

Rural Bulletin

April 2008



Rural Women
NEW ZEALAND

<http://www.ruralwomen.org>

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Consultation

Have Your Say on Coastal Development

A Board of Inquiry has been appointed to get public feedback on a draft NZ Coastal Policy Statement, which will guide councils on how to manage development along our coastline. The statement guides the management of NZ's coastal environment under the Resource Management Act (RMA), and council planning and resource consent decisions must conform with the policies it contains.

The statement requires councils to (for example):

- protect surf breaks of national importance;
- reduce the impacts on endangered species, for example, Maui's dolphin;

- work closely with local iwi to protect certain aspects of our coastline; and
- have principles guiding coastal subdivision to, for example, reduce ribbon developments or destruction of natural values.

Key coastal issues include:

- growing demand for coastal space and resources;
- concern about the nature of some coastal subdivision and developments;
- increased awareness and planning for climate change;
- water quality;
- resources of particular interest to Maori;
- public access to the coast; and

- the need to protect NZ's natural coastal environment and its plant and animal life.

Submissions close on 7 May 2008. They go to Board of Inquiry - Proposed NZ Coastal Policy Statement, c/- The Department of Conservation, PO Box 10 420, Wellington 6143, email nzcps@doc.govt.nz. A submission form is at <http://www.doc.govt.nz/upload/documents/getting-involved/consultations/current-consultations/nzcps-submission-form-2008.pdf>. The draft statement is at Conservation House, 18-32 Manners Street, Wellington, tel 0800 692 777, at all conservancy offices of the Department of Conservation and at www.doc.govt.nz. More information is at [http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/Coastal Policy - Background information.doc](http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/Coastal%20Policy%20-%20Background%20information.doc)

Measuring NZ's Water Levels

Your views are sought on a discussion paper outlining a draft National Environmental Standard (NES) on Ecological Flows and Water Levels.

The standard has been developed in response to a major challenge in water management identified by regional councils and others. Its aim is to promote the sustainable management of fresh water by:

- setting provisional limits on the alteration to flows and/or water levels for rivers, wetlands, and groundwater systems that do not already have limits imposed through regional plans; and
- providing a way to select the right system for evaluating ecological flows and water levels in rivers, lakes, wetlands, and groundwater systems.

Public workshops on the proposals are being held around the country between 30 April and 9 May in Dunedin, Christchurch, Nelson, Wellington, New Plymouth, Napier, Hamilton and Auckland.

Submissions close on 31 July 2008. The discussion document is now available on the Ministry for the Environment website <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/laws/standards/ecological-flows-water-levels/index.html>. The schedule and venue locations for the public workshops are at <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/laws/standards/ecological-flows-water-levels/workshops-ecological-flows-water-levels.html>. Hard copies of the discussion paper and related scientific documents are available from WaterProgramme@mfe.govt.nz

Fencing of Swimming Pools: Have Your Say

The Department of Building and Housing (DBH) is reviewing the Fencing of Swimming Pools Act 1987, which promotes the safety of NZ's young children around swimming pools and spa pools. Every year in NZ, an average of four children under six fall into a swimming pool and drown. Often these tragedies could have been prevented had the pool been properly fenced.

The DBH is seeking feedback on issues around the fencing of pools that have been raised by stakeholders.

A first round of consultation closes 30 June 2008. More information/the discussion document: <http://www.dbh.govt.nz/fospa-discussion-index>. Submissions go to: Fencing of Swimming Pools Act, Evaluation, Regulatory Policy Group, Department of Building and Housing, PO Box 10 729, Wellington, tel 0800 242 243, email: comments@dbh.govt.nz (put "Fencing of Swimming Pools" in the subject line), web www.dbh.govt.nz

Setting Up Schools Plus

You are invited to have your say on the setting up of the Schools Plus Plan. This aims to see all young people either engaged in school or some other form of education, training, or structured learning until the age of eighteen. It also includes a Youth Apprenticeship scheme to help prepare students for a range of opportunities in industry.

Feedback is sought from the secondary school sector, tertiary educators and training providers, ITOs and employers, NGOs, parents, whanau, and communities. Under Schools Plus:

- all young people would be assisted in developing a personal education plan when they enter secondary school, and continuing to refine the plan to map their next steps;
- students would be able to connect what they're doing at school to what they want to do as a career. They will know about the options available to them and, for instance, some may choose to combine workplace or tertiary learning with their schooling;
- all students who leave school before the age of 18 would be connected to high-quality training and education that suits their needs and abilities;
- all under 18-year-olds in full-time work would participate in further training or education; and
- non-government organisations, families, whanau, iwi and communities would offer a range of services that support young people to achieve well in education or training.

Currently, about 14,000 young people leave school without a Level One NCEA qualification and without going on to any further study or training, and 42% leave without NCEA Level 2.

Written submissions close on 31 May 2008. They go to: Schools Plus, Ministry of Education, PO Box 1666, Wellington, email schools.plus@minedu.govt.nz. A discussion paper is at <http://www.schoolsplus.govt.nz/>. Hui and workshops are also being held around NZ during April and May 2008 - for details of these email schools.plus@minedu.govt.nz

A Joint Electricity & Gas Complaints Scheme?

The Electricity Commission and Gas Industry Company want to act jointly to approve a single complaints resolution scheme. The reason for this is that a single dual-fuel scheme provides benefits such as ease of access, consistency of outcomes and efficiencies of scale. In addition, many of the same companies are involved in both sectors and many customers buy electricity and gas from the same retailer.

The Electricity Commission and Gas Industry Company have jointly published a consultation paper called "Approval of a Joint Electricity and Gas Complaints Resolution Scheme", and your views are sought.

Submissions close on 8 May 2008. Electronic submissions are preferred. Email them with "Submission on Approval of a Complaints Resolution Scheme" in the subject header to info@electricitycommission.govt.nz. Written submissions can also be sent to M McGregor, Electricity Commission, PO Box 10 041, Wellington. The consultation paper is at <http://www.electricitycommission.govt.nz/consultation/consultationdocument.2008-03-31.6193824093/view>

Trustee & Maori Development Amendment Bill

Public submissions are now being invited on the Maori Trustee and Maori Development Amendment Bill. This Bill proposes changes that have come out of a review of the Maori Trustee. It would make the Maori Trustee and the Maori Trust Office a stand-alone organisation with new reporting requirements for public funding, and amend how the Maori Trustee is appointed and removed.

It would also set up a new independent statutory corporation to be called Maori Business Aotearoa NZ, to further Maori economic development. A contribution of \$35 million would be made to this corporation from the Maori Trustee's General Purposes Fund to enable it to carry out its functions.

Under the Bill the title of the Maori Trustee Act 1953 would be amended to become the Maori Trustee and Maori Development Act 1953.

Submissions close on 14 May 2008. Two copies go to the Maori Affairs Select Committee, Parliament Buildings, Wellington. The Bill is at http://www.parliament.nz/NR/rdonlyres/DED89088-3743-4BE4-8CD8-E922F3126FBC/76806/DBHOH_BILL_8354_56199.pdf

Commerce Amendment Bill

Public submissions are now being invited on the Commerce Amendment Bill. This Bill amends Part 4, 4A, 5 and 6 of the Commerce Act 1986. The main focus of the Bill is to reform the regulatory control provisions in the Act. Other amendments include improving information disclosure regulation on certain services supplied by three international airport companies, and providing for the enforcement of variation of undertakings given under section 69A of the Commerce Act 1986 in relation to clearance or authorisation of mergers.

Submissions close on 9 May 2008. Two copies go to the Commerce Select Committee, Parliament Buildings, Wellington. The Bill is at http://www.parliament.nz/en-NZ/PB/Legislation/Bills/d/0/4/00DBHOH_BILL8440_1-Commerce-Amendment-Bill.htm

Statistics NZ: Community Project Stories Sought

Statistics NZ (SNZ) is looking for stories about successful community projects that were set up using 2006 Census data. Each story needs to show how Census data was used for a project, and also to describe the positive results. Examples are:

- Census data shows a specific community has a high proportion of children/young people. Result: An organisation develops child-care facilities for that community;
- Census data shows a lot of ethnic diversity in a community. Result: The local library expands its collection to include reading material that caters to various ethnic groups; and
- Census data shows a large proportion of a region's population work from home. Result: The council collaborates with internet companies to increase internet access in the region.

Statistics NZ is seeking examples from each of NZ's geographic regions, and it would also appreciate examples targeting the diverse populations of each region. The stories will be published on the web and through other media.

Submissions have officially closed, but Rural Bulletin readers' stories are welcomed. For more information (including an easy way of recording your story) email Kalem.O'Sullivan@stats.govt.nz or call 04 931 4932

Consultation on Breastfeeding Action Plan

A National Strategic Plan of Action for Breastfeeding aims to improve breastfeeding rates by coordinating approaches at local, regional and national level. Breastfeeding is important for babies' growth, development and health, because it provides excellent nutrition, assists physical and emotional development, protects against infectious disease and may reduce the risk of chronic diseases such as obesity. It is also important for the mother's health.

Your views are sought on whether this plan:

- covers the main factors that influence breastfeeding;
- addresses issues for specific communities, including Maori and Pacific peoples; and
- provides a framework for setting up ways to protect, promote and support breastfeeding.

Submissions close on 2 May 2008. A feedback form is at <http://www.moh.govt.nz/moh.nsf/indexmh/nbac-consultation-nationalstrategicplanofaction>. Submissions go to B Borlase, NBAC Secretariat, Allen & Clarke Ltd, PO Box 10 730, Wellington, tel 04 890 7305, email bborlase@allenandclarke.co.nz. More information: <http://www.moh.govt.nz/moh.nsf/indexmh/nbac-consultation-nationalstrategicplanofaction>

Reimbursement for ACC Review Costs: Changes?

People who are wholly or partially successful in an ACC review application (or in the view of the Review Officer have made a reasonable application) can apply to have some of the costs they incur reimbursed.

The Department of Labour (DoL) is now reviewing the regulations that set out the level of costs that can be paid in these situations, and it is seeking feedback on a discussion paper outlining its proposals.

Submissions close on 18 April 2008. They go to L Mohn, ACC Policy Team, Workplace Group, Department of Labour, PO Box 3705, Wellington, email lisa.mohn@dol.govt.nz, tel: 04 915 4088, fax: 04 915 4015. The discussion paper is at <http://www.dol.govt.nz/consultation/acc-review-costs/acc-review-cost-consultation-document.pdf>

A Hawea Conservation Park?

A new 105,000 hectare conservation park is proposed for Otago. Sited in the Lake Hawea, Dingle Burn and Hunter Valley catchments, this park would be known as the Hawea Conservation Park.

A discussion paper has been prepared for stakeholders and the public. Your views are sought as part of the consultation process. They will help ensure that the final decision on whether or not to formally establish a Hawea Conservation Park is based on comprehensive information about the uses, values, and opportunities affected.

Submissions close on 28 May 2008. They go to: the Conservator, Department of Conservation, PO Box 5244, 77 Lower Stuart Street, Dunedin, attn K Roos, email kroos@doc.govt.nz. The discussion paper is at <http://www.doc.govt.nz/templates/MultiPageDocumentTOC.aspx?id=46093> You can also get copies from the Department.

Reminder: Review of Restructuring/Redundancy Law

A reminder that restructuring and redundancy laws are being reviewed, and your views are sought on the impact these laws have on employees, employers, and the wider economy.

The reviewers will be looking at experiences of employers, employees and unions; problems with current arrangements; experiences of other countries; the cost of entitlements and of complying with the regulations; and how the current laws fit with related legislation. They will be making recommendations about:

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

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

MED Consultation Site

The Ministry of Economic Development (MED) business consultation website is set up so people in business can have their say about how regulation affects them, and voice any concerns they have about the way business rules are implemented. The Ministry is also keen to hear about solutions to problems business people are facing. There is also an opportunity to become one of a group of businesses the Ministry regularly consults on proposed or existing legislation.

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

Rural

Pastoral/Food Industries: \$700 Million for Innovation

New Zealand Fast Forward is a government/industry investment programme set up to respond to emerging threats and opportunities of the changing global markets facing NZ's pastoral and food industries (horticulture, dairy, meat and seafood). The government is making a capital investment of \$700 million to be spent over 10-15 years. The food and pastoral industries will also contribute substantially to the scheme (beyond "business-as-usual" investments) aiming overall to match the level of the government's investment.

New Zealand has a long history of using its natural resources to earn its way in the world. But continuing to produce the same products in the same ways will put pressure on natural resources and it can damage the environment. At the same time, emerging low-cost producers are eroding the advantage NZ has had in international markets. More consumers are looking for sustainability, and demanding higher quality, healthy food. There is now a need to respond to these challenges by identifying new processes and by sustainably diversifying with new innovative products and new markets.

Drought Costs Estimated by MAF

The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) estimates this year's drought will cost farmers around \$1.24 billion this financial year. This cost is a result of falls in production and increases in unexpected costs such as feed supplementation.

The analysis shows that the cost of the drought is \$894 million for dairy farming and \$345 million for sheep and beef farming. That works out at \$25,200 for the average sheep and beef farm and \$79,400 for the average dairy farm. However, as these are average estimates across NZ, farmers in more acutely affected regions are facing much larger losses.

Some individual sheep and beef farmers are forecast to have income reductions in excess of \$100,000, resulting in overdrafts being capitalised back into mortgages and reducing equity at a time when interest rates are high. Although the cost of the drought was significant for dairy farmers, their overall position in this financial year was still significantly better than last financial year, because of the much higher dairy milksolids payout.

Rural Support Organisations in NZ

The contact list for Rural Support Trusts (as at 14 March 2008) is:

Northland	Trust in the process of forming	Helen Moodie helen.moodie@landcare.org.nz	094353863
Waikato/Hauraki/ Coromandel	Waikato/Hauraki/Coromandel Rural Relief Trust	Neil Bateup bateupn@xtra.co.nz	0800787254
Bay of Plenty	Bay of Plenty Rural Support Trust	Derek Spratt spratty@netsmart.net.nz	075333764
Gisborne	East Coast Rural Support Trust (Gisborne)	David Scott treescapfarm@xtra.co.nz	068684840
Hawkes Bay	East Coast Rural Support Trust (Hawke's Bay)	Hugh McPhail info@hughmcphail.co	068584361
068359203	Hawke's Bay Primary Producers Adverse Event Trust	Mike Adye mike@hbrc.govt.nz	
Manawatu/Rangitikei	Manawatu/Rangitikei Family Support Trust	Margaret Millard millard@manawatu.gen.nz	063296860
	East Coast Rural Support Trust (Dannevirke)	Chris Southgate cwsouthgate@xtra.co.nz	063749862
Taranaki	Taranaki Rural Support Trust	Neville Hagenson n.c.hagenson@xtra.co.nz	0272737588
		Peter Adamski p.k.adamski@xtra.co.nz	067514217
Wairarapa	East Coast Rural Support Trust (Masterton)	Bruce Watkins hmebw@xtra.co.nz	063786895
Marlborough/Nelson/ Tasman	Top of the South Trust	Ian Blair ieblair@xtra.co.nz	035789923
West Coast	Westland Rural Trust (Dobson)	Dianne Milne bobmilne@xtra.co.nz	037380038
		Ross Bishop rossbishop@clear.net.nz	037689000
Canterbury	(North) Canterbury Rural Support Trust	Dorothy Oakley spudfarm@clear.net.nz	033181742
	Mid-Canterbury Emergency Relief Trust	Alan Baird Allan.baird@xtra.co.nz	033087594
	Mid-Canterbury Rural Support Trust	Kevin Geddes kgeddes@fedfarm.org.nz	033078148
	South Canterbury Adverse Event Trust	David Hewson hewson@farmside.co.nz	036126367
		David Williams williams_tepuni@slingshot.co.nz	0272974454
Otago	Otago Adverse Events Trust	Irene Scurr scurbiko@xtra.co.nz	034546198
		Bev McCaw beverleymccaw@slingshot.co.nz	034340459
Southland	Southland Rural Support Trust	Russell Falconer Russell.f@sld.quik.co.nz	0274318173

Nurse Heads Rural General Practice Network

Rural nurse specialist, Kirsty Murrell-McMillan, has been elected chair of the NZ Rural General Practice Network. The Network is the first NZ general practice organisation to have a nursing professional as its chair. Network members include general practitioners, rural nurses, rural nurse specialists, nurse practitioners, practice managers, and rural hospital doctors and nurses.

Horticulture & Viticulture: Master Contractors Inc

A new body called NZ Master Contractors Inc has been established to set standards for the horticulture and viticulture industries. Its aims are to help improve workplace practices and culture, and help provide a sustainable working environment for NZ and immigrant workers.

Environment

Forests Could Produce NZ's Biofuel Needs: Study

Purpose-grown forests to produce biofuels could meet all NZ's transport fuel requirements within 40 years, according to a feasibility study by the Crown Research Institute Scion. The study found that if NZ were to start planting purpose-grown forests and introduce a programme of managed harvesting and replanting, the resulting biomass could eventually be used to meet all the country's projected future needs for transport fuels and heat. This could be achieved without threatening the important agricultural industry, as close to one million hectares of steep, marginal land had been identified as potentially available. There is also the added benefit that the trees would be helping prevent erosion on the steep land.

About 2.5 million hectares of purpose-grown forests would have to be eventually grown and earmarked for biofuels to produce 110,000ha a year for harvesting to sustain such an industry. Establishing the forest resource would take about 25 years at an estimated cost of around \$2-3 billion a year.

New Zealand is seen to be one of just a handful of places identified worldwide that are well placed to become carbon-neutral for transport, as there is plenty of suitable land and also favourable tree-growing climate and soils.

More is at <http://www.scionresearch.com/media+releases.aspx?PageContentID=1175>

NZ to Host World Environment Day: 5 June

Dr Rajendra Pachauri (UN Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change Nobel Laureate), President Tong of Kiribati and Achim

Steiner (United Nations Environment Programme Executive Director) are coming to NZ to celebrate World Environment Day on 5 June.

The theme for this year's event (being hosted by NZ for the first time) is "kick the carbon habit", and the Ministry for the Environment (MfE) is encouraging councils, businesses, communities, interest groups and schools to organise and participate in regional and local events. Limited, contestable funding is available to groups interested in organising their own activities in recognition of World Environment Day. MfE has a range of electronic, downloadable resources for communities, schools and businesses planning a World Environment Day event.

Visit www.world.environment.govt.nz for more details

Telecommunications: Environmental Standards

New national environmental standards regulations currently being drafted will govern the size of, and noise from, telecommunications equipment such as antennas, masts and roadside cabinets. These regulations will be standard across the whole country (currently, it varies between territorial authorities, and it's believed this makes it harder for telecommunications companies seeking to install or expand services across several local authority areas).

The national environmental standards cover:

- the erection of roadside cabinets (which can contain equipment for telephones, cable television and for internet access);
- the addition of antennas to existing structures such as light poles on roadsides or verges; and
- radiofrequency fields emitted from antennas and noise levels from roadside cabinets.

For more information, see also the Cabinet paper and regulatory impact statement at www.mfe.govt.nz/laws/standards/telecommunication-standards.html

Mataitai Reserve Established

A new Puna-wai-Toriki mataitai reserve has been established at Hays Gap, south of Kaka Point on the South Otago Coast. The mataitai reserve takes in all coastal waters between Tirohanga and O-Waea (Campbell Point), south of Kaka Point and covers approximately 2.34 km².

Mataitai reserves are established under the South Island Customary Fishing Regulations and recognise traditional Maori fishing grounds that are important for customary food gathering. They also allow local Tangata Whenua to advise the Minister of Fisheries directly on how best to manage fishing in the local area.

Quick Facts

Maori rights to manage customary seafood gathering (for cultural purposes such as hui and tangi) and traditionally important fishing grounds were recognised under the Treaty of Waitangi Fisheries Settlement agreed in 1992.

There are currently five mataitai reserves in the South Island (including this one).

Mataitai reserves are not marine reserves.

Commercial fishing is banned in mataitai reserves but recreational fishing is allowed.

Customary fishing is governed and managed by Tangata Tiaki/Kaitiaki or guardians; nominated by local Maori and appointed by the Associate Minister of Fisheries.

There are currently 110 Tangata Tiaki/Kaitiaki in the South Island.

All customary catch must have an authorisation from a Tangata Tiaki/Kaitiaki.

This kind of reserve does not prevent access to beaches or rivers not on private land.

the Honeycomb Hill Caves Specially Protected Area in Kahurangi National Park.

You can find out more about the Nature Heritage Fund at <http://www.bush.org.nz/organisation/142.html>

Funding for Threatened Species

Nearly \$2 million from the National Biodiversity Funds is to be made available to 83 projects working to protect biodiversity on private land. The allocation means that projects involving, for example, blue penguins, yellow-eyed penguins, kokako, protection of coastal seabird habitat, and kowhai and kanuka forest restoration will benefit. All the projects involve significant landowner and community contributions through voluntary labour and services and further "in kind" and cash contributions amount to \$2,368,863.

The Biodiversity Funds were established in 2001 to assist landowners in protecting indigenous biodiversity on private land. There will be a further funding round announced in May this year.

Te Arawa Lakes Clean Up...

The government is to invest \$72.1 million, over 10 years, in a major restoration programme for the Te Arawa lakes. The total cost of the lakes restoration programme is \$144.2 million and the government has agreed to contribute 50% of this. The other 50% will come from Rotorua District Council and Environment Bay of Plenty. The Rotorua lakes restoration programme will focus its attention on Lakes Rotorua, Rotoiti, Okareka and Rotoehu.

...& Land Use Futures Board Formed

The aim of a new Land Use Futures Board in the Bay of Plenty is to provide practical ways to reduce the impact of farming and other land use activities on lake water quality. The group also wants to encourage sustainable economic use of our land to the benefit of owners and the wider community.

New Conservation Estates

Tarnbrae Station, 2 000 hectares in size and one of the South Island's most pristine high country properties, is to be bought by the Nature Heritage Fund and become part of the public conservation estate. The Ohau Moraines Wetland Complex is also to become part of the conservation estate.

A recent tenure review of the 2 463 hectare Mt Cook Station pastoral lease, at the head of Lake Pukaki, will result in 1 612 hectares or 65% of the property becoming public conservation land next to Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park (which itself covers a total of 70 696 hectares).

Abel Tasman, Nelson Lakes and Kahurangi National Parks are all larger thanks to Department of Conservation purchases. Over 900 hectares has been added to Abel Tasman National Park in numerous parcels, the most significant of which is an area of 790 hectares, known as Hadfields Clearing, overlooking Awaroa Inlet. The area was previously in private ownership and was surrounded by the park. An area of 38 hectares has been included in

Tourism

New Funding for Regional Sustainable Tourism

New government funding of \$840,000 is being committed to help tourism businesses in the regions improve their environmental sustainability. The Sustainable Tourism Advisers in Regions (STAR) Project will help up to eight regions in NZ fund the costs of an adviser who will work with tourism operators to reduce the impact of their business on the environment. The new project sits alongside the upcoming addition of a responsible tourism business requirement to Qualmark criteria. This will recognise tourism businesses that can show evidence of effort to minimise their environmental impact.

The STAR funding is contestable, with a request for proposals to be released to regions by the Ministry of Tourism shortly.

More is at <http://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/government+funding+sustainable+tourism+regions>

Snapshot of Maori Tourism

A four-page snapshot of the Maori tourism sector has been released. It shows a "big picture" view of the unique position Maori tourism holds in the tourism sector.

While Rotorua keeps its reputation as the "capital" of Maori tourism, with 396,000 international visitors seeking a unique Maori experience in the region (2005/2006 figures), the publication has also identified a growing trend towards other popular spots including Auckland and Canterbury.

The report gives an overview of the size and sector trends, as well as the participation levels of international and domestic visitors.

The Maori Tourism Sector Profile can be downloaded from <http://www.tourismresearch.govt.nz/NR/rdonlyres/09B9F895-A27F-448B-80FF-DF2C086C74B1/23843/MaoriCulture032008.pdf>

Latest Regional Visitor Monitor

The latest Regional Visitor Monitor (RVM), which covers expectations, satisfaction, and trip planning of international and domestic visitors to NZ's main tourism destinations, is now available. The main findings include:

- accommodation in RVM regions is increasingly being booked online, with nearly half of all respondents preferring this booking method in the year to December 2007 (45%);
- the expectations of visitors are increasing. Since the beginning of the survey in 2006, expectations of international visitors have increased in a number of areas such as beautiful scenery (up 5% to 66%), safety (up 4% to 65%) and friendliness of people (up 3% to 72%). The same trend is evident among domestic travellers;
- satisfaction levels are stable showing that, on average, travellers in NZ RVM regions continue to be pleased with their travel experiences with a score of 8.0 out of 10. However, the proportion of visitors that describe themselves as highly satisfied has fallen by 4% since the survey began, to 70% in the 2007 period.

The RVM National Benchmark Report is at www.tourismresearch.govt.nz/

NZ: A "Dream Destination"

New Zealand is the dream destination for British outdoors enthusiasts, according to recent readers' polls in two top UK walking publications. The readers of Walk magazine have voted NZ "Best Walking Place Overseas", ahead of France and Austria, in the 2008 Walk Readers' Awards. Walk is the UK's largest circulated walking magazine and reaches 140,000 active walkers and outdoors enthusiasts. Members of the online outdoors community OutdoorsMagic.com have also put their hands up for NZ, naming the country "Best International Destination" in the Outdoors Magic Awards 2007/08. Sir Edmund Hillary was also recognised by Outdoors Magic members, who voted him this year's "Outdoors Magic Personality of the Year".

To find out more, visit www.newzealand.com/travel/UK-Ireland

Health & Safety

Suicide Prevention Action Plan Released

The NZ Suicide Prevention Action Plan 2008-2012 has been developed to assist government and non-government organisations to work closely together to make sure that suicide

prevention initiatives are well coordinated, evidence-based, and safe and effective.

It includes actions that are required, who will do them, and by when. A feature is the "Evidence for Action" section which spells out what is most likely to effectively prevent suicide in NZ.

A wide range of organisations and individuals are involved in suicide prevention, including: government agencies, non-government organisations, policy advisors, service planners, service providers, researchers, professional groups and communities.

The action plan fits with the NZ Suicide Prevention Strategy. The goals of the strategy are to:

- promote mental health and well-being, and prevent mental health problems;
- improve the care of people who are experiencing mental disorders associated with suicidal behaviour;
- improve the care of people who make non-fatal suicide attempts;
- reduce access to the means of suicide;
- promote the safe reporting and portrayal of suicidal behaviour by the media;
- support families/whanau, friends and others affected by a suicide or suicide attempt; and
- expand the evidence about the rates, causes and effective interventions.

New Zealand's suicide rate has reduced by about 19% since the late 1990s.

In an emergency, anyone seriously concerned about an individual's immediate safety should remain with him or her until appropriate support arrives, remove any obvious means of suicide, and contact the nearest hospital or psychiatric emergency services/mental health crisis assessment team.

Support services you can approach include your primary health care provider or general practitioner (GP), the community mental health service, Maori community health service and counselling services such as school counsellors or family counsellors. Useful phone numbers include:

Lifeline: 0800 111 777;
Samaritans: 0800 726 666;
Youthline: 0800 376 633;
Depression Helpline: 0800 111 757 www.depression.org.nz/;
and
The Lowdown (online support for young people):
www.thelowdown.co.nz

Information about suicide prevention can be found by contacting SPINZ at www.spinz.org.nz or by looking at the Ministry of Health website www.moh.govt.nz/suicideprevention. The Ministry of Health has produced a booklet called "Suicide and The Media: The Reporting and Portrayal of Suicide in the Media: A Resource". It is at www.moh.govt.nz/suicideprevention

Massey University: Major Asthma Study

Massey University is carrying out a major study of asthma and allergies in NZ infants. These conditions are becoming increas-

ingly common both in NZ and internationally, and the study will attempt to identify any factors that might prevent people from developing these conditions.

The researchers are particularly interested in investigating whether certain aspects of farm life may influence the likelihood of these conditions manifesting, so they are contacting 400 pregnant women from farming backgrounds, and 400 from non-farming backgrounds.

Participation in the project involves completing an initial questionnaire now, keeping a diary/ calendar for the child from three to twelve months after his/her birth, and a registered nurse visiting you once your child is twelve months old.

More information: Centre for Public Health Research, Massey University, Private Box 756, Wellington, tel 04 380 0602, fax 04 380 0600, email douwes@massey.ac.nz

Elder Abuse and Neglect Guidelines

Guidelines for elder abuse and neglect interventions are available from the Ministry of Health. These include a definition of elder abuse and cover: who abuses; where it happens; possible signs; why elder abuse happens; factors that can increase and contribute to elder abuse; links between elder abuse and other forms of family violence; and suggestions for prevention.

A lift-out sheet summarises the guidelines, and provides summaries of signs and symptoms, and risk factors. The sheet covers, for instance, screening recommendations; service contact details; working with carers; cognitive impairment; key service/provider manager's roles; provider checklists; and reporting. Examples of forms are included.

The guidelines also provide a six-step model you can use to identify and respond to elder abuse: 1) identify, 2) support and empower, 3) assess risk, 4) plan safety, 5) document, and 6) refer.

The guidelines are at www.moh.govt.nz/moh.nsf/indexmh/family-violence-guidelines-elder-abuse-neglect

Misuse of Drugs Act Review: Law Commission

The Law Commission is reviewing the Misuse of Drugs Act 1975 and will be making proposals for a new legislative system that fits with NZ's international obligations concerning illegal and other drugs.

Amongst the issues to be considered are:

- determining the most suitable model or models for the control of drugs;
- which substances should be covered;
- whether drugs should continue to be subject to the current classification system or categorised in another way;
- the appropriate offence and penalty structure;
- whether the enforcement powers proposed by the Commission in its report on Search and Surveillance Powers are adequate to investigate drug offences; and
- which agency or agencies should be responsible for administering the legislation.

The Commission will publish an issues paper and will seek public submissions.

The terms of reference for the review are at http://www.lawcom.govt.nz/UploadFiles/Publications/Publication_143_396_TOR%20MOD.pdf

Reducing Motorbike Casualties: New Measures

Recently introduced new measures are aimed at reducing the high number of motorcycle casualties on NZ roads. Motorcyclists make up only 2% of vehicles on the road but account for 18% of road claims received by ACC (tellingly, three-quarters of the accidents are not the motorcyclist's fault). The number of ACC claims for motorcycle accidents has nearly doubled since 2001, and annual ACC claim costs now exceed \$52 million - this doesn't include treatment in public hospitals, which ACC also funds.

The changes include restrictions on the use of powerful motorcycles by novice riders, changes to the Graduated Driver Licensing System to encourage riders to take up more motorcycle-specific training, and the introduction of safer motorcycling practices such as improving the visibility of motorcycle and moped riders to other road users.

More is at <http://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/motorcycle+safety+package+aims+cut+high+crash+rate>

Prison Mental Health Services: OAG Report

The Office of the Auditor General (OAG) has looked at the effectiveness of systems for delivering mental health services to sentenced and remand prisoners. The responsibility for prisoners' mental health services is split between the Department of Corrections, the Ministry of Health, and District Health Boards, which deliver the services regionally through Regional Forensic Psychiatric Services.

The report notes that responding to mental health issues in prison can help prisoners and staff by improving health, creating a better environment in prison, and potentially reducing re-offending.

It says that that the systems for providing mental health services are under significant pressure from increasing prison numbers and a high demand for in-patient beds. The needs of prisoners with severe mental illness are generally well catered for but timely access to in-patient beds can be an issue. Service responsiveness is more limited for some groups, including those with mild to moderate mental illness, women, those with personality disorders, and Maori. There are challenges and constraints that come with providing health care in the prison environment, and the staff involved in managing prisoners with mental health needs often do so in difficult circumstances.

More information: <http://www.oag.govt.nz/> or email enquiry@oag.govt.nz, or reports@oag.govt.nz

New Booklet Explains Food Labels

A new free booklet ("Understanding Food Labels") from the NZ Food Safety Authority (NZFSA) aims to make understanding the labels on food packaging more meaningful.

Safety information on food labels includes warnings about allergens, and a use-by date or storage/cooking instructions. These are there to make sure that there is little chance of pathogen growth or toxin build-up by the time you eat it. Suitability information includes the best-before date, percentage labelling (so consumers can compare amounts of a key ingredient such as the strawberries in strawberry jam) and nutrition information (so consumers can see the amount of key nutrients in the product and compare this information across similar products - for the likes of energy, protein, fat, carbohydrate).

The booklet is on the web at <http://www.nzfsa.govt.nz/consumers/food-labelling/understanding-food-labels/> and printed copies are available by calling NZFSA's freephone number 0800 693 721 or email info@nzfsa.govt.nz

BZP Ban Passed

Parliament has passed legislation banning BZP-based party pills from manufacture or sale in NZ. Consumers have six months from 1 April 2008 to use any pills they have for personal use.

Education

New Scholarships for Sign Language Training

The government is to fund 20 scholarships for training in sign language, setting aside \$100,000 in scholarships for the Diploma in Sign Language Interpreting at Auckland University of Technology. The scholarships are available from this year. Later this year also, the government will consult on a video relay service to enable the deaf to communicate via sign language interpreters, building on the telecommunications services already provided through the NZ Relay Service.

The NZ Relay Service provides telecommunications for people who are deaf, hearing-impaired, deaf-blind or speech-impaired. It involves use of a relay assistant who voices everything that is typed and types everything that is said.

More information about the NZ Relay Service is at www.nzrelay.co.nz

High Needs Students: Transitional Services Funding

Students with very high needs no longer have to stay at school until they are 21 to be eligible for transitional services funding. They will now become eligible for this funding when they reach the minimum school leaving age. Students can still remain at

school until they are 21 if they choose. The change applies only to students with extreme or severe difficulties with, for example, learning, hearing, mobility or language.

NZCS Can now Copy/Adapt Literary Works

Following recent amendments to copyright regulations, the Correspondence School Te Kura a-Tuhi (NZCS) is now able to make copies or adaptations of published literary or dramatic works as their students' special needs require. This includes modifying publications to provide works in Braille or other accessible format. TCS is the main provider in NZ of educational services to students whose learning needs cannot be met by the local provider alone, and it becomes the sixth body entitled to do this. Others are the Christian Ministries with Disabled Trust, NZ Radio for the Print Disabled Incorporated, the Royal NZ Foundation of the Blind, the University of Auckland, and the Wellington Braille Club Incorporated.

Housing

Making that First House More Affordable?

The Department of Building and Housing (DBH) is to report to government at the end of May on the best way to set up a "multiple use" consents proposal. Multiple use consents would enable big property developers and large volume builders to apply for one building consent for a number of identical dwellings in the same subdivision, district, region and nationwide. The idea is to provide a "fast track" approach to development of low-cost housing.

DBH is also working with the building sector on simplifying the design and approval of starter homes which can quickly be issued with a building consent.

As well, a nationwide design competition has been suggested as a way to help solve NZ's housing affordability issues. The idea is that if the design process is opened up, some clever new designs for more affordable starter homes would become available for first home buyers.

As part of the simplification process a Building Code Compliance Document (BCCD) will show how to build simple starter homes based on standard details (for foundations, flooring, walls, roofing, windows, building services and systems). Product certification for the building materials used in building would also provide an assurance for the starter home owner. The Department is setting up an industry reference group to develop the BCCD, which will be published in October. Councils would be able to quickly issue consents for these homes, as standard specifications could lower the costs of building quite substantially - particularly where there were economies of scale. Note, you would still need to gain local consent from a Building Consent Authority for any site-specific works such as drainage, and foundations would still require separate consideration, as would any significant variation to the design. District Plan and resource consent issues would also need to be addressed separately.

Recent Residential Property Market Figures: REINZ

In the NZ residential property market the national median price eased back from \$340,000 in January to \$337,500 in February, leaving it just 0.74% ahead of the February 2007 median of \$335,000, according to the Real Estate Institute of NZ (REINZ).

More information, including comparative house prices by region is at http://www.reinz.org.nz/Reinz/index.cfm?C0987AB9-F9D5-D36A-EED8-BAC1BA48A58D&obj_uid=A0282E0F-18FE-7E88-4233-C9C3E08B4989

Report: What Drives House Prices

A report called "Final Report of the House Prices Unit: House Price Increases and Housing in NZ" examines what makes house prices rise and potential policy solutions on the government's housing affordability plan for the future. The study, which was carried out by the House Prices Unit from August 2007 to December 2007, aimed to reach a better understanding of:

- the housing market as a national system;
- the relative importance and size of the influences of house price inflation;
- what it would take to slow house price inflation and potentially lessen the volatility of NZ's house price cycles or better manage their impacts; and
- the consequences - for the macro-economy, economic growth and social outcomes - of adjusting existing policies.

The website of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) contains a link to the report: <http://www.dPMC.govt.nz/dPMC/publications/hpr-report/index.html>

House Rentals Rising

A survey of rental information by Massey University has found that the median national weekly housing rental has risen 7.1% in the last year. And for February this year, the median rental rose 3.4% to \$300 a week from \$290 in November. Massey considers that the prospect of falling house prices and higher mortgage rates appears to be forcing many landlords to consider rental increases to bring yields back up to acceptable levels in the absence of capital gains.

Energy

Electricity Supply: New National Policy Statement

A new policy statement on electricity transmission means that decision makers will need to consider the national significance of a reliable and secure electricity supply, as well as adverse environmental effects, when they assess proposals for NZ's national grid.

The national grid is the high voltage transmission network that carries electricity around the country. It is made up of over 12,000 km of high-voltage transmission lines and more than 170 substations. It connects power stations to substations that feed local electricity distribution networks.

The policy statement:

- acknowledges the national significance of the national grid, which now has to be considered in local decision making on resource management;
- recognises the national benefits we all get from electricity transmission, such as better security of supply of electricity;
- gives guidance to local decision makers on lessening the impacts of the transmission network on its environment;
- also guides the management of the adverse effects of activities from third parties on the grid. This will help reduce constraints on the operation, maintenance, upgrading and development of the grid; and
- ensures long term strategic planning for elements of the national grid.

Its development follows public consultation by a Board of Inquiry in 2007 (71 submissions were received).

The relevant Cabinet paper is at www.mfe.govt.nz. More is at <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/rma/central/transmission/index.html>

New NZ Biofuel Manufacturers Assn Formed

Seven of the companies planning to supply NZ with biodiesel or ethanol have formed the NZ Biofuel Manufacturers Association (NZBMA). This association aims to support the growth and development of a sustainable biofuel industry in NZ. Association members are: Argent Energy NZ Ltd, Biodiesel NZ, Biodiesel Oils NZ Ltd, Ecodiesel Ltd, Biodiesel Australasia Ltd, Flo-Dry Engineering Ltd, and Aquaflo Bionomic Corporation.

Home Energy Advice Centre: Pilot 0800 Helpline

The Wellington region is piloting a new energy 0800 helpline providing free, impartial, expert advice to people who want to discuss their home energy needs. It has been jointly funded by the Ministry for the Environment and Wellington City Council. The line is operating weekdays from 10 am to 4 pm.

The new phone number is 0800 388 588. The service is free to residents of Wellington City, the Hutt Valley and the Kapiti Coast up to Waikanae. Those interested can also visit the website www.energyadvice.org.nz, or email an energy advisor at energyadvice@sustaintrust.org.nz

Employment

Current Skill Shortages in NZ

Occupations where fewer than 80% of vacancies are filled with a suitable candidate are seen as experiencing skill shortages.

The findings from a 2007 Department of Labour survey indicate that there were overall widespread skill and labour shortages in NZ in 2007, with only 54% of the advertised vacancies being filled within 10 weeks of advertising. Fill rates for the major occupational groups were:

- trades workers - 37%;
- service and sales workers - 51%;
- professionals - 54%;
- plant and machine operators and assemblers - 54%;
- technicians and associate professionals - 57%;
- clerks - 57%;
- legislators, administrators, and managers - 61%;
- elementary occupations (such as labourers and freight handlers) - 63%; and
- agriculture and fishery workers - 65%.

Between 2006 and 2007, skill shortages became worse for clerks, service and sales workers, and trades workers, but the remaining major occupational groups showed little or no change.

Occupations in Shortage in NZ: 2007 is at <http://dol.govt.nz/PDFs/jvm-shortage2007.pdf>

Recent Employment Statistics from Trademe Jobs

Doctors were the highest paid profession in 2007 and Wellington the best paid location according to figures released by Trademe Jobs. Meanwhile Wanganui is the toughest place to recruit people.

Results for the study include:

- best paid professions: 1. Doctors (\$123,850); 2. IT architects (\$117,768); 3. IT sales (\$108,742); 4. IT project managers (\$100,251); 5. Construction project managers (\$94,634);
- best paid locations: 1. Wellington (\$65,689); 2. Auckland City (\$61,075); 3. Timaru (\$60,274); 4. Western BOP (\$55,583); 5. New Plymouth (\$55,106);
- hardest place to find staff: 1. Wanganui; 2. Thames/Coromandel; 3. Marlborough; 4. Tasman; 5. Masterton;
- lowest paid professions: 1. Kitchen staff (\$29,625); 2. Data entry (\$30,727); 3. Waiting staff (\$30,826); 4. Cleaners (\$31,964); 5. Caregivers (\$31,967);
- lowest paid locations: 1. Southland (\$41,224); 2. Palmerston North (\$42,636); 3. Napier (\$42,786); 4. Nelson (\$43,515); 5. Rodney (\$44,197); and
- most competitive markets: 1. Central Otago; 2. Hamilton; 3. Palmerston North; 4. Waitakere City; 5. Tauranga.

Women's Participation in Labour Market Increases...

The Department of Labour's second annual report "Female Labour Market Outcomes" shows that the female labour force participation rate increased from 59.2% in December 2002 to 61.9% in December 2007 (the male participation rate was 75.6% for the year ended December 2007).

- in the year to December 2007, there were 994,800 employed females compared to 1,161,000 employed males;

- overall employment growth in recent quarters has been driven by changes in female employment (annual female employment growth for the year end December 2007 was 2.1% compared to 1.6% for males);
- employment growth for females has been slightly greater than employment growth for males over the past 5 years - increasing at 2.7% per year for women and 2.4% per year for men; and
- a relatively large proportion of women are working part-time, 34.5% compared to the OECD average of 26.4%.

The full report can be seen at the Department of Labour website www.dol.govt.nz

...But Males Still Dominate Management

In the private sector women remain significantly under-represented in the senior management teams of NZ businesses according to a survey by specialist recruiter Hays. The survey asked over 700 jobseekers across Australasia, of whom 220 were NZers, if the number of women in their senior management team reflected the number in their business overall, and over half (53.89%) said no. One in four (26.17%) said "yes - very well" while 19.94% said "yes - but could definitely be better".

In the public sector, the latest NZ Census of Women's Participation 2008 from the Human Rights Commission reveals that under a quarter (23%) of public service chief executives are women as at December 2007. Eight of 35 departments had female chief executives at that time. The new data also shows that women continue to be under-represented at senior levels with women comprising 38% of senior managers in the public service. Since 2002 the percentage of women in senior management positions in the core public service has fluctuated between 35% in 2003 and 38% in 2007.

Transport

Fuel Efficiency Label for New & Second Hand Cars

A new fuel efficiency label now has to be displayed on cars for sale - in car yards or via the internet. The label shows a star rating similar to that seen on fridges and other appliances, and also estimates the fuel cost per year, based on an average fuel price and distance. It is required for cars where fuel economy information is available, and all new cars and late-model used cars. The fuel economy rating will also be shown on website listings, with major sites such as Trademe already set up to provide the information as part of the listing.

New Freight Study Underway

A freight study is being undertaken jointly by the Ministry of Economic Development (MED), Ministry of Transport and Land

Transport NZ. The study will examine current freight flows and identify future demands that freight will place on the NZ transport system. The information will be used to help with NZ transport network planning, and it will provide a base for monitoring freight movements. It is due for completion by the middle of 2008.

MED contacts for the freight study are Sam.Abusah@med.govt.nz and Anna.Gibb@med.govt.nz

Use of Electronic Equipment in Planes

Travellers will be familiar with the airline request to turn off all electronic devices in preparation for take-off. The good news is that airlines are now generally allowing non-transmitting electronic devices to be used during the flight at times other than take-off and landing. This has come about because of improved screening and filtering of aircraft cabling, the use of digital signalling, and electronic products offered for sale complying with set electromagnetic radiation limits.

Justice/The Law

Digital Audio Recordings of Evidence in High Court

Digital audio technology for recording and transcribing evidence has been introduced by the High Court in Wellington and Auckland. "For the Record" (FTR) provides a high quality recording of the evidence which is then relayed to transcription staff located outside of the courtroom to be typed up as the trial proceeds. The new technology makes the experience of giving evidence easier for witnesses and a better experience for everyone in the courtroom. It also means trials can proceed more quickly. FTR allows witnesses to speak at a normal, uninterrupted speed and the transcript is printed in the courtroom within 30 minutes of the evidence being given.

New "Organised and Financial Crime" Agency

A new Organised and Financial Crime Agency NZ (OFCANZ) is being launched in July. OFCANZ is to be located within NZ Police, and its staff will work alongside national and international law enforcement and intelligence agencies as well as border agencies, regulatory and financial authorities and a range of other government departments. Its headquarters will be in Wellington.

The functions and resources of the Serious Fraud Office (SFO) will be integrated onto the agency, the mission of which is "to improve the safety and security of NZ by combating serious and organised crime and serious or complex fraud through an inter-agency partnership approach".

More information, including the relevant Cabinet papers, is at <http://www.justice.govt.nz/cpu/organised-crime/index.html>

Law Commission: Study Paper on Privacy

The Commission has just released a study paper "Privacy: Concepts and Issues", which forms the first stage in a major review of the law of privacy. This looks at questions such as: What is privacy? How has it been recognised and protected by the law? Are there particular Maori concepts of privacy? Do young people have different ideas about privacy from older people? How is changing technology (particularly the internet) affecting privacy?

The paper considers some privacy issues relating to the media, health and the workplace. It also examines issues of surveillance, and concludes that there appear to be some inconsistencies in existing law in this area. For example, it is a crime to make a covert audio recording of someone, but filming someone covertly is not a crime unless the person is in an intimate situation.

The study paper is on the Commission's website www.lawcom.govt.nz, and is also available from the Commission in hard copy

Biosecurity Act Amendment Bill Passed

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

Business

Business Statistics: February 2007 Year

Sixty thousand new businesses started operating in the February 2007 year according to Statistics NZ (SNZ). They represent 13% of the total number of businesses (463,000) in NZ at February 2007. It is preliminarily estimated that 54,000 businesses ceased operation in the same year.

The new businesses are mainly non-employers (86%) or have between 1 and 5 paid employees (12%). In total, the new businesses have 31,000 paid employees, about 1.5% of the total number of paid employees for all businesses. The property and business services industry is the largest category, with 43% of new businesses in this industry. The second largest category is the construction industry (12%).

The businesses that ceased operating were of similar size and industry characteristics. They had 23,000 paid employees (about 1% of total paid employees).

Analysis of business start-ups from previous years shows that of the 63,000 new businesses in the February 2006 year, 51,000 (82%) were still operating the following year, while the remaining 12,000 (18%) ceased operation within 12 months. A similar pattern appears for surviving new businesses (that continue operation for at least one year) each year from 2001 to 2006.

Of the 43,000 new businesses that first started operation in 2001, 79% were still operating in 2002, 57% in 2004, and 40% were still operating in 2007. Non-employed new businesses from 2001 had a significantly lower proportion surviving the six years compared with businesses that had paid employees.

More is at <http://www.stats.govt.nz/products-and-services/media-releases/nz-business-demographic-statistics/nz-business-demography-statistics-dynamics-feb07-mr.htm>

Record Manufacturing Result: December 2007 Quarter

According to Statistics NZ, seasonally adjusted manufacturing sales increased a record 8.3% in the December 2007 quarter. The increase of more than \$1.5 billion was dominated by the meat and dairy product manufacturing industry, up 25.8%, which accounted for just over three-quarters of the rise. The sales increase is nearly double the previous highest increase set during the September 2000 quarter, and is a record for the series which began in December 1992.

Two other industries made significant contributions to the result. Other food manufacturing and machinery and equipment manufacturing both increased by more than 8.0% compared with the September 2007 quarter.

PLATO: Networks for Small Businesses

The Ministry of Economic Development (MED) is setting up an Auckland pilot of an internationally successful training and business networking programme called PLATO for small businesses. Two PLATO pilot networks of around 10-12 small and medium enterprises (SMEs) each, will be run there over the next two years. They will receive mentoring and training from some of NZ's leading international companies, to help them improve their management systems and gain a better understanding of how to access global markets.

PLATO is an innovative business peer support and mentoring programme that has been very successful in many European countries.

The programme is expected to begin in June 2008. For more information email ron.clink@med.govt.nz

Filing Documents with Companies Office: Changes

From 1 July 2008 it will become mandatory to file some documents with the Companies Office via its online services. Processes that will be affected include: name reservations, company incorporation, annual returns, and liquidation and receivership management.

Resources including guides on how to file electronically with the Companies Office are at <http://www.companies.govt.nz/cms>

NZ/Samoa Agreement Part of Samoa's WTO Bid

New Zealand has signed a market access agreement with Samoa as part of a Samoan bid to join the World Trade Organisation (WTO). To accede to the WTO a state is required to obtain endorsement from a WTO Working Party that its trading system is consistent with WTO rules. It must also conclude individual bilateral negotiations with other members on the terms of their entry to the WTO.

Company Tax Rate Down

The company tax rate dropped from 33% to 30% on 1 April 2008. The move follows the Business Tax Review. It is aimed at strengthening the competitiveness of NZ-based companies.

Money Matters

Benefits/Tax/Super/Kiwisaver Rate Changes: 1 April

From 1 April 2008 new rates apply to:

- *the minimum family tax credit*: increased by \$416 per year to \$18,460;
- *the minimum wage*: lifted to \$12 an hour, including for sixteen-year-olds and seventeen-year-olds after the first 200 hours or three months they have worked;
- *student allowances and benefits*: tertiary students and beneficiaries received a 3.18% increase to their student allowance/benefit under the annual CPI adjustment;
- *the business tax rate*: dropped from 33 to 30%;
- *Kiwisaver new employer contributions*: new employer contributions of 1% are scaled up an extra 1% per annum to reach 4% in 2011 (this is supported by a tax credit for employers of up to \$20 per week);
- *research and development investments by business*: a 15% tax credit is now in place;
- *charities*: the \$1890 cap on charitable donations eligible for a tax rebate of 33.3% has been removed; and
- *NZ Superannuation*: the 510,000 older NZers receiving NZ Super or the Veterans Pension, saw a rise in their payments indexing them to 66% of the average ordinary wage (see below for details).

New Minimum Wage Rules Now in Place

As of 1 April 2008 there is no longer a youth minimum wage. Instead there is a minimum wage for new entrants that applies to some employees aged 16 or 17, with other employees aged 16 years or over entitled to the adult minimum wage.

A new entrant is an employee who: is 16 or 17 years or age, has not completed 3 months or 200 hours of employment, is not supervising or training other workers, and is not subject to the minimum training wage.

If an employee is 16 or 17 years of age, and does not supervise or train other employees, and is not subject to the minimum training wage, then the adult minimum wage will apply to them when they have completed 3 months or 200 hours of employment after turning 16.

If an employee is 16 or 17 years of age and is not subject to the minimum training wage, but they are supervising or training other employees as part of their jobs, then the adult minimum wage will apply to them regardless of the number of hours they have worked or how long they have been employed.

Minimum Wage Rates from 1 April 2008

- employees under 16 years old: no statutory minimum wage;
- 16/17 year-old new entrants: \$9.60 an hour before tax;
- 16/17 year-olds who meet criteria for adult minimum wage: \$12.00 an hour before tax;
- employees aged 18 and over: adult minimum wage of \$12.00 an hour before tax; and
- training wage: \$9.60 an hour before tax.

More is at www.dol.govt.nz/new-entrants or call 0800 20 90 20

NZ Super Rise

The newly adjusted rate of NZ Superannuation (after being taxed at the "M" rate): \$439.80 for a married couple who both qualify from 1 April 2008, is 66.23% of the net average weekly wage. Examples of weekly rates (after tax at "M") of NZ Superannuation and Veteran's Pension include:

Rate	Current net rate per week*	Net rates per week as at 1 April 2008#	Increase per week	Increase per year
Single Living Alone	\$277.06	\$285.87	\$8.81	\$458.12
Single Sharing	\$255.74	\$263.88	\$8.14	\$423.28
Married, Civil Union or Defacto Couple (both qualify)	\$426.24	\$439.80	\$13.53	\$703.56

*Set at 66% of the net average wage as at 1 April 2007.

#Married couple rate set at 66.23% of the net average wage.

Tax Credits for People Made Redundant

People who receive redundancy payments can now claim a tax credit of six cents in the dollar up to a maximum of \$3,600. Anyone who has been made redundant since 1 December 2006 is now eligible to claim. To do so, customers will need to complete the claim form (IR524), and provide documentation that clearly shows the amount of the redundancy payment received. This could include a letter from their employer, a payslip or a calculation sheet provided by the employer.

The form can be requested by calling 0800 257 773. More information, including the application form, is also available at <http://www.ird.govt.nz/yoursituation-ind/retirement/redundancy-tax-credit/>

- when people form an opinion about the environmental, social or ethical aspects of a brand, personal experience of a product or service has the most influence (42%);
- brand advertising influences only 8%, independent expert reviews influence 18%, and other information provided by the brand about environmental and ethical matters drives 13%;
- 82% answer "no" when asked if they can think of one brand in particular that stands out for being better, from an environmental, social or ethical perspective;
- 87% cannot think of a brand that stands out for being worse from an environmental, social or ethical perspective; and
- 11% of purchasing decisions are influenced primarily by consumers' perceptions of goods' and services' environmental, human and social impacts.

Earlier research shows 32% of NZers will buy from a more sustainable supplier for the same or similar price.

How NZers Decide to Buy

A national ShapeNZ survey of 3535 respondents, conducted for the NZ Business Council for Sustainable Development between 26 February and 25 March this year, has found that NZers' purchasing decisions are influenced most by price and quality. The findings include:

Detailed results are at <http://www.nzbc.org.nz/story.asp?id=877>

Limited Partnerships Legislation Passed

Legislation giving effect to new regulations and tax rules for limited partnerships and updating the tax rules for general partnerships has been passed. Limited partnerships are widely used internationally for investing in another country, particularly in relation to private equity and venture capital investment. NZ law now provides for them.

The new legislation removes barriers to this investment into NZ by providing separate legal entity status for limited partnerships, and by making it possible for foreign investors to have their gains and losses recognised for tax purposes in their own countries.

Changes to the Overseas Investment Act

The government has announced changes to the Overseas Investment Act 2005. The amendment requires Ministers, when considering overseas investment applications, to look at whether the investment will "assist NZ to maintain NZ control of strategically important infrastructure on sensitive land".

Tax Advice for Property Investors

Inland Revenue has launched an information campaign to raise awareness of the tax obligations of residential property investors. A 24-page booklet entitled "Buying and Selling a Residential Property" covers topics such as reasons for buying property, the family home, types of tax that might apply, and voluntary disclosures.

IRD has also expanded its website to include specific property-taxation information, including a self-assessment questionnaire, and an online version of the booklet.

For more information go to www.ird.govt.nz/toii/property/property-index.html

Not-For-Profits

Unpaid Work Statistics

These come from Statistics NZ (SNZ) and look at the unpaid work of adults (aged 15 years and over) who usually live in NZ. The information is based on NZ's 2006 Census of Population and Dwellings, in which people were asked to provide information about their participation in unpaid work in the four weeks prior to the census.

The Census measured three kinds of unpaid work: unpaid work within the household; unpaid work outside the household; and other voluntary work through an organisation, group or marae.

The statistics show:

- 92% of women engaged in unpaid work in the reference period compared with 86% of men;
- 35% of women looked after a child living within their own household, compared with 27% of men;
- 9% of women looked after someone in their own household who was ill or disabled, compared with 6% of men;
- 21% of women looked after a child who did not live within their own household, compared with 6% of men;
- 66% of those helping someone who was ill or who had a disability living outside their own household were women; and
- Maori and Pacific women were significantly more likely than women within any other ethnic group to care for others living within their own household (51% of Maori women and 48% of Pacific women cared for a child living within their own household, compared to 35% of women across the population overall).

More information can be viewed at www.stats.govt.nz/NR/exeres/B7DB6448-5065-426C-8327-FBCBE234DDE3.htm

Survey: Government Funding of Not-For-Profits

This survey looked at central government's funding of non-profit organisations (NPOs). It highlights that in 2005/06:

- the largest amounts of departmental payments were made to NPOs in the social services, education and health activity sectors;
- contract payments for services dominate over grant funding;
- there are difficulties tracking payment and funding arrangements through more than one agency to NPOs;
- information about payments made by Crown entities to NPOs was limited; and
- some government payments to NPOs occur indirectly through a second tier of agencies such as Crown entities and local authorities.

There are two distinct streams of funding:

- payments of \$1.25 billion to NPOs from Departments; and
- payments of at least \$141 million to NPOs from Crown entities.

The survey report is at http://www.dia.govt.nz/diawebsite.nsf/wpg_URL/Resource-material-Our-Research-and-Reports-A-Survey-of-Government-Funding-of-Non-profit-Organisations?OpenDocument

COGS Local Distribution Committee Elections 2008

The Community Organisation Grants Scheme (COGS) has allocated \$225 million of grants to community and voluntary organisations since its inception in 1986. Last year, the scheme distributed \$11.5 million to grass-roots community and voluntary

organisations across the country. Around NZ, 37 COGS volunteer local distribution committees representing their communities are responsible for allocating the available funds.

The members of these committees are elected every three years. The 2008 elections are now underway, and registered community organisations can vote for candidates within their area.

From 11-30 April 2008 COGS public meetings will be held in communities throughout NZ. Postal ballots close at 12 noon on 9 May 2008. More information on COGS and the local distribution committee elections is available at www.dia.govt.nz or by freephone 0800 824 824, 8am - 5pm Monday to Friday

For more info about the Workplace Wellbeing Project contact C Twyford on 04 239 8173

Charities Commission Update

The Charities Commission is trying to process all applications by 1 July 2008 so applicants can be sure about their tax commitments, but with the number of new applications continuing to increase (currently around 360 per week) it is unlikely all charities will be registered until later in the year. However, the Commission has the power to backdate an organisation's charitable entity status to the date it received the completed application. This means an organisation that complies with the Act during the period which its application is being processed can claim the tax benefits of a registered charity for that period.

A properly-completed application includes a set of rules, at least one Officer Certification form, and a certified application form.

More is at www.charities.govt.nz/news/fact_sheets/backdating.html

Charitable Person of the Year

Berill Michelsen of Nga Wahine Tamariki Punanga O Whakatu - Nelson Women's and Children's Refuge Services, is the inaugural Telecom Community Connection Charitable Person of the Year. A member of the Women's Refuge since the late 1970s, Berill impressed the judges with her longstanding dedication to the cause, her passion for the rights of women and children, and her willingness to take on tasks - from management roles to handling midnight crisis calls. Berill was nominated for the award by the Nelson Refuge and chosen from amongst a group of outstanding finalists from organisations like St John, IHC and the Red Cross.

Workplace Wellbeing Workshops

Workplace Wellbeing workshops are coming up in:

- Invercargill: 9 May - Robyn Flowers, 03 214 3179 or southland@parent2parent.org.nz
- Alexandra : 10 May - Liz Duggan, 03 448 7435 or eaduggan@clear.net.nz;
- Dunedin: 2 May - Alan Shanks, 03 471 6150 or admin@dcoss.org.nz; and
- Timaru: 20 & 21 May - Joy Silvia, 03 687 7364 or volmsc@xtra.co.nz.

Treaty Matters

Treaty Developments in Past Year

The Human Rights Commission's annual review of race relations for Waitangi Day review lists the main developments in 2007 as being:

- the Waitangi Trust announced that entry to the Treaty grounds will be free for NZers from October 2008;
- the Waitangi Tribunal produced five reports on Treaty claims relating to: Te Tau Ihu (the Northern South Island) (2), He Maunga Rongo (the Central North Island), Tamaki Makaurau, and the Affiliate Te Arawa Settlement; concluded hearings on the indigenous flora and fauna claim; and continued work on other claims;
- two terms of negotiation were signed by the Crown, with Gisborne iwi and with Ngati Toa Rangatira;
- five Agreements in Principle were signed by the Crown, with Ngati Apa (North Island), Te Rarawa, Waikato-Tainui, Taranaki Whanui and Ngati Kahu ki Whangaroa;
- the Whanganui Courthouse was transferred to the Pakaitore Trust on behalf of Whanganui Iwi;
- an Agreement was signed to transfer Mauao (Mount Maunganui) to the iwi of Tauranga Moana and to recognise the importance of the mountain to Waitaha;
- a Deed of Settlement signed between Crown and Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board, updating the 1992 deed relating to Lake Taupo;
- the Waka Umanga (Maori Corporations) Bill was introduced to Parliament;
- nine groups pursued customary rights orders under the Foreshore and Seabed Act, and three groups were engaged in negotiations for territorial customary rights;
- ten iwi were approved as Mandated Iwi Organisations by Te Ohu Kaimoana in 2007, bringing the total to 47 at the end of the year;
- Government established new processes for the sale of Crown land after a review prompted by land protests; and
- the United Nations adopted a Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

For the full chapter on the Treaty or further inquiries contact C Elgar on 09 375 8616

Waikato River Guardians Establishment Committee

The membership of the Guardians Establishment Committee, created under the Waikato River Agreement in Principle signed in December 2007, has been announced. The Committee will provide a forum by which the iwi of the Waikato River, the people of the region and the Crown on behalf of all NZers can demonstrate kotahitanga or unity in developing a vision and strategy to restore and protect the health and well-being of the Waikato River for future generations. It is required to develop both a consultation draft and a final version of the Vision and Strategy, for recommendation to the Crown and Waikato-Tainui by 31 May 2008.

Minister in Charge of Treaty of Waitangi Negotiations, Dr Michael Cullen, and Tukoroirangi Morgan are Co-convenors of the Committee, and the permanent Committee co-chairs of the Committee are Gordon Blake and Tukoroirangi Morgan. The membership of the Guardians Establishment Committee must include: four members appointed by Waikato-Tainui; one member each appointed by Ngati Tuwharetoa, Te Arawa, Raukawa, and Ngati Maniapoto; up to seven members appointed by Ministers of the Crown; and one member appointed by Ministers on the recommendation of Environment Waikato.

The Elections

Enrolling to Vote

The general elections are coming up and you must be enrolled before election day to be eligible to vote.

Any NZ citizen and permanent resident who is 18 or over and whose name is on either the Maori or general electoral roll before election day can vote in a general election. Each voter has two votes to cast - a party vote and an electorate vote as they make a choice about who represents them in Parliament. This electoral system is called mixed-member proportional representation or MMP.

You can enrol on-line at www.elections.org.nz or you can pick up a form from any NZ Post Shop. People can check their details in the printed rolls or view the printed rolls at http://www.elections.org.nz/enrolment/roe_contacts.html

Summary of 2007 Electorate Changes

There will be 70 electorates at the next two general elections. These include:

- an additional new electorate in Auckland named Botany;
- new names for nine electorates, to better reflect the new electorate boundaries: Papakura, Hunua, Waikato, Ohariu, Selwyn, Port Hills, Rangitata, Waitaki, and Hauraki-Waikato;

- the electorates of Clevedon, Port Waikato, Piako, Ohariu-Belmont, Banks Peninsula, Rakaia, Aoraki, Otago and Tainui used in the 2005 election being replaced with these new electorate names and boundaries; and
- the 2005 boundaries in seven electorates - Whangarei, North Shore, Northcote, Tauranga, Kaikoura, Te Tai Tokerau and Waiariki - remain unchanged.

Maps showing the boundaries of the electorates are at <http://www.elections.org.nz/mapping/>

Internet/ICT

Broadband Connection Overtakes Dial-up

The number of broadband subscribers in the six months to September 2007 overtook the number of dial-up subscribers for the first time ever, Statistics NZ said recently. Broadband subscribers continued to increase - up 14.4% in the six months to September 2007, to reach 829,300. However, this growth rate has slowed from an increase of 28.6% in September 2006 and 18.5% in March 2007. Subscribers with dial-up connection fell 8.6% from March 2007, down to 675,800.

The number of broadband subscribers grew from 9 per 100 inhabitants to 19.6 per 100 inhabitants in the two years ended September 2007, while the number of dial-up subscribers per 100 inhabitants fell from 21.2 to 15.9. Of the additional 10.6 broadband subscribers per 100 inhabitants, half switched from dial-up and the remaining half were new subscribers.

New Digital "Super Group"

The government is to fund the setting up of a new overarching digital sector forum. The new forum will create partnerships between industry, community and voluntary groups and users and provide a coordinated voice to government on digital issues. It is expected to be fully up and running by the middle of 2008, with the timing coinciding with the launch of the refreshed Digital Strategy 2.0 (this sets out the strategic direction of NZ's digital future).

Read All About the World's 50 Most Powerful Blogs

What is a Blog?

According to Wikipedia: "A blog (a portmanteau of web log) is a website where entries are commonly displayed in reverse chronological order." Blog" can also be used as a verb, meaning "to maintain or add content to a blog".

Many blogs provide commentary or news on a particular subject; others function as more personal online diaries. A typical blog combines text, images, and links to other blogs, web pages,

and other media related to its topic. The ability for readers to leave comments in an interactive format is an important part of many blogs. Most blogs are primarily textual, although some focusing on art (artlog), photographs (photoblog), sketchblog, videos (vlog), music (MP3 blog), and audio (podcasting) are part of a wider network of social media. Micro-blogging is another type of blogging which consists of blogs with very short posts. As of December 2007, blog search engine Technorati was tracking more than 112 million blogs.

Rural Women NZ "Droughtspeak" Blog

Rural Women NZ has a blogsite for people affected by this year's drought. Bloggers can share information or have their say by clicking on "Droughtspeak". You can also add a comment on "Droughtspeak" by clicking the "comment" link at the bottom of any post. "Droughtspeak" also lists the National Drought Management Committee's members and terms of reference.

The URL is: <http://www.droughtspeak.blogspot.com/>

Given the impossibility of finding your way through all these blogs, the UK Guardian has kindly composed a list of what it considers to be the 50 most powerful blogs on the "blogosphere". You can download the entire list at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/technology/2008/mar/09/blogs> but we thought you might enjoy a sample (in the Guardian's own words) of the top 50 blogs (most of which include an example of the post you're least likely to find on the site):

1. The Huffington Post - huffingtonpost.com

"The history of political blogging might usefully be divided into the periods pre- and post-Huffington. Before the millionaire socialite Arianna Huffington decided to get in on the act, bloggers operated in a spirit of underdog solidarity. They hated the mainstream media - and the feeling was mutual.

Bloggers saw themselves as gadflies, pricking the arrogance of established elites from their home computers, in their pyjamas, late into the night. So when, in 2005, Huffington decided to mobilise her fortune and media connections to create, from scratch, a flagship liberal blog she was roundly derided. Who, spluttered the original bloggerati, did she think she was?

But the pyjama purists were confounded. Arianna's money talked just as loudly online as off, and the Huffington Post quickly became one of the most influential and popular journals on the web. It recruited professional columnists and celebrity bloggers. It hoovered up traffic. Its launch was a landmark moment in the evolution of the web because it showed that many of the old rules still applied to the new medium: a bit of marketing savvy and deep pockets could go just as far as geek credibility, and get there faster." *This site is least likely to post "I'm so over this story - check out the New York Times"*.

2. Boing Boing - boingboing.net

"... No one has done more to promote pointless, yet strangely cool, time-wasting stuff on the net than the editors of Boing Boing (subtitle: A Directory of Wonderful Things). It launched in January 2000 and has had an immeasurable influence on the style and idiom of blogging. But hidden among the pictures of steam-powered CD players and Darth Vader tea towels there is a steely, ultra-liberal political agenda: championing the web as a global medium free of state and corporate control..." *Least likely to post "Has anyone got a stamp?"*.

4. Kottke - kottke.org

"One of the early wave of blogging pioneers, ... Kottke remains one of the purest old-skool bloggers on the block - it's a selection of links to websites and articles rather than a repository for detailed personal opinion - and although it remains fairly esoteric, his favourite topics include film, science, graphic design and sport. He often picks up trends and happenings before friends start forwarding them to your inbox..." *Least likely to post "Look at this well wicked vid of a dog on a skateboard"*.

6. Perez Hilton - perez Hilton.com

Once dubbed "Hollywood's most hated website", Perez Hilton (authored by Mario Lavandeira since 2005) is the gossip site celebrities fear most... *Least likely to post "Log on tomorrow for Kofi Annan's live webchat"*.

9. Beppe Grillo - beppegrillo.it

Among the most visited blogs in the world is that of Beppe Grillo, a popular Italian comedian and political commentator, long persona non grata on state TV, who is infuriated daily - especially by corruption and financial scandal in his country." *Least likely to post "Sign up to our campaign to grant Silvo Berlusconi immunity"*.

13. Treehugger - treehugger.com

Treehugger is a green consumer blog with a mission to bring a sustainable lifestyle to the masses. Its ethos, that a green lifestyle does not have to mean sacrifice, and its positive, upbeat feel have attracted over 1.8 million unique users a month..." *Least likely to post "Why Plastic Bags rock"*.

14. Microsiervos - microsiervos.com

"The second most popular blog in Europe and the 13th most popular in the world (according to eBizMBA), Microsiervos concerns itself with science, curiosities, strange reality, chance, games, puzzles, quotations, conspiracies, computers, hacking, graffiti and design..." *Least likely to post "The internet is, like, so over"*.

16. Engadget - engadget.com

"The world's most popular blog on gadgets and consumer electronics, Engadget was founded by Ryan Block in 2004 and won the Web Blogs Awards that year and each year since..."

18. Chez Pim - chezpim.typepad.com

"Attracting around 10,000 people from all over the globe to her site every week, Pim Techamuanvith has tried and tested an awful lot of food. From Michelin-starred restaurants to street food and diners, she samples it all, and posts her thoughts and pictures to share with other foodie fans. She advises her readers on what cooking equipment to go for, posts recipe suggestions for them to try, and gives them a nudge in the direction of which food shows are worth a watch..." *Least likely to post "Chocolate's my favourite flavour of Pop Tart"*.

20. The Sartorialist - thesartorialist.blogspot.com

"As ideas go, this one is pretty simple. Man wanders around Manhattan with a camera. Spots someone whose outfit he likes. Asks if he can take a picture. Goes home and posts it on his blog... The site attracts more than 70,000 readers a day and has been named one of Time's Top 100 Design Influences..." *Least likely to post "Sometimes you need to chill in a shellsuit"*

28. Michelle Malkin - www.michellemalkin.com

"Most surveys of web use show a fairly even gender balance online, but political blogging is dominated by men. One exception is Michelle Malkin, a conservative newspaper columnist and

author with one of the most widely read conservative blogs in the US. That makes her one of the most influential women online. Her main theme is how liberals betray America by being soft on terrorism, peddling lies about global warming and generally lacking patriotism and moral fibre...". *Least likely to post "That Obama's got a lovely smile, hasn't he?"*.

29. Cranky flier - crankyflier.com

"There's nowhere to hide for airlines these days. Not with self-confessed 'airline dork' Brett Snyder, aka Cranky Flier, keeping tabs on their progress...". *Least likely to post "There's nothing wrong with a well-conducted cavity search"*.

33. Crooked timber - crookedtimber.org

"With a title pulled from Immanuel Kant's famous statement that 'out of the crooked timber of humanity, no straight thing was ever made', it's an amalgam of academic and political writing that has muscled its way into the epicentre of intelligent discussion since its conception in 2003. Formed as an internet supergroup, pulling several popular intellectual blogs together, Crooked Timber now has 16 members - largely academics - across the US, Europe, Australia and Asia. The site has built itself a reputation as something of an intellectual powerhouse; a sort of global philosophical thinktank conducted via blog." *Least likely to post "Did anyone see Casualty last night?"*.

35. The offside - theoffside.com

"Launched by 'Bob' after the success of his WorldCupBlog in 2006, Offside is a UK-based blog covering football leagues globally, gathering news and visuals on all of it, inviting countless match reports and promoting discussion on all things soccer, from the attack by a colony of red ants on a player in the Sao Paulo state championship third division, to the particular qualities of every one of Cristiano Ronaldo's goals so far this season...".

38. Chocolate and Zucchini - chocolateandzucchini.com

"For Clothilde Dusoulier, a young woman working in computing and living in the Paris district of Montmartre, starting a blog was a way of venting her boundless enthusiasm for food without worrying she might be boring her friends with it... The mixture of an insider's view on gastronomic Paris, conversational, bilingual writing and the sheer irresistibility of her recipes pull in thousands of readers every day...". *Least likely to post "Just add instant mash"*.

42. Jonny B's private secret diary - privatesecretary.com

"Growing in popularity since its debut in 2003, Jonny B's diary - which is clearly neither private nor terribly secret - catalogues the rock and bowls lifestyle of one man in the depths of rural Norfolk... As a slow, gentle satire on modern village life, it is often held up as an example of blog as sitcom, and has not only attracted a loyal band of readers, but a dedicated fan club on Facebook desperate to work out the real identity of the wit behind the site...".

44. Waiter rant - waiterrant.net

"Rant isn't quite the right word for this collection of carefully crafted stories from the sharp end of the service industry in a busy New York restaurant... Something about the everyday nature of The Waiter - a person we like to pretend is invisible or treat with servile disdain - deconstructing the event later with a subtle,

erudite tpestroke, has captured the public imagination and (hopefully) made some people behave better in restaurants than they otherwise might...". *Least likely to post "The customer is always right"*.

50. Copyblogger - copyblogger.com

"It's dry, real, and deafeningly practical, but for an online writing-for-the-internet blog, Copyblogger, founded in 2006, is remarkably interesting. Swelling with advice on online writing, it's an essential tool for anyone trying to make themselves heard online, whether commenting on a discussion board or putting together a corporate website...". *Least likely to post "Social networking - it's just a phase"*.

The New Zealand Webguide is a beginner's guide and resource for use of the internet. It is designed for community based and voluntary organisations and groups and iwi groups. The Webguide includes: a blog with regular postings on new internet resources; and guidelines on how to "connect your community" and get your group's work done via the internet.

The Waikato 2020 Communications Trust, along with its partners, has been developing Webguide and are currently evaluating recent updates to the Webguide and they would like you to tell them if it's doing the job. Can you spend about 10 minutes of your time to complete their brief survey to give your views on how they can make Webguide even better? As a way to thanking you for participating, the first 50 participants to complete the survey will go in the draw for a \$50 petrol voucher.

You can link to the survey from the Webguide www.webguide.net.nz or go directly to the survey: www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=19GqLKnyYVT_2bBcskfeQtw_3d_3d

The first *daily news service for NZ's and Australia's carbon trading markets* was recently launched. at www.carbon-news.co.nz. Carbon News will provide detailed coverage on not only the markets and key players but also on the sectors facing major impacts and opportunities from the response to climate change. These include the energy, forestry, agriculture, transport and technology sectors. The service will also initially concentrate on government policy development both here and in other key markets.

The upgraded <http://newzealand.govt.nz> website (formerly www.govt.nz) site is now easier to search, more up to date, and easier to access. It now *searches all government and government funded websites, the Public Sector Directory and MSN live search results*. A big change has been the addition of information about how you can participate in government decisions: the site now contains details of how to enrol to vote, public consultations that are taking place, as well as how you can stand for election.

At the *Pacific - Online Island Community website* at www.thepacific.co.nz you can share information about Pacific cultures, traditions, music and arts.

Programmes of Ethnic Media Watch which has been broadcasting on Christchurch community access radio station Plains FM are now at <http://www.plainsfm.org.nz/Podcasts/programmes>. They include useful discussions about the media's portrayal of ethnic communities.

Arts and Culture

Maori Film Festival to Tour

The Wairoa Maori Film Festival is to tour Wellington, Auckland and Taumarunui, after its Wairoa season finishes. The film festival, which will show in Wairoa during Queens Birthday, ties in with this year's Matariki festival which celebrates the Maori New Year.

This year's film festival theme is "Te Karanga O Papatuanuku, Te Waiata O Te Whenua - The Land Sings, The Earth Cries Out".

The film festival will honour the contributions of Maori film pioneers Witarina Harris, Don Selwyn and Barry Barclay. Films showing include Barclay's documentary "The Neglected Miracle", about plant genetics; "Herdsman", set among the native people of Lapland; and "Blowin' in the Wind", about the effects of atomic testing on Australian Aborigines.

ID360 Short Film Competition: People's Choice Vote

The finalists in the ID360 Short Film Competition (judged by Jess Feast, Zoe McIntosh and David Rea) have now been chosen.

The five finalists in each age category (12-15 years, 16-18 years and 19-24 years) are in the running to win the People's Choice Award, for which the public can vote. The category winners, grand prize winner and the winner of the People's Choice Award will be announced at an awards ceremony on 21 April at the NZ Film Archive in Wellington.

Voting for the People's Choice Awards closes on 11 April 2008. Visit www.id360.govt.nz to view the finalists' short films

- the daily limit on red cod that can be caught by recreational fishers in the southern and eastern South Island reducing: fishers were allowed to take up to 30 red cod per fisher, but will now be restricted to 10 red cod per fisher per day;
- a new rule banning commercial fishers from leaving set nets exposed at low tide on the Kaipara Harbour; and
- a change to open season dates for recreational scallop gathering on the north-west coast of the North Island, from Tirua Point (south of Kawhia Harbour) to North Cape: the season is now 1 September through to 31 March (effective this year). Note that a temporary prohibition on the taking of scallops remains in place for the Kaipara Harbour until 14 September 2008 to help rebuild stocks.

More information: <http://www.fish.govt.nz/en-nz/default.htm>

"Tangaroa" Returns with Scientific Treasures

New Zealand's research vessel "Tangaroa" recently spent 35 days in atrocious ice conditions sampling Antarctic marine biodiversity and habitats, as part of an international survey of marine life in the Ross Sea region by 23 countries. The 26 scientists and 18 crew collected more than 30,000 specimens. Some 88 fish species were recorded - and eight of these may be new to science. Samples included some giant-sized creatures: starfish as big as a serving dish, large sea-spiders, jellyfish with tentacles up to four metres long, and hydroids (relatives of corals) three to four times bigger than any seen in the area before. Some unusual squid species were also caught, including several juvenile colossal squid.

More information: www.fish.govt.nz/en-nz/Environmental/Seabed+Protection+and+Research/IPY+CAML/default.htm. Photos/videos are also available at www.caml.aq/voyages/tangaroa-2007-2008/index.html

Fishing

Recent Changes to Fisheries Rules

Several changes in fisheries rules apply from 1 April 2008, including:

- an increase (from 1 April 2008) in the commercial catch limits for the rock lobster (crayfish): Catch limits in the CRA8 fishery (Southland) are to increase by nearly 211 tonnes to 1053 tonnes, and in the CRA7 (Otago) fishery by 3.7 tonnes to 143.9 tonnes;
- from 1 April 2008 the catch limit in the southern blue whiting fishery in a deepwater area south-east of the South Island known as the Bounty Platform (SBW6B) is being increased from 3,500 tonnes to 10,000 tonnes;
- adjustments being made to the deemed value rates (charges that are imposed on commercial fishers to discourage catching in excess of their catch entitlement) of 28 fishstocks;

General

Happiness Measured in NZ

According to a UMR Research survey of 9000 NZers in which people were asked to rate how happy and satisfied they are with the way their life is going:

- middle-aged Kiwi blokes are the least happy people in NZ while women are happier than men overall and older NZers are the happiest age group in the country;
- the happiest region in NZ is Nelson and the least happy is West Coast/Buller. For men, the happiest region is also Nelson, but the least happy is the home of the Southern Men - Otago/Southland. Women are happiest in Gisborne/Hawke's Bay, but they're least happy in Auckland;

- widows and widowers are happier than those who are married, in de facto relationships, separated, divorced or never been married; and
- those on middle incomes were the least happy and those on high incomes were only slightly happier than those on low incomes.

Lotto, Keno, Big Wednesday: to go Online

Following consumer demand, changes enabling the online sale of Lotto, Powerball, Strike, Big Wednesday and Keno tickets have been gazetted, though a date for their launch is still to be set.

Players will be required to register to play online, be limited to one account, and will have to set their own personal weekly and monthly spending limits which cannot be exceeded. There will also be more general mandatory spending limits. Players will also be able to see how much they have won or lost over the year. NZ Lotteries will monitor players who consistently spend to the maximum, and will contact them to offer support and problem gambling helpline information.

Lotto, Powerball, Strike, Big Wednesday and Keno are seen as relatively safe alternatives to the online games offered by overseas-based gambling operators - and any benefits from gambling in these games remains in NZ.

New Rules for Immigration Advisers

People who provide advice about immigration matters who practice in NZ will have to be licensed from 4 May 2009, and people working offshore who give advice about NZ immigration matters will need to be licensed by 4 May 2010.

Licensing means that people who wish to provide immigration advice will have to prove their expertise by meeting competency standards. Licensed Advisers will also have to adhere to a code of conduct, which will increase industry-wide professionalism and ethical behaviour.

Licensed Advisers who breach the code of conduct can have their licence revoked or be fined up to \$10,000. Unlicensed people who are caught providing immigration advice can be sentenced to 7 years in prison, a fine of up to \$100,000, or both.

The professional standards and code of conduct have now been released. They are at www.iaa.govt.nz

Are you Biased? Checking Preferences & Beliefs

Many of us have preferences and beliefs that we're not aware of and discrimination can be the outcome. Now researchers at Harvard University have developed a tool called the Implicit Association test (IAT) to explore unconscious bias. It claims to uncover biases that people are unwilling or unable to reveal. The aim of Project Implicit is to "examine thoughts and feelings that exist outside of conscious awareness or control".

The website contains demonstration tests that allow the visitor to check out their unconscious biases on a variety of issues. Some of the topics have a distinctly North American flavour, but others have a more universal application.

The site is at <https://implicit.harvard.edu>

Conferences/Festivals

Rural Women NZ National Conference

The National Conference of Rural Women NZ is being held from 16-19 May 2008 at the Marlborough Convention Centre in Blenheim. The conference theme is "Celebrating Diversity".

This conference will be opened by RWNZ Patron, Her Excellency Susan Satyanand, accompanied by His Excellency the Governor General, Anand Satyanand.

The conference keynote speaker is Gregory Fortuin. Other speakers include Stuart Smith, Trish McKelvey, Alistair Sowman, Heather Oehlich, Jane Mitchell, Mike Hollings, Kevin Fleury, Graeme Titcombe, Margaret Millard, and Margaret Chapman.

The conference includes a celebrity debate: "Rural Women do it Better", with (affirmative team) Kim Hill, Tom Lambie, and Fiona Gower, and (negative team) Jim Hopkins, Kerry Maw and Doug Avery. The debate will be chaired by Andrew Finch and will be open to the public. It will be followed by a charity auction, with proceeds going to the Rural Women NZ Leptospirosis Research Fund.

For more information/registrations go to Rural women NZ's website at www.rwnz.org

Beyond Reasonable Drought Fielday

This is being held on 14 May 2008 at Bonavaree Farm, south of Blenheim. Strategies for adapting dryland farming to climate change will be highlighted at the fielday, which winds up a four-year soil conservation project. The conservation project was initiated by farmers concerned that a continuous run of droughts was destroying their land. Since it began, the farm has achieved a 54% increase in profits despite a 15% decrease in rainfall in the last 12 years.

Registrations close 30 April. For more information email collins@landcare.org.nz, tel 03 572 8876, or contact NZ Landcare Trust, tel 0508 526 322

Mystery Creek Fieldays

Mystery Creek (10 minutes from Hamilton) celebrates 40 years of Fieldays from 11-14 June in 2008. The Fieldays include "Kiwi's Best", which features Al Brown from Logan Brown Restaurant, and the TV series "Hunger for the Wild". Kiwi's Best celebrates some of the best NZ food and beverage products coming out of agriculture and horticulture - and they are available to be sampled.

More is at <http://www.fieldays.co.nz/>

Two Tourism Conferences

- "Pure Luxury NZ 2008" (more is at <http://www.pureluxury.co.nz/>) will be held in Queenstown on 21-23 May 2008; and
- the country's largest annual international tourism business event, "TRENZ 2008" (more is at <http://www.trenz.co.nz/>) will be held at the Energy Events Centre, Rotorua, on 26-29 May 2008.

AppleFest

Applefest is a celebration of the completion of the apple harvest. It will be held on 9-10 May 2008 at the Cider Tree Café, Filter Room complex (indoor/outdoor), Awatoto Road, Meeanee (in the Hawke's Bay. Events include, for example, the Great Granny Smith Pie Bake Off, the FruitArt awards, and music at the Apple Hop.

More information is at www.applefest.co.nz, or you can email info@applefest.co.nz or tel 027 348 8574

NZ Hindu Council Conference: Benefits of Yoga/Meditation

The Hindu Council of NZ Inc is holding its second NZ Hindu conference from 16-18 May 2008 at the Hindu Heritage Centre, 2-30 Bukem Place, Mangere East, Auckland. The conference will include views from international experts on how the practices of yoga, meditation and Ayurveda can contribute to enhance the general, physical, mental and social wellbeing of communities in Aotearoa/NZ. (Ayurveda is a natural method of healing that originated in India. It may include meditation, yoga, nutritional foods, massage therapy and/or herbal treatments.) There will also be discussion papers on, for example: the benefits of yoga in mental and physical health; yoga in school education: tools for mind concentration for students; benefits of meditation for stress management and human psychology; importance of Ayurveda in clinical practices; and indigenous medical practices of the Maori community.

For more information, email hinduconference@gmail.com or contact conference co-ordinators: P Sharma; tel 021 072 4051, or S Hegde, tel 021 65 6340

Fundraising Institute of NZ 2008 Conference

This one is being held from 25-27 May 2008 at the Waipuna Hotel and Convention Centre, Auckland. The conference is a training opportunity for professional fundraisers in all sectors wanting practical ideas, inspiration and challenge. It includes masterclasses, workshops and case studies from people at the forefront of international and local fundraising. Three, two and one-day options are available.

Conference information is at <http://www.finz.org.nz/conference>. To register your interest in attending or for more information, email conference@finz.org.nz or phone 0508 64FINZ

Identity Management Conference

This is being held from 29-30 April 2008. It is hosted by Victoria University of Wellington in partnership with the State Services Commission and the Department of Internal Affairs. It includes information on technologies such as fingerprints or voice recognition administered by a trusted organisation (e.g., a bank, healthcare provider or government organisation) as a way of verifying an individual's identity.

More information: email identityconference@vuw.ac.nz, or go to <http://www.identityconference.victoria.ac.nz>

Facilitating Social Change Conference

Zenergy Limited and Commonground are holding a conference on group facilitation in Seymour, Melbourne, Australia from 8-11 May 2008. The objective is to extend the reach of group facilitation further into the realm of social change. Facilitators from both Australia and NZ are invited to attend. Commonground is a conference/social change resource centre and intentional community 95km north of Melbourne.

More information: S Thorpe, tel 09 638 7326, email zenergy@xtra.co.nz, or go to <http://www.fsc.net.au>

Treaty Educators Professional Development Conference

This is being held from 18-20 April 2008 in Tamaki Makaurau (Auckland).

More information: email coordinator@trc.org.nz or go to <http://www.treatyeducators.org.nz/>

Engage Your Community Conference:

This is all about using blogs, YouTube and other cool tools to achieve your group's goals, and it is being held on 22 April 2008 at Waikato Management School, University of Waikato, Hamilton.

Read more at <http://webguide.net.nz/engage-your-community/>

Prison Fellowship NZ Conference

Let's change the crime and justice landscape - that's the call and focus of Prison Fellowship NZ for their 25th Anniversary Conference, 16-18 May 2008, to be held at the Silverstream Retreat, Upper Hutt. Topics include:

- What should our justice and penal policy look like, beyond the current "Effective Interventions" policy?
- Where does the future lie for restorative justice, prisoner reintegration and the role of faith in reducing reoffending?
- What sorts of strategies will reduce gang warfare and youth offending?
- What is the role of civil society and community organisations in the criminal justice sector?

Like to be there, want to know more? Go to www.pfnz.org.nz/conference_2008.htm

Some Funding/Awards Opportunities

New Horizons for Women Trust Awards

The New Horizons for Women Trust offers awards for second-chance education and training in NZ; awards for research in NZ on issues of importance to women; the Elsie Locke Award; the Sonja Davies Peace Award, and the Ria McBride Public Service Management Award.

The Second-chance Awards, to the value of \$2,500 or more, are to assist women who are undertaking education or training at a tertiary level for the first time. Applicants must be women aged 27 years or over, who have not obtained a qualification of NZQA Level 4 (or the equivalent), and who are studying in NZ for an NZQA-approved qualification.

Applications for the 2008 awards (using the 2008 application form) close on 31 May 2008. More information/applications forms are at <http://www.newhorizonsforwomen.org.nz/NHWT-Awards.html>

Lottery Environment and Heritage

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

Applications close 26 May 2008. More information is at http://www.cdgo.govt.nz/available-grants/downloads.aspx#ApplicationType_7

Lottery National Community

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

Applications close 9 May 2008. More information is at http://www.cdgo.govt.nz/available-grants/downloads.aspx#ApplicationType_14

Lottery Outdoor Safety

This committee distributes funding to major outdoor safety and water safety groups, including their branches and affiliates, and to other national and regional groups that have outdoor safety or water safety as their main purpose.

Submissions close on 24 April 2008. More is at http://www.cdgo.govt.nz/available-grants/downloads.aspx#ApplicationType_15

Save the Children Small Grants Fund

Save the Children NZ invites innovative project proposals that focus on making the world a better place for NZ children by:

- encouraging their voices to be heard;
- protecting them from violence and abuse; and
- addressing poverty.

Project ideas should be developed and implemented by or with children and young people where appropriate. The maximum award per grant is \$10,000.

Applications close on 15 April 2008. More is at www.savethechildren.org.nz/new_zealand/nz_programme/small_grants_fund/main.html

Mental Health Foundation: Mental Health Media Grants

The NZ Mental Health Media Grants are for proposals that will help reduce stigma and discrimination by informing the public

about mental health issues and experiences. The Media Grants offer a total grant pool of \$50,000 across two categories (journalism and creative) with grants of up to \$12,000 for each project. They are administered by the Mental Health Foundation and funded as part of the Like Minds, Like Mine programme. All journalists, creative professionals or community groups who have a project idea that promotes positive messages about mental health are encouraged to apply for a grant.

Applications close on 30 May 2008. More information: Mental Health Foundation, tel 09 300 7010, email info@mediagrants.org.nz

NZ Community Safety & Injury Prevention Awards 2008

These awards recognise, reward and promote best-practice community-based injury prevention and safety promotion in NZ. Entry is open to:

- any group or organisation with an excellent and/or promising safety or injury prevention initiative; and
- any individual who has made a significant contribution to creating a safer community.

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

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

Appointments

Dr Edwin David Wylie QC has been appointed as a *Judge of the High Court*. Michael Bevan Smith has been appointed as Crown Solicitor at Whangarei.

Jon Mayson, has been appointed *chair of the board of NZ Trade and Enterprise (NZTE)*. Richard Woods will be the new *NZ Chair of the NZ-France Friendship Fund (NZFFF)* which makes grants for projects in NZ, France and French Pacific Territories that promote friendship, and have an emphasis on young people. Bronwyn Dilley has been appointed as *Chief Executive Officer for biotech industry body NZBio*. The four-person *board to consider Contact Energy's proposal for a new geothermal power station at Te Mihi near Taupo* is Judge Gordon Whiting (chairperson), Dr Patrick Browne, Denis Nugent and Glenice Paine.

The new board members of the Land Use Futures Board set up by the Rotorua Lakes Strategy Group are Chris Sutton (Federated Farmers), Graeme Young (Lifestyle Representative), James Reeves (Meat and Wool NZ), John Ford (Federated Farmers), Kit Richards (Forestry Representative) Neil Heather (Federated Farmers), Nick Edgar (NZ Landcare Trust), Peter Guerin (Rotorua District Council), Rick Vallance (Ngati Whakaue Tribal Lands Inc - chair), Roku Mihiniui (Te Arawa Lakes), Sally Millar (DairyNZ), Stuart Morrison (Federated Farmers) Tina Ngatai (Office of the Maori Trustees), Tom Walters (Te Arawa Federation of Maori Authorities) and Warwick Murray (Environment Bay of Plenty).

Craig Matthews and Paddy Twist
Editors
Rural Bulletin

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

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