greenfinch; 6: song thrush; 7: chaffinch; 8: goldfinch; 9: fantail; and 10: dunnock (or hedgesparrow).

More is at <http://www.landcareresearch.co.nz/research/biocons/gardenbird/results2007/index.asp>

Woodburners: Meeting Air Quality Standards?

A recent review by the Ministry for the Environment (MfE), Environment Canterbury and the Nelson City Council of woodburners on sale in NZ found that compliance with NZ's air quality standards was poor, and that quality assurance among manufacturers varied significantly.

MfE has a list of authorised woodburners that have been tested and found to meet the national environmental standards at the date of testing. All the woodburners on its list have a discharge of less than 1.5 grams of particles for each kilogram of dry wood burnt and a thermal efficiency of at least 65%.

Storing Windpower for Calm Days

Utsira, a small island off Norway, has found a way to turn surplus wind power into hydrogen. The island's two wind turbines produce more energy than the 210 people living there need and a pilot project begun in July 2004 has made it possible to store wind power by transforming it into hydrogen. To do this the surplus wind-generated energy is put through water, and using electrolysis, the hydrogen atoms are separated from the oxygen atoms that make up water molecules. The hydrogen is then compressed and stored in a container that can hold enough hydrogen gas to cover the energy needs of the 10 households for two days. The only emission is oxygen.

The power consumption of the islanders varies, but the stored hydrogen ensures that sufficient renewable power can be generated at any time - even when consumption is high and wind activity is minimal.

However, producing and storing energy this way is still more expensive than the hydraulic power produced on Norway's mainland.

More is at http://turist.utsira.kommune.no/?set_language=en

Biodiesel from Low Grade NZ Tallow

An Auckland company, Flo-Dry Engineering, has developed a new process for making bio-diesel from waste tallow that enables it to accommodate a lower grade tallow than is normally used. The final product is blended with mineral diesel to make a biodiesel blend. Tallow is a renewable resource low in sulphur, and greenhouse gas emissions from tallow-based biodiesel are estimated to be a quarter of those from extra-low sulphur mineral diesel. The company says its new plant could be producing tallow based biodiesel from December.

New Zealand meat companies produce about 150,000 tonnes of tallow each year, most of which is currently exported.

Effects of Climate Change: Updated MfE Manual

The Ministry for the Environment (MfE) has updated its publication "Climate Change Effects and Impacts Assessment: A Guidance Manual for Local Government". The update includes the latest projections of the expected physical impacts of climate change at the national and regional level, including changes in temperature and rainfall in NZ. For example, it indicates that for this winter and spring, NZ can expect the east and north to be drier, but more rain in the west of both islands.

Tourism

Visitors to NZ

According to Statistics NZ there were 179,400 visitor arrivals in April 2008, down 13,800 - 7% - from April 2007 (partly because of the Easter holidays occurring in March in 2008). However, the estimated average number of visitors in NZ per day was up 2%, from 141,100 in April 2007 to 143,800 in April 2008. This was due to more visitor arrivals in preceding months and an increase in the average length of stay.

Visitor arrivals from Australia decreased by 4,400 (6%) in April 2008, when compared with April 2007. There were also fewer visitor arrivals from the United States (down 3,500 or 20%) and the United Kingdom (down 2,100 or 11%).

Visitor arrivals numbered 2.483 million in the April 2008 year, up 36,400 (1%) from the previous year. There were more visitors from Australia and China, but fewer from Korea, Japan and the United Kingdom.

New Zealand residents departed on 164,300 short-term trips overseas in April 2008, up 600 (less than 1%) from April 2007. There were more departures to countries in Asia (up 2,300) and Europe (up 1,700), but fewer to Australia (down 3,100). In the year ended April 2008, NZ residents departed on 1.997 million overseas trips, up 116,800 (6%) from the April 2007 year. There were more trips to Australia, France, the United Kingdom, China, the United States and the Cook Islands, but fewer trips to Fiji.

Permanent and long-term (PLT) arrivals exceeded departures by 400 in April 2008. Annual net PLT migration in the year ended April 2008 remained unchanged from the March 2008 year (4,700), but was well down on the net inflow of 11,200 recorded in the previous April year.

Some 30,600 went to Australia in the year ended April 2008, the highest since 2001 (31,000). Net inflows were recorded for the United Kingdom (7,100), India (4,200), the Philippines (3,300), Fiji (2,500), and South Africa (2,300).

Qualmark Green for Sustainable Tourism

From August this year Qualmark license holders will need to meet minimum environmental standards as part of their quality accreditation assessments. The Qualmark Green qualification will sit alongside the Qualmark ratings. It will indicate - with a gold, silver or bronze star - how sustainable the operator is by measuring energy efficiency, waste management, water conservation, general conservation and community initiatives.

Health & Safety

New Cervical Cancer Immunisation Programme

A new cervical cancer immunisation programme for young NZ women is due to begin in September this year. The human papillomavirus (HPV) immunisation programme will be offered

free to more than 300,000 young women aged 12 to 18 years over the next five years.

From 1 September this year, all young women born in 1990 and 1991 can make an appointment and begin HPV immunisation from their family doctor or practice nurse or health clinic. From 2009, the vaccine will be incorporated into the routine immunisation schedule for year 8 girls (age 12-13).

The immunisation programme is expected to save around thirty lives a year. A reduction in the number of abnormal smear results is also expected.

More information is at <http://www.moh.govt.nz/moh.nsf/indexmh/immunisation-schedule-hpv>

ACC Home Help/Childcare Rates Rise

An extra \$46.5 million over four years will go to non-agency providers of home-based support, i.e., friends and family members of injured people who have given up aspects of their own lives to care for the injured person. The types of care covered include attendant care, childcare and home help.

ACC funds non-agency care for around 14,000 claims each year. Hourly rates for non-agency providers will increase from \$11.28 to \$13.82 for home help, attendant care (level 1) and child care; and from \$13.54 to \$16.59 for attendant care (level 2). The different rates reflect different skill-level requirements and issues around complexity of care.

The new rates will be effective from and back-dated to 1 April 2008.

Maternity Services Consumer Satisfaction Survey

In a survey of 2,936 women who gave birth to live babies in NZ during March and April 2007 maternity services, with antenatal care, lead maternity care, hospital stay, and postnatal care all scored satisfaction levels of 90% or higher.

The survey also raised some issues, including more women finding it hard to locate a Lead Maternity Carer (LMC), and some women reporting that they did not feel ready to leave hospital.

The report is available at: www.moh.govt.nz/maternity

Tsunami Monitoring Network Coming

A fifth sea-level gauge installed at in Tauranga will form part of a national network of 20 gauges being set up to monitor tsunamis. Five gauges will be on offshore islands, and the rest will be in coastal locations.

The gauges will detect first landfall of tsunami waves, and this information will go to NZ civil defence agencies so they can focus their response on the areas that have been affected most. The information the network records will be shared in real time with tsunami warning centres around the Pacific.

Violence Prevention Programme Wins Global Award

The Aotearoa NZ Peace Foundation has won an international Global Peacebuilders' Award for its "Cool Schools" programme,

which trains students, teachers and parents in conflict resolution and peer mediation skills. The programme started in 1991 with 12 schools in the Auckland region and has grown to include 1600 primary, intermediate and secondary schools.

The Ministry of Health has funded the programme since it began, and in 2008 will provide additional funding to expand into another 500 schools in the South Island and Wellington regions. Schools involved with the programme consistently report reduced playground conflict and increased use of the "Cool Schools" techniques in the classroom. "Cool Schools" was one of 50 international violence prevention projects to receive the award.

Dealing with Sexual Violence: Research

Over the next six months the Crime and Justice Research Centre of Victoria University of Wellington will be conducting interviews and surveys with victims of sexual violence and rape crisis workers, counsellors, doctors, police and community leaders. The research is aimed at improving the likelihood of sexual violence victims making a complaint, supporting victims through the criminal justice system, and identifying the types of intervention that best support victims.

The two-year research project is being led by the Ministry of Women's Affairs in partnership with the Ministry of Justice and the NZ Police.

New TV Food Advertising Guidelines for Children

The NZ Television Broadcasters' Council (NZTBC) has launched a new Children's Food Classification System called "Getting it Right for Children". It is part of the guidelines for television advertisements, and is aimed at helping to tackle NZ's obesity problems.

From 1 July, new food or beverage advertisements shown at children's viewing times must be approved under the Children's Food Classification System, with all advertisements to comply by 1 October. The classification system fits with the Ministry of Health's standards on the product's nutritional value. Advertisers will apply to the Television Commercial Approvals Bureau to establish whether a food or beverage in an advertisement is "everyday", "sometimes" or "occasional". The bureau will determine if and when advertisements for "occasional" products can be screened.

The NZTBC is an industry organisation representing the non-competitive interests of free-to-air television broadcasters in NZ. Its members are TVWorks (TV3 and C4), Television NZ and Maori Television.

The guidelines are available on www.nztbc.co.nz. NZ Television Broadcasters' Council is at <http://www.nztbc.co.nz/>, and the Television Commercial Approvals Bureau is at <http://www.tvcab.co.nz/>

Updated Nutrition Guidelines for Infants

The fourth edition of "Food and Nutrition Guidelines for Healthy Infants and Toddlers (Aged 0-2)" is now available.

The most significant change in the latest guidelines involves the recommended duration of breastfeeding (extended to twelve months of age), and the introduction of solids (when infants are developmentally ready, usually around six months).

Breastfeeding rates at birth are generally quite high in NZ, but the rates tend to decline rapidly as babies get older.

A copy of the Food and Nutrition Guidelines for Healthy Infants and Toddlers (Aged 0-2) A Background Paper is at: www.moh.govt.nz/publications

The Social Cost of Illicit Drug Use

New research shows that use of illegal drugs like cannabis and P had social costs to NZ in 2006 of \$1,310 million (\$1.31 billion), nearly 1% of NZ's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Illegal drug production cost the country \$519 million. Related crime cost us \$414 million. Lost output due to illicit drug use cost \$106 million. Another \$53 million resulted from drug-attributable health care and road accidents.

Over two fifths of social costs - 42%, or \$551 million - are caused by illegal stimulants such as P. The report says stimulants stand out as the "the second largest source of tangible costs for the user" at \$2640 per user in 2006. They caused \$551 million of social costs in 2006. The social costs of cannabis use were estimated at \$444 million.

The research is being used to create a "drug harm index", which can be used to quantify drug-related costs, where avoidable costs lie and what could be done to minimise them. It will help answer questions about the cost-benefit of current drug strategies and policies.

The research was carried out by Business and Economic Research Limited (BERL).

Communicating with Older Parents

A campaign aiming to help adult children seeking better communication with their aging parents about life topics such as driving and independence has been launched in NZ by Home Instead Senior Care. The "40-70 Rule" campaign has had support in America and Canada where the company also operates.

Research conducted by Home Instead's Canadian and American branches revealed nearly one-third of adults in the US have a major communication problem with their parents that stems from continuing the parent-child role. The survey found that baby-boomers have the most difficulty talking with their parents about independence issues, such as continuing to live in their own home, and that their parent's desire to remain independent makes it challenging to address such sensitive issues as health (28%) and money (21%).

For more information visit www.4070talk.com. For a free copy of The 40-70 Rule Guide, telephone 07 834 2296, or email neil@homeinstead.co.nz

Education

Ka Hikitia - Maori Education Strategy

Ka Hikitia - "Managing for Success" - sets out priorities, goals, actions and outcomes for Maori students in both immersion and mainstream schools for the next five years. The aims are to push up Maori student achievement levels, ensure that a Maori student's culture is recognised and acknowledged by schools and centres, and have Maori students contributing successfully to NZ and the world.

Actions in the plan include supporting the professional learning and capability of educators, responsible and accountable professional leadership, high-quality Maori language education, family, whanau and iwi engagement in education and government agencies working together.

More information on Ka Hikitia is at <http://kahikitia.minedu.govt.nz>

Research on Special Education Underway...

Two research teams, led by Auckland Uniservices and Poutama Pounamu, have begun their research work in 25 schools as part of a project looking at effective teaching for students with special education needs.

A pilot study for the project - called Enhancing Effective Practice in Special Education - involves 21 schools and four kura kaupapa Maori. Researchers will identify indicators of effective teaching practice for students who require significant adaptations to the curriculum.

The research findings will be used to enhance the professional development programme for teachers.

More information: vijaya.dharan@minedu.govt.nz or bernadette.holden@minedu.govt.nz

...& the Starpath Project: New Research

Tikipunga High School in Whangarei has become the first school outside of Auckland to take part in a pioneering research project to increase the number of Maori, Pacific and students from low-income backgrounds attending university. The Starpath Project, based at The University of Auckland, aims to transform educational outcomes for students under-represented in higher education in NZ through evidence-based research.

The researchers will follow the educational journey of Tikipunga High School students as they progress from Year 9 to 13, looking particularly at achievement and retention. The project will identify the barriers where under-achieving students diverge from the path to tertiary education, and then develop strategies for schools and students to overcome these barriers. Close attention will be given to how NCEA as a qualification system impacts the life chances of different groups of students. The transition to university of those students who do progress will be followed.

Tikipunga High School is decile-two school with a roll of 443 students, with 70% Maori enrolment.

Survey of International Students: Findings

The 2007 National Survey of International Students shows, overall, that international students have a positive experience in NZ. Compared with results from a survey in 2003, students from Asia in particular are more satisfied with progress in their studies and a higher proportion say they intend to stay in NZ after their studies to seek work and permanent residence.

However, the survey also highlighted the need for NZ to ensure a quality experience for international students that extended beyond education. Some 34% of international students believed making friends was difficult and 61% wanted to have more NZ friends.

The full report is at <http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/international/22971>

Dyslexia Foundation to Survey Teachers

The Dyslexia Foundation of NZ is carrying out an online survey to hear teachers' attitudes to dyslexia and what it's really like in the classroom. The survey has been developed with the Nielsen Company for Dyslexia Awareness Week (running 16-22 June) and the findings will help address the needs of the 70,000 NZ school children affected by dyslexia-related learning disabilities.

The survey will be live 15-25 May, with results to be released in time for Dyslexia Awareness Week. More information about Dyslexia Awareness Week, the 4D programme and the Dyslexia Foundation is available on www.dyslexiafoundation.org.nz

Transport

Consumer Information on Used Cars Updated

From 1 July 2008, motor vehicle traders will need to attach a new Consumer Information Notice (CIN) to used motor vehicles they have for sale. The CIN has been updated to include:

- the vehicle year of the motor vehicle as recorded on the motor vehicle register;
- the total cash price value - including GST and on-the-road costs;
- the addition of a tick box system to show whether or not a security interest exists;

- information showing whether the radio is capable of receiving broadcasts in the range of 88 to 108 MHz without having to use a band expander; and
- the addition of a tick box system to show if the vehicle is licensed.

More information is at <http://news.business.govt.nz/news/consumer/article/5486>

"Sea Change" Shipping Strategy

Sea Change is a strategy setting out actions that will help industry and government increase domestic sea freight.

At present about 15% of NZ's domestic freight is carried by sea. NZ's coastal shipping network is small: eight NZ companies operate thirteen ships, which carry about 85% of our coastal cargo, with the balance being carried by international ships.

The strategy goal is for NZ to move 20% of its inter-regional domestic freight by sea by 2020, and 30% by 2040. Actions under the strategy include:

- a Seafreight Development Unit in the Ministry of Transport to create a visible focal point for the coastal shipping sector;
- reducing barriers to coastal shipping accessing government funds;
- government agencies working with the sector to increase the supply of skilled workers;
- information gathering to encourage better use of sea freight and inform policy development; and
- developing effective supply chains.

Let Your Internet do the Driving?

Land Transport NZ (LTNZ) says cutting back on vehicle use through increased internet use is a good way to save on fuel costs - and other indirect savings you can make by using the internet rather than making a trip into town to shop or pay bills include reduced vehicle depreciation and avoiding driver fatigue.

LTNZ itself saw a 36% increase in online transactions for the September 2007 to March 2008 period, including motor vehicle licensing and re-licensing, Road User Charges purchases, and driver licence test bookings. Roughly 6% of motor vehicle licences are now purchased online, about 16% of change of ownership transactions are completed online and nearly 30% of change of address notifications.

Land Transport Management Amendment Bill

This Bill that merges Transit NZ and Land Transport NZ into a new entity (the NZ Transport Agency) and sets up a new funding and planning system for land transport, has been reported back. The Bill now includes requirements that the new NZ Transport Agency develop systems to make sure that activities considered for funding are assessed on their own merit, and that it reports annually on the effectiveness of these systems.

Air NZ to Establish Aviation Academy

Air NZ is to establish an aviation academy to develop and nurture up to 300 home-grown pilots, cabin crew, engineers and specialist airline management staff. As well as providing training for those starting out, the academy will provide support and training for staff moving through their careers, including aircraft type rating and simulator training.

Energy

Accidents Using Electricity & Gas - Take Care

During 2007 there were:

- 77 notifiable electrical accidents, which caused 10 fatalities and injured 67 people;
- 15 notifiable and 25 non-notifiable natural gas accidents, with three of the notifiable accidents causing injury to three people in total; and
- 27 notifiable and 33 non-notifiable LPG accidents, with five of the notifiable accidents causing two fatalities and injury to 14 people.

In terms of electrical and gas accidents between 1993 and 2007:

- electrical accidents 1993-2007: line mechanics made up 37% of the electrical worker accidents (494) occurring in the last 15 years, with electricians being involved in 38% of the accidents, trainee electricians involved in 9% and trainee line mechanics in 3%. Farm workers had 6% of "other occupations" accidents (386) with a significant number of these accidents involved digging or carrying out non-electrical work near high-voltage live lines. Young people under 25 years were involved in 45% of general public accidents (205), and in over 50% of accidents involving the general public occurred at home (causing 23 fatalities and injuring 86 people).
- Natural Gas Accidents 1993-2007: 13% of the notifiable accidents (151) and over 50% of the total non-notifiable accidents (514) reported to Energy Safety involved mains/service/regulator stations, and 31% of the notifiable accidents involved water heaters. Space heaters accounted for 28% of notifiable accidents. About 16% of the notifiable accidents involved cookers/ovens.
- Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) Incidents and Accidents 1993-2007: young people were involved in 15 fatal intentional LPG inhalation accidents. Of the notifiable LPG accidents 31% involved cookers/ovens, 35% involved portable heaters, and 8% LPG refillable containers.

About 12% (31) of the total notifiable accidents (264) in the last fifteen years occurred in caravans.

More is at <http://www.energysafety.govt.nz/upload/56483/summary.pdf>

Employment

Employment in March

According to Statistics NZ, in the March 2008 quarter:

- seasonally adjusted employment decreased by 29,000 to 2,141,000;
- the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate increased to 3.6% with 81,000 people unemployed;
- the seasonally adjusted labour force participation rate decreased to 67.7%;
- the seasonally adjusted total actual hours worked per week decreased 1.9%; and
- 1,062,000 people were not in the labour force.

Holiday Protections for Shift Workers: Bill

The Holidays (Transfer of Public Holidays) Amendment Bill supported by both Business NZ and the NZ Council of Trade Unions would amend the Holidays Act 2003. The legislation follows a recent Supreme Court decision that found that an employer and employee cannot agree to transfer a public holiday from a day listed in the Holidays Act to another day. The Bill would ensure that employers have the flexibility to transfer a public holiday in line with business needs and employees working shifts that span two days can apply a public holiday to one whole shift.

Public & Private Sectors: Jobs & Pay Up

Average quarterly earnings and the number of filled jobs continued to grow in the five years to March 2007, according to Statistics NZ. Average quarterly earnings for full-quarter jobs increased by 4.3% in the March 2007 year, and 22.7% in the five years to March 2007, to \$10,760. Both the public- and private-sector average quarterly earnings grew by 4.1% in the March 2007 year, with earnings at \$13,310 in the public sector and \$10,120 in the private sector. Over the five-year period, average mean quarterly earnings grew by 26.2% in the public sector, and 21.5% in the private sector.

The annual average number of filled jobs was 1,769,750 in the March 2007 year, an increase of 1.6% from the March 2006 year, and 16.8% in the five years since March 2002. In the year to March 2007 most filled jobs (81.0%) were in the private sector. Nearly half (45.6%) of all filled jobs were in firms with 100 or more employees.

In the year to March 2007, there was an average quarterly worker turnover rate of 17.1%. The private sector had a higher worker turnover rate (18.3%) than the public sector (11.9%).

More is at <http://www.stats.govt.nz/leed/>

Justice/The Law

Law Commission: Inquiries Report

The Law Commission's 102nd report "A New Inquiries Act" was tabled in Parliament recently. Inquiries perform an important role in the system of government in NZ, but the Commissions of Inquiry Act 1908 is in need of revision. The Commission's report contains that revision, in the form of a draft Bill.

The new Act, if passed, would establish two types of inquiry - public inquiries and government inquiries.

Public inquiries are designed for big and meaty issues that are of high level concern to the public and Ministers - disasters, for example, or devising a new comprehensive policy framework on a particular subject. They would replace existing commissions of inquiry and royal commissions.

Government inquiries, on the other hand, are intended to deal with smaller and more immediate issues where a quick and authoritative answer is required from an independent inquirer.

Under the Commission's recommendations both types of inquiry will enjoy the same powers. The distinctions lie in how they are appointed. The first are established by the Governor-General by Order in Council. These reports will be formally tabled in Parliament. The second type of inquiry will be appointed by a Minister and report to that Minister. But, unlike current ministerial inquiries, they will have statutory powers and protections.

The report is available at: www.lawcom.govt.nz

Business

Overseas Merchandise Trade: April 2008

According to recent Stats NZ figures, the value of merchandise exports rose 19.7% from April 2007 to April 2008, to reach \$3.8 billion. Imports were up 22.0% to \$4.1 billion. Both increases were led by oil-related commodities, which commonly have irregular monthly trade patterns.

In April 2008, the monthly trade balance was a deficit of \$334 million, or 8.8% of exports. As a percentage of exports, this is the largest deficit for an April month since 1982, but it should be considered in context with the monthly irregularity of some of the commodities (both export and import) that contributed to it.

Small Business Advisory Group 2008 Report

A report from the Small Business Advisory Group (SBAG) to government notes that NZ needs more small- and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) competing successfully on the international stage. SBAG sees the main issues for small business as:

- a more competitive environment for business - one that provides incentives for business growth, innovation and risk-taking, and also encourages businesses to base themselves in NZ. It would also encourage the attraction and retention of the skilled staff needed by growing international businesses and provide the world-class infrastructure needed to support world-class businesses;
- creating smarter business owners - by facilitating access to business assistance and support that provides business owners with more time to focus on growing their business and exploiting new markets. More tools are also needed in order to make business processes and transactions with government as easy as possible; and
- benefiting from sustainable business - giving SMEs the information and support they need to make the most of the opportunities and challenges posed by the world-wide trend towards more sustainable businesses.

Other issues in the report include grievances, food labelling and making it easier to deal with government departments.

There are 449,835 SMEs in NZ (45,837 of them in the Wellington region).

The report is at http://www.med.govt.nz/templates/MultipageDocumentPage____34519.aspx

NZ-India Free Trade Agreement Talks...

NZ and India have discussed progress on a joint study into a NZ/India Free Trade Agreement. There is increasing interest from NZ businesses in trade possibilities in India, and trade between the countries has grown rapidly in the past three years, though this is from a small base: two-way trade is worth currently around \$630 million a year.

...& NZ-Japan Customs Recognition Agreement

New Zealand and Japan have signed a Customs Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) that will help exporters move their goods more quickly and efficiently between the two countries. The MRA, signed in Tokyo, establishes a closer relationship between the two Customs authorities.

Businesses in NZ who have joined NZ Customs' Secure Exports Scheme (SES) will enjoy the advantages of having this scheme recognised in Japan, because their shipments will get into Japan more quickly and with less scrutiny at the border. Japanese exporters who have joined Japan's equivalent - the Authorised Economic Operator scheme (AEO) - will enjoy similar benefits getting their goods into NZ.

Japan is NZ's third largest export market with exports reaching \$3.365 billion in 2007.

New Record for Wine Exports

New Zealand's wine exports have reached a new record level with wine export revenues increasing 16% to NZ\$766 million in the year to March 2008, according to NZ Winegrowers. This was up from NZ\$661 million in the previous year.

The strong growth in wine exports continues the long-term trend. Over the past decade wine export volumes have risen at a compound annual growth rate of 19% per annum and 26% per annum for the last five years. NZ Winegrowers believes the industry is on-track to reach export figures of \$1 billion by 2010.

Money Matters

Food Prices

Statistics NZ (SNZ) advises that food prices increased 0.3% in the April 2008 month, mainly due to higher prices for the grocery food subgroup (up 1.2%). Within this subgroup, the main contributors to the 1.2% increase were higher prices for yoghurt (up 8.8%), sauces (up 5.1%), potato crisps (up 4.6%) and eggs (up 7.6%). The main downward contributions came from lower prices for chocolate (down 1.5%) and processed cheese (down 13.4%).

The most significant downward subgroup contribution in the April 2008 month came from lower prices for non-alcoholic beverages (down 2.7%). Within this subgroup, the main contributors to the decrease were lower prices for soft drinks (down 3.2%) and fruit juice (down 6.6%).

For the year to April 2008, food prices rose 6%. All of the five subgroups recorded upward contributions, with the most significant upward contribution coming from higher prices for the grocery food subgroup (up 10.7%). Within the subgroup, the main contributors came from higher prices for cheese (up 45.5%), fresh milk (up 21.1%), bread (up 13.1%) and butter (up 86.0%). The remaining four subgroups recorded, in order of significance, the following upward contributions: restaurant meals and ready-to-eat food (up 5.0%), meat, poultry and fish (up 2.3%), non-alcoholic beverages (up 3.0%), and fruit and vegetables (up 1.0%).

International Monetary Fund Reports on NZ

In its latest report on NZ, the International Monetary fund (IMF) says that the country is now entering a period of greater economic uncertainty and that factors such as higher mortgage rates, high food and energy prices, a slowing housing market and the impact of the drought are likely to conspire to deliver a period of slower economic growth.

In its view a period of slower economic growth is likely to see the easing of some of the economy's imbalances while high international commodity prices and slowing domestic demand are likely to combine to narrow the current account deficit.

It sees NZ as being in a strong fiscal position, with the banking sector being sound with stable profits, high capitalisation, and few non-performing loans - although vulnerabilities exist.

The IMF also says that NZ banks are not exposed to sub-prime lending like in the United States, but that current global financial market turbulence has flowed through to NZ in the form of higher cost of funding for commercial banks.

Treasury to Supervise Impacts of NZ's Regulations

Treasury is to supervise NZ's regulatory quality system, with the Ministry of Economic Development's (MED's) Regulatory Impact Analysis (RIA) Unit moving there. The idea is to have a "whole of government" approach to strengthening RIA quality assurance and a more co-ordinated approach to improving the quality of our regulatory systems.

Treasury focuses on state sector performance and value for money, and it will be able to assess the impact of regulation on the performance of the economy as a whole. MED will deal with regulations that might be seen as inhibiting growth or innovation at firm and industry levels. It will retain responsibility for assessing the impact of regulation on business; reducing business compliance costs; understanding the effect of regulation on economic growth; setting high standards in regulation design; studying the impacts of regulation on business through benchmarking and other tools; and reviewing the efficiency and effectiveness of regulatory regimes and the impact on economic development.

Note: quality assurance is any systematic process of checking to see whether a product or service being developed is meeting specified requirements.

NZ Joins Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency

New Zealand has become a full member of the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency, a move that will allow NZ to better support the World Bank in its work of promoting economic opportunities for some of the world's poorest communities.

A press release is at <http://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/nz+joins+multilateral+investment+guarantee+organisation>

More Information Available on Market Rents

The Department of Building and Housing has expanded its market rent information and now offers information on 298 areas in NZ. The market rent data is one of the most frequently visited on the Department's website, and it now provides information for 117 additional areas in NZ.

For tenancy advice and information call 0800 TENANCY (0800 83 62 62) or visit <http://www.dbh.govt.nz/tenancy-index>

Treaty Matters

Mauao Historic Reserve Vesting Bill Passed

This recently passed Bill transfers the legal ownership of the Mauao historic reserve to the three iwi of Tauranga Moana, Ngai Te Rangi, Ngati Ranginui and Ngati Pukenga. Mauao (also known as Mt Maunganui) is the extinct volcano at the entrance to Tauranga Harbour. Its name means "caught in the light of the day".

On registration, the three iwi will become the registered proprietors of Mauao. The Bill also retains Mauao's status as an historic reserve, and the public will continue to have access to it (around 850,000 visitors enjoyed Mauao's walking tracks in 2007).

Treaty/Foreshore & Seabed Claim: Terms Agreed

The Crown and Ngati Pahauwera have signed the first Terms of Negotiation combining historical Treaty claims and foreshore and seabed claims. They aim to reach an agreement in principle by September this year for management of the interests of Ngati Pahauwera in the public foreshore and seabed, lands and rivers.

Ngati Pahauwera is a confederation of hapu centred on the Mohaka River in the northern Hawke's Bay.

The Economics of Treaty Settlements: Two Reports

Business and Economic Research Ltd (BERL) has produced two reports to which claimants who have settled their claims or are well advanced in the settlement process have contributed. The first one: "Functions and Costs of Operating a Post-settlement Governance Entity" sets out the operating costs of a medium sized post-governance settlement entity. It models the fixed costs, the discretionary costs (i.e., the expectations of the beneficiaries for a range of grants and financial assistance to the iwi), and the size of the commercial and financial redress package that would be required to enable the organisation to operate effectively.

The second report, "Cost Benefit Analysis of Alternative Settlement Strategies", uses a basic spreadsheet-based model to show income generated by early settlement, as against the costs of income lost, and the ongoing costs of continued settlement negotiations.

The reports and associated worksheets are available at <http://www.cftr.org.nz/storehouse/tools/>

The Elections

NZ Out of Sight - but Not Out of Mind

Close to 48,000 Kiwis living overseas are enrolled to vote for this year's election - a 35% increase on the same time before the 2005 election (when 28,145 votes were cast). Close to 8,000 of them are aged 35 to 39 years, with around 6,240 aged 18 to 29 years.

These broad figures include:

- a 30% increase in people enrolled to vote with an Australian postal address - over 28,500 (22,000 in 2005); and
- a 48% increase in people enrolled to vote with a postal address in England - over 8,600 (5,900 in 2005).

To be eligible to enrol you must: be 18 years or older, and have lived in NZ for more than one year continuously at some time in your life, be a NZ citizen and have been in NZ within the last three years, or be a permanent resident of NZ and have been in NZ in the last 12 months.

Enrol before you go overseas at www.elections.org.nz, by freetexting your name and address to 3676, getting a form at a PostShop or calling 0800 36 76 56. www.elections.org.nz

Internet/ICT

Netguide's 2008 Web Awards

Best blog: public address (publicaddress.net) Sample comment: "it has the best possible signal-to-noise ratio of any blog in NZ."

Best education site: study it (www.studyit.org.nz) Sample comment: "good resources, plus students get the chance to help each other and the teachers are all awesome."

Best real estate site: trademe property (www.trademe.co.nz/trade-me-property) Sample comment: "the cheapest and most effective way to market your house."

Best employment site: seek (www.seek.co.nz) Sample comment: "the easiest employment site to use with the most up-to-date job listings."

Best entertainment site: biggie (www.biggie.co.nz) Sample comment: "makes organising my social life much easier. It has glorious photos too."

Best financial services site: ASB bank (www.asb.co.nz) Sample comment: "I'm able to do almost everything via their web site and very rarely need to contact my personal banker."

Best games-related site: gameplanet (www.gameplanet.co.nz) Sample comment: "the best news and reviews, covering all types of games and gaming platforms."

Best home page: stuff (www.stuff.co.nz) Sample comment: "as an overseas resident, it's great to get such a wide range of information on NZ."

Best isp- nationwide: telstraclear (www.telstraclear.co.nz) Sample comment: "great service, friendly help when necessary and great anti-spam protection."

Best isp - regional: inspire (www.inspire.net.nz) Sample comment: "they have competent staff to back up their services and, best of all, they are friendly."

Best lifestyle site: grownups (www.grownups.co.nz) Sample comment: "has everything that we 50+ people need, want and look for."

Best online shopping site: gp store (www.gpstore.co.nz) Sample comment: "an outstanding selection of games and dvds and their service is always top class."

Best media site: stuff (www.stuff.co.nz) Sample comment: "I like how you can go into each regional newspaper for news within smaller areas."

Best new site: bookabach (www.bookabach.co.nz) Sample comment: "a really informative and easy to use web site. It enabled us to enjoy a great family holiday."

Best government site: inland revenue (www.ird.govt.nz) Sample comment: "everyone hates paying taxes, but at least it's easy to find information."

Best community site: move2nz (www.move2nz.co.nz) Sample comment: "excellent information to assist migrants or returning NZers."

Best travel site house of travel: (www.houseoftravel.co.nz) Sample comment: "excellent for flight and accommodation comparisons - all in one easy step."

Best sports and recreation site: Joint winners: vorb (www.vorb.co.nz) Sample comment: "it's amazing how many mountain bikers use this web site. Awesome features and a buzzing community."

and *allblacks.com* (www.allblacks.com) Sample comment: "keeps us informed about our boys."

Best trading site: trademe (www.trademe.co.nz) Sample comment: "I check it most days to see what's on offer. It has the greatest bargains without the hassle."

Best youth site: 247 girl (www.247girl.co.nz) Sample comment: "the best site for girls my age who just need help with normal life problems."

NZ's favourite search engine: google (www.google.co.nz) Sample comment: "always has the answers."

NZ's favourite social networking site: facebook (www.facebook.com) Sample comment: "the best way to keep in touch with friends all around the world."

Best web ad campaign: mintshot (www.mintshot.co.nz) Sample comment: "win some good prizes just by watching ads."

Site of the year: stuff (www.stuff.co.nz) Sample comment: "keeps me up to date with goings-on on a regional level when I'm in Australia. I couldn't live without it."

More is at <http://www.netguide.co.nz/Home/MagazineEvents/WebAwards/tabid/64/Default.aspx>

New Research on Children's Media Use...

A new research report on NZ children's media use has been published by the Broadcasting Standards Authority (BSA). Called "Seen and Heard: Children's Media Use in Auckland Today", it is based on a 2007 survey of 600 children aged between 6 and 13, and their primary caregivers.

The research provides comparisons with studies undertaken in 2001, and differences between the two include a decrease in parents' awareness that television broadcasts after 8.30pm are not necessarily suitable for children.

It notes that 99% of children watch TV programmes, 84% play computer or video games, 62% use the internet and 42% use a cellphone. Some 27% of children now have a television in their bedroom (compared with 18% in 2001), and a significant number also play computer or video games and use their cellphones while in their bedrooms. More than half the children surveyed said they mainly used the internet while they were alone, which, the report says, signals a need to make sure that children are fully aware of how to keep themselves safe while online.

The report is available at www.bsa.govt.nz

...& Stay Safe Socialising Online

Facebook, Bebo, Friendster, MySpace ... many people - and many of their children - now use one, or more, of these social networking websites. To continue to use and enjoy your online networking it is important to:

- remember that you can set your privacy settings so only your real-life friends can see your full profile;
- be careful what you write on other people's (public) pages and remember that any information you put up could be copied and pasted - don't post anything you wouldn't be happy for everyone to see;
- be careful about accepting friend requests from people you don't know or trust;
- be wary of the information you post. Don't list your full date and place of birth, or other information that could be used for passwords/PIN numbers, etc; and
- step back and think about the information you're posting. Put yourself in the shoes of an identity thief: would they find the information useful?

Remember, posting pictures of a big night out may seem a good idea at the time, but you never know whether those pictures will come back to haunt you...

NZ's Internet Safety Group, NetSafe, offers cybersafety education for all NZers - children, adults, parents, early childhood services, schools, community organisations and businesses. NetSafe runs a contact centre at freephone 0508 NETSAFE (0508 638 723) that receives calls about cybersafety and security issues including text bullying, online harassment (including identity theft), spam, stalking, scams, hacking, etc. You can also email queries@netsafe.org.nz or visit their website at http://www.netsafe.org.nz/index_for_ie6.htm

Telecom, Vodafone... and NZ Communications

Telecom and Vodafone have accepted offers from the Ministry of Economic Development (MED) for the renewal of cellular radio spectrum rights in the 800 MHz and 900 MHz bands for a 20-year period from 2011/12. A condition of the offers in the 800 MHz and 900 MHz bands was that some of the spectrum be made available to a new entrant to the market called NZ Communications. Having a third network player will give consumers more choice and provide more competition for Telecom and Vodafone.

The 800 and 900 MHz bands are valued for their better quality and longer reach which keeps costs down, particularly for coverage outside metropolitan areas. The bands are likely to carry cellular services for the foreseeable future and will accommodate 4G services in the future.

More information is at <http://www.med.govt.nz/radio/cellular-rights>.

National Mobile Roaming Decisions

The Minister of Communications and Information Technology has accepted the Commerce Commission's recommendation to amend the terms of the national roaming service, but has reserved his decision relating to the Commission's view that the service should not be price-regulated. The amendments are expected to provide greater investment certainty with the addition of an alternative roll-out requirement of 100 cell sites, while access seekers will be able to tap into 3G services as well as 2G, giving consumers more choice.

National roaming enables customers of "access seekers", like NZ Communications (itself a customer of an "access provider", such as Vodafone) to tap into networks outside the access seeker's service area.

Copies of the Commission's report can be downloaded from its website, www.comcom.govt.nz

Telecommunication Dispute Resolution Complaints

The Telecommunication Dispute Resolution (TDR) has released information on its first four months of operating.

TDR dealt with 275 complaints up to the end of March, with 174 (63%) being between the supplier and the customer, 93 (34%) classified as non-relevant, and eight still in the dispute process. Almost half of the complaints related to billing and credit. A further 29% were to do with service and product delivery (failures and delays in connection, disconnection and functionality). Customer service complaints made up 11% of complaints, 5% related to network performance (speed and service interruptions), and faults accounted for 3%. The remaining 3% were calls that did not fit the standard categories.

TDR is a free service, which can be used by any consumer whose telecommunications company is a member of the TDR scheme. Consumers must have raised their complaint with their

telecommunication company first, and given the company a chance to respond. If the consumer is not happy with the outcome or it has taken more than six weeks to resolve, TDR can get involved.

A full copy of the quarterly report is on the TDR website www.tdr.org.nz

Next Generation Networks Study

The terms of reference for the Commerce Commission's study into Next Generation Networks (NGN) have been released. The study will focus on raising the level of understanding of the Commission, industry and the wider community of the main technological developments over the next five years, and how these will impact on telecommunications services.

As well as helping identify the issues where there is consensus on NGN, and where and how views differ, the Commission expects that the study will assist in assessing the likely impact of technological change on market structure and competition in the telecommunications market.

The terms of reference for the NGN study are on the Commission's website www.comcom.govt.nz under Industry Regulation - Telecommunications - Inquiries, Reviews and Studies

What are Next Generation Networks?

Next generation networks is the term used to describe the replacement of our existing telecommunication networks like Telecom's PSTN (Public Switched Telephone Network) with new "packet" based all Internet Protocol (IP) networks, and the replacement of the copper access network with fibre either to the cabinet or the home. A "packet" is a formatted block of information carried by a packet mode computer network. Computer communications links that do not support packets, like traditional point-to-point telecommunications links, just transmit information as a series of bytes, characters, or bits alone. When information is formatted into packets, the bit rate of the communication medium can be shared better among the users than if the network was circuit switched.

The power industry has launched a *new website* at www.winterpower.co.nz to provide easy access to the latest information on the electricity supply situation this winter. Winterpower Watch will be updated daily and features the latest data on hydro storage levels, lake inflows and daily power usage. The site will also provide updates on progress that the power industry is making to manage power supplies going into winter.

A new site at <http://www.nzlive.com/> offers a *guide to arts and cultural events, online booking, the purchase of cultural products, a directory of arts and cultural organisations, and a funding guide*. The funding guide is set out under headings of General, Performing arts, Visual arts, Object art & craft, Design, Film, Music, Literature, Museums & galleries, Archives, Heritage, Festivals, Broadcasting, Maori culture, Pacific cultures, and Asian cultures.

A new management site at <http://www.management-focus.org.nz/> allows you to assess your current management performance and identify areas that you can improve on. The site, established by a group of leading NZ private and public sector organisations, also includes business case studies. These illustrate how successful businesses have overcome issues so you can find techniques that you can apply to your own organisation. Content will continue to be added and developed in the coming months

At thelowdown.co.nz - a website has been created to help young NZers understand and recover from depression. Trained counsellors provide free online and text-based support services for young people (text 5626), and visitors to the site can share their experiences and offer support to their peers on the thelowdown.co.nz forum. The website also features a range of useful fact sheets that give advice on dealing with depression and difficult situations that could trigger depression, like being bullied.

A "Showcase China" website which includes the Beijing Olympics is at http://asia-knowledge.tki.org.nz/showcase_china_beijing_2008. Showcase China unit was put together with support from the Asia:NZ, Confucius Institute, International Languages Aotearoa NZ, and the NZ Olympic Committee.

A Te Puni Kokiri directory of iwi and Maori organisations called *Te Kahui Mangai* is at <http://www.tkm.govt.nz/>. The directory will be useful to anyone who wants to contact representatives of iwi and hapu, and also to people who want basic information about iwi, hapu and marae; and a range of other national and urban Maori organisations.

A website aimed at making young NZers more Asia aware is at <http://asia-knowledge.tki.org.nz>. Asia is growing faster than any other region and in this century the region will be very important to NZ economically, politically and socially.

The *Global Emissions Exchange* (GEX) at www.global-emissionsexchange.com believes that every consumer, business, and government agency can play a significant role in reducing energy consumption and lessening harmful emissions. Its "fractional" trading means, in essence, offering consumers a small monetary incentive to go to the supermarket and pick up, for example, a compact fluorescent light bulb or a gallon of biofuel and register the purchase through GEX. People or organisations who register their purchases by logging on to the electronic meeting place (there are no subs and no contract), can sell, offset, swap or donate the credits, or simply hold on to them and allow them to expire. The exchange retains a portion of the emissions credit as income. The site also enables visitors to calculate their carbon footprint.

The *NZ School of Export's online Export Library & Information Service* (ELIS) at <http://www.export.ac.nz/library.html> is now freely available to all NZ exporters. Increasingly, the difference between companies is based on how they use information to gain an advantage over their competitors, and the director of the school believes ELIS could give NZ companies the edge over their overseas competitors.

The *2008 Regional Economic Development Resource Roadmap* is at http://www.med.govt.nz/templates/MultipageDocumentTOC___35389.aspx. This outlines the roles of the wide range of organisations - both government and non-government - that are involved with regional economic development, describes the support and funding that is available from them, and provides contact information for each agency.

Arts and Culture

NZ On Air: 2007 Local Content Report

NZ on Air's latest local content report found that almost 11,000 hours of local programming screened in 2007 on the six free-to-air channels. This is the highest level recorded to date and a 5% increase on last year. The percentage of local content on the six main free-to-air channels rose to 31.8% of the schedule, an increase of 1.5%. The increase is attributed to higher levels of information and news programming. The biggest increase was on TV3, up from 19.33% to 24.12%. Local content increased on four of the six channels surveyed in 2007, and TV One screened the most hours of local content.

The report is available at www.nzonair.govt.nz

Matariki - Maori New Year - TV Series

Matariki - the Maori New Year - is being celebrated with a festival of arts and culture on He Karanga Matariki, a series of three one-hour specials to screen on from at 8.30 pm on 10-11 June and 9 pm on 12 June on Maori Television.

Matariki is a constellation whose appearance in the pre-dawn sky in early June traditionally marked the start of a new phase of life. Occurring at the end of harvest, it was a time to think ahead, plan sea voyages and prepare the land for planting, but also to celebrate. People would gather and reflect, observe ceremonial rituals, sing, dance and tell stories.

Qantas Media Award Winners 2008

Winners of the major categories in the Qantas Media Awards this year were:

- Qantas Fellow to Wolfson College, Cambridge: Phil Kitchin - The Dominion Post;
- Print Industry Award for Outstanding Achievement: Tim Pankhurst and Phil Kitchin - The Dominion Post;
- Senior Reporter: Phil Kitchin - The Dominion Post; and
- Junior Reporter: Ian Steward - The Press.

Poetry for Parkinson's...

Six of NZ's best known poets will be reading from their own works on 11 June and this will be a rare opportunity to hear them all and at the same time support people living with Parkinson's. The poets are: Jenny Bornholdt, Anne French, Michael Harlow, Vincent O'Sullivan, Harry Ricketts and Brian Turner.

The function is at The McKenzie Theatre, Capital E, Civic Square, Wellington on Wednesday 11 June 2008. More information: Parkinson's NZ, tel 04 472 2796, email info@parkinsons.org.nz

General

NZ's Ethnic Populations: Projections

Statistics NZ projects that NZ's Maori, Asian and Pacific populations will continue to grow faster than the "European or Other" population. All four broad ethnic populations are projected to increase under mid-range series 6 of the respective 2006-base national ethnic population projections. The Maori population is projected to increase by an average of 1.4% a year from an estimated 620,000 in 2006 to 820,000 in 2026; the Asian population by 3.4% a year from 400,000 to 790,000; the Pacific population by 2.4% a year from 300,000 to 480,000; and the "European or Other" population by 0.3% a year from 3.21 million to 3.43 million.

The relatively rapid growth of the Asian population is mainly driven by migration, with a net inflow of about 240,000 migrants assumed over the 20-year projection period. Natural increase (births minus deaths) will account for about 160,000 of the projected Asian population growth.

The growth of the Maori and Pacific populations is driven by births, which can be attributed to their higher fertility rates and a young age structure. By comparison, the slower growth of the "European or Other" population largely reflects lower fertility rates and an older age structure.

Because of the different population growth rates, the projections indicate that the proportion of NZ's population that identifies with a European or Other ethnicity will drop from 77% in 2006 to 69% in 2026. By comparison, the proportion identifying with Maori ethnicity will increase from 15% to 17%, with a Pacific ethnicity from 7% to 10%, and with an Asian ethnicity from 10% to 16%. About 1% of NZ's population identified with ethnicities outside of these four broad ethnic groups in 2006.

NZ Births & Deaths: Latest Figures

The average age of women giving birth to their first child was 28 years in the year ended March 2008, according to Statistics NZ (SNZ).

The average age of all NZ women giving birth was around 30 years and has been relatively stable since 2003.

The birth rate is now 2.1 births per woman. Although this represents a slight increase on recent years, the birth rate has been relatively stable at around 2.0 births per woman over the last 30 years. In contrast, during 1949-1978 women averaged 3.4 births, with the birth rate peaking at 4.3 in 1961 and then dropping steadily to 2.1 in 1978.

In the March 2008 year, women aged 30-34 years had the highest fertility rate (125 births per 1,000 women aged 30-34 years). Forty years ago, in 1968, women aged 20-24 years had the highest fertility rate (218 per 1,000).

There were 63,250 births (32,360 boys and 30,890 girls) registered in NZ in the March 2008 year. The highest number of births registered in any year was 65,800 in 1962. At that time NZ's population numbered just 2.5 million compared with 4.3 million in 2007.

A newborn girl can expect to live 81.9 years, and a boy 77.9 years. Life tables for 2004-2006 show that the gap between female and male life expectancy has narrowed from 6.4 years in 1975-1977 to 4.1 years.

Deaths registered in the March 2008 year totalled 28,300, of which 330 were infant deaths (under one year of age). The infant mortality rate (infant deaths per 1,000 live births) was 5.3 per 1,000 in the March 2008 year, down from 6.3 per 1,000 in 1998, and 18.2 in 1968.

Births exceeded deaths by 34,960 in the March 2008 year.

Volunteer Awareness Week

OCVS and Volunteering NZ have promotional resources available for Volunteer Awareness Week on 15-21 June. The focus for the week is on achieving potential.

For more information/resources email ocvs@msd.govt.nz or office@volunteeringnz.org.nz

Report on Impact of Prostitution Reform Act 2003

The Prostitution Law Reform Committee was asked to report within five years of the decriminalisation of prostitution on the impact of the law change on the human rights, welfare, and occupational health and safety of sex workers, and the ban on the use of young people in prostitution.

Its report indicates the Prostitution Reform Act (PRA) 2003 has had a positive effect on the health and safety of sex workers and has not led to a predicted increase in their numbers. Amongst the findings:

- coercion is not widespread;
- sex workers are more likely to be the victims of crime, rather than offenders;
- the links between crime and prostitution are tenuous and there is no evidence of a specific link between them. The link between under-aged prostitutes and youth gangs is often a case of underage people hanging around with friends who happen to be in youth gangs;
- the reasons people joined and stayed in the sex industry were complex, however, money was the main reason;
- fewer than 17% said they are working to support drug or alcohol use, although when broken down by sector street-based sex workers are more likely to report needing to pay for drugs or alcohol (45%);
- the perceived scale of a "problem" in a community can be directly linked to the amount and tone of media coverage it gets;
- much of the reporting on the numbers of sex workers and underage involvement in prostitution has been exaggerated; and
- there is no link in NZ between the sex industry and human trafficking.

The Government is considering the report's recommendations, which include scheduling the next PRA review for 2018.

The report is available on the Ministry of Justice website at www.justice.govt.nz

Conferences/Festivals

Federated Farmers Conference: One Event

This is being held in Rydges Hotel, Christchurch from 24-26 June. An economist, a supermarket executive, the head of Ngai Tahu, a leading academic and an expert on water are amongst the guest speakers.

For more information contact your local Federated Farmers NZ representative or email admin@fedfarm.org.nz

Small Business Summit 2008

This business summit is being held on Friday, 25 July 2008 at SkyCity Auckland Convention Centre. It will bring together business leaders, policy advisors, decision makers and representatives from small- and medium-sized businesses (SMEs - which make up 96.4% of NZ firms).

More information: <http://www.smallbusinesssummit.org.nz/> or contact B Dudli, Summit Organiser, PO Box 36-067, Northcote, North Shore City 0746, Auckland, tel 09 419 0450, fax 09 419 0059.

Not-For-Profit Network Conference

This is being held on 26-27 June 2008 at the Bruce Mason Centre, cnr Hurstmere Road and The Promenade, Takapuna Beach, North Shore City, Auckland. It covers managing staff, relationships between boards and CEOs and generating income while still staying on mission.

Programme details are at www.nfpn.com.au/PDFs/Events08/EU08.pdf

Public Health Association Conference

The Public Health Association's national conference is being held from 2-4 July 2008 in Waitangi. Its title "Tapu - Noa: Environmental, Physical or Both" refers to health and safety across social, cultural, political and physical environments.

More information is at <http://www.pha.org.nz/phaconference.html>

Biogas 2008 Conference

This is called "Production, Use and Realising The NZ Potential." It's being held on 10 July at Waikato University, Campus, Hillcrest Road, Hamilton.

More information: brian.cox@bioenergy.org.nz and www.bioenergy.org.nz

ACE (Adult and Community Education) Aotearoa Conference

The annual national conference for all adult and community education providers and practitioners is being held from 4-6 July at Manukau Institute of Technology, Nga Kete Wananga Marae, Gate 12, Otara Rd, Otara, Manukau City. The theme is Whakatau te Manu Kotingotingo - Colour or Language: Encouraging and Celebrating the Diversity in Adult and Community Education.

For more information visit: www.aceaotearoa.org.nz/index/ACE%20Conferences/Details/Upcoming%20Conferences

INVOLVE 08 Relate Conference

This is being held from 2-4 July with a powhiri at Pipitea Marae Thorndon, Wellington and the conference at the Michael Fowler Centre/Town Hall. The theme is "Young People and Quality Relationships".

Read more at: www.involve.org.nz

National Tobacco Control Hui: Smoking Cessation & Auahi Kore

This conference is being held at Te Papa in Wellington from 25-27 June. It is NZ's first Smoking Cessation Conference for Workforce Development. Marae accommodation will be available in Wellington for the duration of this conference.

More information/registration: D Minnell, Te Hotu Manawa Maori, 09 638-5805, email desirae@thmm.co.nz

Some Funding/Awards Opportunities

Lotteries: New Community Sector Research Fund

The new \$1.75 million Lottery Community Sector Research Fund is now open for applications. The Fund presents an opportunity for community-based organisations to develop a knowledge base and carry out research into the communities they serve.

There are two stages for applications to the new fund. The first stage is to submit a Research Idea to be considered by the distribution committee. The committee will then invite its selected applicants to submit a Full Research Proposal. Invitations to selected applicants to lodge a Full Research Proposal will be issued after the committee meets to make its selection in late August.

Applications for stage one -the Research Idea - close on 1 July 2008. For further information please visit www.cdgo.govt.nz or call freephone 0800 824 824.

Lottery Regional Community Committees

Applications to Lottery Regional Community Committees are now due. These committees make 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. There are 11 regional committees, and their 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 Monday 2 July 2008. For more information contact your nearest Department of Internal Affairs office, tel freephone 0800 824 824, or go to www.cdgo.govt.nz

NZ Community Safety & Injury Prevention Awards 2008

These awards recognise, reward and promote best-practice community-based injury prevention and safety promotion in NZ. Entry is open to any group or organisation with an excellent and/or

promising safety or injury prevention initiative; and any individual who has made a significant contribution to creating a safer community.

Winners receive \$2000 towards professional development and/or the development of their safety initiative.

Entries close on 1 July 2008. More information: T Peters, Safe Communities Foundation NZ, email peters@scfnz.org, tel 09 488 7601.

Olivia Spencer Bower Foundation Art Awards

These awards enable promising NZ painters and sculptors to pursue their own art form for a year. Two awards of \$30,000 each will be made for 2009 and 2010. Recipients also have the option of free accommodation and a studio at the Christchurch Arts Centre.

Applications close on 30 June 2008. Forms are available from the Olivia Spencer Bower Foundation website at <http://www.oliviaspencerbower.org.nz/> or from Trustees, Olivia Spencer Bower Foundation, c/- Guardian Trust Co Ltd, PO Box 9, Christchurch, tel 03 379 0645.

Appointments

Colin MacDonald has been appointed to the position of *Chief Executive of Land Information NZ*. The new *Chief Executive of the Commerce Commission* is Nick Hill. Two new appointments to the *Board of the Foundation for Research, Science and Technology* are Denise Church and Professor Roberta Farrell. Albert Brantley has been appointed *CEO of Genesis Energy*. Simon Marsters has been appointed to the *Board of Solid Energy*. Alistair Polson has been reappointed as *NZ's special agricultural trade envoy*. David Smol has agreed to act as *Chief Executive of the Ministry of Economic Development*. Three new *Mental Health Commissioners* are Peter McGeorge (chair), Ray Watson and Bice Awan. *The Child Cancer Foundation* has Neil Porteous as its *Chief Executive Officer*. The *University of Otago* has appointed Dr Paul Tapsell to its *Chair in Maori Studies*. Alan Galbraith QC has been appointed as *deputy chairperson the Sports Tribunal of NZ*, and Anna Richards MNZM and Dr Lynne Cleman have been appointed as *members of the Tribunal*.

Dr Chris Shaw and Dr Sue Bennett have been appointed as *Guardians of Lakes Manapouri, Monowai and Te Anau*. Current Deputy Chair, Hamish Crooks, has been appointed *Chair of the Pacific Business Trust (PBT) Board*, and Sitiveni Mavoia has been appointed *Deputy Chair*. Dr Fotu Fisi'iahi has also been appointed to the *PBT Board*. Four new members to the *Ministerial Advisory Council (MAC)* - who advise the Minister of Pacific Island Affairs on issues relating to the social, cultural and economic welfare of Pacific peoples) are: Sireli Kini, Sally Ikinofu, Saaga Malua and Mary Cole, respectively representing the Fijian, Niuean and Tuvaluan and Solomon Island communities.

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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If you would like more information about Rural Bulletin or its contents, please contact:

Craig Matthews/Paddy Twist

Editors Rural Bulletin

Tel: 04 473 5524

Fax: 04 472 8946

Email ruralbulletin@ruralwomen.org.nz

Noeline Holt

Executive Officer

Rural Women New Zealand

Tel: 04 473 5524

Fax 04 472 8946

Email: enquiries@ruralwomen.org.nz

Jackie Edkins

Communications Officer

Rural Women New Zealand

Tel: 04 473 5524

Fax 04 472 8946

Email: enquiries@ruralwomen.org.nz

Website: www.ruralwomen.org

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