

Rural Bulletin

February 2009



www.ruralwomen.org.nz

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Nga Mihi o te Tau Hou/Happy New Year, Everyone!

We have been stunned by the support and encouragement you've given us over the Christmas period.

During this time 200 of you opted to change from hard copy to email, joining the 200 or so other readers who switched to email during the second half of last year. That is impressive.

Your generosity means people who have trouble accessing the electronic versions can still receive Rural Bulletin - and the consequent saving in Rural Bulletin publishing costs also means we are still hanging in there.

Your many, many emails and phone calls included some excellent ideas and suggestions for taking Rural Bulletin forward. We are currently exploring some of these and will get back to you on our progress in March.

There was also one significant contribution we are really grateful for. The trustees of the JR McKenzie Trust have given a one-off contribution of \$3000.00 as public endorsement of the value they place on Rural Bulletin.

Thank you all: it has been warming and humbling to have such positive feedback from so many of you.

Below (since we haven't done it before), we offer a snapshot of the Rural Bulletin philosophy. Your comments are welcome.

Margaret Chapman, Paddy Twist and Craig Matthews

Snapshot of Rural Bulletin

In early 1992 Rural Bulletin was designed and developed in partnership with rural community groups who identified a specific information gap and sought unencumbered (not agenda-driven), topical and timely information.

Rural Bulletin's aim is the same now as it was then: to build rural community capacity and social capital by providing people with an opportunity for informed decision making when issues and proposed changes affect them. The publication is designed to:

- give people the opportunity to become involved in local, regional and national decision making processes - so policies and programmes in NZ reflect diverse views and are inclusive;
- create the opportunity for dialogue and interaction between communities, non-government organisations and government agencies;
- present politically neutral, objective and concise information about what is coming up, what changed last month, and what may impact on the lives of people in the community - at the same time making sure readers can find more if they want to; and
- enable people to engage locally with their communities as they distribute the information that the publisher, Rural Women New Zealand*, sends them.

* Rural Women New Zealand's aim is to "Strengthen Rural Communities", by promoting public debate on issues affecting rural communities, by being a strong advocate for rural issues, by helping formulate and evaluate public policy, and by promoting research and disseminating relevant knowledge.

Consultation

Government Consultation with NZ's Communities

The Building Better Government Engagement (BBGE) project reference group has published a report to the Office of the Community and Voluntary sector (OCVS) on community engagement (consultation) entitled "It's More Than Talk". The project follows on from a 2007 Community – Government Forum during which the participants called for the public service to improve consultation processes and "create a more respectful and collaborative culture of engagement". The report emphasises the value of collaborative approaches to decision-making, and considers how to improve the engagement skills, knowledge and values of public servants as they consult NZers on the work they are doing.

The reference group is now consulting with communities on the options it has presented.

Submissions close on 31 March 2009. They go to Building Better Government Engagement, c/o Office for the Community and Voluntary Sector, PO Box 1556, Wellington 6140, email ocvs@msd.govt.nz. The report is at <http://www.ocvs.govt.nz/work-programme/three-key-projects/building-better-government-engagement.html#Projectdiscussiondocumentnowavailableforcommentconsultationends31March20092>

Emissions Trading Scheme Review

Public submissions are invited on a review of the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) being carried out by an ETS Review committee established by the House. The review terms of reference are to:

- hear views from trade and diplomatic experts on the international relations aspects of the ETS;
- consider the likelihood of an international agreement on climate change post Kyoto 1, and the form that might take;
- obtain an impact analysis of the benefits/costs to NZ of any action;
- identify the projections that are being used as the motivation for international agreements to combat climate change; and consider the uncertainties and risks surrounding these;
- consider the impact of any climate change policies on the NZ economy/NZ households, taking into account the weak state of the economy, the need to safeguard NZ's international competitiveness, the position of trade-exposed industries, and the actions of competing countries;
- look at the merits of mitigating (lessening), or adapting to, climate change for NZ;
- consider whether resources devoted to specifically NZ climate change research should be increased;
- examine the merits of an ETS or a tax on carbon or energy as a NZ response to climate change;

- consider the need for additional regulations to combat climate change if an ETS or a tax is introduced;
- consider when any NZ measures should be introduced, with particular reference to the outcome of the December 2009 Copenhagen meeting, the United States position, and the Australian government's timetable for decision-making and action; and
- report to the House.

The closing date for submissions is Friday, 13 February 2009. Submissions go to Committee Secretariat, Emissions Trading Scheme Review, Parliament Buildings, Wellington, tel 04 817 9245, fax 04 499 0486. The committee's terms of reference can be viewed at: <http://www.parliament.nz/en-NZ/SC/Details/EmissionsTrading/>

Reform of NZ's Tribunal System

A study paper from the Law Commission's called "Tribunal Reform" describes a range of different options for reforming NZ's system of tribunals (tribunals decide on issues that affect people's rights –one example is the Disputes Tribunal).

The study paper proposes a new unified tribunal service led by a District Court Judge and new legislative system to provide a consistent set of powers, rights of appeal, and rules of procedure for all NZ's tribunals. The proposals for reform in chapters 5 and 6 of the paper were developed with the Ministry of Justice after an assessment of the current problems faced by tribunals and an examination of the ways in which some other countries have dealt with these.

Submissions close on 28 February 2009. They go to: General Manager, Law Commission, PO Box 2590, Wellington 6140, or you can email them to tribunalreform@lawcom.govt.nz. The paper is on the Commission's site at <http://www.lawcom.govt.nz/ProjectStudyPapers.aspx?ProjectID=131>

Domestic Violence (Enhancing Safety) Bill

This Bill would strengthen police powers, sentencing provision and bail conditions relating to domestic violence. Its main purpose is the introduction of police-issued on-the-spot protection orders to protecting victims of domestic violence. Police would issue the orders in situations where there is insufficient basis to arrest, but where they believe there is a likelihood of domestic violence occurring, and they think an order is necessary for the safety of the victim. The orders would provide a period of safety in which victims can consider their future options, including the possibility of a court protection order.

Submissions close on 27 February 2009. Two copies go to the Justice and Electoral Committee, Parliament Buildings, Wellington. The Bill is at <http://www.parliament.nz/en-NZ/SC/SubmCalled/0/8/e/49SCJEdomesticviolence200902271-Domestic-Violence-Enhancing-Safety.htm>

Medical Council Supervising Overseas Doctors

The Medical Council (the organisation responsible for protecting the health and safety of the public by making sure that doctors are competent and fit to practise medicine here) is seeking feedback on proposals for a new system for supervising international medical graduates (IMGs). This is intended to provide:

- improved supervision for IMGs to make sure they are supported when they come into the NZ workforce;
- improved protection of the health and safety of the public;
- clarity and transparency to the profession, employers and other stakeholders; and
- improved collaboration across District Health Boards (DHBs) with a greater focus on regional service delivery.

Submissions close on 27 February 2009. They can be emailed to consultation@mcnz.org.nz, you can fill out an online submission form at <http://www.mcnz.org.nz/News/SupervisionConsultationResponseForm/tabid/316/Default.aspx>, or you can post a response to Strategic Programme Manager, Medical Council of NZ, PO Box 11649, Wellington. More is at http://www.mcnz.org.nz/portals/0/news/supervision_consultation.pdf

Improving Quality at A&E

A report called "Recommendations to Improve Quality and the Measurement of Quality in NZ Emergency Departments" contains 14 recommendations to the Minister of Health, from the Working Group for Achieving Quality in Emergency Departments. They cover:

- the way the quality of accident and emergency departments should be measured;
- the standards and expectations that district health boards should be held accountable for;
- ways to coordinate improvement in national performance; and
- effective service delivery.

Submissions close: 13 February 2009. You can complete an online submission form or email the form to webmanager@moh.govt.nz, or post it to Monitoring Team, Performance Section, Sector Accountability and Funding Directorate, Ministry of Health, PO Box 5013, Wellington. The report and submission form are at <http://www.moh.govt.nz/moh.nsf/indexmh/recommendations-quality-nz-emergency-depts>

Assisted Reproductive Technology

The Advisory Committee on Assisted Reproductive Technology (ACART) wants your feedback on two discussion papers. The first one is concerned with draft guidelines on the use of donated eggs with donated sperm for reproductive purposes. This discussion paper fulfils ACART's requirements to undertake public consultation before issuing the guidelines.

The second paper is concerned with ACART's proposed advice to the Minister of Health on in vitro maturation (IVM) in fertility treatment. IVM involves removing immature eggs that have yet to complete their growth, and subsequently maturing these eggs in a laboratory. ACART is proposing to advise the Minister of Health that IVM should become an established procedure.

Consultation closes 16 March 2009. The discussion documents are available on the ACART website www.acart.health.govt.nz and hard copies can be obtained by contacting the ACART [Secretariat: acart@moh.govt.nz](mailto:Secretariat.acart@moh.govt.nz) or by phoning (04) 816 3931

Health & Disability Act and Code: Review

The Health and Disability Commissioner (HDC) is currently reviewing the Health and Disability Commissioner Act 1994 and the Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights. As part of the review, the Commissioner has published a consultation paper outlining areas for possible change, including:

- enhancing the way disability services consumers' rights are protected (in light of the recent Select Committee recommendations arising from an inquiry into the quality of care and service provision for people with disabilities);
- including a right to access services in the Code;
- extending the Code to include the right to health information privacy; and
- changing the structure of advocacy services.

Submissions close on 28 February 2009. Email submissions_hdc@hdc.org.nz or post them to Review of the HDC Act and Code, Health and Disability Commissioner, P O Box 12299, Wellington 6144. The paper is at <http://www.hdc.org.nz/files/hdc/Consultation-document-review-of-act&code-08.pdf>

Courts: Suppression of Names/Evidence

The principle of public access to the courts is an essential part of our justice system. It means that courts are generally required to carry out their business publicly unless this would result in injustice. But there are exceptions resulting from an even more fundamental principle: that the chief objective of courts of justice must be to secure that justice is done. This covers the situations that sometimes arise in which doing justice in public would frustrate justice itself.

The Law Commission is seeking comments on whether the suppression provisions of the Criminal Justice Act 1985 are appropriate. It has published an issues paper called "Suppression of Names and Evidence", in which it describes the current law and approach, and identifies a number of issues that have arisen from cases, research, and preliminary consultation. It also considers the challenges posed by the Internet.

Submissions close on 13 February 2009, but late submissions from Rural Bulletin readers will be accepted until 22 February. They go to Law Commission, PO Box 2590, Wellington 6140, email suppression@lawcom.govt.nz. The paper is on the Commission's site at <http://www.lawcom.govt.nz/>

How Safe is that Building?

The Ministry of Civil Defence & Emergency Management is encouraging local authorities and other organisations to comment on draft Building Safety Evaluation Guidelines. These guidelines would be used to assist local authorities to prepare to quickly evaluate the safety of buildings when a state of emergency has been declared after an earthquake or other emergency. If put in place the guidelines would result in a "triage" or "traffic light" system:

- green: inspected, apparently okay, no restrictions on use or entry;
- yellow: restricted use, safety concerns, parts may be off limits, entry only on urgent business, leave as soon as possible, detailed engineering evaluation required before unrestricted use; and
- red: clearly unsafe, do not enter, detailed engineering evaluation required before any use.

Closing date for comments is 16 February 2009. Send them to D Brunson, email db@kestrel.co.nz

Draft Forestry Allocation Plan

The Draft Forestry Allocation Plan outlines the proposed approach to allocating NZ emissions units (NZUs) to pre-1990 forest landowners under the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS). Under the ETS, all owners of pre-1990 forest land will need to decide in the first half of 2009 whether to apply for an allocation of NZUs; or, if they are eligible, apply to have land permanently exempt from the ETS (under the "less than 50 hectare" threshold exemption or the "tree weed exemption").

Submissions on the Draft Forestry Allocation Plan are due by 28 February 2009. They go to email FAPsubmissions@maf.govt.nz or to FAP Submissions, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, PO Box 2526, Wellington. The plan is at <http://www.maf.govt.nz/sustainable-forestry/ets/allocation.htm>

Electricity Supply Report: Winter 2008

A report to the Electricity Commission called "Review of 2008 Winter" makes eight recommendations on which your views are sought. Amongst them is one suggesting that electricity companies rather than consumers could be made to bear the costs of forced outages, in an effort to secure power supplies in times of shortage, and one suggesting that work be done to find out whether it would be more cost-effective to have the units at Whirinaki located elsewhere.

Submissions close on 20 February 2009. Email them to submissions@electricitycommission.govt.nz. Hard copy submissions go to B Christie, Electricity Commission, PO Box 10041, Wellington 6143. The review report is at <http://www.electricitycommission.govt.nz/pdfs/opdev/secsupply/pdfsconsultation/Winter-Review-Report.pdf>

Gas & Electricity Regulations

The Commerce Commission is published a discussion paper on amendments to the regulations in the Commerce Act 1986 that were introduced by the Commerce Amendment Act 2008. The changes directly affect how the Commission regulates electricity lines services and gas pipeline services. They also cover the regulation of the Auckland, Christchurch and Wellington international airports. As well as offering the Commission's preliminary views on the regulations, the discussion paper (which is the first in a series) looks at the history and underlying principles of economic regulation under the Commerce Act.

Submissions close on 16 February 2009. They go to: NPB@comcom.govt.nz (electronic submissions are preferred because the Commission will be publishing them on its website), or to D Healy, Chief Adviser, Network Performance Branch, Commerce Commission, P.O. Box 2351, Wellington. The paper is at <http://www.comcom.govt.nz/IndustryRegulation/ContentFiles/Documents/Regulatory%20Provisions%20of%20the%20Commerce%20Act%201986%20-%20Discussion%20Paper.pdf>. For more information tel 04 924 3600 or email NPB@comcom.govt.nz.

Proposed Tax Rules: Renting Holiday Homes...

The Department of Inland Revenue (IRD) has published proposed tax rules for the renting of holiday homes. Amongst the proposals:

- deductions would generally be allowed for the periods that a holiday house is rented out on an arm's length basis;
- a deduction might be allowed for expenditure incurred while a holiday house is not rented out, if it is genuinely available for rent; and
- limited deductions might be allowed where a holiday house that is essentially available to only the owner and their family and friends is rented out for short periods.

Submissions close on 20 February 2009. The proposals can be accessed via <http://www.ird.govt.nz/public-consultation/>. Email submissions to public.consultation@ird.govt.nz, or post them to Team Manager, Technical Services, Office of the Chief Tax Counsel, National Office, IRD, PO Box 2198, Wellington. More information: email public.consultation@ird.govt.nz, or tel 04 917 3051

...& Are Treaty Settlement Payments Income?

This Inland Revenue Department (IRD) consultation looks at the tax treatment of payments to claimants that are made in addition to financial redress under Treaty of Waitangi settlements. This was previously released for external consultation and is being re-released as a different view has been reached on the issue of whether the payments are income.

Comments close on 13 February 2009. The reference number for the consultation is QB0033. Email comments to public.consultation@ird.govt.nz. The draft paper is at <http://www.ird.govt.nz/public-consultation/>

Fisheries Ministry Treaty Strategy

The Ministry of Fisheries (MFish) is working on a Treaty Strategy that would enable positive input and participation of tangata whenua into the sustainability of NZ's fisheries. The Ministry is seeking views on what a good Treaty participation process would look like, and on anything else you think should be included in the strategy paper it has produced.

Submissions close on 31 March 2009. A paper called Treaty strategy – input and participation and submitting information is at <http://www.fish.govt.nz/en/nz/Consultations/TS+input+and+participation/default.htm>

Mataura River Mataitai: Catch Restrictions?

The Tangata Tiaki/Kaitiaki for the Mataura River Mataitai Reserve proposes bylaws closing the Mataitai Reserve to the taking of tuna (eels) and kanakana (lamprey) and prohibiting the use of fyke nets in the Mataitai.

Submissions close on 27 February 2009. They go to Ministry of Fisheries, Private Bag 1926, Dunedin 9054. More information is at <http://www.fish.govt.nz/en-nz/Consultations/Mataura+River+Mataitai/default.htm?WBCMODE=PresentationUnpublishe>

Review of Southern Blue Whiting Catch

The Ministry of Fisheries (MFish) is consulting on sustainability measures for Southern Blue Whiting for 1 April 2009.

Submissions close on 27 February 2009. They go to T Steel, Ministry of Fisheries, PO Box 1020, Wellington, email tracey.steel@fish.govt.nz. More is at <http://www.fish.govt.nz/en-nz/Consultations/Sustainability+Measures+for+Southern+Blue+Whiting/default.htm?WBCMODE=PresentationUnpublishe>

Cleaning Clan Labs: Draft Guidelines

The Ministry of Health (MoH) has developed draft guidelines covering the cleaning up of clan labs (clandestine methamphetamine laboratories) and your comments are invited. Usually, after a lab is discovered by the NZ Police, the bulk of any lab-related debris, like chemicals and containers, is removed. However, surfaces and absorbent materials (carpets, furniture), sinks, drains and ventilation systems may still be contaminated, and even a small contamination can pose health hazards to people who come into contact with it.

The draft guidelines will enable District Health Board staff, public health services and councils to give practical advice.

Submissions close 27 March 2009. To obtain a copy of the guidelines contact frances.graham@moh.govt.nz or phone (04) 816 4380

Cholesterol-lowering Fruit Juice?

Coca-Cola has applied to Food Standards Australia NZ (FANZ) to get its approval for the use of phytosterols derived from vegetable oils as an ingredient in fruit juice and fruit juice drinks with a minimum 20% juice. The drinks would be specifically marketed to adult consumers, generally over the age of 40, with concerns about their blood cholesterol level.

Submissions close on 11 February. The draft document is at http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/standardsdevelopment/applications/application6_04phyto4142.cfm. FSA NZ prefers emailed submissions to standards.management@foodstandards.gov.au

Animal Exports: Welfare Certificates

The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) is seeking submissions on proposed guidelines for the issue of welfare certificates for the export of live sheep, cattle, goats and deer. At present, NZ has a small market in the export of livestock, focused mainly on the export of dairy heifers for breeding. The

export for slaughter of cattle, sheep, deer and goats is prohibited under a 2007 Customs Export Prohibition Order. The prohibition is not absolute and individual consignments may be approved by the Director-General of MAF.

The Ministry is proposing to issue welfare certificates only when:

- appropriate documentation is presented that certifies that all the importing country's import health requirements for the livestock have been met;
- the livestock are fit and healthy for the journey;
- the aircraft or ship, and any other aspects of transport comply with "Live Animals" regulations or the MAF sea transport standard(s); and
- there is no other reason not to provide a signed export certificate.

Submissions close on 27 February. They go to P Lemow, Team Support Officer, PO Box 2526, Wellington, email paula.lemow@maf.govt.nz, tel 04 819 0100. The guidelines are available from <http://www.biosecurity.govt.nz/biosec/consult>, and from the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry

Possible FTA with Korea?

The Government is inviting submissions on the potential for entering into a free trade agreement (FTA) negotiation with the Republic of Korea. Korea is our sixth largest export market, with our total bilateral goods trade worth around NZ\$2.5 billion a year. Korea is also an important source of international students and tourists.

Submissions close on 6 March 2009. Email them to_ftk@mfat.govt.nz, or post to Korea FTA Submissions, FTU, MFAT, Private Bag 18901, Wellington. There is also an online submission form at <http://www.mfat.govt.nz/Trade-and-Economic-Relations/Trade-Relationships/Online-submission-form/index.php>. More is at www.mfat.govt.nz (including a copy of the joint study)

NZTA: Traffic Signs: New Guidelines...

New guidelines are underway for the design for traffic signs, which will affect local authorities throughout the country. The information will outline good practice and legal requirements, and it will be published in the NZ Transport Agency's (NZTA's) online Traffic control devices manual.

Submissions close on 20 February 2009. They go to B Gibson, email info@nzta.govt.nz, tel 04 894 5400. The guidelines, "General requirements for traffic signs", are at <http://www.nzta.govt.nz/consultation/tcd-traffic-signs/draft-tcd-traffic-signs.pdf>

...& Worktime and Logbooks

Draft Land Transport Rule: Work Time and Logbooks Amendment [(No 2) 2009]: proposes changes to the way in which variations of work time requirements for drivers, operators and others with a responsibility to manage driving hours are dealt with in particular situations.

Submissions close on 27 February 2009. An online submission form and the amendment are at <http://www.nzta.govt.nz/consultation/work-time-and-logbooks-amendment/index.html>. Postal submissions go to Rules Team, NZ Transport Agency, PO Box 5084 Lambton Quay, Wellington 6145

Code for Utilities in Transport Corridors

The NZ Utilities Advisory Group (NZUAG) is seeking feedback on a new "National Code for Utilities in the Transport Corridors". This describes the roles of road owners and utility companies*; outlines planning processes and "standard reasonable" conditions; and includes a number of forms and templates. It also establishes a dispute resolution process.

**Utility companies provide services to the general public - although they may be privately owned. Public utilities include electric, gas, telephone, water, and television cable systems, as well as streetcar and bus lines.*

Send feedback to NZUAG by 15 February 2009. More is on the NZUAG website at www.nzuag.org.nz

Review of Housing Statistics: SNZ

Statistics NZ (SNZ) is carrying out a review of housing statistics. These statistics provide estimates of housing, including numbers of bedrooms; occupied and unoccupied homes; permanent and temporary homes (e.g. tents and caravans); and tenure (owner-occupied, rented and homes provided free).

Submissions close on 6 March 2009. "Review of Housing Statistics: Consultation Paper" and a submission form are at <http://www.stats.govt.nz/NR/rdonlyres/16059ACD-199D-484E-965A-ACEE4525CC2D/0/reviewofhousingstatisticsconsultationpaper.pdf>, or you can email completed submissions to standardofliving@stats.govt.nz.

Electricity Commission: Spot Market Pricing

The Electricity Commission invites submissions on the consultation paper "Issues and Indicative Options for the Spot Market Pricing Process and UTS Provisions". Spot market pricing refers to the buying and selling of wholesale electricity, done via a "pool" or market, where electricity generators offer electricity to retailers and major users, who bid to buy the electricity. The market is called the spot or physical wholesale market.

The paper highlights issues in the wholesale electricity spot market pricing process and in the way undesirable trading situations are dealt with.

Submissions close on 20 February 2009. Electronic submissions (which are preferred) go to submissions@electricitycommission.govt.nz with "Issues and Indicative Options for the Spot Market Pricing Process and UTS Provisions" in the subject header. Postal submissions go to M McGregor, Electricity Commission, Level 7, ASB Bank Tower, 2 Hunter Street, PO Box 10041, Wellington. The consultation paper is at <http://www.electricitycommission.govt.nz/pdfs/opdev/wholesale/pdfsconsultation/Issues-IndicativeOptions-SpotMarket.pdf>

Mental Health: Advisory Group Wanted

The Mental Health Commission is seeking people with knowledge, experience, professional and community networks to be appointed to the Mental Health Commission Advisory Group (MHCAG). The MHCAG is a new advisory body that will offer advice to the Commission. It will be made up of people

who have experience as service users, families/whanau, Maori and Pacific people, other ethnicities, community workers, young people, older people, all of whom have experience of mental health or addictions, or are involved in clinical settings.

Applications close on 20 February 2009. To apply for membership of the Commission's Advisory Group, email C Frewing for an application pack at cfrewing@mhc.govt.nz

New Manawatu Wind Farm?

Mighty River Power Ltd has lodged resource consent applications to build a wind farm of up to 122 wind turbines in the Turitea Reserve. It would cover a 14 km stretch of the Tararua Ranges, 10 km southeast of Palmerston North and 11 km west of Pahiatua, and would be sited on both public and private land. The applications have been referred to a Board of Inquiry, which is seeking submissions.

Submissions close on 23 February 2009. They go to Freepost Call In, Ministry for the Environment, PO Box 10362, The Terrace, Wellington 6143 or email them to turiteacallin@mfe.govt.nz with "Turitea Call In" in the subject line. A submission form is at <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/rma/call-in-turitea/turitea-submission-application.pdf>. The proposal is at <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/rma/call-in-turitea/>

Rural

You're Invited Down to the Farm

On 1 March - Open Farm Day - Federated Farmers of NZ (FFNZ) farmers will be hosting non-farming families on more than 25 farms around the country. The aim of the day in the country is for farmers to strengthen rural-urban relationships by reaching out to non-farmers and providing opportunities for ongoing communication between rural and town people.

FFNZ hopes Farm Day will see hundreds of families visit the country to meet the farmers, see where their food and fibre comes from, and talk about farming practices.

Many city children think milk comes from a carton and meat from a supermarket refrigerator, and the organisation hopes that children will come away turned on to farming and inspired by rural NZ.

The idea of Farm Day comes from the UK, where farmers have offered visiting opportunities to the public for more than ten years. FFNZ's Farm Day will be distinctively kiwi though with the urban public getting the opportunity to see at first hand dairy, goats, cropping, sheep, beef and bees on various farms around NZ (including high country).

For more information contact the Farmers Farm Day coordinator, A Undorf-Lay, tel 03 357 9461

Farm Salaries/Wages: 2009 Report

A report on how much farm employees earn was recently published by Rabobank and Federated Farmers of NZ (FFNZ), following a survey in July/August 2008 of farm employee remuneration rates. The primary sector earns 65% of NZ's export returns, and around 79,000 people were employed in agriculture in 2007. According to the Ministry of Agriculture and

Forestry (MAF) the sector paid out over \$2.29 billion in wages and salaries in the year to March 2008.

Main figures from the report:

- farm workers earned an average salary of \$41,914 (year to August 2008) while non-farm workers, according to Statistics NZ, earned on average \$39,517 (year to June 2008);
- the average total package value for farm workers (with salary and other benefits) was \$46,374;
- average salaries are highest in the arable sector (up 19%), followed closely by dairy (up 6%) then sheep/beef (up 6%);
- in 11 out of 13 full-time job categories surveyed, workers earned more in the South Island than counterparts in the North Island (the exceptions being Sheep/Beef Farm Manager and Sheep/Beef General Farmhand);
- the highest rate of wage growth in 2008 was for managerial positions (up 20%) such as Dairy Farm Manager or Sheep/Beef Farm Manager, while tractor drivers saw an average wage growth of 15%; and
- casual skilled employees earned on average \$19.99 per hour (up 5%) while unskilled casual staff earned \$17.91 per hour (up 14%). Casual rates are highest in the North Island.

Copies/more information: www.fedfarm.org.nz or tel 0800 327 646

New Driver Licensing Rule

The Land Transport (Driver Licensing) Amendment Rule (No 2) 2008, which came into force 15 January 2009) extends the types of vehicle that can be driven with a Class 1 licence to include tractors and combined tractor-trailers of higher weight limits.

Holders of a Class 1 (full) licence are now able to drive:

- any tractor with a gross laden weight (GLW) of more than 4,500 kg but less than 18,001 kg, if driven at a speed not exceeding 30 km/h; and
- a combination vehicle, consisting of a tractor towing a trailer, with a gross combined weight (GCW) of not more than 25,000 kg, if it is being used in agricultural or land management operations and is driven at a speed not exceeding 30 km/h.

The amendment Rule also adds Japan to the list of countries from which overseas driver licence or permit holders are not required to sit a theory test for a Class 1 (motor car) or Class 6 (motorcycle) licence, or a practical driving test, when converting their licence or permit to a NZ driver licence.

The changes take effect on 1 April 2009. Find out more at www.landtransport.govt.nz/rules/

Rural Innovation Fund

Some of the challenges faced by rural health practitioners and providers in New Zealand are different from those faced in urban areas, and for this reason the Rural Innovation Fund (RIF) has been set up to support innovation in primary health care service delivery in rural New Zealand. It is one-off funding for 12 months only with a funding limit of \$50,000 (GST excl) for each application.

Applications close on 27 March 2009. An online application form is at [http://www.moh.govt.nz/moh.nsf/pages/mh/5053/\\$File/rif-application-form-200910-v2.doc](http://www.moh.govt.nz/moh.nsf/pages/mh/5053/$File/rif-application-form-200910-v2.doc). More information is on the Rural Health site at <http://www.moh.govt.nz/moh.nsf/index/mh/ruralhealth-innovationsfund>

Taratahi Training Centre Farm Purchase

The Taratahi Agricultural Training Centre in Masterton is purchasing the 518 hectare Mangarata sheep and beef farm, north of Masterton, which will be used to help train the next generation of farmers. Taratahi has also been given approval to upgrade facilities and student accommodation.

Taratahi offers full-time agricultural training and short courses for adults, and caters for senior secondary school students through the Secondary/Tertiary Alignment Resource and Gateway programmes. The training farm is run for profit, with the returns used to invest in improvements to plant and equipment, facilities and accommodation. The Centre was established in Masterton in 1919 to provide agricultural job training for soldiers returning from World War I. Since then, six generations of farm trainees have been through its doors.

Taratahi's website is at <http://www.taratahi-ag.ac.nz/>

Environment

RMA Reform Group Established

A Resource Management Act (RMA) Technical Advisory Group has been set up to support the intended reform of the RMA. Its chair is barrister Alan Dormer, and the group also includes environmental consultant Guy Salmon, Rodney Mayor Penny Webster, barrister Paul Majury, Tasman District Council Environment and Planning Manager Dennis Bush-King, barrister Michael Holm, planning consultant Michael Forster, and businessman and ex-politician Wyatt Creech.

Climate Change Research Reports...

More than \$5 million was allocated to fund research proposals through the Plan of Action for Sustainable Land Management and Climate Change in 2007/08. The successful research bids focused on helping the land-based sectors to lessen their impact on climate change, as well as build their ability to adapt to a changing climate. These reports are now available online.

For more information go to Forestry Sector research reports at <http://www.maf.govt.nz/climatechange/slm/grants/research/2007-08/index.htm#sub1>; Cross-sectoral/integration reports at <http://www.maf.govt.nz/climatechange/slm/grants/research/2007-08/index.htm#sub2>; Adaptation mechanisms to cope with climate change reports at <http://www.maf.govt.nz/climatechange/slm/grants/research/2007-08/index.htm#sub3>; and Mitigation of agricultural emissions reports; at <http://www.maf.govt.nz/climatechange/slm/grants/research/2007-08/index.htm#sub4>

... & More Climate Change Research Coming

Around \$10 million has been allocated over three years for research aimed at helping the agriculture and forestry sectors adapt and respond to climate change. Projects will consider how to improve production while reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The work will be funded under the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry's (MAF) Sustainable Land Management and Climate Change initiative, with the funding being administered by MAF and the Foundation for Research Science and Technology (FRST).

Pork Industry: Turning Waste into Energy

The Pork Industry (NZPork), MAF and the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (EECA) are evaluating the use of manure in different biogas systems on farms. They will be assessing up to 10 individual farm biogas systems across various regions and farm sizes, and the results will be used to let the industry know which are the most effective opportunities for their farms.

A media summary of the project is at <http://www.eeca.govt.nz/news/media-releases/pork-industry-turn-waste-into-energy.html>

Carp: Munch that Weed!

The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry Biosecurity NZ (MAFBNZ) is releasing 3000 grass carp into Lakes Tutira, Waikopiro, and Opouahi to help eradicate the invasive aquatic weed hydrilla from the lakes. Grass carp graze on aquatic vegetation and have been used successfully to eliminate hydrilla in Lake Eland in Hawke's Bay. The grass carp are bred especially for the purpose, and, because cannot breed naturally in NZ waterways, they can be removed or will naturally die-out once they have done their job.

Tourism

Visitor Arrivals/Long Term Departures

Short-term overseas visitor arrivals (219,300) in November 2008 were down 4% compared with November 2007. The main contributors to the decrease were fewer arrivals from Japan (down 6,900 or 46%), Korea (down 3,800 or 43%) and China (down 2,400 or 18%). The decrease in visitors from Japan was mainly due to the cancellation of student charter flights to NZ. The 2.454 million visitor arrivals recorded in the November 2008 year were down 13,900 (1%) from the previous November year.

NZ residents departed on 155,200 short-term overseas trips in November 2008, down 4,300 (3%) from November 2007. In November 2008, there were fewer trips to Australia (down 4,700 or 6%) and the United States (down 900 or 15%), but more departures to the Cook Islands (up 600 or 15%), India (up 500 or 12%), and Fiji (up 500 or 10%). For the November 2008 year, NZ resident departures numbered 1.979 million, up 8,500 (less than 1%) from the previous year.

Permanent and long-term (PLT) departures exceeded PLT arrivals by 600 in November 2008. In the November 2008 year, there was a net outflow of 35,300 PLT migrants to Australia, up from 27,200 the previous year. The November 2008 year net

outflow to Australia is the highest recorded, and exceeds previous peaks recorded in the January 1989 year (33,700) and the December 1979 year (33,400). The net figure (the difference between arrivals and departures) in the November 2008 year resulted from 48,500 PLT departures to Australia, partly offset by 13,200 PLT arrivals from Australia. Almost two-thirds of PLT arrivals from Australia were NZ citizens. Despite the net PLT outflow to Australia, NZ's overall net PLT migration balance (3,600) was positive in the November 2008 year. However, the balance was down from 6,600 in the November 2007 year, and was the lowest annual figure since the October 2001 year (1,700).

Mobile Studio Records Travellers' Tales

Tourism NZ's has a new mobile studio which is currently recording videos by overseas travellers, as part of its "What Do You Say UK?" campaign. In its first two weeks the studio clocked up almost 3,300 views, and 170 videos were recorded by travellers from not only the UK but also Australia, the US, Japan, Germany, Canada and beyond. The videos are mailed to friends and family, then broadcast on the Have Your Say Youtube channel (some have been viewed over 240 times). The mobile studio will visit around 40 towns between January and April with the aim of recording around 3,000 "raves" from overseas visitors.

With international visitor numbers expected to be down by 10% this summer, it is hoped the initiative will help keep NZ's profile high in the UK, NZ's second largest tourist market.

The Have Your Say Youtube channel is at <http://nz.youtube.com/PureNZHaveYourSay>

Health and Welfare

The State of the World's Children – UN Report

Having a child remains one of the biggest health risks for women worldwide, and this is especially true for women in least developed countries who are 300 times more likely to die in childbirth or from pregnancy-related complications than women in developed countries. This is according to the 2009 edition of UNICEF's flagship publication "The State of the World's Children". The report also says that a child born in a developing country is almost 14 times more likely to die during the first month of life than a child born in a developed one.

The report states that the divide between the industrialised countries and developing regions, particularly the least developed countries, is perhaps greater on maternal mortality than on almost any other issue. For example, a woman in Niger has a one in seven chance of dying during the course of her lifetime from complications during pregnancy or delivery, compared to the risk faced by mothers in the United States, where it is one in 4,800 or in Ireland, where it is just one in 48,000. Overall, more than half a million women die every year as a result of pregnancy or childbirth complications, including about 70,000 girls and young women aged 15 to 19.

To lower the risks for pregnant women and newborns, the report recommends the provision of essential services that include a continuum of care at critical points – adolescence, pre-pregnancy, pregnancy, birth, post-natal and neonatal periods, infancy and childhood – as well as at key locations

where they can be readily accessed by women and children. It adds that health services are most effective in an environment supportive of women's empowerment, protection, and education.

You can download this report from the UNICEF NZ website at <http://www.unicef.org.nz/store/doc/TheStateoftheWorldsChildren2009%5B1%5D.pdf>

Keeping Farms Safe for Children

Farms are fabulous adventure playgrounds for children. Here are some tips for keeping them safe while they play:

- walk around the farm with the children and identify hazards together;
- provide adult supervision (for young children it needs to be close and active);
- lead by example (e.g., always wear a helmet when on your ATV);
- assess whether you should have safety fences around play areas, animal enclosures, work areas and water;
- keep doors shut or locked so little children can't get anywhere they're not supposed to;
- remove keys from doors and vehicles, and never leaving vehicles unattended with the motor running;
- make sure it is safe to reverse farm vehicles;
- don't allow children to ride on tractors, ATVs or on the back of utes;
- make sure children wear high visibility clothing when out and about;
- get children to wash their hands after touching animals;
- use child-proof covers for fencing off tanks, wells and ofal pits, and fill in any that are unused;
- make sure spare tractor wheels are tied to a wall or left lying flat so they can't fall over and crush a child;
- make sure that children riding smaller model farm bikes wear helmets and closed-in shoes (an adult should always supervise);
- don't allow older children to ride farm bikes until they can place both feet firmly on the ground on either side when seated on the bike. Train them how to ride safely over uneven ground;
- make sure children know what to do in an emergency, including where to go and who to call. Teach them basic first aid; and
- make sure children to always say where they are going and when they will be back.

For more information about keeping safe this summer, see www.dol.govt.nz/takecare

New Ministerial Advisory Group on Health

A new Ministerial Group to advise on improving the quality and performance of the public health system has been set up. In the terms of reference, the Group is charged with:

- assisting the Minister and Ministry by providing advice on further progressing the Government's priorities

around clinical leadership, productivity and quality patient services;

- reviewing and prioritising the existing systems for infrastructure and advising about improvements needed; and
- helping meet serious Vote Health financial challenges by providing a fresh examination of health sector spending, with a view to identifying low priority/poor quality spending that can be moved to improve frontline health services.

Its work is expected to be completed in six months from now.

The Ministerial Group is made up of: Dr Murray Horn (chair), Stephen McKernan, Dr Virginia Hope, Dr Tom Marshall, Dr Patricia (Pim) Allen, Chai Chuah, Hayden Wano and Sally Webb.

Draft Disability Supports Plan

This draft plan is about the direction the Ministry of Health wants to take disability support services. It was influenced by feedback received from disabled people, their whanau and carers about what was important to them. Its priorities for Ministry of Health-funded disability supports are:

- *flexibility* - a support system that can respond to individuals needs now and into the future;
- *workforce* - a capable and reliable disability support workforce;
- *families* - strong and supported families and whanau and informal carers; and
- *information* - information and advice that is useful for disabled people and helps to improve disability support services.

The draft Ministry of Health Disability Supports Plan 2008-2010 is on the Ministry of Health website at [http://www.moh.govt.nz/moh.nsf/pages/mh/8193/\\$File/ds-draft-strategic-plan-0810.pdf](http://www.moh.govt.nz/moh.nsf/pages/mh/8193/$File/ds-draft-strategic-plan-0810.pdf). More information: email disability@moh.govt.nz, or tel 0800 DSD MOH (373 664)

Watch Out for Whooping Cough

Whooping cough (also called pertussis) is a serious illness, and cases of it have been increasing over the past year. In adolescents and adults the disease is usually mild, but with children less a year old it can be particularly severe, even life-threatening (about seven out of 10 babies under six months old who catch whooping cough are hospitalised).

Whooping cough symptoms start with a runny nose and dry cough, getting worse over the next few weeks and developing into attacks of coughing. The "whoop" sound is made when the child (or adult) draws a breath after a long coughing attack. Babies might go blue or stop breathing during coughing attacks and might vomit afterwards.

The illness is preventable: babies should be vaccinated against it at six weeks, three months and five months, and children should have booster doses at four and 11 years.

Note: To help avoid whooping cough and other illnesses, parents should keep babies away from anyone with a cough – and anyone with a cough lasting for longer than a week should see a doctor.

One site with useful information about whooping cough is <http://www.southerncross.co.nz/index.cfm?0D00CDEC-2989-4B49-9FBA-F0566C3BDC29>

You can access the complete press release from: <http://www.southerncross.co.nz/index.cfm?EBFC9182-0376-45BE-8605-C9EE8B34E533>

School-based HPV Immunisation Programme

The new HPV (Human Papillomavirus) immunisation programme in schools starts in participating schools this term. The programme is aimed at giving girls and young women better protection from the most common cause of cervical cancer. Girls in school year 8 will be offered free immunisation against the types of HPV that cause most cervical cancer, and girls and young women aged 13 to 18 are also entitled to the free immunisation through a catch-up programme. Written consent from parents or guardians for girls under 16 is required for the immunisation to be given at school, but girls aged 16 and over are able to complete and sign the consent form themselves.

NZ's Organ Donor Rate

Figures released this week reveal that there were 31 organ donors in NZ last year. This is down from 38 the previous year, and NZ's rate remains the lowest in the Western World for the number of organ donors it has.

Top of the list of countries is Spain with 35 donors per million of population. Last year South Australia had 27 donors per million. NZ has 7 donors per million of population.

Gender Differences in Health Concerns

New research* from the Southern Cross Medical Care Society reveals differences between men's and women's health concerns, and who they turn to when they have health-related problems.

The research showed the biggest health issue for women is their weight and general appearance, with 52% of those questioned saying this was amongst their main concerns. The health of their children (47%) came second, with other significant concerns including cancer (37%), heart disease (27%) and obesity (20%).

In contrast, NZ men rated heart disease (40%) as their biggest worry. However, concern over body image is not the exclusive preserve of women, with fitness (37%) and weight and general appearance (36%) rounding out the top three for men.

When it comes to discussing a health-related problem, 50% of males would discuss their concerns with their partner first, and a further 30% say they would initially turn to their doctor. This compares to only 44% of women initially discussing the problem with their partner, and 21% first approaching their doctor to discuss it. Women are far more likely than men to turn to their parents (15% compared to 8%), or their friends (12% compared to 7%). Siblings are left in the dark by both sexes with only 2% of women and 1% of men turning first to their brother or sister, as are work colleagues, who rated 1% with women and 4% with men.

*Note: The survey of 867 NZ women and 625 NZ men aged 20+ was conducted in late 2008.

Mental Health Report: MoH

The Ministry of Health (MoH) has released the third annual report by the Office of the Director of Mental Health. The report provides a record of the work the Office does and reports on some of the activities of the Office's legally assigned officers. It also provides a fuller picture of mental health services and includes, for the first time, information on suicide among specialist mental health service-users for 2004.

The report is split into four sections:

- *Section 1* describes how the Office operates, including the roles of the various statutory positions, how the mental health sector operates and the guiding legislation;
- *Section 2* describes the work of the Office of the Director of Mental Health in carrying out its statutory and other functions, and reports on special projects carried out by the office during 2007;
- *Section 3* provides statistical information, which covers compulsion, seclusion, reportable deaths, and electroconvulsive therapy; and
- *Section 4* includes various appendices.

The report can be downloaded from the MoH website at <http://www.moh.govt.nz/moh.nsf/indexmh/office-director-mentalhealth-annualreport-2007>

Looking After Yourself in Hard Times

Beyondblue, an Australian national depression initiative, has released a booklet aimed at helping people beat the financial blues, and look after themselves and their families. It was developed to help address the fallout of the current economic downturn, subsequent loss of employment for some, and depletion of such things as retirement nest-eggs for others. Its messages are that adapting to adversity and change can be difficult, but there is help and support available, and there's no shame in asking for it – because everyone needs a helping hand at times.

It can be downloaded or ordered from the beyondblue website at http://www.beyondblue.org.au/index.aspx?link_id=4.1092

Education

Threshold for Student Loan Repayments Rises

The income threshold at which NZ-based borrowers must begin making repayments on their student loans will rise from \$18,148 to \$19,084 from 1 April this year. The threshold is reviewed annually and reflects movement in the September Consumer Price Index of 5.07%.

NZ Book Discussion Scheme

NZ Book Discussion Scheme is a not-for-profit organisation that promotes the love of books by lending a wide range of literature to members for reading and discussion. There are approximately 860 reading groups (90 of them with an "RD" address), and 8200 members around the country. The scheme was set up 36 years ago to:

- strengthen communities by meeting community learning needs;
- encourage a sense of community and social cohesion;
- provide pleasure of reading and lifelong learning;
- broaden minds through reading and discussion; and
- work towards a just and equitable society.

More about the scheme is [at www.bds.org.nz](http://www.bds.org.nz), or tel (03) 365 6210

Housing

The Property Market in 2008

2008 saw a sustained drop in property values for the first time since 1998. Quotable Valuation's December Residential Price Movement report shows property values fell by 7.4% during the year.

To keep 2008 in perspective it's useful to look back at the activity of the past two decades. Property values grew by 120% between 2002 and mid 2007. By way of comparison, the last period of sustained growth occurred between late 1992 and the end of 1997 when property values increased by 54%.

It's also interesting to look at the types of properties selling at the different stages of the property cycle. Between 2000 and 2003 the number of house sales more than doubled, with a dramatic increase in the proportion of lower value property selling. In the years 2004 to 2007, the number of house sales remained fairly steady, as did the proportion of low, medium and high value sales. But, during 2008 the number of house sales fell dramatically and the proportion of lower value properties selling significantly decreased. This pattern reflects the wider drivers of the property cycle. When the economy is strong; job prospects are good and immigration is increasing, then demand for houses, particularly first homes, pushes prices up. As the economy weakens and affordability becomes a real issue, first home buyers are usually the first to suffer; sales volumes drop and activity in the market moves back to mid to higher end properties as we saw through 2008.

Across the nation price falls for the year were as follows: Whangarei (-8.6%); Auckland (-8%); Hamilton (-9.3%); Tauranga (-9%); Wellington (-6.9%); Christchurch (-8%); Dunedin (-7.7%); Invercargill (-9.1%).

Weathertightness Claims Progress

At the beginning of this year the Department of Building and Housing (DBH) had received 5,646 weathertightness claims lodged for 6,399 properties, and it had completed assessments for 6,056 properties. Of these 19% have been resolved, 43% have been closed and 38% are active claims.

Of the active claims: 185 are being assessed for eligibility (9%), 389 claims are awaiting claimant decision (18%) and 1,572 claims are pursuing resolution (73%).

With the claims pursuing resolution: 684 claims have the claimant pursuing repairs (44%), 535 claims are in alternative jurisdictions (34%), there are 61 claims in dispute resolution under the 2002 rules (4%) and 292 claims in dispute resolution under the 2006 rules (19%).

With the weathertightness resolution process multi-unit property claims are accepted as single claims. Claims can be closed for a number of reasons e.g., claim discontinued by a claimant; claim being ineligible; property changed ownership; claim withdrawn so the claimant can join a class action; claim not progressing; claim transferred to another jurisdiction, or claim terminated by the Weathertight Homes Tribunal. Once in the system claimants can decide between eligibility, or go for full assessment of the property. When a claim becomes eligible, the claimant can decide to repair first or to resolve the claim and then proceed with repairs.

More is at <http://www.dbh.govt.nz/weathertight-enevs-1>

State Housing Audited

The Office of the Auditor-General (OAG) recently carried out an audit of Housing NZ (HNZ) to provide Parliament with assurance about the effectiveness of the systems and processes the Corporation uses to maintain state housing. HNZ is the agency responsible for maintaining state housing - the largest publicly owned property portfolio in the country, with an estimated value in 2008 of \$15.2 billion. It has the job of ensuring that the state housing stock is well-maintained for tenants and of protecting the value of the properties.

OAG found that, overall, the systems for maintaining state housing properties are comprehensive and effective, apart from the systems for assessing the condition of the Corporation's properties, and for measuring its performance.

Almost all properties are inspected at least twice a year. Tenants can raise maintenance issues directly with the Corporation through a network of neighbourhood offices and a National Contact Centre. The Corporation has set clear standards for the quality of its responses to tenants and for the quality of its maintenance work, and it carefully monitors the performance of its contractors. It also monitors how the standard of its properties compared with properties in the private sector rental market.

The Auditor-General has recommended that:

- HNZ's new Asset Management Framework records detailed information about the condition of state housing properties, and that the Corporation uses this information to plan its maintenance work;
- the framework includes ways of accurately measuring and costing the total maintenance workload; and
- it also includes systems for planning so the overall maintenance workload can be effectively managed.

The report is at <http://www.oag.govt.nz/2008/state-housing/docs/state-housing-maintenance.pdf>

Snapshot – The Building & Construction Sector

Activity in the building and construction industry (including housing) has a significant impact on NZ's economic performance. Details include:

- the sector contributes more than 5% of GDP;
- the total capital spend in building and construction is more than \$20 billion per annum, of which around \$8 billion is surplus after input costs;
- the sector also contributes to activity in a number of related sectors (such as manufacturing, transport, property and business services);
- it has a significant impact on consumption levels (homeownership and the values of peoples' homes affects people's perception of their wealth and financial security);
- currently about 176,000 people are employed in building and construction (about 8% of people employed) – this figure is projected to decline as a result of the current economic downturn; and
- housing and commercial/industrial construction is needed to support the successful growth of Auckland (and other cities).
- Critical issues facing building and construction include:
 - the current sharp downturn in the sector is having a dampening effect on the wider economy;
 - as construction activity weakens in NZ, there is a risk of losing skilled workers, which in turn will reduce the ability of the sector to respond once demand begins growing;
 - there is a projected shortage of dwellings to meet the future Auckland population (for instance, in Auckland City, North Shore and Manukau, land supply for conventional-density housing may be exhausted between 2015 and 2016);
 - home ownership is dropping and housing affordability remains an issue for an increasing number of people;
 - some aspects of the Resource Management Act 1991, and the way it is applied, create significant costs and uncertainties, which constrain development activity;
 - The way development fees are set lacks transparency, and the fees charged by territorial authorities vary greatly between authorities. Charging high amounts may hinder development activity in some areas;
 - productivity in the sector lags behind the rest of the economy and is low relative to building and construction sectors in other countries, reflecting – amongst other things - low training and skill levels, a fragmented industry structure, and current purchasing and sub-contracting arrangements which add cost and time to the construction process; and
 - many territorial authorities are adopting a very conservative approach when issuing building consents and code compliance certificates, following historical weathertightness issues and councils facing consequent liability claims in respect of these. This is likely to be impeding activity and innovation in the sector.

Source: Department of Building and Housing Briefing for the Incoming Minister of Building and Construction (November 2008). Hyperlink: <http://www.dbh.govt.nz/UserFiles/File/AboutUs/Strategic-Direction/pdf/BIM-building-construction-nov08.pdf>

Parliament

Cabinet Committees: A Snapshot...

Cabinet committees provide the forum for consideration and discussion of issues before they are referred to Cabinet (with government officials available to assist Ministers if the committee wishes). Almost all matters are considered first by one or more Cabinet committees. Exceptions to this rule are proposals for, and reports on, overseas travel by Ministers.

These committees are usually established either around a subject area, such as social policy, or around a function across the broad front of government activity, e.g., expenditure and administration.

The Prime Minister determines the structure of Cabinet committees and the membership, chair, and terms of reference of each Cabinet committee, taking into account practical and political considerations.

Cabinet Committee Decisions

All Cabinet committee decisions are reported to Cabinet for confirmation. In almost all circumstances, Cabinet committee decisions may not be acted on until they have been confirmed (or amended) by Cabinet (Cabinet can also ask a committee to consider a matter further). Occasionally, Cabinet will authorise a Cabinet committee or specified Ministers to have "power to act" (that is, power to take a final decision) on a clearly defined item. Where a committee or specified Ministers take a decision under power to act, the decision can be acted on immediately. Approval for power to act is usually sought by way of an oral item at Cabinet. When authorising decisions to be taken by a specified group of Ministers under power to act, Cabinet may request that the Ministers report back to Cabinet. Decisions taken by a Cabinet committee under power to act are reported to Cabinet in the usual way.

Support Party Ministers Now On Cabinet Committees

This year, for the first time, support party Ministers will be included as members of Cabinet committees (under the previous government, support party Ministers were not members of Cabinet committees, though they did attend meetings for their papers).

A support party Minister who is a member of a Cabinet committee will receive the agenda and all papers for that committee, and can attend the committee meetings for all items on the agenda, in the same way as other committee members. For committees where they are not members, support party Ministers will receive copies of any papers relevant to their portfolios, and may attend committee meetings for those items.

Support party Ministers will only be bound by collective responsibility in respect of their own portfolios, but they will be bound by confidentiality in respect of everything else (i.e., the content of papers and the discussion at committee meetings). They will be free to disagree with government decisions in areas outside their portfolios, once those decisions have been announced. On some issues, they may decide to opt out by not receiving papers or being involved in discussions (in order to remove themselves completely from the decision-making process on an important issue of differentiation).

Source: Cabinet Office Manual: <http://www.cabinetmanual.cabinetoffice.govt.nz/>

... & Members of the New Cabinet Committees

The main Committees (committee chairs are in bold and italics) are:

Cabinet Strategy Committee (STR). Sets the overall strategic direction and policy priorities of the government. Members: **John Key**, Bill English, Gerry Brownlee, Simon Power, Tony Ryall, Dr Nick Smith, Judith Collins, Anne Tolley, Christopher Finlayson, Murray McCully, Steven Joyce. *Meets fortnightly.*

Cabinet Economic Growth and Infrastructure Committee (EGI). Considers policy issues relating to economic growth, infrastructure, environment, energy and resources. Members: **John Key**, *Bill English*, Gerry Brownlee, Simon Power, Dr Nick Smith, Anne Tolley, David Carter, Murray McCully, Tim Groser, Dr Wayne Mapp, Steven Joyce, Phil Heatley, Kate Wilkinson, Maurice Williamson, Dr Pita Sharples, Peter Dunne. *Meets weekly.*

Cabinet Social Policy Committee (SOC). Considers social policy issues including health, education, and welfare. Members: John Key, Bill English, Simon Power, *Tony Ryall*, Dr Nick Smith, Judith Collins, Anne Tolley, Dr Wayne Mapp, Georgina te Heuheu, Paula Bennett, Phil Heatley, Pansy Wong, John Carter, Dr Pita Sharples, Tariana Turia. *Meets weekly.*

Cabinet Domestic Policy Committee (DOM). Considers justice and law and order issues, and issues relating to the state sector and other domestic affairs. Members: John Key, Bill English, Gerry Brownlee, *Simon Power*, Tony Ryall, Judith Collins, Christopher Finlayson, Murray McCully, Tim Groser, Steven Joyce, Georgina te Heuheu, Paula Bennett, Dr Jonathan Coleman, Maurice Williamson, Dr Richard Worth, John Carter, Dr Pita Sharples. *Meets weekly.*

Cabinet Committee on Treaty of Waitangi Negotiations (TOW). Considers policy issues relating to the Treaty of Waitangi, including Treaty settlement negotiations, and foreshore and seabed issues. Members: **John Key**, Bill English, Gerry Brownlee, Simon Power, Christopher Finlayson, Tim Groser, Georgina te Heuheu, Phil Heatley, Dr Richard Worth, Dr Pita Sharples, Tariana Turia. *Meets fortnightly (alternates with meeting of ERD).*

Cabinet External Relations and Defence Committee (ERD). Considers policy and other matters relating to foreign affairs, international trade, development assistance, and defence. Members: John Key, Bill English, Judith Collins, David Carter, *Murray McCully*, Tim Groser, Dr Wayne Mapp, Georgina te Heuheu. *Meets fortnightly (alternates with meetings of TOW).*

Cabinet Committee on Domestic and External Security Co-ordination (DES). Members: **John Key**, Bill English, Gerry Brownlee, Simon Power, Judith Collins, Christopher Finlayson, Murray McCully, Dr Wayne Mapp, and the addition of the Minister of Civil Defence for civil defence matters. *Meets when required.*

Cabinet Expenditure Control Committee (ECC). Controls and reviews government expenditure to improve value for money in the State sector. Members: John Key, *Bill English*, Gerry Brownlee, Simon Power, Tony Ryall, Steven Joyce, Rodney Hide. *Meets weekly as required.*

Cabinet Legislation Committee (LEG). Considers the legislation programme, draft Bills and regulations, and government responses to petitions, select committee reports and Law Commission reports. Members: John Key, Bill English, *Gerry Brownlee*, Simon Power, Christopher Finlayson, Kate Wilkinson, Dr Richard Worth, Nathan Guy (Senior Government Whip). *Meets weekly.*

Cabinet Appointments and Honours Committee (APH). Considers appointments to statutory and other government agencies, chief executive appointments, and nominations for NZ Royal Honours, and associated policy. Members: **John Key**, Bill English, Gerry Brownlee, Simon Power, Tony Ryall, Anne Tolley, Christopher Finlayson, David Carter, Murray McCully, Georgina te Heuheu, Pansy Wong, Heather Roy, Tariana Turia. *Meets weekly as required.*

Cabinet Business Committee (CBC). Considers policy issues, appointments, bills and regulations and other matters that require decisions before the next scheduled applicable committee meeting, when other committees are not meeting. Members: **John Key**, Bill English, Gerry Brownlee, Simon Power, Tony Ryall, Dr Nick Smith, Judith Collins, Anne Tolley, Christopher Finlayson. *Meets during non-sitting weeks as required.*

Justice/the Law

Access to NZ's Legislation: New Report

In a substantial piece of work called "Presentation of NZ Statute Law" the Law Commission and Parliamentary Counsel Office discuss the problem of access to NZ Acts of Parliament. They note that the law is often difficult to find - and difficult to understand when it has been found. Their report recommends that:

- an index of Acts of Parliament be produced;
- there be a programme to rewrite and revise old Acts so as to make them easier to understand; and
- "dead wood" legislation be repealed.

The Commission's report is at
<http://www.lawcom.govt.nz/ProjectReport.aspx?ProjectID=132>

Making Trans-Tasman Legal Disputes Cheaper

Australia and NZ are to introduce legislation to make resolving legal disputes across the Tasman cheaper, more efficient and less complicated. This will set in place the Trans-Tasman Court Proceedings and Regulatory Enforcement Treaty (this was signed in July 2008). This treaty includes measures such as expanding the range of court judgments that can be enforced across the Tasman, and simplifying the process for doing so. It also allows certain fines imposed in one country to be enforced in the other.

Gender/Sexual Identity & the Law

"About Us: Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and the Law in NZ" is a new resource looking at legal issues and gender identity/sexual orientation. It covers a broad range of legislation and also considers areas such as legal parenting and guardianship issues, and legal identity documents. It was produced by Whitireia Community Law Centre in partnership with the Ministry of Social Development.

You can download the resource from the Community Law Centre website:
www.communitylaw.org.nz

Not-for-Profits

CommunityCentral: Up and Running

This site paves the way to better collaboration between the people working in the community and voluntary sector. Currently it offers two features: e-newsletters and collaborative projects. As well, ComVoices and Workplace Wellbeing (two important not-for-profit sector projects) now have a home on the site.

The site will shortly be offering community groups the opportunity to have a private online workspace and/or network, where people on different computers, in different organisations, and in different locations can share documents and collaborate online.

To register an interest in an online workspace or a network go to
www.communitycentral.org.nz/workspaces or
www.communitycentral.org.nz/networks

Defining Charitable Purpose: Test Case

The first legal case under the Charities Act 2005 was tried in the High Court recently (Travis Trust v Charities Commission HC WN CIV-2008-485-1689 [3 December 2008]). The case involved an appeal by the Travis Trust against the Commission's decision to decline to register the Trust as a charitable entity under the Charities Act. The central issue of the case was whether the provision of prize money for an annual and significant race (in this case a horse race) is a charitable purpose. The judgment was delivered by the Hon. Justice Joseph Williams, who found in the Commission's favour. The case is the first legal scrutiny in NZ of the definition of "charitable purpose" and "public benefit" under the Charities Act 2005.

The judgement is at <http://www.charities.govt.nz/news/news.htm>

Employment Resource: Mana Mahi

Mana Mahi contains 17 best practice guides and 6 resource booklets covering a wide range of employment relations issues in the not-for-profit sector. There's also a sample employee handbook, plus examples, checklists and a CD-ROM of readily useable templates and best practice material.

To order copies (\$25, incl. GST & postage) email manamahi.orders@gmail.com.
More information: C Twyford, Resource Officer, Workplace Wellbeing Project, mob 021 213 2553, website www.communitycentral.org.nz/workplace-wellbeing

Keeping Health/Community Workers Safe

A guide aimed at reducing the risk of workplace violence in health and community care sectors was recently released jointly by the Department of Labour and the Counties Manukau District Health Board. It includes a number of do-it-yourself tools to help

employers and service providers check out the risk of violence, and gives some practical advice on managing it if it occurs.

Copies of "Managing the Risk of Workplace Violence to Healthcare and Community Service Providers" are available at www.dol.govt.nz or www.cmdhb.org.nz

State Sector

Briefings to Incoming Ministers

These briefings are "one-stop-shop" documents aimed at helping a new Minister get up to speed fast about his or her new portfolio. They provide a very useful snapshot of the particular government organisation, describe how it fits within its particular sector, and identify issues on the horizon - and perhaps also those needing more immediate attention.

(Note: this is the first off two lists, covering organisations with names starting from A-M. Next month we'll publish the N-Y list.)

Archives NZ:
<http://wdwww.archives.govt.nz/docs/pdfs/IncomingGovtBriefing.pdf>

Authority; Civil Aviation of NZ (CAA - link from Beehive website):
http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/CAA_BIM_0.pdf

Authority; Energy Efficiency and Conservation (EECA - link from Beehive website):
http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/Energy_Efficiency_and_Conservation_Authority_BIM.pdf

Authority; Environmental Risk Management (ERMA - link from Beehive website):
http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/ERMA_BIM.pdf

Authority; Independent Police Complaints (link from Beehive website):
http://beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/Independent_Police_Conduct_Authority_BIM.pdf

Authority; NZ Food Safety (NZFSA - link from Beehive website):
http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/Food_Safety_BIM.pdf

Aviation Security Service (link from Beehive website):
http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/Avsec_BIM_0.pdf

Broadcasting; Minister of (briefing from Ministry of Culture & Heritage - link from Beehive website):
http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/Broadcasting_BIM.pdf

Building and Construction; Minister of (briefing from Department of Housing):
<http://www.dbh.govt.nz/UserFiles/File/AboutUs/Strategic-Direction/pdf/BIM-building-construction-nov08.pdf>

Career services (link from Beehive website):
<http://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/education+bims+holding+space>

Civil Defence; Minister of (link from Beehive website):
http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/civil_defence_BIM.pdf

Commission; Charities (link from Beehive website):
http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/charities_commission_BIM.pdf

Commission; Commerce (link from Beehive website):
http://beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/ComCom_BIM.pdf

Commission; Electoral (link from Beehive website):
http://beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/Electoral_Commission_BIM.pdf

Commission; Electricity (link from Beehive website): http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/Electricity_Commission_BIM.pdf

Commission; Families (link from Beehive website): http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/Families_Commission_Briefing.pdf

Commission; Gambling: <http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/Briefing%20on%20Gambling%20Commission.pdf>

Commission; Law (links from Beehive website): http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/Law_Commission_BIM_1.pdf
http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/Law_Commission_BIM_2.pdf
http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/Law_Commission_BIM_3.pdf

Commission; NZ Film (link from Beehive website): http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/New_Zealand_Film_Commission.pdf

Commission; NZ Fire Service (link from Beehive website): <http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/NZFS%20Minbrief%2008%20final.pdf>

Commission; NZ Lotteries (link from Beehive website): <http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/Lotteries%20Commission%20BIM.pdf>

Commission; Retirement (link from Beehive website): http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/Retirement_Commissioner_Briefing.pdf

Commission; Securities (link from Beehive website): http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/SEC_COM_BIM.pdf

Commission; State Services (link from Beehive website): http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/SSC_BIM.pdf

Commission; Transport Accident Investigation (TAIC - link from Beehive website): http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/TAIC_BIM_2008_0.pdf

Community and Voluntary Sector; Office for (administered by Ministry of Social Development): <http://www.ocvs.govt.nz/publications/minister-briefing/index.html>

Community and Voluntary Sector; Department of Internal Affairs (link from Beehive website): http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/DIA_BIM.pdf

Conservation; Department of (DoC): <http://www.doc.govt.nz/publications/about-doc/briefing-to-the-new-minister-of-conservation-2008/>

Consumer Affairs; Ministry of (a part of the Ministry for Economic Development): http://www.med.govt.nz/templates/MultipageDocumentTOC_39855.aspx

Council; Bioethics: <http://www.bioethics.org.nz/publications/bim-nov2008/index.html>

Courts (link from Beehive website): <http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/Courts.pdf>

Creative NZ (link from Beehive website): http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/Creative_New_Zealand.pdf

Crown Company Monitoring Advisory Unit (CCMAU): <http://www.ccm.au.govt.nz/pdfs/CRI-OIA-BIM-12.pdf>

Crown Law Office: <http://www.crownlaw.govt.nz/uploads/agbriefingpaper08.pdf>

Culture & Heritage; Ministry for (link from Beehive website): http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/Ministry_for_Culture_and_Heritage.pdf

Customs Service (link from Beehive website): http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/Customs_BIM.pdf

Disability Issues; Office for (part of MSD - link from Beehive website): http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/Disability_Issues_Briefing.pdf

Economic Development; Ministry of: Guide to MED: http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/Guide_to_MED_for_BIM.pdf

Economic Development; Ministry of: Economic overview: http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/MED_Economic_overview_for_BIM.pdf

Economic Development; Ministry of: Vote Communications and Information Technology: http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/Communications_and_IT_BIM%202008.pdf

Economic Development; Ministry of: Vote Commerce: http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/Vote_Commerce_BIM.pdf

Economic Development; Ministry of: a more detailed review of activities under Vote Commerce in addition to the BIM: http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/CTI_BIM.pdf

Economic Development; Ministry of: Vote Energy: http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/Vote_Energy_BIM.PDF

Economic Development; Ministry of: Vote Economic Development: http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/Vote_ED_BIM_0.pdf

Education; Ministry of (link from Beehive website): <http://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/education+bims+holding+space>

Education Review Office (ERO - link from Beehive website): http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/ERO_BIM.pdf

Environment; Ministry for (MfE - link from Beehive website): http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/MfE_BIN.pdf

Environmental Sustainability Briefing (from Ministry for the Environment, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Department of Conservation, Ministry of Fisheries, Ministry of Economic Development, Land Information NZ, Te Puni Kokiri, Treasury, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, and the State Services Commission): http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/BIM_environmental_sustainability.pdf

Ethnic Affairs (comes under DIA - link from Beehive website): http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/Ethnic_Affairs_BIM_1.pdf

Fisheries; Ministry of (link from Beehive website): http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/Fisheries_BIM.pdf

Foreign Affairs; Ministry of: <http://www.mfat.govt.nz/Media-and-publications/Publications/Post-Election-Brief/index.php>

Health; Ministry of (there are several briefing documents on the Ministry website): http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/MoH_BIM.pdf

Health Research Council of NZ (HRC - link from Beehive website): http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/HRC_BIM.pdf

Historic Places Trust (link from Beehive website): <http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/NZHPT.pdf>

Housing; Department of (link from Beehive website): <http://www.dbh.govt.nz/UserFiles/File/AboutUs/Strategic-Direction/pdf/BIM-housing-nov08.pdf>

Housing NZ (link from Beehive website): http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/HNZC_BIM.pdf

Infrastructure: Briefing for the Incoming Minister (done by MED, Treasury, MfE, Ministry of Transport, Department of Internal Affairs):

<http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/Infrastructure.pdf>

Inland Revenue (IRD): <http://www.taxpolicy.ird.govt.nz/publications/files/IRBIM2008.pdf>

Internal Affairs; Department of (DIA - link from Beehive website): http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/DIA_BIM.pdf

Justice; Ministry of: <http://www.justice.govt.nz/pubs/reports/2005/briefing-ministers-2005/chapter-2.html?search=true>

Labour; Department of (DoL): <http://www.dol.govt.nz/publications/general/gen-incoming-ministersasp>

Land Information NZ: <http://www.linz.govt.nz/docs/supporting-info/publications/linz-bim-2008.pdf>

Legal Services Agency (link from Beehive website): http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/Legal_Services_Agency_BIM.pdf

Maori Affairs; Minister and Ministry of (there are a number of briefings that went to the new Minister as follows): - Te Puni Kokiri - http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/TPK_BIM.pdf - Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Maori - http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/Taura_Whiri_BIM.pdf - Te Mangai Paho - http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/TMP_BIM.pdf - Maori Television Service - http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/MTS_BIM.pdf

Maritime NZ (link from Beehive website): http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/Maritime_NZ_BIM_0.pdf

Business

2009 “Brands with a Conscience” Awards

The Medinge Group (www.medinge.org), an international think-tank on branding and business, recently released its sixth annual “Brands with a Conscience” list.

The criteria for inclusion on the list include evidence of the human implications of the brand and consideration of whether the brand takes risks in line with its beliefs. Evaluations are made based on reputation, self-representation, history, direct experience, contacts with individuals within the organisations, media and analysts, and an assessment of the expressed values of sustainability.

The awards for 2009 go to:

- *Chhatra Sagar* - an eco-resort in Rajasthan (India): <http://www.chhatrasagar.com/ABOUT.HTM>;
- *Ekomarine* - environmentally responsible paint (Sweden): <http://ekomarine.se/en.html>;
- *Kiva* - micro-finance lending (USA): <http://www.kiva.org>;
- *One* - enlightened bottled water (UK; One sells bottled water in the UK and gives away all its profits to water projects in Africa): <http://www.onedifference.org/uk/water/>;

- *Ragbag* - Fair-Traded fashion accessories from recyclable materials (the Netherlands): <http://www.ragbag.eu>; and
- *TOMS shoes* - developing nations’ shoe distribution (USA; for each pair of shoes you buy from this LA-based company, TOMS will donate a pair to needy children in developing nations): <http://www.tomsshoes.com>.

ANZ Commodity Index – December 2008

The latest ANZ Commodity Price Index shows the extent to which the global business environment has deteriorated. The Index shows the price of our commodities - except for apples - fell a combined 7.4% in December. It is the fifth successive monthly fall, and the index is now down 27% from its peak in July 2008.

Dairy and wool prices fell more than 12% in December, aluminium prices dropped 20% to a five-year low and log prices were down 4.4%. Other significant exports dropped as well: lamb -2.4%, venison -1.4%, and beef -1.4%.

Twelve Dangerous Words in Business

Note: the source material came from a UK blog, so there are some specifically British references:

- **Just.** This is used to make a huge request or error seem trivial as in: “Could you just do this (500 page) document by Monday?”, a request best made late on Friday afternoon;
- **But.** “That was a great presentation, but...”, or “I would like to help, but...”;
- **From.** Much loved by advertisers, as in “Fly to Rome from £10” excluding £100 of taxes and other “optional” extras for a flight leaving at 4am, going to an airport about 100km away from Rome and the ticket has to be booked one year in advance;
- **Might (and any other conditional verb).** Might is used to achieve two things: first it sets up a negotiating position as in, “I might be able to do that if...” Second, it lays the ground work for excusing failure later on: “I would have done it, if only...”;
- **Only.** Closely related to “Just”, it is an attempt to make a big request or problem seem small. “It was only a small error....we only dropped one nuclear bomb over London...”;
- **Important (and urgent).** Used to puff up any presentation: “This important new product/initiative...”. Important to who? And why? Maybe it is important to the speaker, but why is it to me?
- **Strategic.** Important, with bells on. See Strategic Human Capital division, formerly known as the Personnel Department. Alternatively used to justify something which has no financial justification at all: “This strategic IT investment....(which costs £100 million and has no identifiable payback at all) is essential to the survival of the business”;
- **Rightsize, downsize, best shore, offshore, outsource, optimise, redeploy, downshift, re-engineer.** How many ways are there of avoiding saying straight up: we are going to lay off staff?

- **Thank you.** Normally "Thank you" is good, except when used by automated voices at call centres saying, "Thank you for calling, we value your call...(and we have so much contempt for our customers that we can not be bothered to answer your call promptly, so we will put you on hold until you give up and try to use our impenetrable and useless online help instead);
- **Interesting.** Fear this word. When your lawyer uses it, you are doomed. When your doctor uses it, check your will is up to date. The recession is certainly interesting. A slightly less interesting time would be preferable;
- **Opportunity.** Because the word "problem" has been banned in business-speak, all problems have become opportunities. This means many opportunities are problems. There is a limit to how many opportunities I can solve. Interesting and strategic opportunities really scare me; and
- **Investment.** Investment was first hijacked by the British government to justify wild and uncontrolled public sector spending. Spending is bad, but investment is good, so they simply re-classified all their spending as "investment" in the health, education and future of the country. The businesses which followed the government's lead by going on a spending/investment splurge are now going bust: unlike the government, they can not print money or raise taxes.

Source: <http://blogs.bnet.co.uk/sterling-performance/2008/12/04/the-12-most-dangerous-words-in-business/>

Money Matters

Global Foreign Investment Downturn: UN Report

Hitting business in the developed world hardest, foreign direct investment (FDI) dropped by over 20% last year and is projected to fall further in 2009, according to a new United Nations report. The UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) publication estimated that flows of investment made by corporations outside of their own country have fallen by an average of 21% worldwide to an estimated \$1.4 trillion. Unlike the 1997 financial crisis which originated in Asian nations, the current turmoil began in the developed world, with FDI inflows contracting in Europe in particular, with reductions of almost 174% to Finland, 120% to Ireland and 94% to Italy. However, UNCTAD notes that the present crisis is rapidly spreading to developing and transition economies.

A press release from UNCTAD is at <http://www.unctad.org/Templates/webflyer.asp?docid=10930&intItemID=1528&lang=1>

Tax Credit Changes: 2009-10

The Taxation (Urgent Measures and Annual Rates) Act 2008 repealed the R&D tax credits from the 2009-10 income year. However, the tax credit remains available for the 2008-09 income year.

Updated information is on IRD's website at www.ird.govt.nz/rd-tax-credit

2009/10 ACC Levy Rates Go Up

The Earners' Account Levy (paid by all employees and self-employed to cover their non-work, non-motor vehicle injuries) will increase from \$1.40 to \$1.70 (including GST) per \$100 of liable earnings. The average composite employer and self-employed levy will increase from \$1.26 to \$1.31 per \$100 of payroll. This levy excludes GST and is an average rate (individual rates for industry groups may be higher or lower).

A person on the average wage of \$47,000 per year currently pays \$658 a year or \$12.61 a week to ACC for the Earners' Levy. The new rate will be \$799 per year or \$15.31 a week.

The new rates take effect on 1 April 2009

Fraud Awareness Week: 3-10 March

Fraud Awareness Week 2008 aims to raise NZer's awareness about how they could spot scams, protect themselves from scams, and report a scam to help protect others. This year the focus is on scams that seduce consumers with promises of easy money, great prizes or true love and deceive or trick consumers into giving scammers their personal details.

The key messages are:

- scams target you - protect yourself;
- don't be seduced - don't be deceived;
- fight the scammers - don't respond; and
- if it looks too good to be true, it probably is.

Go to SCAMwatch at www.scamwatch.govt.nz for more information

Summer Bargain Hunting

Summer sales are looking bigger than ever and there will probably be fantastic bargains out there this season. But what if you get to the store and you can't find the bargain you came for?

The Fair Trading Act prevents stores from misleading customers about their products through advertising on TV, radio, fliers, signs in the store, and anything they tell you when you are in the store.

A sale advertised as "50% off everything" should mean everything in the store is half price. A sale advertised as "up to 50% off" should have a reasonable number of items at half price, not just one or two.

The advertised price and quality need to be the same as what you find in the store. Any other information they tell you about the product has to be true too, including how big it is, what functions the product can do, and where you can use it.

Check how long the sale will last. The store can't decide to cancel the sale before the advertised end date. So if they still have the sale item in store before the end of the sale you should get it for the sale price.

Stores aren't allowed to advertise a cheap price on an item if the store will have difficulty supplying it. So they shouldn't have run out of a product when you arrive early on the first day of a sale. If they have run out of an advertised item, ask if you can get a rain-check – this means you can get the same item for the sale price when they get more stock in.

If you think a trader has breached the Fair Trading Act then talk to them about it first. Point out the difference in quality or price to them. If you are not successful with your approach to the store manager, you can go to the Commerce Commission, which can investigate and prosecute a trader who has breached the Act.

For more information go to <http://www.consumeraffairs.govt.nz/index.html>. The Commerce Commission site is at <http://www.comcom.govt.nz/>

NZ Super Fund: Investment Exclusions

The Guardians of the NZ Superannuation Fund (NZSF) announced at the end of last year that they were excluding from the Fund companies associated with the manufacture of cluster munitions and the manufacture or testing of nuclear explosive devices.

The Fund will divest from stocks in six companies involved in the manufacture of cluster munitions, one of which is also involved in the simulated testing of nuclear explosive devices. It will also divest from another company involved in simulated testing. The Fund does not, and has never, held shares in any company that manufactures nuclear explosive devices. The total value of the Fund's shares in these companies is about \$37 million, or 0.3% of the Fund's portfolio.

Internet/ICT

India: Trading/Investing Information Sites

NZTrade & Enterprise offices in South Asia - <http://www.nzte.govt.nz/section/14485.aspx>: contact details for NZTE's offices in New Delhi and Mumbai;

Biz Information Zone - <http://www.business.govt.nz/biz/>: business information advisors assist with sourcing information and advice on doing business in India;

Directory of Indian Government Websites - <http://www.goidirectory.nic.in/>: government portal listing websites of ministries, government agencies, public corporations and other institutions such as banks;

Central Board of Excise and Customs - <http://www.cbec.gov.in/cae1-english.htm>: this site offers information on tax liabilities for foreign-owned businesses operating in India and on government tenders. There is also an FAQ section, details of the board's online services and links to the websites of its subordinate offices, and sites of business-related government and non-government bodies;

Income Tax Department - <http://www.incometaxindia.gov.in/>: the department's site provides information on tax law - including legislation pertaining to foreign businesses and dealing with such matters as transfer pricing - procedures for tax collection and payment, departmental services for business and tenders;

Department of Commerce - <http://commerce.nic.in/>: this site includes information on the department's activities and departmental bodies such as export promotion councils and commodity boards; India's trade policies and agreements; and details on trade promotion assistance. There are also links to sites carrying information on items like export processing zones, and access to the department's press releases;

Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion - <http://www.dipp.nic.in/>: information on investing in India - including a manual on foreign direct investment - intellectual property, and the department's programmes relating to attracting inward investment and fostering industrial development;

India Brand Equity Foundation - <http://ibef.org/>: the foundation is a public-private partnership between the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the Government of India and the Confederation of Indian Industry, tasked with boosting India's business profile abroad. Its site offers an overview of the Indian economy, information on doing business in India, including a guide to the country for foreign investors by state, and industry, information on infrastructure and the foundation's publications. There are also extensive directories of government ministries and agencies and business bodies, including contact details.

Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry: - <http://www.ficci.com/>: the federation's site offers business directories and matching through its Business Information Services Network, links to business and government portals, information on the organisation's services and links to regional chambers of commerce and government bodies;

Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry - <http://www.assochem.org/>: this site provides information on member services, its hard-copy industrial directories and other publications and its activities. There are also links to business-oriented agencies and bodies;

Confederation of Indian Industry - <http://www.cii.in/>: information on the confederation's business development and general services, business opportunities, access to library resources and an online shop for publications; and

Economic Times - <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/>: India's leading business publication.

Roboform: Managing Passwords

Want to manage all those passwords to sites and online applications? Check out Roboform at <http://www.roboform.com/>. Roboform allows you to:

- manage your passwords and Log In automatically;
- fill long registration and checkout forms with one click;
- encrypt your passwords to achieve complete security;
- generate random passwords to maximise password strength;
- fight Phishing by entering passwords only on matching web sites;
- defeat Keyloggers by not using the keyboard to type passwords;
- back up your passwords and copy them between computers; and
- synchronise passwords between computers using GoodSync.

After a quick download and install you'll be asked to set a master password to protect all your data and then be launched onto a webpage containing both video & online tutorials for all the aspects of this utility. There is a free version and a version to buy. If you want to see what the BBC has to say about this site go to http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/click_online/7843134.stm

Arts & Culture

CNZ: New Arts Funding System

Following a review of how it funds projects Creative NZ (CNZ) has set up a new arts funding system for the February 2009 funding round. Answers to frequently asked questions about the new system are on the Creative NZ website.

Arts funding applications close on 27 February 2009. For more information about the new funding system go to <http://www.creativenz.govt.nz/Funding/Reviewofprojectfunding/tabid/4785/language/en-NZ/Default.aspx>

NZ ON Air Funding: TV Documentaries...

NZ On Air is to spend more than \$2.25 million funding for new documentary projects for broadcasting on Prime TV and TV One. Funding will go to:

- "Fifty Years of Television in NZ", a seven-part series one-hour series celebrating local television since its arrival here in 1960. The series will screen in 2010 on Prime. It's a comprehensive overview of how television has evolved in this country. From news and information to drama and comedy, sport, music and variety shows – even Telethons! It will also examine the ways in which television has influenced society and culture in NZ, and, in turn, how our own culture has changed a very powerful medium. Cost: \$1,249,973;
- "Caravan of Life"(for TV One), is a seven-part, half-hour per episode series that travels the NZ heartland, visiting A & P shows, schools and small towns, highlighting NZ characters. Cost: \$336,812;
- "Te Ohaki" (for TV One), tells the stories of four Maori leaders (in four 1-hour programmes) who shaped our history: Te Rauparaha, Tuhawaiki, Te Wherowhero and Te Kooti. Cost: \$549,290; and
- "Saving Face" (for TV One), a one-hour examination of the NZ doctors (Harold Gillies, Henry Pickerill and Archie McIndoe) who pioneered reconstructive surgery techniques in two World Wars. Cost: \$155,171.

...& Make Your Own TV Doco

The Open Door project gives access to TV3 Network Television to NZers who are involved in an issue, a cause or an activity that they want people to know about. Funding for its 2009 series of programmes has been approved, and Open Door are currently looking for enthusiastic people to work with, who have something genuine to say.

Visit www.opendoor.net.nz for more information/allocation forms, for email opendoor@xtra.co.nz for more information

Television Viewing for 2008

Last year was a record year for television viewing in NZ, with the average person watching 3 hours 8 minutes per day, up 8.6% over 2007. There were more viewers too: 3,924,400

people watched television last year, compared to 3,824,600 in 2007.

On average, 35.6% of the entire population (5+) was watching television during the peak viewing period of 6pm to 10:30pm, an increase of 4.7% over 2007. On average 2,452,600 people tuned in to television at some point each evening, up from 2,360,400 in 2007.

International Paper Art Competition

The Art Studio Amateras in Sofia, Bulgaria, is holding an international exhibition of international paper art in Bulgaria and other countries, which will showcase small paper works in 2D and 3D. An international jury will select the exhibitors and cash prizes will be offered in the following categories: Best in Show Award; Young Artist Award; and Innovation Award.

Entries close on 27 March 2009. The exhibition will be held between 5 June and 5 July 2009 at Art Alley Gallery, Sofia, Bulgaria. More information/entry forms are on Amateras' website www.amateras.eu

Fishing

Crayfish Numbers Falling (North) & Rising (South)

New research suggests crayfish numbers have fallen along large parts of the east coast of the North Island and are likely continue to fall if current catches continue. In contrast, crayfish numbers have increased in the South Island.

In a recently published consultation paper called "Review of Sustainability Measures for Red Rock Lobster Fisheries" the National Rock Lobster Management Group is proposing to reduce the 2009/2010 total allowable catch in the Gisborne and Hawke's Bay/Wellington fisheries and increase the total allowable catches in the Otago and Southland fisheries.

Submissions closed on 9 February 2009, but the Ministry may consider late submissions. More information T Steel, Ministry of Fisheries, PO Box 1020, Wellington, email tracey.steel@fish.govt.nz <<mailto:tracey.steel@fish.govt.nz>>, fax 04 819 4208. The consultation paper is at <http://www.fish.govt.nz/NR/rdonlyres/E425DF23-82DB-4F5D-91EC-D228009145B2/0/NRLMG2008RockLobsterAdvice.pdf>

More Calls to MFish Poacher Hotline

The number of logged phone calls to the MFish 0800 4 POACHER hotline rose by 38% (to 181) in December 2008, compared to December 2007 (131 logged calls). The hotline is a dedicated line allowing the NZ public to report suspicious or illegal fishing activity around the country.

When calls are made to the hotline MFish staff log the calls that have sufficient detail to warrant a call out to local fishery officers. The fishery officers will either investigate the call immediately, follow up on the detail, or it can be added to intelligence on an existing investigation.

To report illegal or suspicious fishing activity call the MFish hotline 0800 4 POACHER

General

World Day of Social Justice: 20 February

In November 2007, the General Assembly of the United Nations proclaimed 20 February 2009 as the first World Day of Social Justice. World Day of Social Justice is aimed at encouraging people to look at how social justice can help get rid of poverty. It also has goals of achieving full employment and support for social integration.

Social development aims at social justice, solidarity, harmony and equality within and among countries and social justice, equality and equity constitute the fundamental values of all societies. To achieve "a society for all", governments made a commitment to create a "framework for action" to promote social justice at national, regional and international levels. They also pledged to promote fair distribution of income and greater access to resources through equity and equality and opportunity for all.

The governments recognised as well that economic growth should promote equity and social justice and that "a society for all" must be based on social justice and respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

More is at <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/social/intldays/IntlJustice/>

Birth/Marriage/Death Certificates: New Requirements

Law changes that came into effect from 25 January 2009 require anyone ordering a birth, death, marriage, civil union or name change certificate to show evidence of their identity unless the record is an old one. When applying for a certificate or related products people need to sign a written statement saying that the information they are providing is true and correct. The statement must also be signed by a person of standing in the community. The aim of the new requirements is to provide better safeguards for people's personal information.

The new rules apply to recent records only. People ordering certificates and related products for old "historical" records do not need to provide evidence of their identity. These records include:

- births that occurred 100 years ago or more;
- still births that occurred 50 years ago or more;
- marriages (and eventually) civil unions that occurred 80 years ago or more; and
- deaths that occurred 50 years ago or more, or where 80 years has passed since the birth of the deceased.

A new register has been created to record the name changes of NZ citizens and permanent residents who were born in another country. Those people can now get a formal name change certificate recording their name changes.

For further information on the Births, Deaths, Marriages, and Relationships Registration Act 1995, visit www.bdm.govt.nz or phone 0800 22 77 77

Did Pacific People Originate in Taiwan?

New research by scientists at the University of Auckland into language evolution suggests most Pacific populations originated in Taiwan around 5,200 years ago.

The researchers have used sophisticated computer analyses on vocabulary from 400 Austronesian languages to uncover how the Pacific was settled. The Austronesian language family is one of the largest in the world, with 1200 languages spread across the Pacific. By studying the basic vocabulary from these languages (such as words for animals, simple verbs, colours and numbers) it's possible to trace how these languages evolved – and the relationships between them could be providing a detailed history of Pacific settlement.

The research results, which were published in the latest issue of the prestigious journal *Science*, show how the settlement of the Pacific proceeded in a series of expansion pulses and settlement pauses. The researchers say the Austronesians were in Taiwan around 5,200 years ago, came to the Philippines 1,000 years later, then spread rapidly across the 7,000km from the Philippines to Polynesia in less than one thousand years. After settling Fiji, Samoa and Tonga, the Austronesians paused again for another thousand years, before finally spreading further into Polynesia eventually reaching as far as NZ, Hawaii and Easter Island.

The database of Austronesian basic vocabulary can be accessed at: <http://language.psy.auckland.ac.nz/austronesian/>

SPARC Invests in Future Kiwi Sporting Success

SPARC is investing \$4.8 million in 18 sports in 2009 aimed at having more NZ athletes and teams winning on the world stage. The contestable investment package will be followed by a further investment announcement in February this year for the nine targeted sports (athletics, bike, netball, cricket, rowing, rugby, sailing, swimming and triathlon).

Overall SPARC will invest in excess of \$32 million in high performance sport in 2008/09, including Prime Minister's Scholarships, Performance Enhancement Grants and NZ Academy of Sport performance services.

Most Popular First Names for 2008

The list of the most popular baby names registered last year has been released by the office of Births, Deaths and Marriages of the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA). Jack is still the most popular boys name for the fourth year in a row, while Sophie is the new number one girls name with last year's top choice, Ella, moving down to third place.

Top 20 girls names for 2008: 1 Sophie 356; 2 Olivia 308; 3 Ella 297; 4 Isabella 288; 5 Charlotte 269; 6 Lily 254; 7 Emma 253; 8 Emily 245; 9 Jessica 245; 10 Grace 237; 11 Hannah 232; 12 Chloe 227; 13 Ruby 213; 14 Lucy 202; 15 Ava 196; 16 Amelia 194; 17 Madison 184; 18 Maia 177; Mia 170; 20 Holly 161.

Top 20 Boys names for 2008: 1 Jack 449; 2 James 378; 3 William 352; 4 Samuel 346; 5 Joshua 332; 6 Riley 328; 7 Liam 302; 8 Oliver 300; 9 Benjamin 290; 10 Daniel 286; 11 Thomas 268; 12 Jacob 266; 13 Ethan 250; 14 Jayden 250; 15 Noah 249; 16 Ryan 238; 17 Lucas 233; 18 Luke 227; 19 Max 223; 20 Hunter 222.

For the full list of 100 names, go to www.bdm.govt.nz

Some Conferences/Events

Central District Field Days

The annual Central District Field Days are being held in Feilding from 12-14 March. These field days are the largest regional agricultural ones in NZ, with nearly 500 exhibitors and over 38,000 visitors visiting the site over the three days. Activities include the National Excavator Championships, The Ramsay Roundwood Lumberjack Show, and the Central Districts Doubles Power Fencing Competition, and once again, a rural visitor has the chance to win a Suzuki ATV, and Brent Smith Trailer filled with prizes.

More is at <http://www.farmonline.co.nz/events/cdfielddays/>

Next Generation Networks Conference

Commerce Commission's Next Generation Networks conference: "Broadband at the Crossroads: Convergence, NGN and the Future" is being held from 26-27 February at the Langham Hotel, Auckland. The implications and opportunities of next generation networks will be discussed. Registration is free.

For more information/to register go to <http://www.tuanz.org.nz/content/bf7a591f-2c22-414d-ac3a-96e2dd0e758b.html>

Emissions Trading/Climate Change Policy Summit

Being held from 25-26 March at the Duxton Hotel, Wellington, this conference will consider the impacts and opportunities and emissions trading scheme will have on NZ organisations.

For more information/to register go to: <http://www.conferenz.co.nz/reviewing-emissions-trading-and-climate-change-policy-summit.html>

Philanthropy NZ & Community Trusts Conference

This is being held from 18-19 March 2009 at Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington. It will cover best practice in the philanthropic sector.

For more information/to register go to www.giving.org.nz/conference

8th Annual Emergency Management Conference

This conference is being held from 23-24 February at the Duxton Hotel, Wellington. Speakers from NZ, Australia and China discuss experiences and challenges in emergency management.

More is at <http://www.conferenz.co.nz/the-8th-annual-emergency-management-conference.html>

Rural General Practice Network Conference 2009

The Network is holding its conference from 27- 29 March at the Wellington Convention Centre. The theme is "Rural Health, Rural Life- look what we've got!"

Visit www.rgpn.org.nz for more information/to register

Te Pou National Outcomes Forum

This is being held in Auckland on 19 February. Called "Destination Information Sharing - The NGO-DHB Experience", it will consider partnerships between NGOs and DHBs that support mental health information sharing.

More information:

<http://www.community.net.nz/communitycentre/events/national/nationaloutcomes.htm?region=default>

Skills to Make a Difference Conference

This National Not-For-Profit (NFP) conference is being held in Napier from 18-20 March. The program features keynote addresses and workshops from experts in their field, and it draws on best practice commercial sector expertise and extensive NFP experience. The conference will identify a "tool box" that NFP management and boards can use to be successful in an increasingly competitive market and challenging times.

Visit www.nfpconference.co.nz for further details

Some Funding/Awards Available

Lottery Regional Community Committees

Lottery Community considers applications for developmental or preventative projects, welfare and support services, or projects that help to improve the wellbeing of people in the community.

The 11 Lottery Regional Community Committees cover: West Coast / Nelson-Marlborough; Canterbury-Kaikoura (including Chatham Islands); Otago / Southland; Northland; Auckland; Waikato; Taranaki; Bay of Plenty / Gisborne; Hawkes Bay; Manawatu-Wanganui and Wellington.

Applications close Wednesday 4 March 2009. More information and an online form from Grants Online are at

http://www.dia.govt.nz/diawebsite.NSF/wpg_URL/Services-Lottery-Grants-Lottery-Community?OpenDocument

RWNZ Enterprising Rural Women Award...

The aim of Rural Women New Zealand's Enterprising Rural Woman Award is to recognise and promote small rural businesses run by women. Women taking a leading role in small businesses in rural areas (including rural towns) are eligible to enter.

Rural enterprise is set to play an important part in overcoming the effects of recession in NZ, and this is a great opportunity for all entrants to receive publicity and promote their business. For the three winners there is the added bonus of great prizes.

The Award, which is sponsored by BNZ, will be judged by Theresa Gattung, a BNZ representative and RWNZ's National President, Margaret Chapman.

Entries close on 16 February 2009. More information/entry forms are on the Rural Women NZ website at www.ruralwomen.org.nz, or contact Rural Women NZ's Administration Officer, tel 04 473 5524

...& Company Directors' Course

Rural Women New Zealand invites rural women to apply for a place on a five-day, six night residential Institute of Directors' Company Directors' course. This course provides an understanding of the role, duties and knowledge required (e.g., governance principles, finance, law, risk and strategy) for directorship in NZ. It was developed specifically to meet the needs of women who have received little formal training for their role as a director. There is an expectation that applicants will have a reasonable level of financial literacy (a simple accounting skills test can be found at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=MujzvE2HtwX7fKuwxqI3pg%3d%3d#q2>).

Applications close on 31 March 2009. For more information email enquiries@ruralwomen.org.nz, or tel 04 473 5524

AsiaNZ Culture Grants

AsiaNZ offers culture grants of up to \$4,000 to organisations and individuals running projects of merit that will educate NZers about Asian arts and culture.

Applications close on 27 March 2009. More information/application forms are at http://www.asianz.org.nz/files/Culture_Grants_Application_Form_NOV_08.pdf. They go to M Turner, Project Officer, Culture, Asia NZ Foundation, PO Box 10 144, Wellington, 6143

The EECA Awards

The Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority's awards feature NZ businesses and individuals who have achieved innovative and outstanding results in energy efficiency or renewable energy projects. There are nine category awards and one Supreme Award, which will be presented in Auckland on 21 May.

Entries close on 20 February 2009. For more information/an entry form go to <http://www.eeca.govt.nz/news/awards/index.html>

Contestable Fund for Aquaculture Sector

A \$600,000 contestable fund has been set up to encourage innovative market development projects in the aquaculture sector. The fund will provide support for projects with a total cost of \$100,000 or more that will improve the profitability and competitiveness of the sector. It will be administered on a dollar-for-dollar match basis.

Applications close 27 March 2009. For further information and application details contact: C Moses, Marketing Executive, AQNZ, tel (03) 546 2668, email: casey.moses@aquaculture.org.nz. AQNZ's website is at <http://www.aquaculture.org.nz/>

Community Irrigation Fund Applications

Applications to the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry's (MAF's) Community Irrigation Fund (CIF) are sought and all potential parties are encouraged to apply. The fund is available to promoters of community water storage and/or irrigation schemes for generating investor and community support. Funding may be provided for up to four years.

Applications close on 20 February 2009. To see the criteria for applications and download the CIF application forms go to <http://www.maf.govt.nz/mafnet/rural-nz/cif/>. Application forms are at <http://www.maf.govt.nz/mafnet/rural-nz/cif/page-02.htm>

ACC Advocacy Grant Scheme

The ACC Advocacy Grant Scheme has been established so that not-for-profit advocacy agencies can apply for funding to assist them to provide accessible, effective and safe advocacy services for ACC claimants.

Applications close on 20 February 2009. More information from ACC Advocacy Grant Scheme Administrator, P O Box 13-350, Christchurch 8141, email: advocacygrant@acc.co.nz. Web: <http://www.acc.co.nz/>

Appointments

NZ's next *High Commissioner to South Africa* will be career diplomat Geoff Randal, and career diplomat Tia Barrett will be our next *High Commissioner to the Cook Islands*.

Gary Judd has been appointed to the APEC *Business Advisory Council of NZ (ABAC)*. Peter Conway has been elected as *Secretary of the NZ Council of Combined Trade Unions (CTU)*. The NZ International Arts Festival has a new *executive director*, Sue Paterson.

The *Board of Enquiry* hearing submissions on Mighty River's proposal for a wind farm near Palmerston North is Judge Craig Thompson (chair), Richard Heerdegen, John Hudson, Chris Shenton and Vivian Kloosterman. Current *Disability Advisory Council members* are: Beverley Grammer, Disabled Persons Assembly (DPA) (*chair*); Nigel Ngahiwi, Ngati Kapo (*deputy chair*); Alan Jones, Association of Blind Citizens; Allysa Carberry, Carers Alliance; Denis Wederell, Neurological Alliance; Dick Stark, Grey Power; Eamon Daly, DPA, John Ward, Hearing Association; Pati Umaga, Wellington Pacific Disability Network; Royce Flynn, Deaf Association of NZ; Susan McDonald, People First; and Terry Ututaonga, Carers Alliance.

Craig Matthews and Paddy Twist

Editors

Rural Bulletin is a free publication produced by Rural Women New Zealand. Its aim is to build community capacity by circulating relevant information, so people in rural and other communities have an opportunity to make informed decisions about, and have their say on, issues and changes that may affect them.

Rural Bulletin may be copied in full and circulated, and individual items may be reproduced providing the source is acknowledged.

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

Craig Matthews/Paddy Twist

Editors Rural Bulletin

Tel: 04 473 5524

Fax: 04 472 8946

Email ruralbulletin@ruralwomen.org.nz

Noeline Holt

Executive Officer

Rural Women New Zealand

Tel: 04 473 5524

Fax: 04 472 8946

Email: enquiries@ruralwomen.org.nz

Jackie Edkins

Communications Officer

Rural Women New Zealand

Tel: 04 473 5524

Fax: 04 472 8946

Email: enquiries@ruralwomen.org.nz

Website: www.ruralwomen.org.nz

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

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

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