

Rural Bulletin

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Rural Women
NEW ZEALAND

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Contents

Consultation

Restructuring and Redundancy: Have Your Say	2
Improving Fuel Economy	3
Review of Privacy	3
Corrections Amendment Bill (No 2)	3
Review of the Television NZ Charter	3
Policing Bil	4
Biometric Data	4
The Threatened Status of Native Birds	4
Financial Advisers Bill	4
Waka Umanga (Maori Corporations) Bill	4
Emissions Trading: Draft Regulations	5
Tasman Aquaculture Management Area	5
Electricity Grid Proposal	5
New Conservation Park Proposed	5
Brunner & Wairau Navigation	5
Glass Standards in Buildings	5
Customs: Approved Formula List for Ethanol	6

Rural

Resources Available in a Time of Drought	6
National Drought Committee Formed	6
2007 Agricultural Census: Provisional Figures	6
Report on Dairying and Clean Streams Accord	7
Walking Access: Moving Forward	7
"Rural Proofing" Your Policies: Guide	7

Environment

Protecting NZ's Marine Environment: Next Steps	7
New Water Measurement Standard	8
Making NZ Cities Sustainable	8
Trans-Tasman Scientists Study Livestock Methane	8
Biosecurity Act Amendment Bill	8
NZ Wetlands Receive International Recognition	8
Central Otago Landscape Protected	8
Sustainable Living Available to More NZers	8

Health & Safety

New Information/Advisory Services for Victims	9
More Family Violence Court Services	9

Domestic Violence: Review of Legislation	9
Some ACC Payments Rise	9
Feedback on Tobacco Displays	9
New Frozen Funds Charitable Trust	9
New Kids Website: Push Play, Eat Well	10
Ketamine to Become Classified Drug	10
Gambling Survey Results	10
Racing Safety Grants	10

Education

The Correspondence School: New Structure	10
Schools Plus: Education Until You're Eighteen	10
21st Century Teacher Training: Report	11
Student Loan Interest Rate for 2008/09	11
Student Loan Debts Rise/Repayments Vary	11
Process for Reviews of Kura Kaupapa Maori Schools	11
Funding to Extend High Standards in Schools	11
Early Childhood Centres Receive More Funding	11
Interest-Free Student Loans: Volunteers Qualify	11
So Do Some Overseas Students	12

Housing

Falling Rate of Home Ownership: Report	12
New Affordable Housing Strategy	12
Loans Scheme Launched for Energywise Homes	12
Home Energy Rating Assessments	13

Energy

Electricity: Reconciliation Rule Signed Off	13
Switching Gas Suppliers Made Easier	13

Employment

New Skill NZ Forum to be Set Up	13
Wages Up	13
Unemployment Down	13
Best Place to Work in NZ Award	14
More Jobs for Older Employees	14

Transport

Higher Fuel Prices Changing Driving Habits	14
Next Steps for Noisy Vehicles Announced	14
Code of Practice for Access to Transport Systems	14



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Business

Number of Businesses in NZ up 2%	15
December Quarter Retail Sales	15
NZ's Slice of the World's Dairy Trade	15
NZ & Australian Agribusiness in February: Rabobank	15
Big Increase in Value of Meat Exports	15
Trends in Australian Food and Beverages	16
NZ-China Trade Agreement Likely	16

Not-For-Profits

New Funding for Community Organisations	16
Nominations Open for COGS Committees	16
Fraud in Not-For-Profits: Survey Results	16
Workplace Wellbeing Workshops	17

Treaty Matters

Ngati Makino & Waitaha to Enter Negotiations	17
Terms of Agreement with Central North Island Iwi	17
Two Foreshore/Seabed Agreements	17

The Elections

Enrolling to Vote	17
Electoral Finance Act Passed	18

Internet/ICT

Two-Thirds of Online Kiwis now Use Internet Banking	18
NZ Heads Australia in e-Government Responsiveness	18
Global Internet Shopping Data	18
ICT Contracts: Intellectual Property Rights Guide	19
Nextspace Innovation Centre Opens	19

Arts and Culture

Flight of the Conchords: Best Comedy	19
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Fishing

Value of NZ's Commercial Fisheries Rises	19
Seabird Protection Measures Announced	20
Lower North Island Crayfishers Reduce Catch	20

General

Half of Global Population Urbanites by Year's End	20
Beating Tagging & Graffiti: New Moves	20
Wool and Silk - Oh, Never Mind the Washing	21
KiwiSaver Breaks Through 400,000 Barrier	21
Race Relations Day Coming Up	21
Less Racial Discrimination in NZ	21
Medal for Vietnam Veterans: Applications Sought	21
Youth Prisoners: Training Opportunities	21
New Minerals Programme	22
Access Radio Programmes Online	22
Conferences/Festivals	
Engage Your Community Conference	22
Federation of Workers Education Associations Conference	22
ESOL Home Tutors Conference	22
Managing and Governing for the Social Good	22
Some Funding/Awards Opportunities	
Green Ribbon Awards: Honouring NZ's Environmental Champions	22
Rural Innovations Fund	22
Women's Creativity in Rural Life Awards: Nominations Sought	22
New Fulbright Award for Education Research	23
Funding for Maori and Pasifika Education Projects	23
NZ Lottery Grants: Lottery Outdoor Safety Committee	23
Global Education Fund Applications Close Soon	23
Appointments	23

Consultation

Restructuring and Redundancy: Have Your Say

A Public Advisory Group on Restructuring and Redundancy issues is examining the impact our redundancy laws have on individual employees, employers, and the wider economy. It is inviting submissions about any foreseeable impacts that would be caused if redundancy provisions were to become regulated.

The group will be making recommendations about:

- legal consultation requirements;
- the amount of notice employers must provide employees in the event of a redundancy;
- consultation required to avoid mass redundancies; and
- a statutory requirement for redundancy compensation or other entitlements.

It will also be considering:

- evidence from research on redundancy provisions in employment agreements, employer and employee experiences, and problems with current arrangements;
- whether any additional legal requirements should apply to all redundancy situations or should they be more targeted;
- the experience of other countries that have put in practice similar requirements;
- employees' and unions' experiences;
- the costs of entitlements and compliance for employers;
- the relevant International Labour Organisation (ILO) standards;
- where this work fits with the existing set of rules for insolvency and where it fits with relevant sections of the Employment Relations Act 2000; and
- how flexible entitlements are.

Submissions close on 30 April 2008. They go to the Department of Labour, email R&RSubmission@dol.govt.nz

Improving Fuel Economy

Compulsory fuel economy standards are on the way for all new and used light vehicles entering the fleet. A discussion paper from the Ministry of Transport outlines options for ways of managing fuel economy improvements, while at the same time making sure that vehicle choice and availability is maintained as much as possible.

The preferred option is to legislate for a vehicle fuel economy standard, with other options including more education and information initiatives, and additional fees for vehicles with poor fuel economy when they are first registered.

The paper also offers three implementation options:

- a tradable credits scheme - importers are given a tradable certificate or credit for each vehicle that performs better than the fuel economy standard. Importers who fail to achieve a compliant annual average would be required to pay a penalty;
- a vehicle levy scheme - each vehicle entering the fleet is assessed against the fuel economy standard and a charge is paid for every vehicle that does not meet or better the standard; and
- an industry code of compliance - companies sign up to an industry code of compliance administered by an industry representative group. Penalties would be based on the expected carbon footprint for vehicles that do not meet the standard.

The light vehicle fleet makes up 93% of the country's total vehicle fleet and is responsible for around 80 percent of the CO₂ emissions from road transport and approximately 13% of total greenhouse gas emissions.

The current average fuel economy of light vehicles entering NZ is about 210g of CO₂/km. Without further intervention, the Government expects to fall well short of its fuel economy target of 170g of CO₂/km by 2015 for light vehicles.

Submissions close on 28 March 2008. An online submission form is at www.transport.govt.nz. Written submissions go to Vehicle Fuel Economy Standard Project, Land Transport Environment & Safety Group, Ministry of Transport, PO Box 3175, Wellington 6140. The discussion paper is at <http://www.transport.govt.nz/assets/NewPDFs/Improving-Fuel-Economy-Paper.pdf>. For more information email fuel.economy@transport.govt.nz

Review of Privacy

The Law Commission's Review of Privacy is taking place in four stages, and the first two stages are now complete. The result of stage 1 is a study paper "Privacy: Concepts and Issues". This paper sets out a structure for the review, and looks at social attitudes, technical developments, and international trends relating to privacy. It also touches on issues (including the media, health, surveillance, and the workplace) that will be considered in the later stages of the Review.

The report for stage 2 of the Review, which covers privacy and public registers, has also been published. This identifies over one hundred public registers in NZ, and recommends that a

dedicated team should review all public registers against a template set out in the report.

The Commission has now begun stages 3 and 4 of the Review. Stage 3 is concerned with the adequacy of NZ's civil and criminal law to deal with invasions of privacy. Stage 4 is a review of the Privacy Act 1993. Issues papers for these stages will be released in the second half of this year, and the Commission will then be calling for submissions.

To help in its review, the Commission wants to hear whether organisations have any concerns about existing laws relating to privacy, e.g., whether an organisation perceives that privacy laws create barriers to the effective performance of its role, or whether it has identified any gaps in the protection of privacy under existing laws. Proposals for reform of these laws are also welcome. If there are issues you want to discuss, you can arrange a meeting with Commission staff.

Send a summary of your concerns or law reform proposals by email to com@lawcom.govt.nz or in writing to Law Commission, PO Box 2590, Wellington. The paper and the report "Privacy: Concepts and Issues" are on the Commission's website at www.lawcom.govt.nz and you can also purchase hard copies

Corrections Amendment Bill (No 2)

This Bill makes a number of amendments to the Corrections Act 2004 to: improve the control of contraband, adopt a consistent approach to the monitoring of prisoners' telephone calls and mail, limit Crown liability in an emergency situation, allow information-sharing on highest-risk offenders, create a new offence of unauthorised communications with prisoners, regulate the use of firearms for animal and pest control in prison grounds, allow for communion wine to be consumed in prisons, and allow the department or its agents to electronically monitor, detect, disable, disrupt, and interfere with wireless transmissions within a prison to prevent or stop unauthorised communications.

Submissions close on 8 April 2008. Send two copies to the Law and Order Committee, Parliament House, Wellington. Print copies of the Bill can be ordered online from Bennetts Government Bookshops. The Bill is at http://www.parliament.nz/NR/rdonlyres/8A897992-A70F-46F3-A3DC-0AE2091FFEDD/73712/DBHOH_BILL_8366_56294.pdf

Review of the Television NZ Charter

Public submissions are now being invited on the Review of the Television NZ (TVNZ) Charter. This review will focus on the proposed changes to the charter following TVNZ's public consultation process held during 2007. The redraft divided the Charter into seven themes - An Informed Society, National Identity and Citizenship, Maori, Diversity, High Standards, Innovation and NZ Talent - to give it clearer structure for the public.

TVNZ's main broadcasting services currently come through TV ONE and TV2, with additional programming content becoming available to the public through the new digital channels TVNZ 6 and TVNZ 7, and increasingly in future years through TVNZ ondemand, the TVNZ website and through other media.

Submissions close on 25 March 2008. Two copies go to the Commerce Committee, Parliament House, Wellington. More information is at <http://tvnz.co.nz/view/page/1503062>

Policing Bill

This Bill has two aims: first, to confirm and strengthen Police governance, accountability and organisational arrangements in a way which is suitable for a contemporary age; and second, to improve the Police's effectiveness, especially by updating human resource management provisions, and establishing a clear framework for exercise of policing powers by particular Police employees. Proposals in the Bill cover:

- principles to guide policing;
- a code of conduct system which replaces the disciplinary system;
- clearer governance arrangements for the Commissioner of Police;
- better support for frontline staff to take particulars of identification;
- an updated framework for negotiating employment terms and conditions for Police employees;
- a process to gather Police employee biometric data for use in pre-employment vetting and as elimination data from crime scene samples; and
- consolidating laws relating to international and United Nations policing.

Biometric Data

Biometric characteristics can be divided in two main classes:

- physiological: these are related to the shape of the body. The oldest traits (which have been used for more than 100 years) are fingerprints. Other examples are face recognition, hand geometry and iris recognition; and
- behavioural: these are related to the behaviour of a person. The first characteristic to be used, still widely used today, is the signature. More modern approaches are the study of keystroke dynamics and of voice.

Strictly speaking, voice is also a physiological trait because every person has a different pitch, but voice recognition is mainly based on the study of the way a person speaks, and it is usually classified as behavioral.

Submissions close on 28 March 2008. Two copies go to the Law and Order Committee, Parliament House, Wellington. The Bill is at http://www.parliament.nz/NR/rdonlyres/0EA5D3E6-A495-4E4E-8FA0-54576ABC97AF/73620/DBHOH_BILL_8396_57596.pdf

The Threatened Status of Native Birds

New Zealand is known as the seabird capital of the world and it is also home to a number of forest birds that live nowhere else on Earth. Some of these native birds are at risk of becoming extinct, and the Department of Conservation is currently seeking submissions from the public about any changes in bird populations they've noticed.

The information will be used to update the birds section of the "NZ Threat Classification System", which classifies all the organisms that live in a wild state in NZ.

Submissions close 1 May 2008. Descriptions of our native birds (with photos) are at <http://www.doc.govt.nz/templates/summary.aspx?id=32845>. This site also includes information on how to make "five minute bird counts". The current conservation status of bird species is at <http://www.doc.govt.nz/upload/documents/getting-involved/consultations/current-consultations/nztsc-birds-list-review.xls>. An online submission form is at <http://www.doc.govt.nz/templates/form.aspx?id=45790> or post, email or fax in your submission to C Miskelly, Wellington Conservancy, PO Box 5086, Thorndon, Wellington, email threatstatus@doc.govt.nz, fax 04 499 0077

Financial Advisers Bill

The Bill establishes a co-regulatory regime for financial advisers, which would see the Securities Commission and industry-based approved professional bodies working together to create and monitor standards for financial advisers. The Bill seeks to impose certain conduct and disclosure obligations on financial advisers, and provide the Securities Commission and the courts with enforcement powers similar to those in the Securities Markets Act 1988.

Submissions close on 4 April 2008. Two copies go to the Finance and Expenditure Committee, Parliament House, Wellington. The Bill is at http://www.parliament.nz/NR/rdonlyres/28B1BF1A-32ED-4039-A049-CC22D2A08F4F/73618/DBHOH_BILL_8380_5654.pdf

Waka Umanga (Maori Corporations) Bill

This Bill, Te Pire Waka Umanga (mo nga Kaporeihana Maori) provides for the establishment of new legal entities by tribal groups or Maori associations. The public policy objective of the Bill is to provide a new statutory governance entity that:

- is specifically shaped to meet the organisational needs of Maori collectives that manage collectively owned assets;
- provides a process for forming an entity and resolving tribal formation disputes;
- provides a mechanism for a tribal group to gain legitimate representative status for purposes specified in its charter; and
- is flexible enough to meet the cultural needs of Maori collectives, and provides certainty to Maori, the Crown, and third parties.

Submissions close on 28 March 2008. They go to the Maori Affairs Committee, Parliament House, Wellington. The Bill is at http://www.parliament.nz/NR/rdonlyres/AC0219BF-3CA7-4033-B740-41D1198D95AB/72874/DBHOH_BILL_8344_560999.pdf

Emissions Trading: Draft Regulations

A draft of the emissions trading regulations for forestry and liquid fossil fuels has been released so potential participants from the forestry and transport sectors are informed about their obligations once they are required to take part in the emissions trading scheme (ETS).

Feedback is sought from both sectors about the proposals.

Participants from the transport sector will be expected to collect information to calculate their greenhouse gas emissions.

Regulations for the forestry sector cover obligations under the emissions trading scheme for owners of forests planted before 1990. The regulations for forests planted after 1989 are still being developed, but the guidance being published with the draft regulations for pre-1990 forests outlines the planned approach.

The final form of the regulations is dependent on the provisions of the Climate Change (Emissions Trading and Renewable Preference) Bill once it becomes law.

Feedback goes to emissionstrading@climatechange.govt.nz. The draft regulations are at www.climatechange.govt.nz

Tasman Aquaculture Management Area

A total of 108 hectares of new aquaculture space in the Tasman region has received preliminary approval from the Ministry of Fisheries (MFish). To approve an interim aquaculture management area (AMA), MFiSh must be satisfied that there would not be an undue adverse effect on fishing and the sustainability of fisheries resources.

A further 2001 hectares that was applied for has been declined, because of the potential effects on fisheries resources and commercial scallops and snapper fishing. MFiSh is also declining some of the interim AMA near Collingwood because of potential undue adverse effects on the sustainability of fisheries resources.

Nearly two thirds of all aquaculture in NZ is in the Tasman and Marlborough regions. There are already 8,374 ha of existing aquaculture space in these regions.

Submissions by affected parties close on 16 April 2008. More is at <http://www.fish.govt.nz/en-nz/Press/Tasman+aquaculture+management+area.htm>

Electricity Grid Proposal

Modernising the equipment known as Pole 1 at the northern end of the Cook Strait cable will cost between \$600 and \$800 million, according to a consultation paper issued by the national grid operator, Transpower. "Pole" is the industry term for the pieces of equipment at either end of a high voltage line, which convert the high voltage to a lower voltage for the local grid.

The equipment is 42 years old and is currently stood down before work starts on returning half the Pole to a standby state for use in critical times. Pole 2, located at Benmore in the South Island (commissioned in 1991) continues to operate reliably and has been upgraded to carry additional electricity since Pole 1 was stood down.

Transpower has assessed the replacement options for Pole 1 and believes that a 700 MW replacement pole is preferred compared to the other short-listed options.

Submissions close on 4 April 2008. More information is at <http://www.transpower.co.nz/n1317.html> and <http://www.gridnewzealand.co.nz/n280,110.html>, or contact R Wilson, email communications@transpower.co.nz

New Conservation Park Proposed

A new conservation park of 90,000 hectares has been proposed by the Department of Conservation and your views are sought. The proposed park is located in mostly rugged country between the inland and seaward Kaikoura Ranges. It is almost 60 kilometres long and 20 kilometres wide.

Its proposed name is Ka Whata Tu O Rakihouia (the standing food stores of Rakihouia).

Submissions close on 2 April 2008. They go to Conservator, Department of Conservation, Private Bag 5, Nelson, email nelson-marlboroughco@doc.govt.nz. More information: R Cant, email nelson-marlboroughco@doc.govt.nz

Brunner & Wairau Navigation

Maritime NZ (MNZ) is seeking submissions on draft navigation plans for the Wairau River and Lake Brunner. In respect of the Wairau, MNZ says users have worries over river safety. With Lake Brunner, it says that agreed navigation rules are needed to resolve concerns over the increasing number of vessels on the lake, particularly during busy periods.

Submissions on both proposals close on 31 March 2008. The Lake Brunner consultation paper is at http://www.maritimenz.govt.nz/consultation/lake_brunner.asp and the Wairau River one is at http://www.maritimenz.govt.nz/consultation/wairau_river.asp

Glass Standards in Buildings

Standards NZ is seeking submissions on the standards for installation. These have been adapted from Standards Australia to make the NZ and Australian standards similar.

Submissions close on 27 March 2008. More is at <http://shop.standards.co.nz/drafts/DZ4223SUPP1-P4223Supplement1.pdf> or you can email jillene.everett@standards.co.nz

Customs: Approved Formula List for Ethanol

The NZ Customs Service is amending the Customs list of approved formulae for denaturing ethanol (i.e. changing its natural qualities but retaining its usefulness). The Customs and Excise Act 1996 provides for duty free ethyl alcohol when denatured according to an approved formula. However, the Environmental Risk Safety Authority (ERMA) has a group standard for ethanol and Customs also has some approved formula. The proposal means that eight of the 15 Customs formulae will be removed.

Submissions close on 31 March 2008. They go to M Merwood, NZ Customs Service, PO Box 2218, Wellington, email mark.merwood@customs.govt.nz, tel 04 462 0120. More information on the Group Standard is on ERMA's website at <http://www.ermanz.govt.nz/hs/groupstandards/standards/etoh.html>

Rural

Resources Available in a Time of Drought

Farming is a business and when a drought strikes the business loses money. The general rule about drought costs to farm businesses is that the first cost is the least cost. The general rule about decision-making is that the decision the farmer makes at the time is always the right one (whether or not in hindsight it still looks that way), because it is much better to make a decision than to put off making one.

There are a number of resources available to people farming at this time. They include (in no particular order):

- **IRD:** Special Tax Measures: Inland Revenue has put in place special measures to help ease the pressure on drought-affected farmers. They include allowing farmers to send a late estimate, or re-estimate, of provisional tax, if their circumstances have changed due to the drought. Early provisional tax refunds can also be arranged if tax has been overpaid. Inland Revenue has also relaxed the rules of the income equalisation scheme, allowing late deposits and early refunds. Other help available could include remission of late payment and non-filing penalties, and extensions of time for filing returns. Working for Families Tax Credits, which are linked to income levels, could also be adjusted where necessary. Affected farmers are encouraged to contact a tax professional or Inland Revenue to clarify what this means for them;
- **"Meeting the Challenges: key points for getting through droughts":** a Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) publication is at <http://www.maf.govt.nz/mafnet/rural-nz/emergency-management/droughts/meeting-the-challenges.pdf>. It looks at the lessons learned from earlier droughts, sets out the kind of assistance that's available to farmers, and gives contact details for where to go to get help;

- **ways to manage animal welfare in a dry summer:** this information from DairyNZ is at: www.dairynz.co.nz <<http://www.dairynz.co.nz>> or phone 0800 339 235 for more information;
- a **"Drought Toolkit"**: this comes from Meat & Wool New Zealand (MWNZ) for farmers already in, or facing the possibility of, a drought situation developing. The toolkit includes management and technical information, advice to farmers to recognise the signs of stress and cope with it, and a publication providing helpful advice on stress. It is at www.meatandwoolnz.com/main.cfm?id+313 <<http://www.meatandwoolnz.com/main.cfm?id+313>>, or tel 0800 696 328 for a hard copy;
- **help with sourcing feed:** this is available through freephone 0800 335 663: Federated Farmers (FFNZ) has activated an 0800 number to support farmers who are having trouble sourcing feed over the long hot summer and to monitor the situation. Farmers can register demand for feed or, if they have surplus feed supply, they can register the type and amount available for purchase. They can also consider other avenues when sourcing feed such as Trade Me. FFNZ members can also contact their local provincial president;
- **Rural Support Trusts:** the Rural Support Trust freephone number (general enquiries) is 0800 787 254. These trusts can help with: co-ordinating an initial response to an event, helping farmers decide on business options, acting as advocates for financial assistance, and providing stress management services (or making referrals if appropriate). The trusts currently operate in most, but not all, parts of NZ (the network is to be extended to cover the country); and
- a **Government helpline 0800 779 997** for information and access to services such as financial assistance, stress counselling and off-farm employment. This is a Ministry of Social Development helpline with links to non-government agencies like the Rural Support Trusts, Rural Women NZ and Federated Farmers. (Note: people do not have to be a Work and Income client to get assistance.)

National Drought Committee Formed

A National Drought Committee met for the first time on 21 February, and it will continue to meet on a regular basis. The members of this committee are: John Squire, National Recovery Coordinator, together with representatives from DairyNZ, Meat and Wool New Zealand, Federated Farmers, Rural Women NZ, PGG Wrightson, ABB Grains, National Bank, Meat Industry Association, New Zealand Veterinary Association, Ministry for Social Development, Inland Revenue, MAF Policy and MAF Animal Welfare.

2007 Agricultural Census: Provisional Figures

Provisional figures from the 2007 Agricultural Production Census (which involved all farmers and foresters in NZ) show that:

- the national number of sheep decreased to 38.6 million - 4% fewer than in 2006, and the lowest recorded since 1955;
- the number of lambs tailed in the year to 30 June 2007 was 33.5 million, just down from 33.8 million in 2006;

- dairy cattle numbers reached 5.3 million, up 2% on the 2006 figure. In 2007, there were 1.4 million (38%) more dairy cattle than in 1994;
- the number of deer fell to 1.4 million, 12% fewer than in 2006;
- beef cattle numbers remained stable at 4.4 million;
- the area planted in apples decreased to 9,340 hectares in 2007, down 15% since 2005;
- the area planted in wine grapes increased to 29,680 hectares, up 23% since 2005; and
- the area planted in avocados was 3,990 hectares, up 17% on the 2005 figure.

Final results from the census will be available in May. They will cover land use, livestock and arable farming, horticulture, forestry production, and farm practices - including irrigation and fertiliser use.

More is at <http://www.stats.govt.nz/products-and-services/media-releases/agricultural-production/agricultural-production-statistics-provisional-jun07-mr.htm>

Report on Dairying and Clean Streams Accord

The fourth progress report on the Dairying and Clean Streams Accord was released recently. The Accord is an agreement between the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, the Ministry for the Environment, Fonterra Co-operative Group and Local Government NZ. Signed in May 2003, it aims to achieve clean, healthy water in dairying areas, including streams, rivers, lakes, groundwater and wetlands.

This latest report shows steady progress is being made towards the Accord's targets in most areas. Some regions are performing really well, others not so well.

The snapshot report is available at <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/publications/land/dairying-clean-streams-accord-snapshot-feb08/index.html>

Walking Access: Moving Forward

A new government agency will be established this year to advise on, and set up, walking access policies. It will also help local groups with access issues and take responsibility for mediation of disputes over walking access. Its first job will be to develop a national access strategy along with a voluntary code of responsible conduct. A database of walking access is also planned, and the group will be seeking funding so new walking access can be established.

The basis for all new walking access over private land, including Maori land, will be by negotiation and agreement with the landholder(s).

More information is at <http://www.walkingaccess.org.nz>

"Rural Proofing" Your Policies: Guide

The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) has published a guide called "Rural Proof Your Policy - A guide for government policy advisers".

The guide is designed to help government agencies take into account the needs of rural people and rural businesses when developing policies and carrying out consultations. It recognises that the rural community is an important part of the NZ community and that the NZ economy is dependent on rural-based businesses. It also recognises that two key characteristics of rural NZ - low population density and isolation - could influence the effectiveness of proposed government policies in rural areas.

Rural proofing is based on three principles:

- all people, no matter where they live, should have a reasonable ability to live, work, and run businesses; and contribute to, and be part of, NZ society;
- government policy-making should take into account the potential implications for people living and working in rural areas; and
- Maori have a unique relationship to rural tribal land, marae and wahi tapu and that collectively-owned Maori land operates under a special legislative framework.

The guide includes a checklist to help policy advisers identify the potential implications of their policy proposals for the rural community, and a list of suggestions to help guide policy advisers towards creative solutions.

More information is available on MAF's website at <http://www.maf.govt.nz/mafnet/rural-nz/proof/>. Hard copies of the guide are available. Email policy.publications@maf.govt.nz

Environment

Protecting NZ's Marine Environment: Next Steps

The next steps in protecting NZ's marine environment have been announced. The country has been divided into 14 coastal regions to create a network of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) that reflect the diversity of NZ's marine environment. There will be three types of marine protection in the regions:

- marine reserves: these offer highest form of protection because you are not allowed to take anything from the water;
- other marine protected areas: some activities are allowed in these areas, but anything that would significantly change the overall environment is prohibited, e.g., bottom trawling, dredging, etc; and
- other types of marine protection: in these areas certain plants or animals in the marine environment are protected.

Community groups called Marine Protection Planning Forums will now start looking at the best way for each region to protect their local habitats. They will be made up of representatives of tangata whenua and local groups, including commercial and recreational users, environmental groups, regional councils and tourism operators.

More is at www.biodiversity.govt.nz/seas/biodiversity/protected/index.html

New Water Measurement Standard

The National Environmental Standard for Measuring Water Takes was approved by Cabinet recently and will now be drafted into regulation. The standard will encourage better water management because the amount of water taken from rivers, lakes and aquifers will be accurately measured. Currently, only 31% of the volume of water granted to consent holders is measured.

The standard will set minimum requirements for installing and operating water measuring and recording equipment. It will require consent holders to install and operate the water measuring equipment, and to inform regional authorities about their water use. The standard does not apply to individual households or businesses using water from reticulated supplies, nor to small amounts taken for an individual's drinking or stock-drinking needs.

The Cabinet paper relating to this standard is at www.mfe.govt.nz

Making NZ Cities Sustainable

A new Centre for Sustainable Cities has been launched at the University of Otago, Wellington, bringing together experts from NZ and overseas on making our cities more sustainable. The centre will provide practical solutions to urban problems in NZ (90% of NZers live in an urban environment), and it is already undertaking things like:

- developing a Healthy Housing Index which is being used as a basis for fixing safety issues in the home and then monitoring the impact on ACC claims;
- researching travel survey data to determine the most sustainable travel patterns in our cities; and
- analysing how to make the transition to low-carbon cities, through better urban design and transport policies.

Trans-Tasman Scientists Study Livestock Methane

New Zealand and Australian scientists are to jointly investigate ways of reducing the impact of livestock methane emissions by finding out more about the digestive processes in the rumen of livestock. The first ever collaborative project between the Livestock Industries Division of Australia's national science agency, the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation Livestock Industries (CLI) and NZ Crown Research Institute, AgResearch, will jointly fund the research.

Biosecurity Act Amendment Bill

A recently introduced Biosecurity and Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Legislation Amendment Bill is aimed at

amending the Biosecurity Act and Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act, to resolve issues around managing the risk to NZ from incidentally imported new organisms. The Bill follows a Court of Appeal judgment on importation of bee products from Australia that went in favour of the bee industry. Its objective is to ensure that statutes can be applied to importation of new organisms in the way that was intended.

NZ Wetlands Receive International Recognition

Some 16,000 hectares of wetlands in Southland have become part of a network of just six NZ sites that are recognised under the International Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.

This area - around the Awarua Plains, New River Estuary, Toetoes Harbour and Spit, and around Foveaux Strait - covers a very diverse range of natural habitats; including bog, swamp, forest, shrubland, saltmarsh, mudflats, estuaries, lakes, rivers, lagoons and sand dunes. It is home to many nationally threatened and uncommon plant and animal species; from unique sub-alpine plants and insects found at sea level, 81 different types of birds and a wide range of fish that live in the sea, estuaries and rivers.

Central Otago Landscape Protected

Almost 8,000 hectares of land between Omarama and St Bathans, in the South Island high country, has been purchased for use by the public. The 7,861 hectare Twinburn property is a pastoral lease in Central Otago. It covers a substantial part of the St Bathans Range of Central Otago and is also part of the Upper Manuherikia Basin. This is one of only two basins in Central Otago remaining with native vegetation from the valley floor to the tops. About 7,000 hectares of Twinburn will become conservation land. However, irrigated and other developed farmland will be available to exchange for other areas in the vicinity with high conservation values.

New recreational areas will be opened up for activities like cross country skiing, tramping, horse riding, mountain biking and photography. Opportunities will also include the ascent of Central Otago's highest peak, Mt St Bathans, and four-wheel drive travel across the dividing range between Otago and Canterbury.

Sustainable Living Available to More NZers

The Sustainable Living Programme is a partnership between 22 local and regional councils to provide practical ways of making small changes to limit your environmental impact at home. It includes community education courses covering energy efficiency, waste reduction, shopping tips, travel, vegetable gardening and eco-building, as well as water use and impacts.

Last year 36 courses and many workshop sessions were held in 30 locations across NZ. They were hosted by community education providers at secondary schools, migrant communities, council offices (for staff) and environment centres.

More information, including details of courses or one-off events coming up in your district or region, is at www.sustainableliving.org.nz, tel 03 960 2656, or email: rhys@sustainableliving.org.nz

Health & Safety

New Information/Advisory Services for Victims...

The Government is to provide \$1.7 million in 2008/09 for programmes aimed at assisting victims with advice about support agencies and services. They include:

- funding a national 0800 victim helpline;
- setting up a website for victims;
- giving the NZ Council of Victim Support Groups additional funding to build the capability of frontline service coordinators; and
- developing a Victims' Charter to make people more aware of the standard of service that victims can expect from government agencies.

...More Family Violence Court Services...

The Government is also providing additional services, costing \$5.8 million in 2008/09 and \$6.2 million in subsequent years, through Family Violence Courts. These include:

- setting up an independent Victim Advocate/Support Person position, to provide support and assistance to victims of domestic violence;
- funding non-government service providers to deliver stopping violence programmes to offenders referred from Family Violence Courts; and
- revisiting the Legal Services Act 2000 to ensure victims have full access to legal representation and do not need to repay legal aid grants.

A Justice Advisory Board of eminent NZers is also to be established in response to the Ombudsmen's report which investigated the issues involving the administration of criminal justice. This board will be able to consult with the wider public, and it will provide an independent perspective from across the justice sector.

...& Domestic Violence: Review of Legislation

A review is underway to identify which parts of the Domestic Violence Act and related legislation could be strengthened so that domestic violence is reduced or prevented, and victims of domestic violence have effective legal protection. Groups involved with preventing domestic violence have already made submissions on proposals for change outlined in a recent discussion paper. The proposals included changes to allow:

- Police-issued short-term protection orders;
- written reasons when declining protection orders;
- increased access to hearings when orders are declined;
- more rigorous checking before orders are discharged;
- greater emphasis on enforcing breaches of orders;
- the ability to allow affidavits from protection order hearings in subsequent bail hearings; and

" the ability to allow the criminal court to issue protection orders when sentencing offenders for a domestic violence related offence.

In terms of safety for children when parents are before the Family Court developing parenting plans, suggested changes would:

- introduce speedy hearings to deal with care and contact issues;
- increase emphasis on specialist reports; and
- include psychological abuse in the definition of violence in the Care of Children Act.

The proposals also aim to increase access to educational programmes for respondents and protected persons.

The discussion paper is at <http://www.justice.govt.nz/pubs/reports/2007/domestic-violence-act-review/index-discussion.html>

Some ACC Payments Rise

ACC is now paying an additional \$25 million a year to contracted agencies providing home-based support for injured NZers and their families. ACC funds around 70 agencies nationwide to provide home-based services to about 15,000 injured people a year. The services include personal care, childcare and home help, and the extra funds will enable the agencies to increase the amount they pay the carers.

Under the change, rates for services by contracted providers have increased per hour from: \$19.98 to \$22.50 for home help; \$21.89 to \$24.21 for personal care level 1 and childcare; from \$25.34 to \$28.03 for personal care level 2.

Feedback on Tobacco Displays

Over 200 submissions were received on the Ministry of Health's Review of Tobacco Displays in NZ: Consultation Document which closed on 15 February. The consultation document sought feedback on three options for the future of tobacco displays: current requirements with enhanced education and enforcement, further restrictions on tobacco displays, or a total ban on displays altogether.

Submissions came from a range of individuals and groups, including medical groups and professionals, cancer support groups, smokefree lobby groups, tobacco companies, retailers and tobacconists.

More is at www.moh.govt.nz/smokefreelaw

New Frozen Funds Charitable Trust

This Trust was created from the "Patient's Recreation Fund", a general fund created from the interest on individual institutionalised psychiatric and psychopaedic patient trust funds. The funds were originally intended to be used for the good of all patients. However, in the late 80s this practice was stopped, and the funds frozen and interest returned to patients where possible.

The Trust's board has seven members, four of whom are consumers of mental health or intellectual disability services. Its aim is to help improve support for former and current mental health

patients, and it expects to give \$300,000 annually in grants for projects run by or for people who use mental health or intellectual disability services.

The first round of grants this year is expected to go towards charitable organisations that will raise public awareness of the legacy of institutionalisation.

New Kids Website: Push Play, Eat Well

An interactive website, geared at encouraging kids into exercise and healthy eating habits, was launched recently. It is part of "Mission-On", which is aimed at encouraging children and young people to lead a healthy lifestyle through improving their nutrition and increasing physical activity.

The website combines a mixture of visually stimulating and interactive elements, including the ability to:

- create your own character;
- play games and participate in activities;
- set and achieve goals;
- earn points and win prizes by doing "offline" activities;
- make friends and send messages;
- receive medals for mastering new skills;
- keep your favourite activities in one place; and
- see what fun things other children have done.

The website is at www.mission-on.co.nz

Ketamine to Become Classified Drug

Ketamine, a short-acting hallucinogenic dissociative anaesthetic, commonly used by veterinarians and increasingly in human surgery and palliative care, has been classified as a Class C drug. The classification, which will be approved by Parliament after being gazetted, means that there will be increased controls on storage of the drug and increased penalties for its importation, possession, manufacture, or supply for illicit purposes. The drug would still be able to be used as a prescription-only medicine by veterinarians and doctors, but they would need to keep it in an "approved" locked metal or concrete cupboard or compartment.

Gambling Survey Results

Most NZers gamble at least occasionally, with Lotto and Instant Kiwi/scratchies the most popular large-scale activity, according to newly released results of a 2005 survey undertaken by the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA).

Figures from this survey are almost all lower than in previous surveys: some 66% of respondents played Lotto at least once a year (75% in 2000) and 37% at least once a month (50% in 2000). The corresponding figures for Instant Kiwi/scratchies were 41% (48% in 2000) and 18% (23% in 2000). Few people reported participating in the types of gambling considered most potentially harmful such as gaming machines and racing.

Figures for the forms of gambling considered most potentially harmful were: 19% for non-casino gaming machines, 14% for betting on horse and dog races, 10% for casino gaming machines, and 4% for TAB sports betting and casino table games.

Some 8% of respondents said they played non-casino gaming machines once a month or more.

The report, "People's Participation in, and Attitudes to, Gambling, 1985-2005: Results of the 2005 Survey", is available under Resources - Research and Reports at: www.dia.govt.nz

Racing Safety Grants

Twelve clubs have been granted nearly \$368,800 to support racecourse safety projects. The grants make up the first round of the Racing Safety Development Fund, which offers up to \$1 million per year in dollar-for-dollar contributions to clubs for projects that enhance the safety and quality of racecourse facilities. The second round of applications, which closes on 31 March, has about \$631,200 in grants available.

Education

The Correspondence School: New Structure

The Correspondence School (TCS) is changing the way it is organised to increase student engagement and achievement. The new structure will be based around three wahanga (divisions) which focus on learning delivery (teaching, learning and student support); curriculum development and assessment; and support services. The wahanga will be responsible for delivering all teaching and learning across the three broad areas of Early Childhood; Primary and Special Education; and years 7 and above.

There are now four regional teaching teams: North, Central North, Central South and Southern. Regional managers called Kaiarahi will work with communities in their region, and make sure that TCS teaching staff, e.g., liaison teachers, have the support they need.

The new structure should be mostly in place by term 2 of 2008. It will be completed by the end of 2009.

For more information email the school at info@correspondence.school.nz or write to Freepost 10010, Private Bag 39992, Wellington Mail Centre, Lower Hutt 5045

Schools Plus: Education Until You're Eighteen

Under a new Schools Plus policy the school of the future will be the base from which young people begin youth apprenticeships, obtain work skills or continue with study leading to university or tertiary education. Schools Plus aims to have all young people either in school or in some other form of education or training until they reach the age of eighteen.

Consultation on the programme is to begin soon.

21st Century Teacher Training: Report

A review of initial teacher education policy has been carried out with the aim of assuring government, the teaching profession, and families about the quality of newly qualified teachers.

The review followed consultation in 2007 on ways the teaching profession can influence the quality of initial teacher education when they are provisionally registered, and when they gain full registration. It also focused on the kinds of support government and the profession should provide to teachers in training, and during their induction into teaching.

It suggests that a significant challenge remains for all stakeholders to work together in a unified way to improve the quality of initial teacher education.

The review report is at http://www.minedu.govt.nz/web/downloadable/dl11404_v1/report-on-analysis-for-public.doc

Student Loan Interest Rate for 2008/09

The interest rate on student loans for the 2008/09 tax year has been set at 6.7%, down from 6.8%. The interest rate, for those borrowers who still have to pay interest on student loans, is based on a five-year average of the 10-year bond rate, plus a margin to cover administration costs.

Student Loan Debts Rise/Repayments Vary

Statistics NZ says that the number of students borrowing in a year under the Student Loan Scheme reached a high of 167,400 in 2006. The 8% increase from 154,404 in 2005 is the biggest annual percentage increase in the number of borrowers since 2001. This is despite total enrolments dropping 3% from 527,211 in 2005 to 512,694 in 2006.

The average student loan leaving debt reached a high of \$15,590 in 2005, up 6% from \$14,730 in 2004. This continues the upward trend in average student loan leaving debt recorded since 1992.

The total number of students receiving an allowance increased 5% to 58,194 in 2006 from 55,554 in 2005. This is the first increase in the number of students receiving an allowance since 2002. The average amount received increased 3% to \$6,580 in 2006 (from \$6,380 in 2005).

Students who left study from engineering and related technologies qualifications at level 7 bachelors in 2001 had the highest average income for those at this level five years post-study, at \$50,420. This compares with an average five-year post-study income of \$31,490 in 2006 for students who left study from creative arts qualifications, the lowest average five-year post-study income for students studying at level 7 bachelors.

Process for Reviews of Kura Kaupapa Maori Schools

The Education Review Office (ERO), with Te Runanga Nui o Nga Kura Kaupapa Maori o Aotearoa and the Ministry of Education,

have developed a framework for reviewing the performance of kura kaupapa Maori.

Kura kaupapa Maori are total immersion schools that follow a curriculum which validates Maori knowledge, structures, process, learning styles and administrative practices. There are some 60 kura kaupapa Maori around the country.

The two ERO publications set out the process for the reviews, acknowledging the value placed on matauranga Maori, reo Maori and tikanga Maori. They are "A Framework for Review and Evaluation in Te Aho Matua Kura Kaupapa Maori", and "Evaluation Indicators for Education Reviews in Te Aho Matua Kura Kaupapa Maori". They have been printed as working booklets.

More information is on ERO's website at <http://www.ero.govt.nz/ero/publishing.nsf/Content/What%27s+New>

Funding to Extend High Standards in Schools

Recently announced funding of \$10 million aims to help NZ schools boost their performance by sharing good ideas. A total of 178 schools in 31 clusters will benefit from grants under the Extending High Standards Across Schools (EHSAS) initiative, designed to help clusters of schools develop and share their best teaching practices.

All clusters have a focus on teacher practice and student achievement, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Other areas of focus include boys' achievement, Maori achievement and developing the potential of gifted and talented children.

The third round of EHSAS will begin in Term 1 2008, with successful schools to receive funding in 2008.

More information about the schools in each of the 31 clusters that are receiving funding is at www.minedu.govt.nz/goto/extending

Early Childhood Centres Receive More Funding

Thirteen new early childhood education centres (ECE) across the country have received grants with a combined worth of \$485,000 to help them start providing services. Seven existing ECE services will also be expanding their services by five or more child places. In the 2007/08 financial year \$1.2 million is available to eligible services, and funds are allocated four times during the year. Individual services can receive up to \$30,000.

More is on the Ministry of Education website at www.minedu.govt.nz

Interest-Free Student Loans: Volunteers Qualify...

The Government has named a further four charitable organisations whose volunteers may qualify for interest-free student loans while working for those organisations overseas. They are: the Campus Crusade for Christ NZ, Hare Krishna Food for Life

Inc, SIM NZ, and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints NZ Trust Board. The changes will apply from 1 April 2008.

...& So Do Some Overseas Students

The Government is also to extend interest-free loans to people studying full-time overseas as part of formal exchange programmes. To qualify for an interest-free student loan, borrowers must generally be in NZ for 183 or more continuous days. There are certain exemptions (one of which applies to students engaged in full-time study with an overseas provider). The change is also scheduled for introduction later on this year, with the exemption being backdated to apply from 1 April 2007.

Housing

Falling Rate of Home Ownership: Report

The Centre for Housing Research, Aotearoa NZ (CHRANZ) has released research that shows that a smaller proportion of those under 40 years old are buying their own homes, they are taking longer to do so, and it is costing them relatively more. The implications are that there are delays in starting the "housing career", and that people are starting with smaller dwellings, that are often further from the workplace, and with lower disposable income for other expenditures.

The main findings of the report:

- rates of home ownership have fallen from a high of 73.7% in 1986 to 66.9% in 2006, a rate last seen in the 1950s;
- the decline has resulted in a redistribution of housing equity across age groups, income groups and household type, to the disadvantage of the young, single parents and low-income households;
- more households are compensating for the rising cost of ownership by purchasing multi-unit properties that have traditionally been rented, and by purchasing "out-of-town" further from employment, especially in the 2001-2006 period. It seems that many people have traded off the cost of commuting against the cost of ownership to secure their home; and
- falling home ownership means that wealth is being redistributed from young to old, there is more demand for rental housing, and there are geographical and environmental impacts as different housing choices are made.

Copies of the research report and CHRANZ Research Bulletin are available from the CHRANZ website at www.chranz.co.nz

New Affordable Housing Strategy

The Government has announced a plan to help families into home ownership by boosting the supply of affordable houses. Under the plan it will:

- review public land holdings to see which can be used for urban housing projects;
- develop large-scale housing developments involving partnerships between central, regional, and local government, and the private sector;
- support the development of the not-for-profit sector to provide more affordable rental and owner-occupied houses for lower-middle income families or individuals in high cost areas. Under this change local authorities, iwi and others already working in the not-for-profit sector could expand their role;
- set up a shared equity scheme (in July). This involves the Government taking a share in a home to bridge the gap between a family's income and the price of a modest house. This government share becomes a second mortgage which attracts no interest. It has to be repaid on the resale of the home; and
- look at how to simplify the design and building consent costs for starter homes.

More information on shared equity schemes is at <http://www.hnzc.co.nz/hnzc/web/rent-buy-or-own/home-loans/shared-equity.htm>

Loans Scheme Launched for Energywise Homes

The Government's interest subsidy for insulation, clean heating and other energy efficiency measures is now available through 11 organisations across the country. The Energywise funding is available to homeowners earning less than \$100,000 a year (1 or 2 earners) or \$140,000 a year (3 or more earners), with homes built before 1 April 1978. It comes as either:

- an interest subsidy, so homeowners who meet the criteria will be able to pay off over time the cost of energy efficiency improvements, and the Government will pay the interest, up to a maximum of \$1,250; or
- a grant, of 10% of the cost of insulation and clean heat, up to a maximum of \$500.

Eleven organisations entering into partnerships with the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (EECA) to provide flexible funding packages to middle-income NZers are:

- Air Lana - Terra Lana and AirCon NZ - Nelson to South Otago, Hawkes Bay;
- Community Energy Action Trust - Christchurch;
- Eco Insulation - central Auckland and Wellington;
- Energy Options - Eastern Bay of Plenty, Tauranga, Rotorua, Tokoroa, Taupo, Poverty Bay, Hawkes Bay, Blenheim and Picton;
- EnergySmart Ltd - Hawkes Bay, Manawatu/Tararua, Kapiti, Horowhenua, Wellington, Nelson, Tasman, Marlborough, South Canterbury, Otago and Southland;
- Environment Canterbury - Christchurch, Kaiapoi, Rangiora, Ashburton, Timaru;
- Huntly Energy Efficiency Trust - South Auckland, greater Waikato, King Country;
- Insinc Home Solutions Ltd - Auckland - Bombay Hills to Whangaparaoa;
- J H Brewster Ltd - Papakura, Pukekohe and North Waikato;

- Nelson City Council - urban Nelson; and
- Sustainability Trust - Wellington and Porirua City.

To find out how to apply, contact the organisation in your area. For more information go to www.energywise.govt.nz

Home Energy Rating Assessments

The Association of Building Sustainability Assessors (ABSA) is a not-for-profit organisation responsible for providing assessor accreditation services for the Home Energy Rating programme.

The general process for getting a Home Energy Rating assessment involves contacting a trained and accredited assessor to conduct an assessment of your home or home plans. The assessor will report on:

- how well the building's design, construction and orientation enables it to maintain a comfortable indoor temperature; and
- the efficiency of a home's two biggest energy users: the space heating system and the water heating system.

The assessment can be completed on any home.

To get a home energy ratings assessment, select an assessor from the list on the ABSA website at www.absa.net.nz

Energy

Electricity: Reconciliation Rule Signed Off

The "reconciliation rule change" has been signed off by the Minister of Energy and will come into effect on 1 May 2008. Under the rule, the retail electricity market will be reconciled using all meter readings, and any unaccounted for electricity will be shared amongst buyers. New links between the registry and reconciliation systems mean unaccounted for electricity can be allocated fairly.

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

Switching Gas Suppliers Made Easier

The gas industry has agreed to help domestic consumers switch more easily between retailers. It will:

- establish a central gas registry as a database for all information required to undertake a switch of a customer between gas retailers;
- set up a management system for the information held by the registry;

- appoint a registry operator; and
- standardise the data exchange process for switching consumers between retailers.

The protocols are at <http://www.med.govt.nz/upload/55533/gas-rules-2008.pdf>

Employment

New Skill NZ Forum to be Set Up

A cross-government, business and industry forum is to be established to improve the skills of Kiwis' workers. It will be known as the Skill NZ Forum, and it will be made up of: the Secretary of the Council of Trade Unions, Chief Executive of Business NZ, Chair of the Industry Training Federation, Minister for Tertiary Education, Associate Ministers for Tertiary Education, Minister of Labour, Minister for Social Development and Employment, Chief Executives of the Ministry of Social Development, Department of Labour, Tertiary Education Commission, Ministry of Economic Development, the Secretary for Education and the Chair of the Tertiary Education Commission.

A survey released in December found that 800,000 workers did not have the skills needed to participate fully in a knowledge-based economy. Proportionally, the figure is similar in other developed countries.

Wages Up...

Salary and wage rates (including overtime) rose 3.4% in, in the year to the December quarter according to the Statistics NZ's Labour Cost Index (LCI). The Quarterly Employment Survey (QES) for the year to December showed a 4.1% increase in average total hourly earnings to \$23.32.

The LCI figure of 3.4% for the year to December and a 1.1% gain for the quarter were both records. Public sector salary and wage rates, including overtime, were up 3.1% for the year and 0.9% in the latest quarter.

According to the LCI, private sector salary and wage rates, including overtime, rose 3.4% in the year to the December quarter and 1.1% in the quarter alone - both records. Public sector salary and wage rates, including overtime, were up 3.1% for the year and 0.9% in the latest quarter.

Average ordinary time hourly earnings for females increased 1.3% to \$21.59, with that for males up 0.8% to \$24.68.

...& Unemployment Down

The latest Household Labour Force Survey results show the unemployment rate at a record low 3.4%, with the number of people unemployed dropping from 79,000 in September to 77,000 in December 2007.

The December quarterly survey also showed the highest level of employment recorded since the survey began in 1986,

with 2.173 million NZers now in paid work, up 23,000 from the September quarter, and the highest ever rate of labour force participation, rising to 68.8%.

Overall, NZ has the fifth lowest unemployment rate of the 27 OECD countries with standardised unemployment rates. By comparison Australia was ranked 10th with an unemployment rate of 4.5%.

The survey results are at <http://www.stats.govt.nz/products-and-services/media-releases/household-labour-force-survey/household-labour-force-survey-dec07qtr-mr.htm>

Best Place to Work in NZ Award

The Outward Bound Trust of NZ has been voted the Best Place to Work in NZ. Established in Anikiwa in the Marlborough Sounds in 1962, Outward Bound currently has 50 employees and is the country's leading organisation for showing people their full potential through challenge and adventure in the outdoors.

It is a former winner of the survey, having picked up the "Overall Winner" award in 2005, and triumphed again this year by eclipsing competition from more than 200 other organisations that participated in the 2007 Unlimited/JRA Best Places to Work in NZ Survey.

Flight Centre, another former winner of the Overall Award, again received the Best Place to Work award in the Large Workplaces category (400+ employees), whilst the James Cook Hotel Grand Chancellor in Wellington was placed top of the 10 Best Medium-Large Workplaces (150-399 employees), and management and IT consulting firm Maven took out the Small Workplaces (20-49 employees) category. Outward Bound won the Small-Medium Workplaces (50-149 employees) category.

More Jobs for Older Employees

According to Statistics NZ, the employee group aged 65 years and older showed the greatest growth in filled jobs and average mean quarterly earnings in the five-year period to December 2006. While those aged 65 years and older held only 2.5% of total filled jobs, this group exhibited the greatest percentage growth of 88.9%, substantially higher than the national average of 17.0%.

Jobs held by employees aged 60 to 64 years had the second largest percentage increase of 50.5%, followed by the 55- to 59-year age group with 45.0%. Growth in average mean quarterly earnings was highest for employees aged 65 years and older at 40.7%, compared to the national average of 22.5%.

Transport

Higher Fuel Prices Changing Driving Habits

Rising fuel prices are forcing nearly a third of Kiwis to drive their car less often, according to a Research NZ telephone poll conducted

between 12 and 18 February. The poll found the rising cost of petrol and diesel over the past 12 months had resulted in 32% of Kiwis saying they were driving their car less often. The poll also showed if the price of fuel rose to \$2.00 or more per litre, over half of Kiwis said they would use their car less (54%).

The poll also showed females claimed they were altering their driving habits more than males. While 35% of females said they were driving less, only 29% of males said they were.

There was also variation in opinion among people of differing household income. Those on higher incomes were less likely to state they had changed their driving habits due to rising fuel prices. Seventy percent of people with incomes of \$70,000 or more were least likely to state they were driving less. If the price rose to \$2.00 or more per litre 64% of people earning under \$40,000 were more likely to say they would use their car less, compared to 49% of those who earned \$70,000 or more.

Next Steps for Noisy Vehicles Announced

Noisy vehicles are likely to come under closer scrutiny under new proposals. All vehicles with a modified exhaust system that fail a subjective noise test at warrant or certificate of fitness will be required to undertake an objective (metered) test, to see if they comply with the in-service limit of 95 decibels. If a vehicle fails then it will have to be repaired and pass the objective test at 90 decibels.

In addition, when Police are out on patrol they will be able to direct a noisy vehicle to undergo a noise test. In this case the vehicle will be required to meet the stricter 90 decibel limit before it can return to the road.

The Government also intends to make a further change relating to the entry requirements for vehicles. This change will ensure vehicles meet tighter noise restrictions when they enter NZ.

The proposed amendments are subject to the standard consultation process. A draft Rule will be prepared by Land Transport NZ for public consultation and its expected this will be completed by the end of the year and come into effect in 2009.

More information at the Ministry of Transport website <http://www.transport.govt.nz/noise-index/>

Code of Practice for Access to Transport Systems

The Government is developing legislation that would set in place a national Code of Practice to encourage better management of the competing demands on our transport systems. The idea is to reduce the cost of access to road, motorway and rail systems by utilities (these are electricity, gas and telecommunications), and by local authorities (which supply water services), so they are sustainably managed.

The Minister for Economic Development (with the Ministers of Transport and Local Government) will have the power to approve, administer, amend and notify the code. The legislation will also include regulation-making powers for a regulated Code of practice.

Business

Number of Businesses in NZ up 2%

According to recent Statistics NZ figures, the number of businesses increased 2% in February 2007 compared with February 2006.

In February 2007, there were around 463,000 businesses in NZ. The increase in business numbers resulted mainly from property and business services (up 6,900), followed by finance and insurance (up 1,900). The majority of the new businesses in these industries were non-employing (88% in property and business services, and 92% in finance and insurance).

Ninety-seven percent of businesses had fewer than 20 employees, but in total this group accounted for less than a third of all NZ employees. Ninety-six percent of the annual growth in business numbers comes from businesses with fewer than 10 employees.

Business numbers increased in all regional council areas in February 2007 compared with February 2006. More than three-quarters of NZ businesses were located in the North Island, with 31% in the Auckland region. The number of businesses increased by 2% in both the North and South Islands.

December Quarter Retail Sales

Recent Statistics NZ figures show that, except for cars, retail sales were flat in the December quarter. Overall, sales rose 0.3% in the quarter, with higher prices for vehicle fuel a key factor. Seasonally adjusted retail prices rose 1.9% or \$309 million in the quarter, compared with the September quarter. Sales for core retailing industries, which exclude vehicle-related sales, rose 0.4%. Automotive fuel retailing sales were up 15.1% or \$229 million in the three months, following an increase of 1.7% in the September quarter.

The biggest monthly sales increases were in automotive fuel, up 2.7% or \$16 million, and department stores, up 3.1% or \$10 million. The biggest monthly sales decreases were in motor vehicles, down 2.4% or \$17 million, and cafes and restaurants, down 3.2% or \$11 million.

NZ's Slice of the World's Dairy Trade

A recently published profile on MarketNewZealand.com highlights that NZ accounts for about a third of the entire world trade in dairy products. This is due to NZ exporting 95% of its dairy products, despite it only producing about 2% of the world's total dairy production.

The dairy industry is NZ's largest industry. Annual exports for 2006 totalled NZ\$6.6 billion. Dairy company Fonterra is the country's largest company and one of the top six dairy companies in the world by turnover.

Fonterra scientists have achieved a world-first by breeding cows that produce low-fat milk that is also high in omega3 oils and polyunsaturated fat.

Fonterra and Industrial Research Ltd have also developed the world's first processing plant to produce complex lipids from milk. In a purified form, these lipids can be worth thousands of dollars a kilogram and have a variety of nutritional and cosmetic applications.

Meanwhile, Dairy Goat Cooperative (NZ) Ltd is the world's leading manufacturer of goat milk nutritional powder products and has also developed leading infant formula and long-life goat milk.

And Tatua Cooperative Dairy Company Ltd has secured 40% of the world market for lactoferrin, an iron-binding protein.

The dairy industry profile also covers industry structure, specialty cheeses, the quickly growing demand for organic production, company profiles and contact details.

Download at: <http://www.marketnewzealand.com/common/files/NZ%20Dairy%20Industry%20Profile%202007-08.pdf>

NZ & Australian Agribusiness in February: Rabobank

Rabobank has published its February issue of Australia and NZ Agribusiness Review, a monthly commentary on NZ and Australian economic and agricultural conditions. Prepared by the bank's Food & Agribusiness Research and Advisory division, the report highlights:

- summer 2008 has brought a number of unwelcome weather records for NZ with hot and dry conditions prevailing and farmers preparing for drought conditions. While Australia recorded the hottest January on record, solid rainfall has brought relief from prolonged drought to many regions on the east coast of the country;
- food prices increased by 3.2% per annum in NZ and 1.2% in Australia. The Australian figure was affected by big falls in fruit prices, which declined by 32% for the year;
- volatility and uncertainty generated by the US sub-prime crisis and its global impact have continued to dominate all regional markets creating confusion over the direction of interest rates and currencies;
- the easing of international dairy prices which began in late 2007 has continued in early 2008, within increasing supply playing the largest role in the price adjustment;
- world wheat and soybean prices soared to record levels in early 2008, due to extremely tight inventories and some panic buying; and
- raw sugar on the ICE futures market was one of the best performing soft commodities in January, gaining 14% for the month.

Further information: http://www.rabobank.com.au/knowledge_services/research/reports_commodity_notes/documents/agribusiness_review_au_nz-feb08.pdf

Big Increase in Value of Meat Exports

A recently published profile of the country's meat industry shows the annual value of NZ's beef, sheep, lamb and deer meat exports increased from NZ\$2.5 billion to \$4.3 billion between 1989 and 2006 - an increase of 75%. The profile also shows that this increase reflects an increased price per kilogram: the quantity of meat exported has remained relatively static - 614,050 tonnes in 1989 and 781,123 tonnes in 2006.

The total value of all meat exports in 2006 was NZ\$4.67 billion. This represented about 13% of the country's total exports. Meat was the second-largest food export after dairy products. About 90% of sheep and lamb and 80% of beef meat produced each year is exported. The United States and European Union are the two largest markets, accounting for 54% of meat exports by volume in 2006.

New Zealand is the world's largest exporter of Halal slaughtered sheep meat and a significant exporter of Halal slaughtered beef.

The NZ meat industry profile also includes information on the industry's structure, bodies, research agencies, regulatory bodies and industry contacts.

The profile is at: <http://www.marketnewzealand.com/common/files/NZ%20Meat%20Industry%20Profile%202007-08.pdf>

Trends in Australian Food and Beverages

Changing trends and growing concerns about obesity and other health issues in Australia are creating opportunities for NZ food and beverage exporters, according to a report from NZ Trade and Enterprise (NZTE). The report - "Market Profile - Food and Beverages in the Australian Market" - says NZ products that can deliver fresh, healthy, natural snacks and meal solutions are well placed to tap into these trends and concerns.

It says other consumer trends to be aware of include an increased demand for convenience in both shopping time and meal preparation; people shopping more frequently; an increase in casual dining; a lower share of income spent on food; and an increase in lower priced imported products.

Linked to the demand for healthy products is an increase in demand for organic products.

New Zealand is a major source of food imports into Australia, accounting for around 20% of the total A\$6.5 billion food and beverage products imported in 2005/06.

The report advises that due to the highly competitive nature of the Australian grocery market and the dominance by nationwide chains Coles Myer and Woolworths, NZ companies wishing to enter the retail market need to be well prepared and should research the market well.

As well as market entry strategies, the market profile includes information on the market structure, the regulatory environment, the competitive environment and further sources of information.

The report is at <http://www.marketnewzealand.com/Common/Files/AustraliaF&Bmarketprofile.pdf>

NZ-China Trade Agreement Likely

New Zealand is poised to sign a trade deal with China, with the Prime Minister due to visit Beijing in April. If everything goes as planned, this will be NZ's biggest trade deal since CER (Closer Economic Relations) was signed with Australia 25 years ago. Details are still to come, but it is estimated that the agreement will be worth \$200 million to \$400 million-a-year over the next 20 years.

Not-For-Profits

New Funding for Community Organisations

Community organisations (NGOs) providing essential services to families, children and young people are to receive new funding, of \$446 million over the next four years. The funding is provided under a "Pathway to Partnership" plan aimed at building stronger, sustainable and more effective community-based social services.

Essential services are those services that are best provided by community organisations and which the Government would have to provide directly if the community couldn't. From 2008/09 there will be an extra \$37.5 million of funding for these groups, increasing to \$192.8 million in 2011/12 and beyond.

The Government is moving away from a market-based system where NGOs competed against each other for funding contracts. The NGOs that provide essential social services will be contracted for the full cost of delivering these services and they will receive funding that reflects changing costs and demands.

The services benefiting from the plan are: parenting programmes (e.g., Barnardos, FamilyWorks); women's refuges and family violence prevention and crisis programmes; budgeting advice services; mentoring programmes for young people; community programmes to address youth offending; and Victim support.

The funding will come through multi-year funding arrangements and it will provide funding security at the grass roots level.

Services that do not meet the criteria for an essential service, but which contribute towards the greater community good (e.g. community drop-in centres) will move to grant funding rather than contracting for services in order to lower compliance costs for small providers.

Nominations Open for COGS Committees

Nominations are being sought for the 37 Community Organisations Grants Scheme (COGS) committees located throughout NZ. The Local Distribution Committees (LDCs) are made up of volunteers who make decisions about funding applications from organisations within their local communities.

Applications close on 4 April 2008. Forms can be downloaded from www.dia.govt.nz. For more information tel freephone 0800 824 824, or email Graham.Gibbs@dia.govt.nz

Fraud in Not-For-Profits: Survey Results

The 2008 BDO Kendalls not-for-profit fraud survey shows fraudsters who target not-for-profit organisations across Australia and NZ are men and women in their 40s who work in a non-accountancy role but have ready access to cash. This differs from the widespread perception that fraud is perpetrated by younger people working in a business.

The largest number of frauds reported among the 384 respondents occurred in organisations in the \$1 million to nearly \$10 million turnover group with 186 individual fraud cases reported. Other key findings include:

- the average value of the largest frauds in not-for-profit organisations was \$45,527;
- only 8% of fraud was committed by unpaid volunteers;
- the most common motivator for fraud was financial problems and pressures;
- the majority of respondents did not report the fraud to police;
- 20% of organisations did not sack the person who had committed the fraud; and
- cash theft and kickbacks/bribery were the most common types of fraud perpetrated.

Since the last survey was released in 2006, the dollar value of the fraud had increased but the percentage of organisations suffering from fraud had decreased from 19% to 16%.

The report can be downloaded from <http://www.bdospicers.com/content/our-services/NotforProfit.aspx338>

Workplace Wellbeing Workshops

Workplace Wellbeing workshops around the country have been organised by the NZ Council of Social Services, the NZ Federation of Voluntary Welfare Organisations, Social Services Waikato and the Service and Food Workers Union Nga Ringa Tota. The workshops support the development and maintenance of good employment practice and relationships in the not-for-profit sector. The next workshops are in:

- Marlborough - 17 March, email lyne.johnston@marlborough.govt.nz
- Porirua - 28 March, Avalon, email coordinator@pcoss.org.nz
- Palmerston North - 15 March, email pncsc@inspire.net.nz

For more information contact C Twyford, tel 04 239 8173

In 2007 the Waitangi Tribunal recommended that the Crown make negotiations with Ngati Makino and Waitaha a priority. These negotiations will take place alongside the discussions underway with other Central North Island iwi regarding Crown forest land.

Terms of Agreement with Central North Island Iwi

The Crown and representatives of central North Island iwi have taken an early, but important, step forward in their relationship with the signing of a Terms of Agreement at Parliament. The Terms of Agreement was signed on behalf of the Crown and by the representatives of the iwi group known as the Central North Island iwi Collective that includes Ngati Tuwharetoa, Ngati Whakaue, Ngai Tuhoe, Ngati Rangitahi, and Ngati Whare.

The Terms enable the Collective to develop proposals for the allocation of Crown-owned forest lands between iwi with unsettled historic claims against the Crown in the central North Island.

Two Foreshore/Seabed Agreements

The Crown and negotiating representatives for Te Runanga o Ngati Porou have signed a Heads of Agreement to move forward on issues surrounding Ngati Porou's special and enduring relationship with the foreshore and seabed.

The Heads of Agreement recognises the special relationship and the enduring and unbroken mana of nga hapu o Ngati Porou in the areas beside the sea that they have occupied since before the Treaty. It also ensures that public interests and access are protected.

The Crown has also signed a Heads of Agreement on the foreshore and seabed with representatives of the hapu that make up Eastern Bay of Plenty iwi Te Whanau a Apanui.

This agreement reflects the customary activity carried out by members of the hapu of Te Whanau a Apanui since before the passage of both the legislation and the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi. Their customary behaviour is also respected by the wider community in the region. It will now go to the hapu of Te Whanau a Apanui for approval.

Members of both iwi have owned large land holdings next to the foreshore and seabed without interruption since before the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840.

Treaty Matters

Ngati Makino & Waitaha to Enter Negotiations

Terms of Negotiation have been signed on behalf of the Crown with representatives of Ngati Makino and Waitaha. Ngati Makino's area of interest lies between Lake Rotoiti and the Bay of Plenty coast. Waitaha's area of interest is from Tauranga harbour in the west across to Maketu in the east. The historical claims of the iwi primarily relate to the confiscation of land (raupatu), land sales to the Crown, and the operation of the Native Land Laws.

The Elections

Enrolling to Vote

It is compulsory to be enrolled to vote in the General Election if you are a NZ resident and 18 years of age or over. However, you can choose whether or not to vote for a candidate in the election.

If you live overseas, are 18 years of age or older and either a NZ citizen and have been in NZ in the past three years; or a NZ

permanent resident who has been in NZ in the past 12 months, then you can enrol to vote.

If you are a NZ Maori, or a descendant of a NZ Maori, you have the choice of enrolling to vote at parliamentary elections on a Maori roll or a General roll.

If you are eligible to vote, and you believe that having your details recorded on the published electoral roll could threaten your personal safety, or that of your family, you can request that your details be included only on the unpublished roll.

You can enrol to vote at http://www.elections.org.nz/enrolment/enrol_form.html. An enrolment form for people who need to go on the unpublished roll is at http://www.elections.org.nz/enrolment/unpublished_form.html

Electoral Finance Act Passed

This Act came into force on 1 January 2008. It prohibits anonymous donations over \$1000 to political parties and provides that anyone wanting to spend more than \$12,000 on an election campaign must list as a third party and not spend more than \$120,000.

For more information see www.elections.org.nz

Internet/ICT

Two-Thirds of Online Kiwis now Use Internet Banking

According to a survey by The Nielsen Company, out of every 100 people over 15 within NZ, 84 have access to the Internet and 71 use the Internet at least once a month. Of those who use the Internet, AC Nielsen survey results show that 68% used online banking in the last month, while 57% used it at least once a week.

The most frequently used banking sites included ASB, Westpac and National Bank, with all three of these sites now having over half a million unique browsers per month. Considering the main banks that customers use, ASB has the highest proportion of customers who used online banking in the last month (85%), followed by Kiwibank (81%) and Westpac (77%).

For younger people with Internet access, online banking is the norm - 80% of those under 40 used online banking in the last month. For older people, online banking is becoming common practice - 62% of people over 55 visited an online banking site in the last month.

On their last visit to an online banking site, 90% of customers checked their account balances, while around six in ten (56%) transferred money. In addition, just under half (47%) made payments online.

NZ Heads Australia in e-Government Responsiveness

A University of Otago study of e-government responsiveness set out to see if e-government was making government services more responsive. Their key and consistent finding was that NZ agencies performed significantly better than their Australian counterparts.

Researchers sent out an email message to 273 government agencies at both local and national level in Australia and NZ asking two simple questions: "Where are you located?" and, "what are your open hours?". They would have contacted more agencies but found 29% of Australian federal agencies had no such facility for email contact. Responses were monitored, recording how long they took, and then analysed for quality of response.

The researchers heard back from 209 agencies, with 199 replying within 45 working hours. A total of 67.5% of the Australian and 89.3% of the NZ agencies responded to the email.

In terms of quality of response, just over a third of all Australian agencies answered both questions, compared with 75% of NZ agencies. NZ local government agencies were the best performers at 81.5%.

Researchers speculating on why local government agencies performed so well in comparison to the central government counterparts wondered whether it was to do with local government's closeness to their communities, and also whether local government was more customer-focused.

Global Internet Shopping Data

More than 85% of the world's online population has used the Internet to make a purchase - an increase in the market for online shopping of 40% in the past two years. Globally, more than half of Internet users have made at least one purchase online in the past month, according to the Nielsen Global Online Survey on Internet shopping habits.

When the Nielsen Company conducted its first global survey into Internet shopping trends two years ago, about 10% of the world's population (627 million) had shopped online. Within two years, this number has increased by around 40% (to 875 million).

Among Internet users, the highest percentage shopping online is in South Korea, where 99% of those with Internet access have used it to shop, followed by the UK (97%), Germany (97%), Japan (97%) with the US eighth, at 94%. Additionally, in South Korea, 79% of these Internet users have shopped in the past month, followed by the UK (76%) and Switzerland (67%) with the US at 57%.

Globally, the most popular and purchased items over the Internet are Books (41% purchased in the past three months), Clothing/Accessories/Shoes (36%), Videos/DVDs/Games (24%), Airline Tickets (24%) and Electronic Equipment (23%).

Among NZ Internet users, 44% said they bought Airline Tickets/Reservations, 33% had bought Books and 29% Clothing/Accessories/Shoes and Event Tickets (second in the Asia Pacific region after Australia) in the past three months. Seven percent had purchased groceries.

Credit cards are by far the most common method of payment for online purchases - 60% of global online consumers used their credit card for a recent online purchase, while one in four online

consumers chose PayPal. Of those paying with a credit card, more than half (53%) used Visa. Eighty one percent of Kiwi Online shoppers use credit cards - well above the Asia-Pacific regional average of 59%, with Visa being the most popular credit card (69%).

ICT Contracts: Intellectual Property Rights Guide

New guidelines for the treatment of intellectual property rights in information and communications technology contracts have been developed. These say that the commercialisation of intellectual property resulting from state services agencies' ICT contracts is best carried out by the commercial sector. However, new intellectual property that comes from state sector contracts must be free to be shared by all state agencies. Otherwise, ICT contractors own the IP and can utilise it in the private sector.

The guidelines are at www.e.govt.nz/policy/ipr/IPR.pdf

Nextspace Innovation Centre Opens

The Nextspace Innovation Centre is now open. Nextspace is a joint initiative between the Government and software developer Right Hemisphere. The centre was established to create new products and applications based on locally-developed 3D graphical communications technology software, and to carry out a research and development programme of its own.

As well as being involved in what is a multi-billion dollar industry world-wide, the centre will provide an opportunity for NZ companies to have access to the latest product development in the 3D graphical communications technology sector. It will also provide an opportunity for people who want to build a career in this field.

The Nextspace Innovation Centre is located at Level 3, Building C, Millenium Centre, 602 Great South Road, Auckland. More information is on the Nextspace website at <http://nextspace.co.nz/>

For parenting hints and tips go to www.nzfamilies.org.nz/ parenting "Parenting, the best day's work you'll ever do" is the slogan for a parenting campaign launched by Families Commission last week. Check it out for resources and ideas about encouraging good parenting in NZ.

A directory of out of school programmes is at <http://www.oscar.org.nz/directory.asp>. Covers before- and after-school programmes and holiday programmes throughout the country.

Business information about the location, type and size of businesses is now available for free on www.stats.govt.nz. The information highlights areas of opportunity for services such as food outlets, hire services or cafes and restaurants.

The Kiwi Research Information Service website at www.nzresearch.org.nz - is a gateway to the open-access research documents produced at universities, polytechnics, and other research institutions throughout NZ. The site has research information from around NZ collected in one place. You can use

the website to search for research, look up specific subjects or authors, browse the research in various ways, and keep abreast of emerging research activity.

The Parliamentary Access to Legislation is at www.legislation.govt.nz. This site provides easy access to all legislation and regulations. The site has been a number of years in the making.

Arts and Culture

Flight of the Conchords: Best Comedy

Flight of the Conchords, NZ's self-styled "fourth most popular folk parodists", have won a Grammy Award. Jemaine Clement and Bret McKenzie won the best comedy album at the awards for their EP "The Distant Future".

It is the first Grammy to be won by a NZ act since opera star Dame Kiri Te Kanawa took a prize in 1984.

Fishing

Value of NZ's Commercial Fisheries Rises

New Zealand's commercial fisheries (those managed under our quota management system - the QMS) were worth \$3.8 billion in 2007, according to Statistics NZ (SNZ). That's an increase of 39% since 1996, when they were valued at \$2.7 billion.

In 2007, 20 kinds of fish contributed 90% of the total value of the fishery. Eighteen of these species have been managed under the QMS for the full period between 1996 and 2007.

The total number of species managed under the QMS has increased from 32 in 1996, to 96 in 2007.

The total asset value of commercial fish stock in 2007 slipped 1% from a high of \$3.9 billion in 2004. Economic conditions, including the high value of the NZ dollar and increasing fuel prices, are likely to have had an impact on the asset value of the commercial fish stock.

The Fish Monetary Stock Account 1996-2007 is at <http://www.stats.govt.nz>

Seabird Protection Measures Announced

New measures to protect seabirds from being accidentally caught when commercial vessels are fishing have been announced. They will stay in place until longer term solutions to the problem of seabird bycatch in commercial fisheries are developed.

Seabirds such as albatrosses and petrels are attracted to fishing vessels by the bait that is put on longlines and also by the offal and fish trimmings that are discharged from the vessels when they process their catch. The birds can dive down under the water and take longline baits, become hooked and drown, or can be distracted by feeding on offal discharge and get hit by the heavy steel cables that tow trawl nets.

Detailed information on the new measures can be found on the Ministry of Fisheries website www.fish.govt.nz

Background

New Zealand is an important breeding ground for approximately 80 seabird species and it has the greatest variety of albatross and petrel species in the world.

Seabird species globally are facing a number of threats, both at the sites where they breed and while they are feeding at sea. One of the key threats is bycatch by commercial fishers, especially longline and trawl fishers.

Across the whole of NZ's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ - the sea-zone over which we have special rights to explore and use marine resources), seabird deaths caused by trawl and longline vessels are estimated to be between 3,500 and 10,000 a year.

Currently, regulated or voluntary seabird bycatch mitigation measures are in place for only a portion of the NZ fishing fleet, meaning that a significant number of vessels may not be deploying any effective mitigation measures. Some fisheries that are particularly high risk may have insufficient measures in place.

Recent significant seabird bycatch by vessels in longline fisheries in the Kermadec and Chatham Island areas have highlighted the immediate and ongoing risk that fishing without mitigation measures can pose to threatened species of seabirds.

A lack of regulated mitigation measures prevents government from taking action where vessels do not use mitigation measures and catch significant numbers of seabirds.

Lower North Island Crayfishers Reduce Catch

Rock lobster (crayfish) fishers in the lower North Island (the CRA4 Rock Lobster Industry) have agreed not to fish around 60% of their annual catch entitlement for the new fishing season starting 1 April.

By reducing their catch, the fishers are hoping to increase the size and abundance of lobster available at peak catching times when export market prices are at their best - both in the coming season and also for future seasons.

The move follows a voluntary commercial catch reduction of 44% in the current fishing year (April 2007-March 2008).

General

Half of Global Population Urbanites by Year's End

By the end of this year, half of the world's 6.7 billion people will live in urban areas, according to a report unveiled by the United Nations, which also predicts that future growth of the world's urban population will be concentrated in Asia and Africa. The 2007 Revision of World Urbanization Prospects provides the official UN estimates and projections of the urban, rural and city populations of all countries in the world up to 2050.

Currently there are 1.6 billion people living in Asia's urban areas. That number is expected to rise by another 1.8 billion people in the next four decades, more than doubling the urban population. China, which is now 40% urban, is expected to become more than 70% urban by 2050. Its urban population is expected to number about 1 billion by that year.

In comparison, only 30% of India's population today is living in urban areas - slightly more than 300 million people. By 2050, 55% of India's population will be living in urban areas, amounting to 900 million people.

Turning to Africa, the urban population is likely to triple over the next 40 years, passing from 340 million to over 900 million. Meanwhile, the urban population will grow a little bit in Latin America, while not very much in the developed world.

Although megacities - those with more than 10 million inhabitants - attract a lot of attention, that is not where most of the population growth will be found. With 36 million people, Tokyo is the world's largest megacity and it is not expected to change in size until 2025. The fastest growth rates will be found in the cities of Africa, such as Lagos and Kinshasa that are not yet megacities but will be in the future, and the cities of Pakistan and Bangladesh, such as Lahore, Karachi and Dhaka.

Beating Tagging & Graffiti: New Moves

Features of a government move to stop tagging and other forms of graffiti include:

- creating a new offence for tagging and graffiti vandalism in the Summary Offences Act;
- increasing fines (up to a maximum of \$2,000) and/or effective community sentences;
- banning the sale of spraycans of paint to those under the age of 18; and

- shopkeepers being required to keep spraycans secured so that people cannot access them without the help of shop staff.

Some \$6 million is to be made available (\$2 million per annum) to support communities to tackle vandalism. Of this:

- \$800,000 per year will go to a Graffiti Vandalism Small Initiatives Fund (grants of up to \$20,000 each will be available for NGOs, iwi, and local authorities for anti-graffiti vandalism initiatives in local areas; these grants are intended for smaller organisations or smaller population areas with limited problems);
- \$1 million per year will go to a Graffiti Vandalism Contestable Fund available to local government (this will support larger scale programmes with a city or district wide approach); and
- \$200,000 per year will be available to use for restorative justice for victims of tagging and graffiti vandalism and the offenders responsible.

An Advisory Group will also be appointed. It will include representatives of local government, NGOs, and government agencies responsible for the rail track and highways.

Wool and Silk - Oh, Never Mind the Washing

Wool and silk, which are composed of natural proteins called keratins, are among the most prized and widely used fabrics in the clothing industry. However, they are difficult to keep clean and are easily damaged by conventional cleaning agents.

Now, "self cleaning" forms of wool and silk have been developed with the help of nanotechnology. The secret is a particle coating similar to one already used to keep windows clear.

In a new study, scheduled for publication in the journal *Chemistry of Materials*, Monash University researchers prepared wool fabrics with and without a nanoparticle coating - particles around five nanometres across (five billionths of a metre) composed of anatase titanium dioxide, a substance already used as a pigment that is known to break down and destroy contaminants when it is exposed to sunlight. They then stained the fabric samples with red wine. After 20 hours of exposure to simulated sunlight, the coated fabric showed almost no signs of the red stain, whereas the untreated fabric remained deeply stained, the researchers say. The coating, which is non-toxic, can be permanently bonded to the fibre and does not alter its texture and feel, they note, so a silk tie would still feel silky.

Industrial testing and mill trials of the technology are underway.

KiwiSaver Breaks Through 400,000 Barrier

The number of NZers joining KiwiSaver continues to beat expectations, with 414,144 signed-up at the end of January, compared with the Treasury's initial projection of 276,000 by 1 July 2008.

Race Relations Day Coming Up

Race Relations Day is on 21 March: the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. It is an opportunity to undertake positive activities that raise awareness and appreciation of diversity, and promote harmonious relations.

Details of events and resources (including posters) are available at www.hrc.co.nz

Less Racial Discrimination in NZ

The proportion of people who believe Asians, recent immigrants and refugees are discriminated against is the lowest it has been since tracking began seven years ago, according to a UMR research poll conducted for the Human Rights Commission.

Respondents were asked to name groups of people who they think are generally most discriminated against in NZ. 11.1% said Asians for their first mention, 10.5% said middle class or working class people and 8.9% said Maori. The most common first mentions, however, were "unsure" (15.5%) and "none" (13.3%).

They were then given a list of 12 different groups in today's society and asked to rate their perceived discrimination level using a forced 4-point scale. Asians topped the list, with 68% saying this group is discriminated against "a great deal" or "some". 62% said people on welfare, recent immigrants and people who are overweight are discriminated against at the same level. The groups with the lowest perceived discrimination were women (39%) and men (29%).

The poll results are contained in the discrimination section of the Commission's annual Race Relations Report, which is being published this month.

There were 414 race related complaints to the Human Rights Commission in 2007, with the greatest numbers relating to discrimination in employment and racial harassment. This compares to 491 complaints in 2006.

Medal for Vietnam Veterans: Applications Sought

The Queen has approved the extension of eligibility for the "NZ General Service Medal (NZGSM) 1992 (Warlike) with clasp Vietnam" to veterans who are currently eligible for the Vietnam Medal. The extension of eligibility follows the Memorandum of Understanding between the Government and representatives of Vietnam veterans, the RNZRSA and the Ex-Vietnam Services Association, signed in December 2006. More than 3000 NZ Vietnam veterans will be eligible for the new medal, which will also be available to the surviving spouse or family of eligible Vietnam veterans who are deceased.

Applications go to the Medals Office, Headquarters NZ Defence Force, Private Bag 905, Upper Hutt. Copies of the application form are on the NZ Defence Force medals website at <http://medals.nzdf.mil.nz/info/forms.html>

Youth Prisoners: Training Opportunities

Corrections are planning to expand the range of work experience available to youth prisoners (those aged 15-18 years).

As part of their sentence plan, youth prisoners will be encouraged to undergo one- to two-week introductory courses in

each of the industry streams available: catering, joinery, engineering, horticulture, agriculture, and forestry. Instructors will provide training to youth prisoners that will fit around their other rehabilitative programmes and schooling.

Offenders under the age of 20 years have the highest recidivism rate, with almost 67% reconvicted within 12 months after release or completion of their community-based sentence. Research indicates that prisoners who find sustainable work on release are less likely to re-offend.

New Minerals Programme

A new programme is now in place that provides government and the mining industry with up-to-date regulations aimed at enhancing NZ's reputation as an attractive exploration destination for investment. The programme also includes a way of allocating permits that promotes the responsible discovery and development of NZ's Crown owned mineral and coal resources.

More information (including the regulations) is at www.crownminerals.govt.nz/cms/minerals/legislation

Access Radio Programmes Online

Wellington Access Radio 783AM is pooling its language and ethnic programmes with Community Radio Hamilton and Fresh FM in Nelson and it is now available online.

The online service features programmes in over 20 languages including Khmer, Vietnamese, Japanese, Tamil, Hindi, Punjabi and Mandarin.

Go to: www.accessradio.org.nz/ethnic_voices.html

Conferences/Festivals

Engage Your Community Conference

This is being held at the University of Waikato Management School Hamilton on 22 April 2008.

It covers use of internet-based tools like blogs, wikis, YouTube and other social media to enable groups to engage their communities. Early registration fee (before 15 March 2008) applies. Multi-person discounts and scholarships are available.

More information is at www.webguide.net.nz/engage-your-community or contact T Zorn, email tzorn@mngt.waikato.ac.nz

Federation of Workers Education Associations Conference

This conference and Annual General Meeting is on 11, 12 and 13 April 2008 at Capital House, 21 Manchester St, Melrose, Wellington.

More information is at <http://www.wea.org.nz/> or email admin@wea.org.nz

ESOL Home Tutors Conference

The theme for this conference is "Our Changing Identity" The conference is being held at the Rutherford Hotel, Trafalgar Square, Nelson on 16-18 May 2008.

More information is at www.esolht.org.nz/about/conference/

Managing and Governing for the Social Good

Not-for-Profit Conference, Napier, 13-14 March 2008. This conference includes presentations on performance and remuneration issues.

Contact events@grow.co.nz

Some Funding/Awards Opportunities

Green Ribbon Awards: Honouring NZ's Environmental Champions

Nominations are now open for the 2008 Green Ribbon Awards, which honour NZ's environmental heroes. This is the 18th year of these awards, which recognise the outstanding contributions of individuals, organisations and businesses to sustaining, protecting and enhancing NZ's environment. The categories this year have been extended from six to nine and are: urban sustainability; sustainable land use; making a difference to household sustainability; community action for the environment - young people; businesses making a difference; community action for the environment - volunteers and not-for-profit organisations; environment in the spotlight; innovative solutions for the environment; and lifetime commitment to the environment.

Nominations for the awards close on 7 April 2008. More is at <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/withyou/awards/green-ribbon.html>

Rural Innovations Fund

People delivering health services to rural people are invited to apply for one-off grants up to a maximum of \$50,000 aimed at encouraging and helping to spread new and improved ways of working. In particular, proposals aimed at enhancing the recruitment and retention of rural health professionals, for example, rural midwives are sought.

Applications close on 31 March 2008. More information about the fund and how to make an application is available on the Ministry of Health website at <http://www.moh.govt.nz>

Women's Creativity in Rural Life Awards: Nominations Sought

The Women's World Summit Foundation (WWSF) is calling for nominations for its 15th annual prize for women's creativity in rural life. The awards honour creative and courageous women and women's organisations working to improve the quality of life in rural communities around the world. 15-20 prize winners will be selected from around the world this year and several of them will

be invited to Geneva to personally present their work at an award ceremony on 15 October - World Rural Women's Day.

Nominations close on 31 March. They go to WWSF Women's World Summit Foundation, 11 avenue de la Paix, 1202 Geneva, Switzerland, email: info@wssf.ch web www.woman.ch. More information is at www.woman.ch/women/1-guidelines.php

New Fulbright Award for Education Research

The Fulbright-Cognition Education Research Trust Scholar Award in Education Research is for a NZ scholar to pursue research in the US designed to have an impact on NZ schooling and student achievement. This new award is valued at up to US\$20,000 plus travel expenses, for three to five months of research. The Fulbright programme has been supporting educators and education research for 60 years. This includes 33 years of teacher exchanges between NZ and the US, and more recent programmes such as the Fulbright-Hays seminars on which groups of American primary and secondary school teachers undertook an intensive study tour around NZ.

Applications close on 1 May 2008. More information about the award and how to apply is at www.fulbright.org.nz

Funding for Maori and Pasifika Education Projects:

ASB Community Trust has set up a fund for education projects that are intended to promote Maori and Pasifika educational excellence.

Expressions of interest should be submitted by 14 April 2008. More information is at www.initiative.org.nz or www.asbcommunitytrust.org.nz

NZ Lottery Grants: Lottery Outdoor Safety Committee

This committee funds water safety and outdoor safety projects. Groups that do not have outdoor safety or water safety as their main purpose are not eligible to apply to Lottery Outdoor Safety (but they might be eligible for funding from the Lottery Community committees, as these committees consider applications that primarily have a social sector or community development focus).

Applications close 24 April 2008. For more information go to http://www.dia.govt.nz/diawebsite.NSF/wpg_URL/Services-Lottery-Grants-Outdoor-Safety?OpenDocument

Global Education Fund Applications Close Soon

The Global Education Fund (GEF) provides funding for small projects to develop awareness and understanding of global perspectives among NZers. The aim is to encourage people to become responsible global citizens, and to create a safe and just world. Grants are between \$2,000 and \$15,000 (ex GST). Criteria that must be met include:

- the subject matter must be explicitly global;
- the educational materials and/or activities should highlight the relevancy of the issue to those living in NZ; and
- the project needs to encourage critical thinking, reflection, and action encouraging NZers to be responsible global citizens, and to create a safe and just world.

Applications close on 31 March 2008. For information on eligibility requirements, the selection criteria and how to apply visit: www.globaleducationfund.org.nz

Appointments

Christine Ruth French is a new *Judge of the High Court*.

The new *Cook Islands High Commissioner* is Brian Donnelly. Dail Jones has been *elected to Parliament* from the NZ First Party party list. The vacancy arises from the retirement from Parliament of Brian Donnelly. Rob Taylor has been appointed Official Secretary, Government House.

Former Ports of Tauranga Chief Executive Jon Mayson has been appointed *chair of the board of NZ Trade and Enterprise (NZTE)*. Richard Woods has been appointed the new *chair of the Environmental Risk Management Authority (ERMA)*.

Peggy Burrows has been appointed to the *National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee*. Nick Calavrias is a new *vice-chair of the NZ Business Roundtable*. The *chair and deputy chair* of the new *Lawyers and Conveyancers Disciplinary Tribunal* to be established this year are, respectively, Judge Dale Clarkson and Mr David Mackenzie. Karen Johansen and Jeremy Pope have been appointed as part-time *Human Rights Commissioners*. Brian Roche has been named as the *seventh trustee on the board of Development West Coast*.

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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