

Rural Bulletin



November 2009

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Consultation

N-F-Ps: Financial Reporting Rules

Two new discussion papers consider the law covering financial reporting. The first, which comes from the Ministry of Economic Development (MED) proposes that all not-for-profit entities that receive donations from the public (in contrast to fees from members), outlay \$20 million or more, or have ten or more members, should be required to prepare and publish these reports (they would be exempted if they have outlay less than \$20,000).

The second, from the Accounting Standards Review Board (ASRB) outlines tentative proposals about the accounting standards entities required to prepare General Purpose Financial Reports (GPFR), and the level of assurance that should be provided on those reports. It also proposes that a set of accounting standards be developed for use by not-for-profit entities and that these be based on International Public Sector Accounting Standards.

The closing date for submissions to MED on both documents is 29 January 2010. Copies of the discussion documents can be found at: www.med.govt.nz/templates/StandardSummary_187.aspx or www.asrb.co.nz

Finance Company Failures Inquiry...

Public submissions are now being invited on the Inquiry into finance company failures being conducted by Parliament's Commerce Select Committee. The committee's inquiry will focus on four areas. These are: making sure that investors are well-informed about investment proposals; that investors understand the implications of a moratorium proposal before voting; that advance actions can be taken to reduce the chances of failure; and that adequate measures or redress are in place if failures occur.

Submissions close on 12 November 2009. Two copies go to the Commerce Committee Parliament Buildings, Wellington. The Terms of Reference for the Inquiry are at http://www.parliament.nz/en-NZ/PB/SC/BusSum/a/7/a/00DBSCH_INO_9325_1-Inquiry-into-finance-company-failures.htm and click on Terms of Reference

...& Fees for Financial Sector

The Ministry of Economic development (MED) has published a discussion paper on fees for financial service providers and financial advisers. It proposes initial registration and application fees ranging from \$350 to around \$1,385 for registration for authorised financial advisers, and around \$4630 for qualifying financial entities.

Submissions close on 13 November 2009. The fees discussion document is available at: <http://www.med.govt.nz>

Retirement Villages Disclosure Statements

The Department of Building and Housing (DBH) is consulting on the style and content of disclosure statements for retirement villages. These statements provide would-be residents with the information they need to make an informed choice about which retirement village, if any, to move into. At the moment statements include whether or not the retirement village is mortgaged and, if so, by how much and who to; the estimated financial return to residents, or their estate, at the end of their tenure; and weekly fees paid by residents.

The DBH is reviewing whether the statements can be shortened (which would cut operators' costs), and still retain the information that intending residents need when they are considering which retirement village best suits to their needs.

Submissions close 11 December 2009. A questionnaire is at www.dbh.govt.nz/retirement-villages and a discussion paper is at <http://www.dbh.govt.nz/UserFiles/File/Consulting/pdf/2009/what-do-you-think-should-be-included-in-a-retirement-village-disclosure-statement.pdf>

Mechanics of Broadband Rollout

The Government has decided to extend the time for submissions on a discussion paper called "Facilitating the Deployment of Broadband Infrastructure". This outlines what needs to be done by local fibre companies and other telecommunications companies to facilitate the roll-out of ultra-fast broadband and rural broadband, and what needs to be done in terms of accessing land.

It covers access to support structures (e.g., fibre cables, poles, and duct) and services (e.g., in-house ducting and wiring), access to land, and Resource Management Act (RMA) controls.

Submissions now close on 27 November 2009, with cross-submissions closing on 11 December 2009. Email them to facilitating.broadband@med.govt.nz, or post them to: Facilitating Broadband, ICT Regulatory Group, Ministry of Economic Development, PO Box 1473, Wellington. The discussion paper is at http://www.med.govt.nz/templates/MultipageDocumentTOC_42034.aspx

Broadband Partners Wanted

The Ministry of Economic Development (MED) has released an "Invitation to Participate" (ITP) form that sets out the requirements and details of the partner selection process for ultra-fast broadband investment.

People intending to participate in the partner selection process must notify MED of their intention by 13 November 2009, and proposals must be lodged 29 January 2010. More is at http://www.med.govt.nz/templates/ContentTopicSummary_41902.aspx

Whanau Wellbeing

A new approach to the delivery of Maori social and health services has been proposed by the Ministry of Social Development (MSD). A discussion paper called "Whanau Ora*: A whanau-centred approach to Maori wellbeing" outlines the preliminary work undertaken by the Whanau Ora Taskforce on a whanau-centred approach to Maori wellbeing. Among its proposals are:

- **whanau action and engagement:** whanau strengths are endorsed, whanau ownership of solutions and actions is encouraged, and partnerships between whanau and providers are the norm;
- **whanau-centred design and delivery of services:** as well as placing whanau at the centre of service delivery, this also involves building on the strengths and capabilities already present in whanau; and
- **iwi leadership:** while government-funded whanau-centred services and initiatives are supported, whanau, hapu and iwi have critical and distinct roles to play in facilitating whanau ora.

*"Whanau Ora" is about Maori families being supported to achieve their maximum health and well-being.

Submissions close on 30 November. You can download the discussion paper from <http://www.msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-and-our-work/work-programmes/initiatives/whanau-ora/whanau-ora-discussion-document.doc> and the terms of reference for the Whanau Ora Taskforce at <http://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/work-programmes/initiatives/whanau-ora/terms-of-reference.html>

Increases in ACC Levies

ACC is proposing increases to ACC levies which relate to:

- work levy rates - that provide cover for work-related personal injuries;
- earners' levy rates - that provide cover for non work-related personal injuries (e.g., at home or at sport); and
- motor vehicle rates - that provide cover for personal injuries involving moving motor vehicles on public roads.

Increases proposed:

- **for the Work Account**, the combined average levy rate per \$100 liable earnings would go up 16c;
- **for the Earners Account**, the levy rate for non-work claims in 2010/11 per \$100 liable earnings would go up 67c; and
- **for the Motor Vehicle Account**, the average levy per vehicle would go up \$30.28 (with greater rises for motorbike owners)

ACC says an increase in the number of claims received annually, rising health costs, and scheme extensions have been the major contributors to the need to increase levies to cover the current costs of the ACC Scheme.

It is separately looking at changes to some of the criteria measuring people's eligibility for ACC.

Submissions close on 10 November. They go to ACC, PO Box 242, Wellington 6140, fax 04 918 4395, email: consultation@acc.co.nz. More, including proposed levy rates for 2010-2011, is at www.acc.co.nz/consultation, or freephone 0800 ACC RATES (0800 222 728)

Transporting Animals: Draft Code

The draft Code of Welfare for Transport within NZ has been released for public consultation. This code will apply to anyone responsible for the welfare of all animals during transport within NZ. This includes the selection and preparation of animals for transport, loading and unloading, and travel, whether by land sea or air. Minimum standards and recommendations for best practice in the code relate to responsibilities for meeting code requirements, stockmanship and competency, equipment design and maintenance, preparation and selection of animals for transport, loading and unloading, travel, the provision of food, water and rest, ventilation, monitoring, specific requirements for land, sea and air transport, transport in emergencies, emergency humane destruction, and quality management.

Submissions close on 30 November 2009. They go to NAWAC Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, PO Box 2526, Wellington 6140, or you can email them to animalwelfare@maf.govt.nz. The draft code is at <http://www.biosecurity.govt.nz/regs/animal-welfare/stds/codes>

SMEs: Tax Payment Proposals

A report from the NZ Institute of Chartered Accountants (NZICA) and Tax Management NZ takes a fresh look at the way NZ small businesses (SMEs) calculate and pay tax, putting forward two proposals. They are:

- a **"Micro Business Taxation"** proposal targeting business activity operating on a very small turnover (unregistered for GST, earning less than \$60,000 per year) proposal (featuring a 15% flat tax rate); and
- a **"Small Business Taxation"** proposal for small businesses whose turnover is up to \$1.2 million.

The aim is to make tax compliance simple and practical, with small businesses having to spend no more than one hour on one return, and only having to make one payment every two months for income tax and GST compliance.

After feedback is collected, NZICA will take a final proposal to Government.

Comments close on 1 February 2010. The report is at <http://www.smetax.co.nz/reports/>, and you will can post comments on an interactive section of the website or email them to carla.feakin@nzica.com

Requirements for Teacher Registration

The NZ Teachers Council (NZTC) is looking for feedback on possible changes to requirements for teacher registration affecting the:

- teaching and learning environment for provisionally registered teachers (PRTs);
- duration of provisional registration;
- definition of a “teaching position”;
- definition of “recent teaching experience”; and
- introduction of a proposed new registration framework.

Submissions close on 27 November 2009. Email them to alastair.mclean@teacherscouncil.govt.nz or post them to NZTC, PO Box 5326 Wellington, 6145, Attention: A McLean. The consultation paper is at http://www.teacherscouncil.govt.nz/policy/regs_for_reg_consult.rtf

Forestry Allocation Plan

The Emissions Trading Scheme Amendment Bill includes changes to the forestry sector allocation. Because of this, the Government released another consultation paper on the subject called “The Pre-1990 Forest Land Allocation Plan (Consultation Draft) 2009” towards the end of October.

Submissions close on 22 November 2009. For more information visit the <http://www.maf.govt.nz/sustainable-forestry/ets/allocation.htm>

Public Transport Farebox Recovery

The NZ Transport Agency (NZTA) is consulting over Farebox recovery. The term “farebox” is used to describe the money collected from tickets (cash, prepaid, passes, and electronic purses) purchased by those who use public transport system. NZTA’s draft farebox recovery policy is designed to:

- help improve the effectiveness and efficiency of public transport services;
- help make sure that the costs and benefits of providing public transport services are shared fairly between those who use public transport and those who don’t;
- make sure regional councils throughout the country all have a consistent and clear approach to farebox recovery; and
- enable the NZTA to better benchmark and monitor farebox recovery percentages throughout NZ.

Submissions close on 30 November 2009. More is at <http://www.nzta.govt.nz/consultation/farebox-recovery-policy/index.html>

Lifejackets on Small Boats

Maritime NZ (MNZ) is currently consulting on navigational safety rules and the wearing of personal floatation devices (PFDs) – or lifejackets. Two proposed amendments to the Maritime Safety Rules include:

- the power to reserve an area for a specific reason to ensure the safety of users; and
- compulsory wearing of lifejackets in some circumstances. This amendment would require them to be worn on recreational craft less than 6m long unless permission is given by the skipper for them to be taken off (currently you do not have to wear a lifejacket unless the skipper instructs that they be worn or there is a heightened level of risk). Accident data has shown that most recreational boating fatalities could be prevented by wearing lifejackets in small craft.

Submissions close on 18 December 2009. A consultation paper, including an invitation to comment, is at <http://www.maritimenz.govt.nz/Publications-and-forms/Consultation/Part91-ITC.pdf>

Economic Standard of Living Statistics

Statistics NZ is reviewing the economic standard of living statistics. These statistics are used to monitor and understand income, wealth, and consumption trends and issues, and to help anticipate future changes. The last review on NZ income and wealth statistics was in 1991.

Submissions close 20 November 2009. More is at <http://www.population.govt.nz/sitecore/content/statistics/Home/Publications/StandardOfLiving/review-esol-consultation-paper.aspx>

Outdoor Pursuits Licences

It’s intended to grant two 15-year outdoor pursuits licences to Sir Edmund Hillary Outdoor Pursuits Centre Trust to undertake guiding and educational instruction on various areas of public conservation land within Tongariro Taupo, Wanganui, Wellington, Hawkes Bay, Auckland, East Coast Bay of Plenty, and Waikato Conservancies, and on Motu Kaikoura Island within Auckland Conservancy.

Submissions close on 17 December 2009. More information is at <http://www.doc.govt.nz/getting-involved/consultations/current/sir-edmund-hillary-outdoor-pursuits-centre-trust-concession-notification/>

IRD Consultations

Closing dates for comments on these consultations are in brackets:

- **Retirement villages - GST treatment:** This interpretation statement addresses the GST treatment of payments made to the owners or operators of retirement villages and their entitlement to input tax credits on supplies received for the purpose of a retirement village. It was previously released for consultation in February – March of this year (20 November 2009). The draft is at: <http://www.ird.govt.nz/public-consultation/>
- **Reimbursing shareholder-employees for motor vehicle expenses:** Clarifies the use of the mileage rate published by Inland Revenue to reimburse shareholder-employees, in particular, the employee criteria and whether the 5,000km limitation applies (30 November 2009). Reference number is ED0118.
- **Loose furniture for short-term hire:** This sets out the rate for "Furniture (loose)" in the "Hire Equipment (short-term hire of 1 month or less only)" asset category. An example of this is furniture hired to prospective home vendors (25 November 2009). Reference number for the item: DDG0143.

Email comments about any of IRD's consultations to public.consultation@ird.govt.nz. More information about each consultation is at <http://www.ird.govt.nz/public-consultation/>

Medsafe Consultations

Medsafe has published two discussion papers for your comment:

- **"Request for comments on proposed updates to the NZ Good Clinical Research Practice Guideline":** in this, Medsafe is proposing to consolidate and update the NZ guidelines relating to clinical trials. Submissions close on 30 November 2009. They go to Medsafe GCRP Consultation, Ministry of Health, PO Box 5013, Wellington, email becci_slyfield@moh.govt.nz (with "GCRP Consultation" in the subject line); and
- **"Review of the submission and publication processes for data sheets and Consumer Medicine Information on the Medsafe website":** in this one Medsafe is looking for feedback on the changes and timeline it has planned. Submissions close on 20 November 2009. Email comments (on the online form) to abby_cutfield@moh.govt.nz, with "Data sheet and CMI Consultation" in the subject line.

Both consultation papers are at <http://www.medsafe.govt.nz/hot/Consultation/contents.asp>

PHARMAC Consultations

PHARMAC is consulting on (submission closing dates are in brackets):

- **a review of the ways people receive subsidised pharmaceuticals in NZ.** There are two parts to this review: to determine whether a wider range of health professionals should be able to generate a subsidy for pharmaceuticals; and to review the various the way certain pharmaceuticals are delivered to eligible patients (24 December 2009). Submissions go to S Dougherty, PHARMAC, PO Box 10 254, Wellington 6143, email sean.dougherty@pharmac.govt.nz, fax 04 460 4995. The discussion paper is at <http://www.pharmac.govt.nz/2009/10/16/2009-10-16%20-%20PSED%20review%20discussion%20paper.pdf>
- **seven options for improving consumer participation in PHARMAC's work.** These are: a patient reference guide; a quarterly consumer-specific newsletter; occasional papers; formalising regular consumer meetings; consumer comment on recommendations from its clinical advisory committee; retrospective consumer audits; and consumer involvement in prioritising processes. It will also consider other options suggested (4 December 2009). Submissions go to C Jacobson at the address above or email corp.team.assist@pharmac.govt.nz. The paper is at <http://www.pharmac.govt.nz/patients/haveyoursay/ConsumerParticipation>
- **a proposal to fund solifenacin (Vesicare) and mesalazine (Asamax),** through a provisional agreement with CSL Biotherapies. Also includes price and subsidy reductions for various funded hydrocortisone preparations. Changes would run from 1 January 2010 (10 November 2009). Submissions go to G Williams, Therapeutic Group Manager, PHARMAC, email greg.williams@pharmac.govt.nz, or post to PHARMAC's address above.
- **a proposal relating to the listing of tiotropium bromide (Spiriva) inhalers** in the Pharmaceutical Schedule. Would result in a reduction in the net effective price of Spiriva until 1 July 2013 (12 November 2009). Submissions go to S Dougherty, Therapeutic Group Manager, PHARMAC, email sean.dougherty@pharmac.govt.nz, or post to PHARMAC's address above.

More on all PHARMAC's consultations is at <http://www.pharmac.govt.nz/consultation>

Electricity Commission Consultations

The Electricity Commission is consulting on (submission closing dates are in brackets):

- Minor Editorial Rule Changes (29 January 2010);
- Transmission pricing review: High-level options (7 December 2009);
- Managing locational price risk: options (7 December 2009);
- Scarcity pricing and compulsory contracting: options (7 December 2009);
- Consultation on dispatchable demand: options (16 November 2009);

- Publication of EGR Committee Minute (13 November 2009); and
- AUFLS Exemptions – Issues and Options (13 November 2009).

Email submissions to submissions@electricitycommission.govt.nz, noting the name of the consultation in the subject header. Alternatively, post them to: K Hudson, Electricity Commission, PO Box 10041, Wellington. More is at <http://www.electricitycommission.govt.nz/consultation>

ERMA Consultations

The Environmental Risk Management Authority (ERMA) is consulting on (submission dates are in brackets):

- **HRE09001:** Management of LPG, Propane and Butane Gas: note that, as well as affecting businesses, this proposal would affect the use and storage of LPG bottles in homes. ERMA proposes that: LPG, propane and butane contain an odorant (this would give a characteristic smell to each); new signage requirements when these are stored indoors or included in a refrigeration system; and LPG cylinders used in domestic properties should follow the recommendations covering storage and handling of LPG (23 November 2009);
- **ERMA200108:** to import or manufacture Glacier for the control of various fungal diseases in crops (7 December 2009);
- **ERMA200094:** reassessment of the approval for emulsifiable concentrate containing 50g/litre esfenvalerate to add a flammability classification (3 December 2009);
- **ERMA200078:** to import Trexel as a plant growth regulator containing the active ingredient trinexapac-ethyl, to reduce the risk of lodging in wheat, barley and oats, and to promote seed yield increases in ryegrass seed crops (2 December 2009);
- **ERMA200125:** to import NOR002 as a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory injection for use in dogs, cats and horses (1 December 2009);
- **ERMA200090:** to import or manufacture Canyon to use for the control of nematodes in Carrots, Kiwifruit, Kumara, Lucerne and Potatoes (24 November 2009);
- **ERMA200067:** Yearly Chemical Review. Consultation on a review of the classifications of 40 chemicals and substances containing these chemicals (20 November 2009);
- **ERMA200046:** to import or manufacture Pyromite as an insecticide containing the active ingredient fenpyroximate for the control of mites in apples and pears (18 November 2009);
- **ERMA200086:** to import or manufacture Vienna to use for the control of annual grasses and broadleaf weeds in carrots, forest nurseries, certain fruit crops, transplanted lettuce, maize, onions and peas (18 November 2009);
- **ERMA200123:** to import or manufacture BM1991RH as a veterinary medicine for use in cattle (12 November 2009);
- **ERMA200122:** to import or manufacture BM1981RH as a veterinary medicine for use in cattle (12 November 2009);
- **ERMA200117:** to import or manufacture BD1990RH as a veterinary medicine for use in cattle (10 November 2009); and

- **ERMA200116:** to import DAI, and manufacture BD1620RH, for use as a veterinary medicine for use in cattle (10 November 2009).

All Submissions go to ERMA NZ, PO Box 131, Wellington 6140, email submissions@ermanız.govt.nz. More is at <http://www.ermanız.govt.nz/consultations/consult-apps.html>

Courts of NZ Consultations

There are two:

- **Written Briefs:** the Rules Committee seeks submissions on its second consultation paper on changes to the High Court Rules relating to written briefs; and
- **Rules of Discovery:** comment is sought as to whether there should be change to the rules on discovery, and, if so, the form these should take. This consultation paper sets out the background and three options.

Submissions for both close on 20 November 2009. Email them to S Klinger, email sophie.klinger@justice.govt.nz, or post them to Clerk to the Committee, Auckland High Court, PO Box 60, Auckland. More is at http://www.courtsofnz.govt.nz/about/system/rules_committee/consultation

Standards NZ Draft Standards

There are two draft standards currently up for comment:

- AS/NZS 61558.2.16:2010 **Safety of Power Transformers, Power Supplies, Reactors and Similar Products** for supply voltages up to 1 100 V Part 2.16: Particular requirements for switch mode power supply units and transformers for switch mode power supply units. Submissions close on 14 December 2009. An online form/more information is at <http://shop.standards.co.nz/drafts/DR09927CP-DR09927CPAS-NZS61558.2.16Ed1.pdf>; and
- (Revision of AS/NZS 4602:1999). Part 1: **Garments for general use**. Submissions close on 20 November 2009. An online form/more information is at <http://shop.standards.co.nz/drafts/DR09062-DR09062.pdf>

Tenure and Pastoral Lease Reviews

The following reviews are being undertaken:

- **Hunter Hills Tenure Review.** Public submissions are being sought on the Preliminary Proposal for the Hunter Hills Pastoral Lease tenure review. Submissions close on 21 December 2009. More at <http://www.linz.govt.nz/crown-property/news-stats-reporting/crown-property-in-the-news/2009/20091024-hunter-hills-preliminary-proposal/index.aspx>
- **Rollesby Tenure Review.** Public submissions are being sought on the Preliminary Proposal for the Rollesby Pastoral Lease tenure review. Submissions close on 23 November 2009. More is at <http://www.linz.govt.nz/crown-property/news-stats-reporting/crown-property-in-the-news/2009/20090926-rollesby-preliminary-proposal/index.aspx>

- **Holbrook Tenure Review.** Public submissions are being sought on the Preliminary Proposal for the Holbrook Pastoral Lease tenure review.

Submissions close on 23 November 2009. More is at <http://www.lin.govt.nz/crown-property/news-stats-reporting/crown-property-in-the-news/2009/20090926-holbrook-preliminary-proposal/index.aspx>

Rural

NZ Wines are World-beaters

NZ wines have beaten contenders from across the world to win both the Sauvignon Blanc and Pinot Noir Trophies for the fourth year running at the UK-based International Wine and Spirit Competition (IWSC). The Competition awarded the IWSC Trophy for Sauvignon Blanc to the Villa Maria Cellar Selection Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc 2009 and the Bouchard Finlayson Trophy for Pinot Noir to Mount Dottrel Central Otago Pinot Noir 2007.

A full list of results is available at www.iwsc.net

Slow Rural Property Market

According to the Real Estate Institute of NZ (REINZ), the total number of farms sold in the three months to September 2009 was 178, compared 183 in the three months to August 2009, and well down on the corresponding period in 2008 (430 properties sold).

The greatest activity in the rural sector was in grazing properties, followed by horticulture. Northland and Bay of Plenty were the busiest areas during the three months.

Median farm sale prices were down in most districts in the three months to September 2009 compared with the August figures (however, Gisborne, Waikato, Hawkes Bay, and Taranaki's median price rose and Auckland remained the same).

... But Lifestylers Sit Pretty

Lifestyle property turnover and value continue to hold firm. The national median selling price for a lifestyle property in the three months to September 2009 was \$430,000, the same as the three months to August 2009. This compares to \$435,000 in the corresponding period in 2007 and 2008. A total of 1,365 lifestyle properties were sold in the three months to September 2009 compared with 1,342 in the three months to August 2009; well up on the 1,071 sold in the three months to September 2008 but down on the 1,645 sold in the corresponding period in 2007.

More is at http://www.reinz.org.nz/Reinz/index.cfm?C098EA2A-E298-5EDA-3ABC-A2FD95493308&obj_uuid=54FE49B9-18FE-7E88-4257-01C797BA2C7A

Grants to Plant Forest

The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) has granted \$4 million to 42 recipients to plant new forests (creating 2688 hectares of new forest in 2009 and 2010), following the third round of the Afforestation Grant Scheme's (AGS) public tender round, which closed on 30 April 2009. The next tender round is planned to close on 30 March 2010, for projects starting in the 2011/12 financial year.

For further information on the AGS or to download an AGS Public Tender Form, see <http://www.maf.govt.nz/climatechange/forestry/initiatives/ags/>

NZ's Second Montreal Process Report

The "Montréal Process" relates to the work of the Working Group on Criteria and Indicators for the Conservation and Sustainable Management of Temperate and Boreal Forests. This group was set up in Geneva, Switzerland in 1994 to work on the conservation and sustainable management of temperate and boreal forests (conifers are the dominant tree type in boreal forests).

Its report (which includes NZ forests for the second time) covers 12 countries: the others are Argentina, Australia, Canada, Chile, China, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Russian Federation, US and Uruguay. Collectively, these countries account for 83% of the world's temperate and boreal forests and 49% of the world's total forest area.

The report is at <http://www.maf.govt.nz/mafnet/publications/2008-nz-report-montreal-process/index.htm>

Entry Level Agrichemical Workshop

A growing number of district councils are insisting on completion of safe handling courses for all users of agrichemicals. In response, FarmSafe has developed a new entry-level agrichemical workshop which will be industry-recognised.

The one-day workshop is ideal for those new to working in the horticulture, viticulture, and pastoral sectors. Upon completion, participants will receive the "Introduction to Agrichemicals Certificate".

The workshop covers a wide variety of best practice information and participants will learn to recognise what chemicals may hurt them or the environment and how to address that, information on applying chemicals, how to store and dispose of chemicals, keep accurate records, and be informed of their responsibilities around environmental issues.

Major risks with chemical use are usually acute poisoning and skin irritation, and the long-term effects on health from poor chemical handling are still being discovered. So it makes good sense to read chemical labels thoroughly and use the correct clothing to minimise risk (a PVC apron, face shield, solvent resistant gloves and chemical resistant footwear should be standard).

For more information call FarmSafe on 0800 545 747

Latest Farm Monitoring Reports

The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry's (MAF) latest sheep and beef farm monitoring reports show better prices for lamb, sheep and cattle boosted income in the 2008/09 season. However, production was below usual in many parts of the country due to this year's drought or carryover effects from last year's.

In the coming year, production is expected to recover from the effects of the previous year's drought; however, farm gate prices are predicted to fall for all products due to the rising exchange rate and reduced demand in some markets.

A copy of the reports can be found on the MAF website:
<http://www.maf.govt.nz/mafnet/rural-nz/statistics-and-forecasts/farm-monitoring/>

Environment

Virtual Water: the Next Big Thing

As water allocation becomes a hot topic all over the globe, the Royal Society of NZ (RSNZ) is warning the next big challenge food and other producers face will be to report on the sustainable use of water. "Virtual water" is a concept being increasingly discussed. At its simplest, virtual water means the litres of water required to produce one kilogram of a particular product. For example, a litre of milk requires 200 litres of water on average to produce. A cup of tea requires 35 litres, mainly to water the tea bushes, while a cup of coffee requires 140 litres, an apple 70 litres, and a hamburger around 2400 litres, reflecting the water-intensity of cattle-raising as well as the water needs of the wheat which becomes buns.

In an emerging issues paper which discusses the rise of, and potential pitfalls with, "water footprinting," the RSNZ says as one of the top three global exporters of virtual water per head of population, NZ "will increasingly need to show use of water is sustainable."

Download the issues paper and find out more at
http://www.royalsociety.org.nz/Site/news/virtual_water_paper.aspx

Industrialised Countries' Greenhouse Gas

Harmful greenhouse gas emissions produced by industrialised countries rose for the seventh consecutive year in 2007, according to data submitted to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Emissions from the 40 industrialised countries with reporting obligations under the Convention rose by 1% between 2006 and 2007. In addition, the group of 37 industrialised countries with targets under the Kyoto Protocol slightly increased emissions between 2006 and 2007 by 0.1%.

More is at <http://unfccc.int/2860.php>

NZ's Greenhouse Gas Research Centre

State-owned AgResearch's Palmerston North campus will be the base of a new research centre made up of nine NZ research organisations looking for ways to cut agriculture greenhouse gases. The other eight are the Pastoral Greenhouse Gas Research Consortium, DairyNZ, Lincoln and Massey Universities, and Crown Research Institutes Landcare Research, NIWA, Plant and Food Research, and Scion. NZ hopes to form an alliance with other food producing countries so they can all cooperate on cutting agriculture emissions in a way that does not curb production and protects food supply.

A Recycling Tax? NZers Divided

A new law on minimising waste allows for compulsory recycling schemes – but NZers are almost evenly split over paying 10c an item extra at shops to recycle packaging. A new nationwide ShapeNZ survey of 2,397 people shows the country is split 36% for to 34% against any new per-item tax. Some 23% are neutral and 8% are not sure. Asked how they believe packaging recovery and recycling should be paid for, 58% say through local council rates and by the Government from general taxation.

Putting in place such a tax for containers is estimated to cost at least 10 cents per item, according to packaging industry research.

More is at <http://www.nzbcscd.org.nz/story.asp?StoryID=1029>

Self-setting Stoat Trap

A new self-setting trap to catch stoats has been undergoing field trials after being introduced by the Department of Conservation (DoC). Designed by industrial engineers 'Goodnature,' the "Henry" is a gas-powered, tree-mounted, re-setting killing device named after the pioneer in protecting native species against stoats – Richard Henry.

The trap, which is specifically designed to deal with stoats and rats, has a CO₂ powered piston which is tripped when the target pest enters it. The pest dies instantly and falls to the ground. The trap is "baited" with a long-life meat derivative lure, and is able to reset itself at least 12 times before needing attention, making it at least six times cheaper to use than conventional traps.

More is at <http://www.doc.govt.nz/about-doc/news/media-releases/doc-and-local-designers-come-up-with-home-grown-kiwi-saver/>

NZ's Top Ten Birds

In a flying finish, an earth-bound bird – the kiwi - winged its way to victory as Forest and Bird's Bird of the Year with 1586 votes (only taking the lead in the final days of polling). The kiwi has fared badly in this annual popularity contest, and last year, it failed to even reach the final 10. Its main rivals - the rifleman and the kea - clocked up more than 1000 votes each in a competition that saw more than 11,000 people flock to the polls. This year's top 10 birds are: 1: Kiwi; 2: Rifleman; 3: Kea; 4: Kakapo; 5: Tui; 6: Takahe; 7: Fernbird; 8: Fantail; 9: Karearea/native falcon; and 10: Pukeko.

A Northland National Park?

NZ Conservation Authority (NZCA) is to investigate creating a new National Park in the Waipoua Forest in Northland. The area includes Tane Mahuta (Lord of the Forest) NZ's largest known living Kauri tree - and Trounson Kauri Park which has a dense stand of Kauri. The Northland Kauri forests are also home to several threatened species, such as North Island brown kiwi, kukupa (NZ pigeon), pekapeka (bats), and Kauri snails.

The investigation will involve consultation with the tangata whenua, Te Iwi o Te Roroa, local authorities, and the public.

More is at <http://www.doc.govt.nz/getting-involved/consultations/current/kauri-national-park-proposal/>

River Quality/Groundwater Quality

Tables ranking the water quality of our major rivers have recently been released, along with a national report on groundwater quality. The groundwater report pools together data from around 1000 monitoring wells and from regional councils and Crown Research Institutes.

More on the water quality of rivers is at <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/environmental-reporting/freshwater/river/league-table/river-water-quality-league-tables.html>, and more on the groundwater report is at <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/publications/ser/groundwater-quality-trends-2008/>

Atlas of NZ Reptiles/Amphibians

The Department of Conservation (DoC) has released NZ's first electronic atlas of reptiles and amphibians, with information on more than 100 different native species. By publishing the atlas DoC hopes to attract new sighting records and help people learn more about our native reptiles and frogs.

The electronic atlas can be accessed via the DoC website on www.doc.govt.nz/nzherpatlas

Recent Wind Farm News

The latest wind farm news includes:

- Meridian Energy is to start building its 64 megawatt (MW) Te Uku Wind Farm, near Raglan. Te Uku will be the first wind farm in the upper North Island;
- Windflow Technology and Mighty River Power's 12.5 MW Long Gully wind farm has received consent; and
- Meridian Energy says all 62 turbines are now operational at its 142 MW Project West Wind.

Water Subsidies: Small Communities

In the latest round of applications (the last to be assessed under the scheme's old criteria), the Sanitary Works Technical Advisory Committee (SaWTAC) has recommended 66 of the 72 drinking water applications be funded, and three of the nine sewerage applications. This equates to \$19 million of subsidies for small communities to help them improve drinking water supplies and another \$5.8 million for new sewerage systems.

The drinking water assistance applications came from territorial authorities, marae and community organisations, all with communities of under 5000 people.

Solar-Powered Shingles

Dow (the big American chemical company) has developed solar roof shingles. The company is ready to start production of asphalt shingles that incorporate a layer of thin-film solar panel. Since they can be nailed to a roof like regular shingles, they require no specialized labour or installation. That means lower installation costs, which means electricity generated from solar power will be that little bit cheaper. Limited production is expected to start next year in the US before ramping up in 2011.

More is at <http://blogs.wsj.com/environmentalcapital/2009/10/09/fiddling-on-the-roof-dows-solar-powered-shingles/>

Ancient Creatures Discovered in NZ

Some of the world's most ancient and fascinating animals have been re-discovered in southern NZ and prospects for their survival look good – provided groundwaters and wetlands are protected. Over the past two years, DoC and NIWA workers and scientists painstakingly searching for phreatoicids (a very primitive crustacean - pronounced free-at-o-ik-ids) have found them in 66 places.

More is at <http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/SC0910/S00007.htm>

Tourism

Tourism: a Pretty Good Year

Overall, total tourism spending by domestic and international tourists increased 1.1% (\$226 million) to \$21.7 billion in the year ended March 2009, according to Statistics NZ's Tourism Satellite Account: 2009. Other results for the year:

- spending by international tourists in NZ decreased 0.9% (\$87 million). The fall is the first since 1999;
- domestic tourists spent \$12.4 billion, an increase of 2.6% from the previous year;

- international tourism contributed \$9.3 billion (16.4%) to NZ's total exports of goods and services;
- direct tourism value-added decreased 4.4% (\$296 million) to \$6.4 billion, or 3.8% of gross domestic product (GDP). The contribution to GDP in the previous year was 4.1%;
- the indirect value-added of industries supporting tourism generated an additional \$8.7 billion to tourism;
- the tourism industry directly employed 94,600 full-time equivalent employees (4.9% of total employment in NZ), an increase of 0.4% from the previous year; and
- tourists generated \$1.6 billion in goods and services tax (GST) revenue.

The Tourism Satellite Account: 2009 is the first in this series of publications to work to a new "value-added" international standard introduced by the United Nations World Tourism Organisation. More is at www.stats.govt.nz or via the Statistics NZ Information Centre.

More Visitor Arrivals

Visitor arrivals in September 2009 (172,400) were up 14,700 (9%) compared with September 2008, Statistics NZ said recently. This is the largest monthly percentage increase in visitor numbers since April 2006. Arrivals from Australia (up 12,600 or 15%) were the major contributor.

NZ's annual net PLT (permanent and long-term) migration balance was a gain of 17,000 in the September 2009 year, up from 4,400 in the September 2008 year. The increase in net migration was driven largely by 12,100 fewer PLT departures compared with the previous year. There were also 600 more PLT arrivals.

More is at http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/population/Migration/InternationalTravelAndMigration_MRSep09.aspx

Review of Adventure Tourism

The Department of Labour is carrying out a review of risk management and safety in the adventure tourism industry. The review, which will cover all commercial adventure tourism, will consider: the number of operators and events; current regulations; the authorities responsible for monitoring; controls on entry into the sector; education of tourists; standards and guidelines that apply; licensing systems; auditing, monitoring, and quality assurance systems; the degree of injury reporting; and risk management and safety provisions.

Consultation with operators and other stakeholders is planned.

The terms of reference for this review are at http://img.scoop.co.nz/media/pdfs/0910/Microsoft_Word_TOR_FINAL.pdf

NZ: UK's Favourite Destination

NZ has turned in a winning performance in the UK, being voted favourite long-haul country by readers of the Guardian, the Observer and guardian.co.uk. At the annual Reader's Travel Awards announced recently, NZ beat Cambodia, Chile, Vietnam and Japan to take the top spot. Air NZ was named second-favourite long-haul carrier after Singapore Airlines.

Health and Welfare

NZ's Public Health System: Changes

Following on from the 2009 Ministerial Review Group's (MRG's) 170 recommendations about our public health system, a National Health Board (NHB) is to be set up a unit within the Ministry of Health. Its role will be supervision of the \$9.7 billion dollar spend on hospital and primary health services. The NHB will:

- sit within the Ministry of Health with a General Manager and a Chair of an advisory board who reports directly to the Minister of Health;
- take over funding and planning of specialist national services such as paediatric oncology, clinical genetics, and major burns; and
- take over infrastructure planning of IT, Workforce and Capital management from the 21 DHBs and other agencies.

Other MRG recommendations being set in place will involve:

- creating a Shared Services Establishment Board to start consolidating administrative functions such as payroll and purchasing currently spread across 21 DHBs and regional shared agencies;
- strengthening regional cooperation in service planning and delivery;
- devolving programme of funding of up to \$2.5 billion, currently managed by the Ministry of Health, where appropriate to DHBs;
- re-orienting the National Health Committee to focus on improving value for money and prioritising new health technology and interventions; and
- increasing clinical leadership and clinical networks.

The changes will begin immediately.

The Ministry of Health is to report by the end of the year on: expanding the remits of PHARMAC and MEDSAFE to include the prioritisation and procurement of medical devices, and establishing a separate Quality Improvement Agency (the report will be carried out in consultation with the Treasury and State Services Commission).

More information is at <http://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/major+push+lift+public+health+performance>

Under Sixes: No Cough/Cold Medicines

Medsafe has accepted the recommendation of the Cough and Cold Review Group that cough and cold medicines should not be given to children under six years of age (with the exception of those containing only bromhexine). Medsafe will now work with manufacturers to put the recommendations in place as soon as possible.

More, including the minutes of the Cough and Cold Review Group's meetings, can be found at <http://www.medsafe.govt.nz/hot/alerts/CoughandCold/CoughandCold.asp>

Alcohol Use in NZ...

This report presents the key findings about alcohol use and alcohol-related harm among NZ adults, from the 2007/08 NZ Alcohol and Drug Use Survey. Key findings include:

- alcohol is the most commonly used recreational drug in NZ, with 85% of adults (aged 16–64 years) having had an alcoholic drink in the past year;
- the prevalence of risky drinking is high among NZers. Six in ten people who drank alcohol in the past year had consumed enough alcohol to feel drunk at least once in the past year, while one in ten had done so on a weekly basis;
- alcohol-related harm continues to be a social and health issue in NZ. Some of the most common harmful effects experienced by people in the past year due to their own alcohol use were harmful effects on their friendships or social life (7%), having had days off work or school (6%) and injuring themselves (5%); and
- youth, Maori men and women, Pacific men, and people living in more deprived neighbourhoods were more likely to drink higher amounts than recommended, to engage in risky drinking behaviours, and to experience more harm due to alcohol use.

The report is at <http://www.moh.govt.nz/moh.nsf/indexmh/alcohol-use-in-nz-oct09>

...& Young People & Alcohol

A new Ministry of Health (MoH) survey indicates that young people experience higher levels of harm from their own drinking or other people's drinking than other people. The report shows that in the past year:

- about 5.8% of people aged 16–64 years had consumed alcohol daily, and 10.7% people aged 16–64 years had consumed a large amount of alcohol at least once a week;
- 16.8% people aged 16–64 years reported having driven a motor vehicle while feeling under the influence of alcohol, while 9.5% reported having worked while feeling under the influence of alcohol;

- the most common harmful effects from alcohol use experienced by adults aged 16–64 years were: harmful effects on their friendships or social life (6.9%), having days off work or school (5.6%), harmful effects on their home life (5.4%), harmful effects on their financial position (5.4%), and injuring themselves (4.7%);
- youth aged 16–17 years were about as likely to have consumed alcohol as people aged 18–64 years, and 16–17 year-olds experienced much higher levels of harmful effects as a result of their drinking, compared with other age groups;
- people aged 18–24 years had a high level of risky drinking behaviour, with 29.8% of men and 15.8% of women in this age group drinking a large amount of alcohol at least once a week;
- Maori, particularly Maori women, were more likely than others to have experienced harmful effects in the past year from their own and other people's drinking; and
- people living in more socio-economically deprived areas were more likely to have consumed a large amount of alcohol at least once a week, more likely to have received help to reduce their level of alcohol use and/or wanted help but not received it, and more likely to have experienced harmful effects from their own alcohol use.

MoH's "Alcohol Use in NZ" is at <http://www.moh.govt.nz/moh.nsf/indexmh/alcohol-use-in-nz-oct09>

ACC Sensitive Claims: New Process

ACC has made some changes to the way it manages sensitive claims (claims for mental injury resulting from sexual abuse or sexual assault). Amongst these is one requiring all claimants to now have a diagnosis from the American Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM IV), with only those trained at a tertiary level in the use of this manual being able to assess claims for mental injury.

There will be an independent clinical review of the changes in six month's time.

Concerned clients or victims of sexual assault or abuse, or their family or friends, can contact ACC directly on a freephone number (0508 222 233) or by email - sensitiveclaims@acc.co.nz

Global Diabetes Epidemic

The International Diabetes Federation (IDF) has released new data showing that 285 million people worldwide have diabetes (7% of the world's population). If the current rate of growth continues unchecked, the total number will exceed 435 million in 2030.

The Pacific island nation of Nauru has the world's highest rate of diabetes, with almost a third of its adult population (30.9%) living with the disease. It is followed by the United Arab Emirates (18.7%), Saudi Arabia (16.8%), Mauritius (16.2%), Bahrain (15.4%), Reunion (15.3%), Kuwait (14.6%), Oman (13.4%), Tonga (13.4%), and Malaysia (11.6%).

More about the latest IDF Diabetes Atlas at <http://www.diabetesatlas.org/> and more about the IDF is at <http://www.idf.org/>

Free Online Posture Programme

The NZ Chiropractors' Association (NZCA) is urging all kiwis to take three minutes a day to improve posture, core strength and spinal health through the Straighten Up NZ programme, available free online. It is a World Health Organisation (WHO) endorsed exercise programme consisting of a series of basic stretches and is designed to be undertaken daily.

More is at: www.straightenup.org.nz

Medicines Terminology Report

The main recommendation in a recently-released NZ Medicines Terminology* Recommendation Report is for NZ to "adopt and adapt" the Australian medicines terminology that will eventually be included in the international Systematised Nomenclature [classification] of Medicine Clinical Terms (SNOMED CT - the most comprehensive, multilingual clinical healthcare terminology in the world). Currently, different groups in the NZ health and disability sector use a variety of electronic medicines information, and it's believed that having one set of terms for medicine will make it easier to share information.

*A medicines terminology – or vocabulary - is used to identify medicine ingredients, therapeutic groups, and the relationships between them.

The report is available at: <http://www.hisac.govt.nz/moh.nsf/indexcm/hisac2-standards-approved-hiso10024>

Factors Related to Melanoma

A Trans-Tasman study recently conducted by MoleMap has identified six factors that help predict the risk of Kiwis developing melanoma. They are: a history of blistering sunburns as a teenager; red or blonde hair; marked freckling on the upper back (a sign of excessive sun exposure); family history of melanoma; history of scaly/crusty patches of skin on sun exposed areas; and outdoor summer jobs for three or more years as a teenager.

In addition, a genetic predisposition for melanoma (as yet scientists have not been able to identify the gene responsible for causing melanoma), people with a large number of moles or "funny looking moles", and higher socio economic classes have all been linked to an increase incidence of melanoma.

For more information visit www.molemap.co.nz

Senior Holiday Care for Summer

Access Homehealth has teamed up with St John to launch a new service this summer called "Holiday Care from St John". This is a short term "peace of mind" service for seniors while their children are away on holiday. Initially, the service is being offered to most areas of the South Island from October 2009 to January 2010.

There are three main service packages available:

- **Holiday Care:** a monitored St John Lifelink medical alarm, a 24 hour St John assistance number for children to call if they are worried about Mum or Dad, and a First Aid Handbook;
- **Holiday Care Plus:** offers the benefits of Holiday Care plus a daily phone call to Mum or Dad from St John; and
- **Holiday Care Extra:** offers the benefits of Holiday Care Plus together with a two-hour weekly block of home assistance from Access Homehealth (things like bringing in the rubbish, helping prepare a meal, or doing the cleaning and laundry).

Brochures explaining more about the programme are available at Access Homehealth branch offices throughout the South Island.

For more information please call St John on 0800 50 23 23

Watercress/Puha on the Menu

A team of researchers at Lincoln University have studied watercress and puha that may have taken up 1080 from baits after an aerial 1080 operation. Their research showed that with watercress, a 70 kg person would need to eat over two tonnes of affected watercress at one sitting to have a 50% chance of dying from 1080 poisoning. The puha results were even lower.

Camping Safely with Gas

From the Ministry of Economic Development's Energy Safety Group come the following safety tips for campers:

- use camping appliances outside whenever possible;
- never use gas appliances in confined spaces such as small tents;
- if they are used inside, make sure that there's plenty of space and ventilation;
- the ventilation should allow air to move across the space with openings at high and low levels;
- keep appliances in good condition;
- follow the manufacturer's instructions;
- give your flame room to burn if you are cooking - it should touch no more than the bottom of the pot;
- don't use appliances if they are giving off a smell because this indicates leaking gas or emissions linked to carbon monoxide poisoning; and
- if your gas appliance isn't working properly, stop using it.

Sexual Violence Taskforce Report

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Te Toiora Mata Tauherenga - the Report of the Taskforce for Action on Sexual Violence - has been released. The report, which includes recommendations, mainly reflects the views of the people who deliver front-line services for sexual violence victims and treatment for offenders.

A summary of the report is at <http://fines.govt.nz/policy-and-consultation/taskforce-for-action-on-sexual-violence/policy-and-consultation/taskforce-for-action-on-sexual-violence/documents/tasv-report-summary>

...& MWA Sexual Violence Reports

The Ministry of Women's Affairs (MWA) has published five reports on sexual violence against adults in NZ after investigating over two years why so few sexual violence cases result in prosecution.

The reports and background material are at <http://www.mwa.govt.nz/our-work/svrproject/index.html>

New Human Tissue Standard

Standards NZ recently published a new Standard, "Non-therapeutic Use of Human Tissue" NZS 8135:2009. The Standard ensures that where a person, or their family/whanau, has given consent to the use of human tissue for non-therapeutic purposes (for example, research or education) correct processes are followed for collection, storage, use, and return/disposal of tissue.

You can download NZS 8135:2009 from www.standards.co.nz (enter '8135' in the search area), or email enquiries@standards.co.nz, or freephone 0800 782 632

Education/Training

New National Education Standards

Newly-launched National Standards from the Ministry of Education in reading, writing and maths are aimed at setting clear, consistent expectations of students in NZ schools. The standards will be introduced in English-medium primary and intermediate schools next year.

For examples of the National Standards and more information on reporting to parents, go to www.minedu.govt.nz

Five New Trades Academies

The five successful applicants selected to open trades academies in 2011 will be based at: Northland College; Waikato Institute of Technology and Cambridge High School; Wellington Institute of Technology; Taratahi Agricultural Centre; and Catlins Area School. Trades academies are part of the Youth Guarantee programme. They are based on partnerships between schools, tertiary institutions, industry training organisations and employers. Students can earn both NCEA credits and a tertiary qualification.

Job Training for Prisoners

At least 1000 extra prisoners will gain skills and work experience through a Department of Corrections Prisoner Skills and Employment Strategy. This aims to reduce re-offending by giving prisoners the skills to gain employment when they are released from custody.

Of the extra prisoners gaining skills and work experience, most (77%) will train in Corrections Inmate Employment Industries and unit based employment, with 19 % learning through trade and technical training delivered by institutes of Technology and Polytechnics. Around 5 percent of the extra training will be through literacy and numeracy courses.

Dealing with School Bullying: Resource

Following an inquiry into the safety of students at school in relation to bullying and violence, the Office of the Children's Commissioner (OCC) is publishing a complementary resource "Responsive Schools" this year. The OCC plans to have one copy available for every school in NZ. "Responsive Schools" outlines the messages from the full report on how to address bullying and violence. The publication also provides examples of some of the successful approaches schools around NZ have taken to formulate appropriate responses to specific incidents.

The report is at http://www.occ.org.nz/data/assets/pdf_file/0016/6028/OCC_SchoolSafetyReport_160309.pdf

Review of Parenting Programmes

The Family Start and Early Start intervention programmes are to be independently reviewed. These programmes, which were set up in the 1990s, deliver intensive home-based services to families with high needs to help parents support their children.

The review will look at how the programmes were set up, how they're delivered, who they're delivered to, and whether they are delivering value to the taxpayer. It's expected a final report will be with the Minister of Social Development before the end of the year.

Transport

Winter Tyres: New Rule

A new Tyres and Wheels Amendment Rule sets safety standards for winter tyres, and specifies a greater minimum tread depth for winter tyres. These tyres are usually marked with a snowflake or mountain symbol and/or the word "studless".

Research has found that mixing winter and conventional tyres can make a vehicle difficult to control in wet conditions and during hard braking. The rule will come into force in April 2010.

Employment

The full Hays Quarterly Report can be viewed at www.hays.net.nz/forecast

Hiring Expectations Up

Hiring expectations up for second consecutive quarter, according to the latest Hudson Report. Details include:

- one in five employers expect to increase permanent staff levels;
- sentiment in the IT industry remains stronger compared to other industries, with a net 25% of employers intending to increase permanent staff;
- increasing demand for contract/temporary employees; and
- the Lower North Island the most optimistic across regions, although the Upper North Island reports the strongest increase in confidence.

More is at <http://nz.hudson.com/node.asp?kwd=the-hudson-report#octdec2009>

Wage Income & Rates

The latest annual NZ Income Survey for the three months to June 2009 shows the median hourly rate for wage and salary earners was \$19.47, a rise of 3.8% over the June 2008 quarter (the median is the wage which half the population earn less than and half earn more than, and is more representative than the average which is pulled higher by a relatively small number of high earners).

However, when looking at weekly earnings for all people over 15 years old (including those not earning), there is a different picture. The total median weekly income has barely changed – from \$536 to \$538. Wage and salary weekly income has risen faster, from \$447 to \$455, but only by 1.8% – just below inflation of 1.9% in the period.

More is at http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/work_income_and_spending/Income/NZIncomeSurvey_HOTJun09qtr.aspx

Employment Recruiting: Hotspots

The latest Hays Quarterly Report shows hiring intentions are improving and a greater variety of skills are in demand than we've seen throughout the year. According to the report, these include:

- qualified accountants with three to four years experience, internal auditors at all levels, experienced company accountants, tax consultants, credit controllers and payroll clerks;
- customer service staff, telesales and account managers to bring in more business and retain clients;
- senior engineers with business development skills and existing clients;
- trade-qualified painters, decorators and carpenters; and
- all-rounders who can adapt quickly to a changing office environment and additional duties.

New Job-seeking Partnership

Work and Income (WINZ) are working in partnership with the Recruitment and Consulting Services Association (RCSA). The RCSA has over 700 recruitment agencies throughout NZ, and the partnership allows WINZ people to tap into vacancies that traditionally haven't been available to them through Work and Income. In turn, RCSA benefits by providing their employers with access to a more diverse talent pool (as well as allowing their own job-seeking clients to tie in with Work and Income to check they're getting all the financial support they're entitled to while they're between jobs).

Fewer Work Injuries

According to Statistics NZ, total work-related injury claims (that is, those made to ACC for injuries occurring while a worker is at work or travelling to or from work) fell from 246,800 claims in 2005 to 235,000 claims in 2007. And provisionally, there were 224,900 work-related claims for the year ended December 2008.

As total claims have fallen, so has the incidence rate (worked out by dividing the number of claims by the number of full-time equivalent employees - FTEs) of injury.

Occupations such as labourers traditionally have the highest incidence rate, but this has fallen from a high of 292 claims per 1,000 FTEs in 2005 to 273 claims per 1,000 FTEs in 2007. In 2008, the provisional incidence rate for such occupations was 239 claims per 1,000 FTEs.

More information is at http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/health/Injuries/InjuryStatistics_MR08.aspx

Caregiver Shortage Predicted...

According to a report from the Department of Labour (DoL) the number of paid caregivers required in NZ will rise almost three-fold, from 17,900 in 2006 to 48,000 in 2036. This is because between 2006 and 2036 the proportion of NZ's population aged 65 or over, as a proportion of the working-age population, is expected to rise from 18 to 40%. The greatest increase will be in the proportion of the population aged 85 or more – the age at which the demand for caregivers is the highest. The same needs are also arising in countries such as Australia, Canada and the United States.

"The Future Demand for Paid Caregivers in a Rapidly Ageing Society" is at www.dol.govt.nz/services/LMI/workforce2020/ageing/paid-caregivers/index.asp

... & Migrant Carers for Elderly?

Two reports from Victoria University's Institute of Policy Studies say NZ and Australia need to develop programmes to bring in migrants if they are to care for their growing elderly populations. Migrants, many from the Pacific and Asia, already form a significant part of NZ's elderly caregiving workforce (especially, over the last 2 years, from the Philippines).

Both studies argue that policymakers on both sides of the Tasman need to carefully consider where future workers might come from and what models of migration might be appropriate for the host country, the country sending migrants and the migrants themselves.

The two reports are "Low skill temporary migration in NZ: Labour market and human rights law as a framework for managing future migration" and "Ageing NZ: The growing reliance on migrant caregivers". The Institute of Policy Studies is at <http://ips.ac.nz/index.html>

Annual Work Stoppages Decrease

Five work stoppages ended in the June 2009 quarter and 18 work stoppages ended in the June 2009 year, Statistics NZ said recently. Stoppages in the June 2009 year involved 1,551 employees, and losses of 1,783 person-days of work and an estimated \$0.3 million in wages and salaries. In comparison, the 30 stoppages in the June 2008 year involved 7,200 employees, and losses of 17,929 person-days of work and an estimated \$3.9 million in wages and salaries.

Housing

Housing Market Update

The results of the latest quarterly survey of the NZ housing market carried out by Quotable Value show signs of optimism in the housing market, that reflect a rapid turnaround in property values that was largely unexpected. The majority of respondents now expect house prices to rise over the coming year, rather than fall. There are more interested buyers in the market, and also a shortage of properties available for sale (with the combination leading to quick sales and strong prices). Of the main factors influencing the decision to buy or sell, job security, financial pressures and lending conditions are now less important than they were last quarter, and the number of respondents intending to buy or sell in the next three months is up.

Values in Cities

Increasing values in recent months mean that most of the main centres now have values above the same time last year. In the Auckland Area values are now 0.6% above last year, the Wellington Area is 1.1% up, Christchurch 0.4% up, and Dunedin 2.2% up. Tauranga is still 1.8% below last year but has improved rapidly over recent months. Hamilton is the only main centre to drop back slightly and is now 0.9% below last year.

Values in Provincial Centres

Values in most of the provincial centres have not risen as much as the main centres in recent months. As a result most are still showing values below the same time last year. Whangarei is -4.2% compared to last year, Wanganui -2.5%, Nelson -0.5% and Invercargill -2.0%. New Plymouth at 2.9% and Palmerston North at 1.1% are exceptions, with both having values above the same time last year. In contrast to most of the rest of the country, continuing value declines in recent months have led to Rotorua (-3.7%), Gisborne (-9.0%) and Queenstown Lakes (6.3%) all still being below last year.

Quotable Value say comments suggest, though, that people remain cautious, particularly over whether positive signs in the economy will continue beyond the short term.

A map showing values by area is at <http://www.qv.co.nz/online/reports/propertyvaluemap.htm> and the survey is at <http://www.qv.co.nz/aboutus/pressreleases/housingsurvey09102009.htm>

Real Estate Code of Conduct

The Real Estate Agents Authority has released new rules which set the standard for the real estate industry when dealing with people buying or selling property in NZ.

Developed in consultation with the real estate industry, the code outlines clear expectations on professional and ethical conduct by all agents, branch managers and sales people when dealing with consumers. It also includes standards of professional competence and conduct, such as the requirement to act in good faith and deal fairly with all parties, and it details the expectation that those holding a real estate licence must act in the best interests of consumers. A new complaints process is also in place.

The Real Estate Agents Authority begins operating on 17 November 2009 when the Real Estate Agents Act 2008 comes into effect.

More is at www.reaa.govt.nz

Report on Construction Sector...

A report from the Department of Labour (DoL) charts the growth of the construction industry since the turn of the century and also considers how the industry responded to the downturn over the last two years. The analysis shows that a recovery in residential construction activity can be expected to begin before the end of the year, while employment might still fall a bit more before stabilising. The timing and extent of the recovery will depend on consumer and business confidence.

Download the report from at <http://www.dol.govt.nz/publications/lmr/construction-sector/summary.asp>

... & Confidence in Trades Services

The latest Builderscrack.co.nz Trade Job Size Index, which measures confidence in trades services, was down 2 points from August to 75 points in September. This is 25% below November 2008 levels - but 17% above lows reached in June 2009, indicating that consumers are slowly gaining the confidence to take on larger renovation and construction jobs.

The information also shows that bathroom renovations continue to grow in popularity, while poor weather this year seems to have reduced the number of major outdoor jobs like painting the exterior of the house or installing a deck.

The index is based on the cost of trade jobs completed through www.builderscrack.co.nz

SFO Warning: Housing Scam

The Serious Fraud Office (SFO) has publicised an investigation into two companies offering financial assistance to people in the housing market. The scheme centred around existing property owners allowing their properties to be used as the security for another loan that would assist people with limited resources to obtain a property, usually on a rent-to-buy basis. The company would arrange finance secured against the participants' properties, and would accept responsibility for meeting all of the outgoings, with the agreement usually being for a period of three years. Various incentives, such as lump sum payments, motor vehicles and mobile phones were offered to encourage existing home owners to participate in the scheme. The company was then to use the finance to assist another party to obtain a property, usually on a rent-to-buy basis.

Most participants didn't realise that the scheme required them to sign away ownership of their property to the company for the period of their participation, or that failure of the company to meet its obligations could well result in the loss of the property.

Ultimately, the companies could not meet all the required obligations for the repayment of loans, mortgages fell into arrears and properties of participants were lost.

The SFO says that the message is very simple: if you are going to be entering into significant financial arrangements, especially if it involves your home, get fully independent legal advice. This applies no matter how well you may think you know the person you are dealing with.

Energy

All About Light Bulbs

The Building Research Association of NZ (BRANZ) recently carried out a home lighting survey so the Electricity Commission could identify areas for electricity savings programme. Amongst the findings:

- there are 30 light bulbs per house: 18 incandescent bulbs (30 million in NZ), six compact fluorescent bulbs (CFL - 10 million in NZ), three halogens (5 million in NZ), one fluorescent tube (1.5 million in NZ), and two other types;
- compared to a 2001-4 survey there are now three more bulbs per home, 5 more CFL bulbs, five fewer incandescent bulbs, and 1.5 fewer halogens;
- the bulb used for most hours is the 50w halogen downlight (2.8 hours a day);
- rooms with the highest lighting power density are first the bathroom then the toilet; and
- amongst the areas recommended for electricity savings programmes are: promotion of energy substitutes for the 50w halogen downlight; education on energy efficient bulbs with dimmers; and use of efficient lighting in bathrooms and toilets.

The survey findings are at <http://www.electricitycommission.govt.nz/opdev/elec-efficiency/programmes/lighting/further-info/index.html>. Visit www.rightlight.govt.nz for more on saving power.

NZ's Oil Exports (2008)

The value of this country's oil exports in the 2008 calendar year was NZ\$2.8 billion, making it the third-highest export earner, ranking only behind dairy and meat exports. In the last 12 months the Government has received more than \$900 million in petroleum royalties and taxes.

Source: Parliamentary questions for oral answer - Wednesday, 14 October 2009

Justice/the Law

Victims Levy Bill Passed

The Sentencing (Offender Levy) Act imposes a \$50 levy on all convicted offenders at the point of sentencing in court, which will be collected after reparation and before fines. This is in addition to any sentence or court order. Funds from the levy will be used to fund additional entitlements and services for victims of serious crime:

- a funeral grant of \$4,500 to families of homicide victims, on top of the \$5,500 available through ACC;
- a court attendance grant of \$124 per person per day for up to five adult members of a homicide victim's family;
- an increase in the discretionary grant for families of homicide victims which are suffering financial difficulties, from \$1,500 to \$5,000;
- a homicide support service which will provide four paid homicide support co-ordinators to work with Victim Support;
- a court service for victims of sexual violence which gives them access to a trained adviser who understands the dynamics of sexual violence cases and the needs of victims;
- a grant of \$250 towards the expenses incurred as a result of sexual violence, such as replacing items of clothing collected for forensic evidence;
- increases in travel, accommodation and childcare assistance for victims attending High Court trials, from \$1,000 to \$3,000, and Parole Board hearings, from \$500 to \$1,500; and
- information about the court process and support services.

Boy Racers: Car Seizure

The Sentencing Amendment (Vehicle Confiscation) Act 2009 allows vehicles to be seized and destroyed as a new penalty for illegal street racing. The new law closes loopholes in the previous legislation that allowed illegal street racers escape penalty. In the past, illegal street racers have been able to sell vehicles prior to them being confiscated, and then buy them back. Illegal street racers have also avoided penalty by committing offences in a vehicle belonging to someone else.

Money Laundering Bill Passed

The Anti-Money Laundering and Countering Financing of Terrorism Act Bill aims to boost measures to counter money laundering by criminal gangs and organised crime, and to counter the financing of terrorism. The Act makes it easier to investigate organised crime, by following the illegal money trail through financial systems.

The Act is meant to go hand-in-hand with the Criminal Proceeds (Recovery) Act, passed by in April 2009, which can be used to attack criminal profits. It also puts in place measures established by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) - an inter-governmental body that sets international standards for combating money laundering and terrorist financing.

Police: Citizens' Satisfaction Survey

The results of an independent Citizens' Satisfaction Survey, measuring public perception of Police performance show:

- 72% of people surveyed by had full or quite a lot of trust and confidence in Police;
- 79% of people who had contact with Police were satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of service they received;
- 91% said Police staff were competent (2008: 89%);
- 72% had full/quite a lot of trust and confidence in Police (2008: 69%);
- 79% were "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the quality of service received (2008: 80%);
- 78% said their individual circumstances were taken into account (2008: 75%);
- 73% said it was an example of good value for tax dollars spent (2008: 70%);
- 66% felt safe/very safe in their neighbourhoods after dark (2008: 65%); and
- 67% agreed/strongly agreed police are involved in their communities' activities (2008: 58%)

More is at <http://www.police.govt.nz/news/release/21308.html>

Parliament

MMP Referendum at 2011 Election

The first referendum on the MMP voting system is to be held in conjunction with the 2011 general election (because there will be a high voter turnout - important in terms of the referendum result).

The referendum will ask voters two questions: whether they wish to change the voting system from MMP; and if they do, which alternative voting system they would prefer (a list of options will be provided).

If a majority of voters opt for a change from MMP in the 2011, there will be a second referendum at the 2014 general election. This will be a contest between MMP and the alternative voting system that receives the most votes in the first referendum. It will be binding. That means that if a majority of voters prefer the alternative voting system to MMP, the 2017 general election will be held under the alternative voting system.

A Bill empowering the first referendum will be introduced into the House in early 2010. The Bill will include the two questions to be asked in this referendum. The public will be able to comment on the Bill at the select committee stage of the Bill's progress.

Cabinet decisions in the next few month will cover the drafting of the actual questions to be asked, the alternative electoral systems to be offered, and how the referendum will be conducted.

Information on the MMP referendum can be found at <http://justice.govt.nz/policy-and-consultation/electoral> (this will be regularly updated); and more information about how referenda and elections are run in NZ can be found at www.elections.org.nz

Not-for-Profits

Funds for Working Together...

Four funding organisations — the Todd Foundation, Tindall Foundation, Wayne Francis Charitable Trust, and the J R McKenzie Trust — are introducing a new fund known as the Working Together More Fund — He Putea Mahi Tahi. The aim of the fund is assist community organisations to make a greater difference for the people and communities they serve, through working together more closely with other organisations. There will be a number of funding rounds.

Groups of two or more organisations which are interested in exploring how they might work more closely together can apply for financial assistance and/or expert help.

Applications to the first funding round close on 13 November 2009, the second in March 2010. An application form is at <http://www.tindall.org.nz/application-form/>. More is at <http://www.tindall.org.nz/working-together-more-fund>

...& JR McKenzie Trust Changes

The JR McKenzie Trust has been giving grants to community organisations helping to build stronger communities for 70 years. From next year its focus will be on contributing to long term changes to systems or ways of doing things that will improve the prospects or participation of disadvantaged people. Its grant making will shift from making many small annual grants to making fewer, larger, multi-year grants, and it will look for other ways, alongside grants, to contribute to the work of the organisations it supports.

For the next five years the Trust will focus on disadvantaged children and their families, and Maori development. Applications with a focus on other especially marginalised groups may also be considered.

More is on the Trust's website at www.irmckenzie.org.nz, or you can email info@irmckenzie.org.nz, or tel (04) 472 8876

N-f-Ps' Concerns: Finance/Fundraising

Not-for-Profit organisations are becoming increasingly concerned about finance and fundraising, according to a nationwide survey by international accounting firm Grant Thornton. Financing the organisation was identified by 72% of survey respondents as one of the three most significant issues they faced during these challenging economic times, with 47% saying that fundraising was also a key area of concern. Both these figures were up significantly from the last survey two years ago and the highest since the survey first started in 2003.

Other areas of significant concern are the role of the board in relation to governance, retaining and motivating staff and the managing and compliance costs of staff.

Download the report from <http://www.granthornton.co.nz/Assets/documents/pubSeminars/NFP-Survey-2009-2010.pdf>

For Charities Taking Deposits

The Charities Commission says that if a charity is a deposit-taker it should check new rules coming in that could affect the way some charities are governed and managed.

The Reserve Bank recently became the regulator of non-bank deposit takers in NZ. This means that everyone who meets the definition of "deposit-taker" will be required to comply with specific requirements it has set out.

The Commission says most charities won't be affected, because they don't take deposits as they have been defined. Those who are should talk to a solicitor. It also says the Bank has the power to exempt organisations from these obligations where they can be proven to be unduly onerous and burdensome.

An information sheet which includes the definition of "deposit-taker" is at http://www.charities.govt.nz/news/deposit_taker.pdf

Community Help: New Edition

The 18th edition of "Community Help" is now available. The aim of this directory is to help meet the information needs of people disadvantaged by lack of access to government agencies, and of people who want to get in touch with voluntary groups and community organisations. It describes the role of, and services provided by, 300 organisations, and gives national and regional contact details. Examples are: community law centres, district health boards, Maori and Pacific organisations, Crown agencies, and MPs.

Cost is \$55.95 (direct from the publisher) CR McPhail, PO Box 2091, Palmerston North, tel 06 357 1644, fax 06 357 1648

Business

Malaysia-NZ FTA

A new Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between NZ and Malaysia is aimed at giving access to the Malaysian market, with its growing population market of more than 28 million people.

Under the terms of the FTA, tariffs on 99.5% of NZ current exports will be eliminated by 2016, and it is estimated that the FTA will then provide duty-savings of over \$10 million per year for our exporters. It is believed that this market access will particularly help NZ exporters of education, environmental, management consulting, and veterinary services.

Currently, Malaysia is our eighth largest export destination, accounting for almost a billion dollars of exports in 2008. The FTA is scheduled to enter into force in 2010.

Documents related to the agreement are available at <http://mfat.govt.nz/Trade-and-Economic-Relations/Trade-Agreements/Malaysia/index.php>

Report on NZ's Bioeconomy

More than 70 percent of NZ's export earnings are derived from biology-based industries - the bioeconomy - which spans human and animal health, agriculture, horticulture and other natural products. Bioeconomy exports include finished products and ingredients destined for the food, cosmetics, nutraceutical and pharmaceutical industries.

An NZBIO report, "Driving Economic Growth through Bio-Based Industries: The 2009 Bioeconomy Industry Summit Report", says that bio-based industries have the potential to generate: increased GDP (Gross Domestic Product); increases in labour and resource productivity; innovative value-added export products; increased intellectual capital and skills within NZ; and niche opportunities in novel technologies for health and industrial/environmental applications.

The OECD has estimated the potential contribution of the Bioeconomy to NZ's GDP at up to \$182 billion by 2030.

Download the report at <http://www.nzbio.org.nz/portals/3/files/NZBIOsummitReportwebsite.pdf>

Manufacturing Activity Up...

Overall manufacturing expanded for the first time since April 2008, according to the BNZ Capital - Business NZ Performance of Manufacturing Index (PMI*). The seasonally adjusted PMI for September stood at 51.7, up 2.9 points from August and the first expansionary result since April 2008. *A PMI reading above 50.0 indicates that manufacturing is generally expanding; below 50.0 that it is declining.

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

...& August Retail Trade Up

In August 2009, seasonally adjusted core retail sales were up 1.2% (\$49 million), Statistics NZ said recently. Total retail sales also rose, up 1.1% (\$60 million), with two-thirds of all retail industries showing increases.

The total retail sales trend has been rising since February 2009, and has increased 1.4% since then, following a 13-month period of decline. Seasonally adjusted sales figures were up in all regions except Wellington and Waikato. Since February 2009, the trend for the North Island has risen 1.3%, while that for the South Island has declined 1.1%.

More is at

http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/industry_sectors/RetailTrade/RetailTradeSurvey_MRAug09.aspx

Privacy and CCTV : Guidance

The Privacy Commissioner has released a guide on how businesses, local government, and other agencies can use camera surveillance systems (CCTV) while still protecting privacy. It includes practical advice about such things as: deciding whether CCTV is right for them; planning the system properly; selecting the appropriate technology and positioning cameras; making employees, customers and others aware that CCTV is operating; storing and retaining the images; and giving people access to images of them.

View the Guidelines and the summary of guidelines and checklist at

<http://www.privacy.org.nz/privacy-and-cctv-a-guide-to-the-privacy-act-for-businesses-agencies-and-organisations/>

Money Matters

We're Doing OK: Keep Saving

NZ has escaped major damage in the worst global financial crisis in decades, but the experience has highlighted imbalances and vulnerabilities, the Reserve Bank says in its 2008-2009 Annual Report. The report notes that before the crisis, households had been consuming beyond their incomes, borrowing heavily offshore through their banks. In the past two years there has been a substantial correction in household savings and the external payments imbalance. However, further improvements will be needed to stop NZ's international debt position from mounting further.

Read the Annual Report at <http://www.rbnz.govt.nz/about/whatwedo/0094054.html>

High Dollar Not All Bad News

Research by Westpac economists indicates that, over time, the exchange rate has helped rather than harmed commodity producers. The bank's economists say the Kiwi tends to move in the same direction as world prices for NZ export commodities. This limits the hurt for commodity exporters' when world prices

fall, though it also limits some of the benefits when prices rise. Example: The bank's research shows over 2008 the commodity price index fell 24% in world price terms but the NZ dollar fell too, so by the end of the year, the index was unchanged from the start of the year in NZ dollar terms.

Read more at

[http://www.westpac.co.nz/olcontent/olcontent.nsf/content/FM_Bulletin_20090924B/\\$FILE/Buffer%20or%20buffer.pdf](http://www.westpac.co.nz/olcontent/olcontent.nsf/content/FM_Bulletin_20090924B/$FILE/Buffer%20or%20buffer.pdf)

CPI Annual Rise: Low

The consumers price index (CPI*) increased 1.7% from the September 2008 quarter to the September 2009 quarter, the lowest annual increase in five-and-a-half years. A big contributor to the lower annual increase came from petrol prices and airfares falling during the year, which partly offset higher prices for food, electricity, and local authority rates. *The CPI measures the rate of price change of goods and services purchased by households.

More is at

http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/economic_indicators/CPI_inflation/ConsumersPriceIndex_MRSep09qtr.aspx

Superannuitants: Rest & Travel Easy

The recently passed Social Assistance (Payment of NZ Superannuation and Veteran's Pension Overseas) Amendment Bill will make it easier for superannuitants and veteran's pensioners to live and travel overseas, by revamping the overseas payment policy that's been in place since 1990.

A new payment rate means a superannuitant or veteran's pensioner will be able to receive up to the full rate of their entitlement, depending on how long they've lived in NZ between the ages of 20 and 65 years. And, if someone serves time in the armed forces, receives special medical treatment or training abroad, works in an embassy or volunteers overseas they'll still be counted as residing in NZ under the payment formula.

Some Crisis Measures Removed

The Reserve Bank has removed or altered some of the temporary emergency facilities put in place during the financial crisis in 2008. It has:

- removed the Term Auction Facility (TAF) where banks have been able to borrow funds for 3, 6 and 12 months using eligible collateral (such as Residential Mortgage Backed Securities – RMBS - registered bank bills, NZ Government securities etc);
- allowed all eligible securities (including corporate securities and RMBS) to be acceptable collateral for repurchase transactions of maturity up to three months;
- shortened the maximum term over which funds may be borrowed from the Bank in the Overnight/Term Reverse Repo Facility (ORRF/TRRF) from one month to an overnight basis only; and

- withdrawn the regular weekly Reserve Bank bill tender. The Bank will continue to offer Reserve Bank bills as required in the daily OMO.

For details on the Bank's liquidity facilities refer to <http://www.rbnz.govt.nz/finmarkets/domesticmarkets/3329772.html>

Food Cheaper in September

According to Statistics NZ food prices decreased 0.7% in the September 2009 month. The Food Price Index (FPI) also fell in August, by 0.9%. Both falls were influenced by lower fruit and vegetable prices, which decreased 8.4%.

Vegetable prices fell 12.8% in September and 3.2% in August. Prices were particularly high in July 2009, influenced by unusually cold weather in May. Lower prices were recorded in September for lettuce (down 40.7%), cucumber (down 25.5%), and capsicum (down 23.5%), following unusually warm weather in August. Grocery food prices recorded their second consecutive fall (down 0.1% in September 2009 and 1.3% in August), while meat, poultry, and fish prices rose 1.8% in September, following price falls in July and August.

For the year to September 2009, food prices rose 3.3%, which is the smallest annual increase since a rise of 3.0% in the year to June 2007. Grocery food was up 3.8%, meat, poultry, and fish up 7.1%, non-alcoholic beverages up 9.7%, and restaurant meals and ready-to-eat food up 3.6%. The fruit and vegetables subgroup fell 7.4% in the year to September 2009.

More Kiwisavers

KiwiSaver's membership reached 1,189,597 as at end of September 2009, with growth of 54% in that second year (that's about 32,000 people joining every month). In the year to June 2009, \$2.1 billion in contributions from members, employers and the Crown were passed to providers for investment, more than double the amount for the first year. In total, \$3.15 billion in contribution was transferred to providers in the scheme's first two years – or \$4.25 billion to the end of September.

The 2008/09 KiwiSaver Evaluation Report is available at <http://www.ird.govt.nz/aboutir/reports/research/report-ks/>

Insurance Tips

A new section in the Sorted.org.nz site covers insurance options for house and contents, vehicle, life and health, and income and debt protection, and there is a calculator so people can factor in their own personal circumstances and work out what cover is right for them. The information will be very useful for the one-third of survey respondents who told the Retirement Commission that they don't know enough about insurance to make informed decisions. Here are some of the tips:

- it's a good idea to have an emergency fund to take some of the insurance risk yourself and keep your insurance costs down;
- consider the excess - the higher the excess the lower the premium but you will have to pay more for each claim;
- buying as much of your insurance as possible from one company can save you money;

- seriously consider any insurance offered through your employer or attached to another saving or insurance product;
- always tell your insurer everything; if you leave out information you risk a claim being turned down;
- read the policy carefully so you understand what is and isn't covered;
- review your insurances regularly;
- pay your premiums on time;
- know what insurance you have;
- don't leave it too late - premiums for life insurance and income replacement insurance increase as you get older;
- as with all good financial decisions, shop around; and
- get advice from a skilled insurer, broker or adviser.

More is at www.sorted.org.nz/calculator/insurance.

NZ's Income Disparity

A recent United Nations global study on income inequality worldwide puts NZ at number 6 on the income inequality list. The top 10 for income inequality are: 1 Hong Kong, 2 Singapore, 3 US, 4 Israel, 5 Portugal, 6 NZ, 7th equal Italy and Britain, 9 Australia, 10th equal: Ireland and Greece. Scandinavian countries, Japan, and the Czech Republic were found to have the least amount of income inequality.

World Economies Changing Places...

The world's largest economies took the biggest hit in the World Economic Forum's 2009 Financial Development Report. Global financial centres still lead in the report's Index, but the effects of financial instability have pulled down their scores compared to last year. The UK, buoyed by the relative strength of its banking and non-banking financial activities, claimed the Index's top spot from the United States, which slipped to third position behind Australia largely due to poorer financial stability scores and a weakened banking sector.

While most of the 55 countries covered by the report (NZ is not included) saw a significant drop in their financial scores, emerging economies fared comparatively better in the ranking (which takes into account some 120 variables from stability to size and depth of capital markets).

More is at <http://www.weforum.org/en/initiatives/gcp/FinancialDevelopmentReport/index.htm>

... & China's Rich List Grows

The number of Chinese who are US dollar billionaires has leapt from three to 130 in five years. Seven of this year's Chinese rich list top 10 are new arrivals and many are major beneficiaries of China's economic stimulus. However, the rich fall as fast as they rise – two of last year's top 10 are now in detention centres.

More on this at <http://www.stuff.co.nz/business/world/2962095/Chinas-rich-list>

Internet/ICT

One [Phone Charger] Size Fits All

The United Nations International Telecommunications Union (ITU) has approved a new energy-efficient one-size-fits-all mobile telephone charger. IT says that the phone charger will fit all future handsets, regardless of make and model, enabling users worldwide to charge their mobiles anywhere from any available charger, while also reducing the energy consumed while charging. The new charger is estimated to cut standby energy consumption by 50% and eliminate 51,000 tons of redundant chargers, resulting in a reduction of 13.6 million tons in greenhouse gas emissions each year.

More is at http://www.itu.int/newsroom/press_releases/2009/49.html

Telco Service Levy: Changes?

As part of its proposed \$300 million Rural Broadband Initiative, the Government is proposing to change the current telecommunications service levy. Currently, Telecom receives around \$70 million per year largely to compensate it for supplying local services to rural customers. This money is gathered through a telecommunications service obligation levy which is paid by market participants, including Telecom, on a market share basis.

The new telecommunications development levy would be contestable and made available on a grants basis, mainly to develop rural broadband.

Source: Parliamentary questions for oral answer - Wednesday, 14 October 2009

Providing Free Broadband: Awards

The Aotearoa People's Network Kaharoa (APNK) (a collaboration between National Library and the public libraries of NZ) has picked up two nation-wide awards for its part in offering free broadband access at public libraries and helping the blind and vision impaired access the internet.

APNK won the LIANZA (Library and Information Association of NZ Aotearoa) 3M Award for Innovation in Libraries. The organisation also won the Extra Touch Award, presented by the Association of Blind Citizens of NZ, for adding 'Magnifying Glass' and NVDA (Non Visual Desktop Access) to the computer software.

The APNK manages a network of over 500 free computers in 119 public libraries, involving 39 local authorities.

NZ's Rural Hit Parade

The top five websites in the "Rural" category visited by NZers (as measured over a week in mid-September), are: metservice.co.nz/rural, stuff.co.nz/farming, rd1.com, farmtrader.co.nz and dealsonwheels.co.nz. The next five are: country-wide.co.nz, ruraltrader.co.nz, agridata.co.nz, nzfarmersweekly.co.nz, and ruralliving.co.nz.

Source: Nielsen NZ Market Intelligence.

Billions of Mobile Subscribers

The rapidly growing information and communications technology (ICT) industry is set to see mobile subscriptions reach 4.6 billion worldwide by the end of the year (the most rapid uptake of technology in history), according to figures released by the United Nations telecommunications arm, the International Telecommunications Union. More than a quarter of the world's population is now online and using the Internet. Subscriptions for mobile broadband services topped 600 million in 2009, outstripping fixed broadband by 100 million.

Download a fact-sheet on this topic at http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/ict/material/Telecom09_flyer.pdf

2009 IgNobel winners

The IgNobels - a play on the name of the Nobel prizes awarded every October from Stockholm and Oslo - are given out by the Harvard-based humour magazine *Annals of Improbable Research*. This year's Ig Nobel winners are:

- **Veterinary Medicine:** Catherine Douglas and Peter Rowlinson for showing that cows with names give more milk than unnamed cows;
- **Peace:** Stephan Bolliger, Steffen Ross, Lars Oesterhelweg, Michael Thali and Beat Kneubuehl for investigating whether it is better to be struck over the head with a full beer bottle or with an empty beer bottle;
- **Economics:** Executives of four Icelandic banks for showing how tiny banks can become huge banks, and then become tiny banks again;
- **Chemistry:** Javier Morales, Miguel Apatiga and Victor Castano for creating diamonds out of tequila;
- **Medicine:** Donald Unger for cracking just the knuckles on his left hand for 60 years to see if knuckle cracking contributes to arthritis;
- **Physics:** Katherine Whitcome, Liza Shapiro and Daniel Lieberman for figuring out why pregnant women don't tip over;
- **Literature:** The Irish national police for issuing 50 tickets to one Prawo Jazdy, which in Polish means "driver's license";
- **Public Health:** Elena Bodnar, Raphael Lee and Sandra Marijan for inventing a brassiere than can be converted into a pair of gas masks;
- **Mathematics:** Gideon Gono and the Zimbabwean Reserve Bank for printing bank notes in denominations from 1 cent, to \$100 trillion; and

- **Biology:** Fumiaki Taguchi, Song Guofu and Zhang Guanglei for demonstrating that bacteria in panda poop can help reduce kitchen waste by 90%.

More about the winners at <http://improbable.com/ig/winners/>

A Handful of Sites

- "Wired" has a collection of short clips, titled *Best Science Visualization Videos of 2009* at <http://www.wired.com/wiredscience/2009/08/visualizations/all/1>. These highlight the year's best computer models, which are helping scientists understand things like how waves break, how a supernova explodes and how carbon monoxide builds and abates over the course of a year.
- *A Virtual Piano* is at <http://www.thevirtualpiano.com/>. It is a piano keyboard that allows you to use your mouse to hit individual notes, or learn the proper chord formations in all 12 keys
- *A Commerce Commission release outlining the High Court's decision on Telco market competition* is at <http://www.comcom.govt.nz/MediaCentre/MediaReleases/200910/telecomblockedcompetitioninhighspe.aspx>. The Court found in the Commission's favour regarding a claim that section 36 of the Commerce Act (which prohibits firms with a substantial degree of market power from taking advantage of that power for an anti-competitive purpose) had been contravened. The High Court's judgment is also on the Commission's website - www.comcom.govt.nz - under Media Centre/Judgments and settlements.
- *The Google Translator Toolkit - which now includes te reo Maori/Maori language* - is at <http://googleblog.blogspot.com/2009/10/google-translator-toolkit-and-minority.html>. Maori is one of 285 new languages recently added to the toolkit which offers a language translation service for professional and amateur translators, and now includes 345 languages
- *An upgrade of The Yellow Maps™ website enabling people to browse and book accommodation* is at www.maps.yellow.co.nz. The maps allow travellers to quickly scan accommodation options and prices on the map, check availability, and then make a booking directly from the Yellow Maps site.
- *A new website addressing important issues of self-esteem for kids who wet the bed at night* is at www.drynites.co.nz
- *Can a billboard be the vehicle for innovative and perspective-altering design? See for yourself* at <http://10steps.sg/inspirations/artworks/50-extraordinary-and-attractive-billboards/>. Some 50 "extraordinary and attractive" billboards are on display there.
- *Interested in a website where members post their latest fashion looks while the rest of the community gets to comment and "hype up" the looks they like?* Go to <http://lookbook.nu/> (Note: people have to be invited to register, but the rest of us can browse as we like).
- *A series of fact sheets summarizing the main changes made to the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) by the Resource Management Act (Simplifying and Streamlining) Amendment Act 2009* can be found at <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/publications/rma/rma-amendment-act-factsheets-2009/index.html>

- *The Household Labour Force Survey (HLFS), which estimates of the usually resident civilian population of NZ aged 15 years and over, i.e., the working-age population, is at* <http://img.scoop.co.nz/media/pdfs/0910/HouseholdLabourForceSurveyEstimatedWorkAgePopulationSep09qtrHOTP.pdf>
- *To see Sirocco, the kakapo star of the NZ episode of "Last Chance to See" (with Stephen Fry and Mark Cawadine) - who thinks he's a human in - more ways than one - go to* <http://www.doc.govt.nz/features-archieve/sirocco-the-kakapo/>

Treaty Matters

Treaty Settlement Secondment Programme

The Treaty Settlement Secondment Programme is a pilot programme in which public servants are seconded to work with iwi to help with the historic Treaty settlement process, and so contribute to the Government aim of settling all historic Treaty claims by 2014.

Up to 10 claimant groups are being selected for secondment, and suitably skilled public servants are currently being recruited for the secondment positions.

Public servants or Ministries seeking more information can email vacancy@tpk.govt.nz quoting "Treaty Settlement Secondments" in the subject header.

Arts & Culture

Vodafone NZ Music Awards 2009

Winners of these awards include:

- Vodafone Album of the Year: Ladyhawke – Ladyhawke;
- Vodafone Single of the Year: Ladyhawke – My Delerium;
- Steinlager Pure Best Group: Midnight Youth;
- Best Male Solo Artist: Savage;
- Mazda Best Female Solo Artist: Ladyhawke;
- Pacific Blue Breakthrough Artist of the Year: Ladyhawke;
- Highest Selling NZ Single: Smashproof feat. Gin – Brother; and
- Highest Selling NZ Album: The feelers – The Best: 1998-2008.

A list of all winners is at <http://www.nzmusicawards.co.nz/2009/10/08/winners-for-the-vodafone-new-zealand-music-awards-2009/>

Topp Twins Film Honoured...

Following the film's award winning success at the Toronto International Film Festival (Cadillac People's Choice Award – Documentary) and the Melbourne International Film Festival (People's Choice Award – Documentary), "The Topp Twins: Untouchable Girls" has been invited to screen at the prestigious International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam (IDFA). Director Leanne Pooley will attend as a guest of the Festival to present the film to audiences.

....& "\$6.50 Man": Short Film Prize

NZ Film "The Six Dollar Fifty Man" has taken out the top short film prize at the Middle East International Film Festival. The short film has won the Black Pearl Award 09 for Best Narrative Short at the International Film Festival which is based in Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates. The accolade includes prize money of USD \$25,000.

More about the Film is at <http://www.stickypictures.co.nz/node/86>

Fishing & Shipping

Maritime NZ: Ship's Waste

Maritime NZ (MNZ) is currently working on two projects dealing with waste from vessels:

- **Shipboard garbage: reducing the load.** MNZ is currently talking with the fishing industry to learn more about how garbage is managed on boats. The work will help with planning ways of making garbage management easier and more effective and, ultimately, reduce the amount of garbage disposed of at sea. The information gained will then go to the wider NZ boating community and will also be shared with the international maritime community as an example of good practice; and
- **Review of maritime sewage discharge regulations:** there is increasing awareness of the potential for untreated sewage discharge from smaller vessels to affect the coastal environment and its users as well, so the regulations governing maritime sewage disposal are now under review to determine whether they have kept pace with the maritime sector and society's expectations. MNZ is currently gathering information on current practice in dealing with sewage on board ships, from recreational boats, ferries, tourist excursion craft, and ocean-going ships.

Note: in general, untreated sewage may not be discharged within 500 metres from land, or in water less than 5 metres deep. There are fewer restrictions on the discharge of treated sewage.

Maritime NZ will be consulting the public on both projects. In the meantime, if you want to know more about either, email the Environmental Research and Analysis team at enquiries@maritimenz.govt.nz, or tel freephone 0508 22 55 22

New Diving and Sailing Standards

Two new ISO (International Organization for Standardization) standards aim to make scuba diving training programmes safer for diving newcomers as well as more experienced divers: They are "Recreational diving services – Requirements for introductory training programmes to scuba diving", (ISO 11121:2009); and ISO 11107:2009, "Recreational diving services – Requirements for training programmes on enriched air nitrox (EAN) diving".

Another new ISO Standard covers sailors attached to sailing trapezes on small craft. This one is called "Small craft – Quick release system for trapeze harness" (ISO 10862:2009).

To order or download these ISO standards go to www.standards.co.nz, enter '10862' as the keyword in the search area and click 'ISO'. For more information, email enquiries@standards.co.nz or call customer services on 0800 782 632

New Marine Farming Space

The Ministry of Fisheries has given final approval for the 1783 hectare Wilson's Bay Interim Aquaculture Management Area in the Firth of Thames. Of this area, 520 hectares has been zoned for shellfish farming, with the remainder being access-ways between marine farm blocks.

More is at www.fish.govt.nz

Science/Technology

Asteroid Not So Menacing

NASA scientists have recalculated the path of a large asteroid using updated information which indicates a significantly reduced likelihood of a hazardous encounter with Earth in 2036. The Apophis asteroid is about the size of two-and-a-half football fields. The new data indicate the probability of an Earth encounter on 13 April 2036 for Apophis has dropped from one-in-45,000 to about four-in-a million.

Family Tree For Cattle

A team of international researchers has created an accurate "family tree" for cows and other ruminants going back as far as 29 million years using a new scientific technique. The research reveals the history of European cattle, with domesticated cattle moving through Turkey, the Balkans and Italy, then spreading through Central Europe and France, and ending in Britain. The scientists also found evidence supporting a second route of ancient cattle coming into Europe from the Iberian Peninsula.

Animal scientists can now begin to study evolution of certain breeds, gathering information that could eventually be useful for farmers throughout the world.

More is at <http://www.bio-medicine.org/biology-news-1/MU-research-team-establishes-family-tree-for-cattle--other-ruminants-10421-1/>

Research: the Maori Way of Death

A University of Waikato project to examine the Maori way of death (both past and present) has won a Marsden Fund grant, worth \$950,000 over three years. Findings from the research programme – Apakura: the Maori way of death -- will be made available to a wide range of groups, from whanau and hapu to the health services, police, and the funeral industry. A further outcome will be constructive analysis and advice on particular issues in the tangi experience, such as claiming and repatriating the deceased, exhumation and recovery, makutu or modern sorcery, and organ donation.

NZ's Largest Science Blog Network

The Science Media Centre recently launched Sciblogs, a network of science blogs covering everything from clinical health to climate change. It debuts with 26 bloggers, including scientists from universities, Crown Research Institutes and private research organisations the length of the country. It will act as a forum of discussion on the important issues facing society.

More is at <http://sciblogs.co.nz/>

General

The Weather to December

A weak El Niño in the equatorial Pacific Ocean is not expected to unduly affect NZ rainfall in the coming two months, according to the latest outlook from NIWA's National Climate Centre.

After a recent dry period in eastern parts of the South Island, the Centre says rainfall is likely to be in the normal range in all regions for the October-November-December season.

Temperatures (November and December) are expected to be near average for the North Island, but are equally likely to be in the average or below average ranges for the South Island.

In line with the rainfall outlook, seasonal soil moisture levels and stream flows are likely to be in the normal range throughout the country.

Christmas Mail Delivery Changes

NZ Post has made changes to mail delivery over the 2009/10 Christmas period. There will be no mail delivered on Saturday 26 December 2009, or on Saturday 2 January 2010 (so posties will get a bit of a Christmas break...).

Population Grows Across Country

There was population growth across NZ in the June 2009 year, largely due to an increase in our net gain from permanent and long-term migration (from 4,700 in the June 2008 year to 12,500 in the June 2009 year). All of the nation's 16 regions recorded population growth in the June 2009 year. Auckland and Canterbury – the two most populated regions – were the fastest-growing in the June 2009 year, with growth rates of 1.5% and 1.2%, respectively.

The fastest-growing territorial authority areas were Selwyn district (up 2.8%) and Queenstown-Lakes district (up 2.6%). Tauranga (up 1.6%) retained its position as NZ's fastest growing main urban area, and Pukekohe (up 1.9%) continued to be NZ's fastest growing secondary urban area.

At 30 June 2009, 78 of every 100 NZ residents lived in either a main or secondary urban area, and 53% of us were living in the four main urban areas (Auckland, Hamilton, Wellington, and Christchurch).

More is at

http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/population/estimates_and_projections/Su_bnationalPopulationEstimates_MR30Jun09.aspx

NZers & Wellbeing

The first Statistics NZ General Social Survey (NZGSS) gives social and economic information across a number of areas of life. It includes NZers' assessments of their health, the environment, and social contact with family and friends - collecting information on, for example, volunteering, emergency preparedness, and housing problems. Traditional measures such as income, tenure, employment, and education are also included. The resulting information shows how changes in economic and social conditions, such as health and income, affect NZers' lives, which conditions have the most impact on people, and who is most affected.

A key finding is that most people are satisfied or very satisfied with their life in NZ overall. Other key findings from the NZGSS include:

- around 1 in 7 people said they did not have enough money to meet their everyday needs;
- more than 80 percent of people had some sort of contact with family living outside their household, at least once in the last month;
- despite this, one-quarter of people felt they did not have enough contact with non-resident family, and one-fifth reported not having enough contact with non-resident friends;
- half of people reported one or more problems relating to their house, street, or neighbourhood;
- 1 in 10 people had been discriminated against in the past 12 months, with the most common grounds being 'nationality, race, or ethnic group';
- however, over 90 percent of people agreed that it is good that people in NZ can have different values and ways of living;

- unemployed people were around two-to-three times more likely than people who were employed or not in the labour force to say they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with life overall; and
- one-third of people undertook voluntary work and about two-thirds had done unpaid work outside the household in the last four weeks.

More is on the Statistics NZ Website at www.snz.govt.nz

NZ News Media Accountability

Based on a survey of 750 people carried out from 24-27 September 2009, one in four (25%) kiwis say the country's media are inaccurate reporting the news. Almost one-third (30%) say they are one-sided in presenting the news, and half (50%) say the media are unwilling to admit to mistakes.

Some 35% said the media was accurate, 30% said the news was balanced and 27% said the media was willing to admit to mistakes.

The survey indicates a general pattern that the older people are, the less accurate or balanced they say the news is. Also, men (51%) are significantly more likely to say the media is unwilling to admit to mistakes than women (43%).

More is at [http://www.umar.co.nz/Media/Perceptions_of_the_NZ_Media_\(Sept-09\).pdf](http://www.umar.co.nz/Media/Perceptions_of_the_NZ_Media_(Sept-09).pdf)

World Leaders: What NZers Think

Recent findings from a recent UMR Research survey which surveyed public attitudes towards several world leaders indicate that:

- **Barack Obama**, whose ratings have been sliding in the US, is still held in very high regard by kiwis (88% give him a favourable rating and only 6% an unfavourable rating);
- **Kevin Rudd** comes in at a strong second place with a 56% favourable rating and 11% unfavourable rating;
- **Gordon Brown** (UK Prime Minister) comes in at 30% total favourable; 31% total unfavourable (by comparison, Tony Blair's last rating amongst kiwis in a UMR survey was 61% favourable; 34% unfavourable in February 2004);
- **Nicolas Sarkozy's** (President of France) favourability rating is 20% total favourable, 18% total unfavourable (compared to Jacques Chirac 37% total favourable; 42% total unfavourable in March 2003);
- **Vladimir Putin** (Russia's Prime Minister) has gone backwards among NZers (17% now have a favourable opinion and 36% an unfavourable opinion);
- **Silvio Berlusconi** (Italy's Prime Minister) remains unknown to most NZers (he has a 7% favourability rating, a 23% unfavourable rating with 70% unsure or never having heard of him); and
- **Angela Merkel** (Germany's Chancellor) is also barely known with 20% having a favourable opinion, 5% an unfavourable opinion, and 75% unsure or not having heard of her.

Content Report, 2011 Census

Statistics NZ has released its report on the content that will be included in the 2011 Census, and has decided not to make any major changes to the census content or introduce any new topics. Instead, they have focussed on improving the questions.

The agency has also reviewed the way official ethnicity statistics are collected and reported. One of the things looked at was whether a tick-box for "NZer" should be provided (there was some debate about this during the 2006 Census). However, the agency has decided not to make any changes to the ethnicity question in the upcoming Census.

More information is at

http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/Corporate/Corporate/CorporateCommunications_MR2011censuscontentreportOct09.aspx

Vietnam Gallantry Recognised

Approval has been given for NZ veterans to receive and wear 15 gallantry medals awarded by the US and the Republic of Vietnam during the Vietnam War. This formal approval completes the medals actions agreed upon in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed in 2006 between the Government and representatives of Vietnam veterans, the Royal NZ Returned and Services' Association (RNZRSA) and the Ex-Vietnam Services Association.

Global Asylum Seekers

According to a report published by the United Nations refugee agency, Iraqis head the list of the growing number of people seeking asylum in industrialised countries again this year (in fact, for the fourth year in a row), just ahead of people searching for safety from war-torn Afghanistan and Somalia. Some 185,000 asylum-seekers filed applications in the opening six months of 2009 across 38 European countries, the United States, Canada, Japan, Australia, NZ, and the Republic of Korea (ROK), representing a 10% increase on the same period last year. Of those, 13,200 claims came from Iraqi, 12,000 came from Afghans, and 11,000 from Somalis as security conditions continued to deteriorate in large parts of those countries.

More is at <http://www.unhcr.org/4adf24079.html>

Some Conferences/Events

The Organic Sector Conference

This conference is being held from 13-15 November at the University of Waikato. It will be focusing on innovation organics and biodynamics.

For more information/to register go to www.goorganic.org.nz

Postharvest Pacifica 2009

The Postharvest Pacifica 2009: Pathways to Quality conference is being held at the Napier War Memorial Conference Centre, Napier, from 15-19 November.

The conference website is at www.postharvestpacific.org.nz

e-Engage Your Community Conference

A conference for community non-profit organisations on using the internet to engage their communities is being held at the Massey University Campus in Wellington on 12-13 November 2009.

For more information/to register, go to www.eyc.org.nz

Refugee Health and Wellbeing Conference

This conference is to be held at the AUT University North Shore Campus in Auckland from 18-20 November 2009. The "Looking Back and Moving Forward" theme is about reflecting on what has been achieved and identify what remains to be done.

More is at <http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/research-institutes/niphmhr/centre-for-asian-and-migrant-health-research/refugee-health--and--wellbeing-conference>

NZ Cooperatives Assn AGM

The NZ Cooperatives Association's annual general meeting is being held at the Brentwood Hotel, Kemp St, Kilbirnie, Wellington on Friday 27 November.

More is at <http://nz.coop/news-events/>

National Digital Forum Conference

This forum is being held at the Museum of NZ Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington on 23-24 November.

More, including registration details, is at <http://www.community.net.nz/communitycentre/events/national/ndfconference.htm?region=default>

Funding/Awards Opportunities

Lottery Environment and Heritage Committee

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

Applications for this round close 13 November 2009. Apply online at <http://www.cdgo.govt.nz/apply-for-funding/> or freephone 0800 824 824

Lottery Marae Heritage and Facilities Committee

This committee makes grants for the capital costs of the conservation, restoration and development of marae facilities, particularly whareniui, wharekai and wharepaku facilities (note that the committee only funds the conservation of whakairo where the whakairo is part of a capital works project).

Applications for this round close on 4 December 2009. Apply online at <http://www.cdgo.govt.nz/apply-for-funding/> or freephone 0800 824 824

Lottery Individuals with Disabilities Committee

This committee makes grants to people with mobility and communication related disabilities so they can purchase/adapt vehicles, scooters and other mobility/communication equipment. Applications are considered at various times throughout the year.

An information sheet is at <http://www.cdgo.govt.nz/UploadFiles%5CGrantDocuments%5CPDFs%5Ca5aacc8b/1Disability%20info%20sheet%20revised%20June%202008.pdf> and an application form is at http://www.cdgo.govt.nz/UploadFiles%5CGrantDocuments%5CPDFs%5C5918d8e7/Individuals_w_DisabilitiesVer2.pdf or freephone 0800 824 824

2010 Golden Lamb Awards (Glammys)

Entries are now open for the 2010 Golden Lamb Awards aka "The Glammys", with the final showcased at the Upper Clutha A & P Show in Wanaka on 12-13 March 2010.

For entry forms/ more information contact K Doran at Beef + Lamb NZ on freephone 0800 733 466, email kim@beeflambnz.co.nz or visit the competitions link at www.beeflambnz.co.nz

Veuve Clicquot Business Woman Award

Nominations are now open for NZ's third annual Veuve Clicquot Business Woman Award. The winner will travel to Champagne, France to join award winners from around the globe at the Veuve Clicquot Business Woman Award Forum, and christen a vine in her own name. Each year after that she will receive a gift of La Grande Dame champagne produced from vineyards owned by Veuve Clicquot Ponsardin.

Nominations close on 11 December. More information is at www.veuveclicquotaward.co.nz

Cycleway Project: Funding Application Process

The funding process for Phase Two of the NZ Cycleway project was recently announced. Proposals will be assessed at each of three stages (the concept, feasibility study, and business case stages). Proposal criteria being measured include: meeting market demand; showcasing the best NZ has to offer; meeting the overall objectives of the cycleway project; and developing partnerships.

Final date for concept proposals is 18 December 2009. More is at www.tourism.govt.nz/cycleway or email cycleway@tourism.govt.nz

Sporty Schools Can Win \$1000

School teachers and students throughout NZ are encouraged to enter teams in the 2009 Pearl Izumi Taupo Half Ironman to be in with a chance to win \$1000 for new sports equipment. Teams of 2 or 3 can swim 2kms, ride 90kms and run 21kms, and can be made up of either students, teachers or other school staff. The event takes place on 12 December.

More information is at www.halfironmantaupo.co.nz

Marine Energy Deployment Fund

The marine energy deployment fund has been set up to encourage the development of marine energy (i.e., using waves and tides to make energy) by supporting the use of energy-generating devices that will provide formation and experience in marine energy.

Applications to the latest round close on 23 November 2009. The application process/more information is at www.eeca.govt.nz/marine-energy-fund

Jean Wright Award

Applications are now open for this \$10,000 award, the aim of which is to encourage education and training for librarians in small public libraries.

Applications close on 13 November 2009. The Terms of reference and application forms are at <http://www.natlib.govt.nz/downloads/Jean-Wright-Award.DOC>, or email marilyn.baker@natlib.govt.nz

Appointments

Career diplomat Marion Crawshaw is to be *NZ's new High Commissioner to Papua New Guinea*. Andrew Needs has been appointed *NZ's High Commissioner to Canada*. Dr Jim Rolfe is the *new deputy director of the Asia Pacific Military Centre of Excellence* at Queanbeyan, outside Canberra.

Twenty-four new appointments, reappointments and positional changes across 10 SOE boards and two airport boards were announced recently. Two new *chairs to SOE boards* are Jenny Shipley (*chair of Genesis*), and Joan Withers (*chair of Mighty River Power*). Serving *chairs* Bolger (at *NZ Post*) and John Palmer (*Solid Energy*) have been reappointed for 12 months each. Four new *deputy chairs* have also been confirmed: Michael Cullen (*NZ Post*), John Ashby (*AsureQuality*), Janine Smith (*Kordia*), and Trevor Janes (*Mighty River Power*). New *SOE board members* are: *Airways Corporation of NZ Ltd* (David Park and Susan Huria); *AsureQuality Ltd* (Jane Lancaster); *Christchurch International Airport Ltd* (George Gould); *Kordia Group Ltd* (Rhoda Holmes and Ken Benson); *Landcorp Farming Ltd* (Bill Baylis); *Mighty River Power Ltd* (Mike Allen and Jon Hartley – the latter subject to due diligence); and *NZ Post Ltd* (Murray Gribben).

An eight-member taskforce to help *steer the future direction of the wool industry* has been appointed, *chaired* by Jeff Grant (other *members* are: John Brakenridge, Dr Scott Champion, Cliff Heath, Derek Kirke, Colin McKenzie, Sam Robinson, and Keith Sutton).

Members of the new Clinical Training Agency Board, a new national body to unify workforce planning in NZ, is: Professor Des Gorman (*chair*), Professor Max Abbott, Professor Gregor Coster, Helen Pocknall, Karen Roach, Professor Don Robertson, and Dr Andrew Wong.

The three new members of *Film NZ's Board of Trustees* are Gary Little, Jos Ruffell, and Kevin (KJ) Jennings. *Brian Roche is the new CEO of NZ Post*.

Whatarangi Winiata will continue in the role of *President of the Maori Party*. Architect Ian Athfield has been appointed to the *NZ Historic Places Trust Board*.

Dairy farmers have voted to retain sitting *DairyNZ directors* Alistair Body and Barbara Kuriger on their board, and Kevin Ferris is a new *member*. Bryan Crawford was recently elected *president of the Communication Agencies Association of NZ* (CAANZ) Peter Biggs is the new *chair of the NZ Book Council*. Richard Forgan has been appointed to *lead the new Infrastructure Unit in Treasury*. Kevin Bowler is the new *CEO for Tourism NZ*. Judith Binney and Helen Kedgley have been *appointed to the board of Creative NZ* for terms of 3 years



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

Rural Bulletin may be copied in full and circulated, and individual items may be reproduced providing the source is acknowledged. If you would like more information about Rural Bulletin or its contents, please contact:

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

Disclaimer: While every effort has been made to ensure the information in Rural Bulletin is accurate, Rural Women New Zealand does not accept liability for error of fact or opinion which may be present, nor for the consequences of any financial decision based on the information. Any views or opinions expressed do not necessarily represent the views of Rural Women New Zealand.

**Together Rural Women NZ, the Lottery Grants Board, and Rural Bulletin's other generous supporters make it possible to provide timely information to people in rural and other communities so they have the opportunity to make informed decisions about, and have their say on, issues and changes that may affect them.

Messages from Our Supporters

Renewing Your Agrichemical Approved Handler Certificate

ChemSafe is an Agrichemical Approved Handler renewal service, brought to you by FarmSafe. We have recently introduced a quick and easy system where you can choose to renew your Agrichemical Approved Handler Certificate online, or request a Home Pack be sent to you in the post.

Our renewal service will outline the changes since your last certificate was issued. After paying the fee, follow a few simple steps and answer some questions relating to the changes. You can complete the renewal process, either:

Online - for those on broadband or fast dialup speed (this should take under 30 minutes); or

Home Pack - request a Home Pack (either online or by calling 0800 545 747).

**For further information go to <http://www.farmsafe.co.nz/our-products/agrichemical-approved-handler-renewal.aspx> or call 0800 545 747

Telecom Submissions; Rural Broadband

The following are key Points from Telecom's submissions to the Government's Rural Broadband Initiative and the TSO Reform Documents:

Telecom supports the broad objectives the Government is seeking to achieve through the TSO and RBI proposals. However, we have concerns about the detail of the proposals and believe there is an opportunity to improve their design to better meet the Government's objectives and maintain incentives for investment which benefit rural NZ.

Rural NZ is a significant contributor to NZ's productivity and wealth. Telecom is currently the provider of the residential voice service TSO and the largest investor in rural telecommunications in NZ.

The business case for further private investment to enhance fixed telecommunications networks in rural areas is challenging. Investment is unlikely to occur without some form of Government subsidy. Telecom believes that it has the most to offer the Government as a partner in deploying voice and broadband infrastructure in rural NZ.

Broadband access is important to help drive improved productivity. However, from a social policy perspective, high quality voice continues to be the most important telecommunications service for most customers.

The proposal is that Telecom will no longer be compensated for providing TSO voice services in uneconomic areas. There are real costs with providing TSO voice services in rural areas and we oppose the removal of the current TSO funding methodology unless it is replaced with a model compensating Telecom for its ongoing economic costs of supplying the TSO services

Withdrawal of funding for voice services and infrastructure to rural NZ appears unlikely to meet the Government's objective of improving the quality of telecommunication services in rural NZ. The TSO proposal will make rural areas that have already been identified as uneconomic even more uneconomic. Any business cases for investment in upgrading or replacing voice infrastructure in these areas above and beyond the minimum necessary will become difficult to justify.

Telecom has proposed two alternative models that would link voice and rural broadband investment to obtain better outcomes for rural NZ.

Telecom currently over-achieves on its TSO obligations. Instead of reinforcing this approach, the new model penalises it and creates an incentive on Telecom to minimise its replacement investment in uneconomic areas. We don't believe that this is good enough for rural NZ.

Totalspan – A Shed For All Seasons

Every season brings something new in the dairy industry, along with the demand for a year-round commitment to quality performance. So dairy farmers need the support of suppliers that recognise those demands and keep pace with changes in the business, according to NZ's leading supplier of farm sheds and buildings, Totalspan.

"As a local company, Totalspan is ideally positioned to work alongside NZ farmers designing a dedicated range of farm buildings that perform best in the local environment – through every season," said Spanbild NZ national sales manager Leon Skylakis.

"For the local dairy industry, that has meant providing more flexibility and more space – with a fully customisable range – without compromising on the quality and strength Totalspan has built its name on in the rural sector."

Underpinning Totalspan's success, says Leon, are the partnerships the company has developed with some of the most recognised and trusted names in the rural industry.

"From our locally sourced primary materials, including the steel forged by NZ Steel, a uniquely sustainable product, to the expert support provided by trusted companies like Rylock, Allied and

Carters, we are able to bring the best quality products – and the best deals – to local farmers.”

Being local also has other very real benefits for Totalspan’s rural customers, says Leon.

“Our franchises are spread right around the country, with many based in rural communities, and every one of them working with the farming community in their local area.”

“We also know the ins-and-outs of the resource management process, and can work with you on every stage of the process, from planning and site preparation to construction and after-sale service. So building with Totalspan can ensure your construction programme is hassle-free,” said Leon.

“One of the key things our local experts can deliver is help to select the right farm building for your dairy operation,” said Leon.

Totalspan’s dedicated rural range of steel buildings and sheds includes a selection of widths, and the option of open or lock-up bays – ideal for storing equipment securely. The range also includes a choice of building heights, to accommodate all types of farm machinery and the option to customise or add on to each building with a wide variety of additional options and accessories, from cabling and lighting, to a choice of door widths, partitioning, and special features.

Leon Skylakis says the Totalspan commitment to the rural sector isn’t simply limited to the buildings it provides.

“The Totalspan Undercover Kids programme is a fantastic example of our dedication to the rural community,” said Leon.

Since its establishment in 2008, the Totalspan Undercover Kids programme has allocated over 120 purpose-built bus shelters to rural schools and communities, with a further 71 announced this year.

Another thing the farming community can depend on, says Leon, is that Totalspan will be around for a long time – working as hard as Kiwi farmers. “We’re confident in backing all our buildings with a 25-year structural guarantee. We make ‘em, we build ‘em, we back ‘em.”

More information can be found at <http://www.totalspan.co.nz/>

About TaxRefunds.co.nz

We set up the country’s first fully automated tax refunds system and in the process became the biggest tax agent in NZ. Already over \$63 million of overpaid taxes resting with the IRD has been returned back to taxpayers through our website.

We have processed over 1 million applications, and initial results for the 2009 tax year indicate that more workers are receiving tax refunds than previous years, and that overall, tax refunds are going up in value every year.

Our online service provides free, no risk estimates of tax refunds owed to salary and wage earners for any of the previous 5 tax years (and anyone employed on casual, part time, shift, seasonal and/or part of a tax year). Claims can be made from anywhere in the world. We will inform you if you are due a tax refund or not.

You need only file claims for the years where refunds are owed, meaning there are no unwanted bills. You can also claim family tax credits through the site.

Our services are fast, simple, and risk free.

Check out the website at www.taxrefunds.co.nz and for free material for your staff contact M Thompson on 0276663543 or email margot@taxrefunds.co.nz

Access Homehealth

Access Homehealth supports kiwis of all ages with personalized quality healthcare – at home and in the community. Established in 1927 by Rural Women NZ, we are now a national provider (Whangarei to Invercargill) of home and community health services - and we pride ourselves on our commitment to NZ’s rural communities.

Our aim is to help people maintain their independence so that they can live successfully in their own home and within their local community.

Our skilled professional team supports more than 13,000 people nationwide with healthcare services including:

- aged and disability support;
- rehabilitation and recovery;
- long-term condition management;
- clinical and assessment services; and
- respite care.

We specialise in providing personalised care and support that’s relevant and based on an individual’s particular health needs. This includes short- and long-term assistance with daily living activities such as showering and grooming, household assistance, meal preparation, skilled and qualified nursing, socialisation, and general companionship.

You can find out more by phoning 0800 161 444, emailing us at info@access.org.nz, faxing (0)3 366-0344, or by visiting our website, www.access.org.nz