

Rural Bulletin

April 2007



Rural Women
NEW ZEALAND

<http://www.ruralwomen.org>

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Consultation

Newspaper Complaints Handling: Have Your Say

The NZ Press Council is being independently reviewed for the first time since it was set up in 1972, and the reviewers are seeking your views on the way the council operates.

The Press Council hears complaints against newspapers and other publications. It also is required to maintain Professional standards, and to promote freedom of speech and freedom of the press in NZ:

The reviewers will examine:

- the purposes, activities, performance, governance and resourcing of the Council;
- the adequacy of the Council's objectives in light of changing circumstances and public perceptions and whether the Council is operating in a manner consistent with them; and
- the range and scope of the Council's activities when compared with the operations of similar bodies in other countries.

Submissions close 30 April 2007. Reviewers' contact details are: PO Box 5748, Wellington, tel: 04 463 7496, fax: 04 463 5566. Emails: reviewers@presscouncilreview.org.nz; submissions@presscouncilreview.org.nz. More information on the Press Council is at: <http://www.presscouncil.org.nz>

Aeroplane Security: Proposals

Under recently introduced legislation (the Aviation Security Legislation Bill) foreign armed marshals would be allowed on to Air NZ international flights and the Government would give itself the power to deploy local police in the same capacity. The bill would also allow for random searches of staff at local airports in areas critical to aviation security, including baggage handling, aircraft maintenance and catering. It would also strengthen the seizure powers of airport security staff involving banned goods and potential weapons.

The law would most likely be applied in the first instance to Air NZ flights to and from the US, where air marshals were introduced after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. The bill has been introduced to meet standards set under the Convention on International Civil Aviation, a specialist agency of the United Nations.

Submissions close 27 April. They go to the Transport and Industrial Relations Committee, Parliament House, Wellington. More information is at <http://www.transport.govt.nz/aviation-security-legislation-bill-1/>

Parole Board: Changes Proposed

The Justice and Electoral Committee is inviting public submissions on the Criminal Justice Reform Bill Supplementary Order Paper No 99. This paper amends the Criminal Justice Reform Bill to:

- enable the Parole Board to receive information in confidence, and forbid the disclosure of information to any person, including the offender and offender's counsel;

- require the Parole Board to bear in mind that the offender has no entitlement to be released;
- require the chief executive of Department of Corrections to advise the Police of the forthcoming release of a prisoner or of the imposition of residential restrictions on an offender;
- authorise the Commissioner of Police to apply to the Parole Board to have an offender on parole recalled to prison;
- clarify that an offender is liable to be recalled to prison if he/she has committed an offence punishable by imprisonment, whether or not this has resulted in conviction; and
- give the Parole Board the power to summon witnesses.

Submissions close 4 May. They go to the Justice and Electoral Committee, Parliament House, Wellington. More information is at <http://www.parliament.nz/en-NZ/SC/SubmCalled/0/2/a/02a4951806674542b94c09e2aeb35c12.htm>

Maori Participation in Early Childhood Education

The Maori Affairs Committee is holding an inquiry into Maori participation in early childhood education and your views are sought. The terms of reference for the inquiry are:

- to examine economic and social factors, barriers, and family (whanau) influences affecting Maori participation rates in various early childhood education programmes;
- to examine the effectiveness of governance arrangements for publicly funded early childhood education initiatives, and their effects on Maori; and
- to inquire into the appropriate interventions to increase and enhance Maori participation in early childhood education.

The closing date for submissions is 27 April. The committee requires 2 copies of each submission. Those wishing to include any information of a private or personal nature in a submission should first discuss this with the clerk of the committee, as submissions are usually released to the public by the committee. They go to the Maori Affairs Committee, Parliament House, Wellington (no stamp required). People wishing to appear before the committee to speak to their submissions should state this clearly and provide a daytime telephone contact number.

Retirement Villages Code: Fair Wear and Tear

The Retirement Commissioner is seeking written submissions on a proposed variation to the Retirement Villages Code of Practice 2006. The proposed variation is to clause 49.1(e), which relates to refurbishment and fair wear and tear of residential units in retirement villages. Also proposed are some minor editorial amendments to some other clauses.

Submissions close 9 May. They go to Retirement Villages, Retirement Commission, Level 3, Gleneagles Building, 69-71 The Terrace, PO Box 12 148, Wellington, fax 04 499 7397, email: office@retirement.org.nz. The proposed variation and background information are available from the Retirement Commission's website at www.retirement.org.nz

Births, Deaths, Marriages: Registration Amendment

The Government Administration Committee is inviting public submissions on the Births, Deaths, Marriages, and Relationships Registration Amendment Bill. This bill would amend the Births, Deaths, and Marriages Registration Act 1995 (BDMRA) by introducing amendments aiming to improve the way information is collected and verified. It would also regulate access to that information, and modernise the Act to take account of technological and social advances.

The BDMRA is the Act covering the registration of information about births, adoptions, changes of name, sexual assignment and reassignment, marriages, civil unions, and deaths. It also provides for public and government agency access to this information and for the issue of birth, death, marriage, and civil union certificates.

The closing date for submissions is Friday, 4 May 2007. Send two copies of your submission to the Government Administration Committee, Parliament House, Wellington. Copies of the bill can be purchased from Bennetts Government Bookshops.

New Zealand's Relationships with the South Pacific: Enquiry

The Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee is examining NZ's relationships with South Pacific countries, in particular looking at the role NZ plays and can play in assisting Pacific Island Forum nations (excluding Australia) to develop sustainable economies. It is in the process of identifying:

- NZ's main interests and responsibilities in Pacific Forum countries;
- any strategic threats to NZ's relationship with Pacific Forum members;
- opportunities to advance NZ's relationships with governments and peoples in the Pacific Island Forum countries;
- current and potential actions to encourage long-term economic development in, and two-way trade with, Pacific Forum countries;
- strategic objectives for NZ aid spending in Pacific Forum countries; and
- appropriate levels and types of aid.

The closing date for submissions is Friday, 25 May 2007. Two copies go to the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee, Parliament House, Wellington.

Armed Forces Law Reform Bill

The Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee is inviting you to have your say on this Bill, which aims to reform the military justice system with amendments to the Armed Forces Discipline Act 1971, the Courts Martial Appeals Act 1953, and the Defence Act 1990. The bill also aims to make a number of consequential amendments. The intent of the Bill is to provide for a common system of summary discipline, and for establishment of

a permanent Court Martial of NZ to replace the current ad hoc courts-martial.

Closing date for submissions is 4 May. More information is at <http://www.parliament.nz/en-NZ/SC/SubmCalled/4/e/b/4ebf203d8a5241b98366614384282a0a.htm>

ERMA Consultations

Amongst the consultations currently being carried out by the Environmental Risk Management Authority (ERMA) are:

HRC07001: the proposal is to vary the approved handler control where petrol, in quantities less than 2,000 litres, is stored on a farm of 4 hectares or more. Closes 30 April.

HSR06130: re Zyban WP Broad Spectrum Fungicide for Ornamental Plants: the proposal is to approve for importation or manufacture for the control of a range of diseases of ornamental plants (Category A). Closes 10 May.

More information is at <http://www.ermanz.govt.nz/consultations/consult-apps.html>. Submissions go to ERMA NZ, PO Box 131, Wellington 6140, tel: 04 916 2426, fax: 04 914 0433, email info@ermanz.govt.nz

Great Care Stories Wanted

The Health and Disability Commissioner and the Nationwide Health and Disability Advocacy Service are promoting the importance of quality care for consumers. People make complaints about disappointing or poor care - they would also like to hear about what the care is like when it works well for consumers!

If you have experienced great care and are willing to allow your story to be used anonymously for education and training purposes please send your written account to N Gailani at either of the following: Health and Disability Commissioner, PO Box 1791, Auckland, free fax: 0800 2787 7678, or advocacy@hdc.org.nz

Rural

Walking Access Report Out

The Walking Access report followed a request from the government for the Walking Access Consultation Panel (the Panel) to get consensus from the public on the issues around walking access to the outdoors and about how best to deal with them. Here is an excerpt from that report.

The matters on which the Panel believes it has found consensus are:

- NZers should have fair and reasonable access on foot to and along the coastline and rivers, around lakes and to public land;
- the public generally have the right to be on public land;
- landholders generally have the right to manage their land and who may enter on to it;
- the public has rights to public resources;
- there is a need for leadership, guidance and policy making at a national level in respect of walking access, and this will require the establishment of a new access organisation;
- there is a need for improved information about public access rights and this will require the provision of appropriate mapping and signposting;
- unformed legal roads provide an important network of public access rights, both along water margins and elsewhere. There is a need for measures to enforce the public right of access to unformed legal roads, but these measures should be accompanied by powers to regulate the inappropriate use of these roads;
- there is scope to use existing access rights that are not in a useful location as a basis for negotiating more practical access;
- where fixed water margin access has been affected by erosion it is desirable that it should be reattached to the relevant water margin. There are uncertainties around existing public access along water margins, and these need to be addressed;
- where new access over private land is needed, it should be by negotiation and agreement with the landowner, and with appropriate compensation where necessary;
- the NZ Walkways Act 1990 is a valuable existing statutory mechanism for the provision of walking access, and there is merit in transferring the management of this Act to the proposed access organisation";
- the proposed access organisation (Te Ara o Papatuanuku) should work in harmony and cooperation with existing access initiatives and with local government;
- there is a need for a widely accepted voluntary code of responsible conduct to protect the environment and the interests of landholders;
- landholders' concerns about liability in respect of walker safety and any fire risk attributable to walkers need to be managed. Rural crime and personal security is a concern to many, and requires on-going attention by the Police and stakeholders together;
- biosecurity is an important issue for landholders, and while there are adequate existing regulatory controls, there is scope to recognise biosecurity concerns when negotiating access; and
- while the focus of the proposed access organisation's work will be on walking access, there is scope in the negotiation of walking access on private land for agreement by landholders to access with vehicles, guns and dogs.

Some stakeholders raised concerns about recreational access to land with vehicles, especially with four-wheel-drive vehicles. This is outside the scope of walking access, but, given the existing right to use motor vehicles on unformed legal roads, this issue should be considered alongside the recommended measures to deal with the use of unformed legal roads for walking access.

The Panel has recommended a plan of action that would see the forming of an establishment board for an access organisation

as soon as possible, and the commencement of work on the mapping of existing access rights under the supervision of the board. The plan of action also recommends that work commence on the legislative measures that would be needed to give effect to some of the Panel's recommendations.

The report can be found at: www.walkingaccess.org.nz

New Horticulture Worker Permits

Kiwi horticulture and viticulture employers can start recruiting workers under a new Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) Policy, which encourages recruitment from the Pacific.

It allows both new and current holders of seasonal work permits to apply for a permit until 30 September 2007. It also expands the pool of workers eligible for a seasonal work permit by allowing visa-required people who were in NZ on 15 February 2007 to apply (previously this date was 15 September 2006).

The RSE policy creates an opportunity for up to 5,000 workers to work in NZ for up to seven months in the sector, with the opportunity to return the following year. Workers from Pacific Forum countries (excluding Fiji) will have preferential access under this policy.

Go to <http://www.immigration.govt.nz/community/stream/employmentprocesses/employingtemporaryworkers/>

Rural Women NZ Conference 2007

The 72nd national conference of Rural Women NZ (RWNZ) is being held from 14-17 May at the Rydges Hotel, Fenton Street, Rotorua. Under the theme of "Using the Past to Create the Future" the programme will include a wide range of business, guest speaker and panel sessions, as well as an open forum.

Check the RWNZ website www.ruralwomen.org or contact their office tel: 04 473 5524

Farm Fuel Storage: New Rules

Changes to the way fuel is stored on farms came into effect on 1 April. Any tank, drums or containers for petrol or diesel must:

- comply with the design, construction and installation requirements;
- be at least 20 metres from dwellings or other buildings made of combustible materials;
- be at least 6 metres from other dangerous goods or combustible materials; and
- be compounded (bunded) or located so that any spillage will not endanger any building, or flow into any natural water body.

You will need a Location Test Certificate if you are storing more than 50 litres of petrol and you do not meet all the requirements (there is no similar limit for a Location Test Certificate for diesel).

More information is at <http://www.ermanz.govt.nz/hs/compliance/foftc.html>. If you need certification, contact your fuel supplier.

Check Electric Fences for Phone Line Interference

Telecom's website site has a five-step electric fence check available. Autumn is a good time to check the set-up and earthing of electric fences to make sure they are not interfering with phone and internet connections - or possibly causing problems for neighbours (even those several kilometres away). The site includes advice on laying out electric fences to avoid interference and information about noise on rural phone lines.

Visit www.telecom.co.nz/electricfences

Extended Hunting Seasons for Some Areas

As well as the established hunting seasons, additional seasons for the Canada goose, mallard, paradise shelduck and pukeko have been set by some of the Fish and Game Councils around the country. The extra seasons are aimed at reducing populations that can cause damage to crops. Areas with extended seasons for one or more of the above species are: Northland; Eastern; Taranaki; Wellington; Nelson/Marlborough; West Coast; North Canterbury; Central South Island; Otago; and Southland.

Species, dates and bag limits differ from area to area. To find out more about extended seasons for your area contact your regional Fish and Game Council. A list of regional Council sites is at: http://www.fishandgame.org.nz/SITE_Default/SITE_your_region/default.asp

GST Exemption for Horses Sold for Export

The Commissioner of Revenue has decided to permit racehorses sold for export to remain in NZ for up to 24 months without attracting GST. The decision, which doubles the racing industry's current GST-exemption of 12 months, allows for NZ trainers to develop young overseas-owned horses here.

Environment

The World's Forests: Latest Figures

Although the world's forests are shrinking yearly overall, a recent United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) report offers some positives, showing that in some regions, centuries of deforestation are being reversed thanks to effective forest management and economic prosperity. But, countries that are facing the most serious challenges in achieving sustainable forest management are those with the highest rates of poverty and civil conflict.

Forests cover roughly 4 billion hectares, or 30%, of the earth's land, and the FAO states that in the period between 1990 and 2005, the world lost 3% of its forests, average 0.2% each year. Between 2000 and 2005, 57 countries reported an increase in forest area while 83 claimed a decrease. Forests disappear at a rate of 7.3 hectares per year or 20,000 hectares, approximately twice the size of Paris, daily.

In Asia and the Pacific, forest area increased between 2000 and 2005. Although deforestation accelerated in South-East Asia, this was offset by new large forest plantations in China. Europe and North America also demonstrated gains in forest area.

Also in this period, of the 10 countries which collectively house 80% of the world's primary forests, four - Indonesia, Mexico, Papua New Guinea and Brazil - saw the largest losses in forest area.

Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean faced the highest losses in forest area. African forests, accounting for 16% of the world's total, lost 9% between 1990 and 2005, while Latin America and the Caribbean, with 47% of the world's forests, also lost forest area.

More information is at <http://www.fao.org/newsroom/en/news/2007/1000506/index.html>

Contact Launches Carbon Calculator

Contact Energy has launched an online Carbon Calculator to help households reduce their CO₂ emissions. It allows anyone to calculate their household carbon footprint by answering a few questions on the Contact Energy website. The Calculator covers total household energy consumption from all fuels, including electricity, gas and travel. This data then generates a carbon emissions profile based on emissions factors specific to NZ. For example, it takes into account that NZ's electricity system is dominated by renewable energy, so electricity emissions are lower than countries such as Australia or Britain. Contact also intends to launch a web-based function soon, where people can pay to offset their emissions, using a range of accredited native forest planting and other abatement projects.

You can access the carbon calculator at: <http://www.contactenergy.co.nz/web/view?page=/contentiw/pages/energyefficiency/carboncalculator&vert=ee&onlineMode=oh>

Dairying and Clean Streams Accord: Progress

In May 2003 the Fonterra Co-operative Group, the Minister for the Environment, the Minister of Agriculture, and regional councils agreed on a Dairying and Clean Streams Accord.

The 2005/2006 Snapshot of Progress looks at work done during the 2005/2006 dairying season to achieve the targets and objectives of the Accord. Here are the main findings:

- progress towards the Dairying and Clean Streams Accord's five targets continues to be steady in most areas;
- current levels of non-compliance with resource consent conditions or regional plan rules for dairy effluent management is unacceptable. The national compliance average is only 67% versus the 100% target set to be achieved immediately;

- incidences of significant non-compliance with effluent management rules which have the potential for environmental impacts average about 10 percent across the 13 regions where Fonterra operates;
- the targets of excluding dairy cattle from streams, rivers and lakes, and the provision of bridges or culverts over regular crossing points, have already been met for 2007; and
- good progress has been made in the adoption of nutrient management budgets compared to last season. However, a great deal of work is still needed to meet the 2007 target. In regions where councils have identified regionally significant wetlands, the 2007 Accord target has been met.

The Accord partners have committed to an extensive programme of work to improve compliance with effluent management rules and to increase the uptake of nutrient management systems by farmers. Accord partners will also work together to improve information on regionally significant wetlands.

You can access the report of the Ministry for the Environment (MfE) website at: <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/publications/land/dairying-clean-streams-accord-snapshot-mar07/index.html>

Kiwi: New Report

A new report on the status of NZ's national bird highlights a big increase in private kiwi conservation efforts with more than 60 private, individual, iwi and community-led kiwi conservation projects underway around NZ. Non-government projects have lifted the area of kiwi habitat under conservation management by about 50,000 ha, complementing the 70,000 ha now under active management by the Department of Conservation (DOC).

Where kiwi habitat is managed and pests and predators controlled, kiwi are doing well.

However, in areas where kiwi are not managed they are continuing to decline, and there are challenges in the South Island where the Okarito brown kiwi (rowi) and Haast tokoeka kiwi get hit by rat and stoat plagues, despite conservation efforts.

The status report is available at <http://www.doc.govt.nz/templates/news.aspx?id=43002>

Environment Waikato: Animal Waste Proposal

Environment Waikato is proposing a variation to its regional plan (Variation 5), which includes a rule about spreading animal waste on land.

Nutrient flows into the lake are affecting the viability of the lake and the council has announced that it is proposing to cap nitrogen levels in the lake, and to reduce manageable discharges in the lake's catchment by 20% over 15 years. Many farmers have improved their practices, but there are still cases where high levels of nitrogen and effluent are seeping into rivers and lakes.

Environment Waikato will also be working with landowners to find ways to reduce the amount of manageable (almost 90% of the total) nitrogen flowing into the lake. This work is being conducted through the Lake Taupo Protection Trust, which recently received \$81.5million from central government, Environment Waikato and the Taupo District Council.

Bee Virus Identified

Biosecurity NZ has confirmed that a virus causing deformed wings (DWV) in bees has been identified on two properties in Northland and Waikato. The virus is widespread overseas and clinical signs occur in varroa-weakened hives. The virus is not a threat to human health or the environment, and is unlikely to mean the restriction of live bee exports or exports of bee products. Biosecurity NZ will be working with the affected beekeepers to trace bee movements and survey their hives for the virus.

More information: Biosecurity NZ Senior Communications Adviser, 029 894 0432. To report an exotic pest or disease, call the MAF Emergency Pest and Disease Hotline: 0800 80 99 66

Eco Guide for Tourists

An "Eco-Wise Travel Guide" has been published by Ministry for the Environment (MfE) and has been designed so it can be downloaded and printed by travel agents for tourists. If they want, they can also add their business logo to the guide.

The Eco-Wise Travel Guide can be downloaded at: <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/issues/sustainable-industry/initiatives/sustainable-tourism/eco-wise-travel.html>

Green Ribbon Awards: Nominations Sought

Nominations for the 2007 Green Ribbon awards are open to individuals, businesses and community organisations who are sustaining, protecting and enhancing NZ's environment.

Categories this year are:

- rural sustainability;
- urban sustainability;
- caring for our water;
- sustainable business and household;
- young people making a difference; and
- community action for the environment.

Nominations close on 20 April. Winners will be announced on World Environment Day on Tuesday 5 June, followed by a presentation ceremony on 6 June. For an information sheet on the Green Ribbon Awards 2007, including how to make a nomination, visit www.mfe.govt.nz.

QEII Board Directors Wanted

The Minister of Conservation wants experienced directors with an interest in conservation on private land to be nominated for directorships on the Queen Elizabeth II Board with effect from 1 June 2007.

Nominations close 20 April. Use the official nomination form located on www.qe2.org.nz

Biofuels Conference: Coming to a Pump Near You

The Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority's Biofuels Conference will examine the place of biodiesel and bioethanol in NZ's transport energy future. Keynote speakers will give a global perspective on biofuels, and there will also be presentations on current and emerging biofuels technologies in NZ.

The conference is on 24 April, at the Museum of NZ Te Papa Tongarewa's Soundings Theatre, Level 2, Cable Street, Wellington. Cost is \$150 (plus GST of \$18.75). Registration forms are at <https://secure.enlightenhosting.com/biofuels/>

Tourism

Tourism Arrivals/Departures...

Visitor arrivals from the People's Republic of China increased by 6,500 (76%) in February 2007, compared with February 2006. Some of the increase was due to the timing of Chinese New Year (February this year/January last year). The latest increase pushed annual visitor arrivals from China to 113,000, surpassing Korea to become the fifth-largest source of visitors to NZ.

The increase from China and a 6% increase from Australia helped visitor arrivals reach 267,600 in February 2007, up 6% from the 252,400 visitor arrivals in February 2006. Seasonally adjusted visitor arrivals increased by 7% between January and February 2007.

In the year ended February 2007, there were 2.433 million visitor arrivals, a record for any 12-month period. There were more visitors from Australia (up 30,000) and China (up 24,700), but fewer from Japan (down 22,000) and the United Kingdom (down 10,100).

New Zealand residents departed on 96,300 short-term overseas trips in February 2007, an increase of 5,200 (6%) on February 2006. There were more trips to Australia, China, the United Kingdom, India and the Cook Islands.

In the February 2007 year, there were 1.870 million NZ resident short-term departures, down from 1.879 million departures the previous February year.

Permanent and long-term (PLT) arrivals exceeded departures by 2,100 in February 2007, compared with an excess of 3,100 arrivals in February 2006. On a seasonally adjusted basis, there was a net PLT inflow of 500 in February 2007. In the year up to February 2007 there was a net PLT inflow of 13,200, up on the net gain of 8,300 in the February 2006 year. Annual net PLT migration had reached 14,800 in the year ended November 2006, but has since eased.

...Guest Nights Up...

A recent Statistics NZ report shows total guest nights in short-term commercial accommodation up 2 percent in January 2007

compared with January 2006. The guest night total of 4.4 million this month is the highest recorded for any month since the survey began in July 1996. January is traditionally the peak month for guest nights.

Guest nights were 5 percent higher in the North Island and 1 percent lower in the South Island, compared with January 2006 (the North Island had its highest monthly guest nights total since the survey began).

Guest nights spent by international visitors were 3 percent higher than in January 2006. Visitors from European countries showed the largest increases, while visitors from Australia and Japan had the largest decreases. Domestic guest nights recorded a 2 percent increase in January 2007 compared with January 2006.

The Northland region had the largest increase in guest nights, followed by Auckland, Bay of Plenty and Wellington.

...and Domestic Visitor Spend Up

Recent Ministry of Tourism (MT) data shows that domestic travellers within NZ spent \$7.2 billion in the year to September 2006, an increase of 7.5% compared to the same period the previous year. Of the 7.5% increase, around 2% can be attributed to rising fuel costs, leaving 5.5% as a true spending increase.

The research also shows that average length of stay by overnight travellers increased from 2.9 to 3.0 days. The number of overnight trips increased by 0.4% and the total number of nights increased by 4%. Against this, day trips undertaken by NZers fell by 10.4% over the period.

An MT spokesperson said that the switch from day trips to overnight trips made sense in an environment where fuel costs were high. Rather than using petrol money on day trips more are opting to stay over, and to stay longer, and this results in more spending overall.

More information is available on the Ministry of Tourism's research website - www.tourismresearch.govt.nz

Health & Safety

New Suicide Bereavement Support Service

A new suicide support service for family, friends and significant others who have lost someone to suicide or are affected by a suicide attempt will begin this year. The new service will combine the skills and experience of clinical psychologists from Clinical Advisory Services Aotearoa Limited (CASA) and Victim Support workers, who will work with those affected, to offer immediate and ongoing emotional and practical support.

There will be five parts to the service. The first part is a suicide bereavement support service that will initially be set up in three police districts (Christchurch, East Coast and the combined Waitakere/North Shore/Rodney and Auckland Central districts). This is a 24-hour, 7-day a week crisis response and will be delivered by Victim Support workers, who will receive specialist train-

ing. A national suicide support coordinator and district suicide support workers will be appointed.

Suicides can sometimes impact on whole communities, and in some cases result in further suicides. The second part of the service will provide communities with training and support to be better able to respond appropriately after a suicide. This is often referred to as postvention planning and will be initially delivered in three communities.

The third part of the service is the flexible community response service. This service will respond to suspected, or emerging, suicide clusters in up to three communities anywhere in NZ over a twelve month period. Suicide clusters are defined as the occurrence in time and space of (usually three or more) suicides, greater than the number of suicides which would normally be expected.

What type of support do people need after a suicide?

Research suggests that grief after a suicide can raise a wide range of issues for those affected, many of which are common to other bereavements, but some are specific to a suicide. Their specific issues include: the need for information about suicide and mental health problems; the need for social and emotional support; access to counselling or psychotherapy; assistance with a police investigation, coronial inquest and other official procedures; and help and advice about practical matters following the death.

The fourth part of the service is four pilot programmes to provide support to families and significant others who are caring for someone who has made a suicide attempt. The programmes will cover issues such as the carer's own emotional wellbeing, information about mental health and suicide, and how to access services.

The fifth part of the service is the management of the Postvention Response Fund. This is a fund to assist communities that are affected by a suicide anywhere in NZ to deliver programmes to reduce the potential for more suicides.

More Resources

For background information on the latest suicide data go to: <http://www.beehive.govt.nz/ViewDocument.aspx?DocumentID=27881>. For more information about suicide prevention contact SPINZ (Suicide Prevention Information NZ): www.spinz.org.nz or 09 300 7035. There is evidence showing that some types of reporting on suicide can result in an increase in suicides. Please refer to the Ministry of Health booklet "Suicide and the Media: The reporting and portrayal of suicide in the media - a resource". This can be found at: <http://www.moh.govt.nz/moh.nsf/238fd5fb4fd051844c256669006aed57/a72dcd5037cfe4c3cc256bb5000341e9?OpenDocument>

Alcohol Ranked Fifth Most Harmful Drug

Alcohol has been ranked the fifth most harmful drug in the world by a leading medical journal - ahead of ecstasy and amphetamines. The analysis in *The Lancet* ranks the world's 20 most dangerous substances, with heroin topping the list. Amphetamines came in at eighth on the list, tobacco ninth, cannabis eleventh

and ecstasy further down at number 18. Here in NZ, by comparison, alcohol rates at the very top of our list of harmful drugs.

Kiwis Fast Food Spending Rises

New Zealanders are developing a growing love affair with take-away food, with annual sales almost doubling to \$100 million in the past five years [fast food spending was \$55 million in 2002]. Recent Statistics NZ figures show sales of burgers, fish and chips, pies, ice cream, pizza and ethnic foods remained relatively flat between 1995 and 2002, but have risen 88% since then. In the same period, the next-biggest increase in food-related sales was for fresh produce, which rose 41%.

New Zealanders have been ranked 17th in a list of the world's most obese people - fatter than Australians, Britons, Canadians and Fijians and gaining on Americans. Overall, 68% of NZers are classed as obese by the World Health Organisation. Child obesity has trebled in the past decade, with one in three now overweight or obese.

UN Global Road Safety Week

The first United Nations Global Road Safety Week takes place from 23-29 April 2007. The week will focus on young road users to highlight the incidence of road traffic injuries. It is expected that hundreds of initiatives will take place around the world, organised by governments, nongovernmental organisations, United Nations and other international agencies, private sector companies, foundations and others working for safer roads. The main global event will be the World Youth Assembly for Road Safety, which will bring delegations of young people together from many countries to discuss and adopt a youth declaration on road safety and define ways to better serve as road safety advocates in their countries.

For more information go to <http://www.who.int/roadsafety/week/en/>

Gambling: Media Campaign...

A new Health Sponsorship Council "Kiwi Lives" media campaign on problem gambling begins soon. It includes a 30-second television advertisement to get NZers talking about problem gambling and thinking about action they can take to minimise or prevent the harm it causes.

It is estimated that in NZ every year Kiwis lose about \$2 billion dollars to gambling, which can destroy relationships, and result in kids going hungry, businesses failing, debts mounting, and violence and crime. Some community groups estimate that one in three people visiting food banks are affected by problem gambling.

The public will have access to information resources specially developed for the campaign via a website www.ourproblem.org.nzc. Advice and support will also be available through the Gambling Helpline 0800 654 655.

...and Gaming Machines Hooked Up Ahead of Schedule

For the first time, all pokie machines in NZ (20,289 machines in over 1,600 venues around the country) are now connected to electronic monitoring (machines in NZ casinos were already con-

nected to monitoring systems). An electronic monitoring system obtains accurate and timely information about gaming machine usage, in order to:

- limit opportunities for crime or dishonesty in the operation of gaming machines;
- help ensure the integrity and fairness of games;
- improve information about the money that is spent in gaming machines;
- assist to identify problems with gaming machines;
- help with collection of information supporting policy development; and
- inform NZers about gaming machine operations in their communities.

Unsafe Baby Walkers: Prosecution

A Christchurch trader has been fined \$10,000 for selling baby walkers that did not meet the Product Safety Standard regulations. The Commerce Commission says that one of the baby walkers collapsed with the baby in it only a few weeks after purchase. The seller attempted to repair the damage to the walker with a piece of string. Under the Fair Trading Act it is illegal to sell baby walkers that do not comply with the standards. Other compulsory safety standards for products for babies and children include standards for cots; toys for children under three years of age; children's nightwear; pedal bicycles, and baby walkers.

Call the Commerce Commission on freephone 0800 943 600 if you have concerns about the safety of any of the items listed above. More information on the six standards is available from the Consumer Affairs website at www.consumeraffairs.govt.nz/productsafety/standards

Abortion Numbers Decrease

An Abortion Supervisory Committee report indicates that abortion numbers and rates have decreased two years in a row. It is not known exactly why the rates have gone down, though it could be for example, because of sex education in schools, a decrease in overseas student numbers, and/or the increased availability of emergency contraception.

More information about the work of the Abortion Supervisory Committee is at <http://www.abortion.gen.nz/asc/index.html>. Abortion statistics are at <http://www.abortion.gen.nz/information/statistics.html>

Latest HIV Figures Released

The NZ AIDS Foundation says the number of heterosexual women diagnosed with the HIV infection in 2006 was the highest recorded. Last year also saw the second highest number of HIV cases since recording began more than twenty years ago.

Figures from the AIDS Epidemiology Group show 177 new HIV diagnoses were recorded in 2006. And the AIDS Foundation says there was an increase in the number diagnosed through heterosexual contact - up from 73 in 2005 to 85 last year, including 45 women.

Food and Nutrition Guidelines for Schools

New school guidelines for healthy eating are aimed at helping children make healthy lifestyle and food choices, and improving their educational achievement as well as their physical health. Funding will be available to help schools and early childhood education (ECE) services set the guidelines in place, and it will also provide training for two people from every school and ECE in NZ.

Public Health Association Conference 2007

The 2007 Public Health Association Conference will be held from 4-6 July. Conference themes are kaupapa Maori, systems and structures, workforce, inequalities, determinants of health, and globalisation.

Anyone who works in, or has an interest in, public health is welcome to attend.

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

Education

NCEA Exam Results: Girls Outperform Boys...

Newly released NCEA figures show that girls are continuing to outperform boys at high school, and that children at single-sex colleges appear more likely to gain qualifications than those at co-ed schools. Overall, about 150,000 candidates sat NCEA subjects in 2006, making achievement gains across all year levels and for both genders. But female pupils were more likely to get NCEA qualifications across the board than males. Fifty-five percent of boys passed level one, compared with 65% of girls.

The gulf widened when comparing results at single-sex schools. At level three - which replaced Bursary - 51% of boys passed, compared with 71% of girls. Both sexes fared better at single-sex schools than at co-eds, according to the figures. Nearly 78% of girls at single-sex schools gained level-one NCEA last year, compared with 60% at co-eds. For boys, about 12 per cent more gained level one at all-boys' schools.

...But Boys Do Well at Scholarship Exams

Last year three out of the five schools top-performing at scholarship level were boy's schools. Boys picked up 1502 scholarships, compared with girls, who won 1426 scholarships. Gender research literature suggests that boys are more comfortable with competitive examination environments than girls.

Learning Sign Language at School

New Zealand is one of the first countries in the world to introduce sign language into the school curriculum, to support it being

made an official language under the NZ Sign Language (NZSL) Act 2006. The NZSL curriculum now positions sign language as a choice alongside other languages offered in schools, to be learnt by all students. It now has equal status to a spoken language.

The "NZ Sign Language in the NZ Curriculum" has been developed over the past four years in partnership with the deaf community, and sets out how students' learning will progress and the outcomes to be achieved. The curriculum also contains guidelines for teaching and learning NZSL in early childhood education centres aligned with "Te Whariki", the Early Childhood Education Curriculum Framework. Teaching materials to support the curriculum's implementation will initially focus on years 7-8, and will eventually be rolled out to increase language learning from years 7-10

More information is at http://www.tki.org.nz/r/resource_link/sept2006/curriculum/sign-language_e.php

Te Reo Maori Curriculum...

The first national curriculum for Te Reo Maori provides for the teaching of Maori language and tikanga in mainstream primary and secondary schools. These schools now have a flexible framework that will enable children to learn the indigenous language of NZ.

At present, learning Maori, and official language of NZ, is not an option for all Maori children, or non-Maori children. The development of kohanga reo and kura kaupapa, where Maori is the medium of instruction, is helping with the regeneration of Maori language, but only 16% of Maori school students attend these schools. A further 8% of Maori school students study Maori language in the mainstream."

References to the Treaty of Waitangi are also to be reintroduced to the school curriculum after being omitted from the draft last year.

A media release is available at <http://www.executive.govt.nz/93-96/minister/creech/wcn240496.htm>

...and Community Reo Maori Funding

Applications are sought from community groups involved with Maori language initiatives. They go to Ma Te Reo, a Government funded programme established in 2001 to support projects, programmes and activities that contribute to local level Maori language regeneration.

Closing date is 27 April for hard-copy applications (includes emailed and faxed applications). Closing date for on-line applications is 11 May. More information is at www.ma-tereo.co.nz

Out of School Services: New Report...

A Ministry of Women's Affairs report called "Out of School Services: Child and Family Outcomes" examines these services,

which include care for children before and after school and during the school holidays. The report presents the main findings from NZ and international research on the impact of out of school services on children and their families. The literature suggests that not only does the provision of quality out of school services meet the needs of families, it can also lead to children performing better at school and is linked to higher self esteem, less delinquency and reduced violence and drug and alcohol use.

For children with poor records of school attendance and achievement, the study indicates that as long as their attendance at high-quality OSS is regular and frequent over several years, their engagement with school is likely to improve.

More information is at <http://www.mwa.govt.nz/news-and-pubs/publications/work-and-enterprise/oss/html>

...and Action Plan for Out of School Services

The Ministry of Social Development (MSD) is working with other government agencies on an action plan to improve out of school services. The aim is to give carers who choose to work, train or study better access to quality, affordable age-appropriate care for their school age children. The plan looks at four main areas:

- developing a better understanding of the needs and perspectives of parents and children through research and consultation;
- improving the supply and flexibility of out of school services so they reflect the needs and preferences of parents, including those working non-standard hours, those with children with disabilities and rural families;
- improving the quality assurance framework for out of school services; and
- reviewing out of school services funding and affordability.

MSD will be consulting on the action plan shortly

More information is at <http://www.msds.govt.nz/work-areas/families-whanau/out-of-school-services.html>

20 Hours Free ECE: Freephone...

A freephone is available to anyone wanting more information about the 20 Hours Free Early Childhood Scheme which starts in July. Face-to-face workshops for providers are also underway.

The Early Childhood Education Information Freephone number is 0800 20 44 33

...and ECE Early Intervention Increase

Ten more Early Childhood Education Centres (ECE) are to join a pilot programme offering support for parents to get more involved in their child's education. Eighteen centres are now involved with the pilot programme, which began in July last year.

Help offered by the programme includes facilitating regular visits from a public health nurse through the ECE centre, home

visits by teachers and links through centres to community social services. Some \$2.4 million will be spent rolling out the pilot project to the 10 new centres, as part of the government's Early Intervention Initiative.

Te Kotahitangi Research: Positive Results

The Maori Education Research Institute at the School of Education, University of Waikato (together with Poutama Pounamu Research and Development Centre) has released a report on Te Kotahitanga, a research and teacher professional development programme. It shows improvements in numeracy and literacy for the Maori students involved with the teachers in the programme, and also benefits for non-Maori students.

Follow-up interviews with Maori students show that a good relationship with their teachers means they thrive at school - and interviews with the teachers involved indicate that they have undergone a philosophical shift in the way they think about teaching and learning.

More information is at http://edlinked.soe.waikato.ac.nz/departments/index.php?dept_id=20&page_id=2654

Second-Chance Education and Training Awards 2007

These awards (value is \$2,000 or more) from the New Horizons For Women Trust have been set up to assist women aged 27 years or older who did not obtain a tertiary qualification when younger to return to education or training. Applicants need to show evidence of acceptance into an NZQA-accredited educational or training course.

Applications close 31 May. Post them to: Second-chance Awards Secretary, New Horizons for Women Trust (Inc.), PO Box 12 498, Wellington 6144. More information is at <http://www.newhorizonsforwomen.org.nz/>

Student Loan Amendment Bill

A recently passed student loan scheme bill will make life easier for borrowers who are overseas and simplifies the administration of the student loan scheme. The changes for borrowers who are overseas include a repayment holiday of up to three years, new repayment obligations, extension of interest-free loans to full-time undergraduates, and extension of the amnesty for those who have fallen into arrears with their payments. Other changes in the Bill include a reduction in the late payment penalty for all borrowers, and allowing data matching between Inland Revenue and Customs to ensure correct entitlement to interest-free loans.

Information on these and other technical changes in the bill is available in the commentary on the bill, published at: <http://www.taxpolicy.ird.govt.nz>

Employment

Calculating Holiday Entitlements Made Easy

The Department of Labour now has a calculator for calculating leave entitlements available on its website for both employers and employees. It provides a step-by-step process for calculating whether an employee is entitled to a paid public holiday, and if so, what their entitlement should be. It can also be used to calculate payments for working on a public holiday, and work out sickness and bereavement leave entitlements. It should be particularly helpful for industries which don't have traditional "nine to five" working hours - such as the horticulture, manufacturing, and hospitality industries.

The calculator is available at <http://www.ers.govt.nz/holidays-online-tool/default.aspx>

DPEP Act Repealed

The Disabled Persons Employment Promotion (Repeal and Related Matters) Act is now in place. Under this Act, employment opportunities for people with disabilities in segregated settings will continue, but wages will be paid according to the work people do rather than the place where people work. The changes will come into effect on 30 November this year to give the workshops which have not completed individual worker assessments time to do so.

Some workshops are already paying the minimum wage.

Older Workers: Three Reports

According to a recently released Department of Labour (DoL) report, more older Kiwi workers are staying on the job, with NZ recording one of the highest workforce participation rates in the OECD for the 50-64 year age group. The "Older People in Work" report shows a surge in the number of older people in paid work - with 77% of 50-64 year olds working in 2005, compared with just 57% in 1991. Australia's participation rate is around 10 percentage points lower.

In today's climate of skills and labour shortages, there's a growing recognition by business that older workers are an experienced and valuable pool of labour which will help meet skill needs. In return, these workers benefit from the social and economic gains of staying longer in paid work. In particular, the report shows participation by older women growing markedly - from about 45% to about 70% between 1991 and 2005 - which partly reflects the qualifications held and work opportunities available to this group today. Factors contributing to this growth include the fact that women are pursuing careers across their lifetime, technological changes to the nature of work and ongoing skills shortages. Raising the age eligibility for superannuation has also played an important part.

Additional research entitled "45 plus: Choices in the Labour Market", provides an insight into drivers and barriers to paid work for people over the age of 45. The research shows that many people in this age group still face barriers to taking up paid work. Some of the people in this age-group have responsibility for

young children or grandchildren, or for relatives. Combining these responsibilities with paid work can be challenging. Other barriers faced by the group included low or outdated skills, age discrimination (both experienced and perceived) and not knowing where to go for information about work. The research provides guidance to employers and policy makers about how to make sure that older people who want to work can work.

A third publication "Ageing Workforces and Ageing Occupations" is a discussion paper. It looks at the changing nature of work, and the extent of workforce ageing in NZ. It also focuses on occupations where ageing is significant.

"Older People in Work: Key Trends and Patterns 1991-2005" is at <http://www.dol.govt.nz/publication-view.asp?ID=222> "45 Plus: Choices in the labour market. Final Report - Stage 3" is at <http://www.dol.govt.nz/publication-view.asp?ID=221> "Ageing Workforces and Ageing Occupations" is at <http://www.dol.govt.nz/publication-view.asp?ID=218>

Money Matters

Too Good to be True? It's Probably a Scam

It's estimated that more than 20,000 NZers a year get caught up in a scam and invest time or money in it - that's a city the size of Taupo. Unfortunately scams are seldom reported as most people are too embarrassed to report them, making it even harder to catch the scammers. UK research estimates that less than 5% of scams are reported. But scams are illegal and they should be reported like every other crime.

The Consumer Affairs Ministry estimates that nearly half of NZ adults have been exposed to mass marketed scams, spread especially through email or the internet. UK research has exploded the myth that the elderly are the targets of scams. People of all ages and backgrounds are being taken in by these increasingly sophisticated scams. The most common scams are banking and investment scams, Nigerian letters and pyramid selling schemes. The rule of thumb is that if it's too good to be true then it's probably a scam. You can't win a lottery you didn't enter. And banks don't ask for your pin number by phone or email. The Ministry of Consumer Affairs and the Commerce Commission have prepared the following advice on protecting yourself from scams:

Protect your Money:

- don't send money or give credit card details to someone you don't know or trust;
- never respond to an email asking for your PINs or passwords;
- seek independent advice before investing;
- avoid online banking at internet cafes; and
- check bank statements.

Protect Your Phones:

- don't give out your number to just anyone; and
- be cautious about unexpected calls and text messages.

Protect your Computer:

- keep your software protection up to date;
- don't respond to unsolicited emails; and
- don't open attachments unless it's from a trusted source.

Protect Your Identity:

- don't share personal information (e.g. PINs, maiden names);
- destroy old bills, statements or expired credit or identity cards;
- check your credit report at least once a year;
- report scams; and
- if you get burnt tell the Police.

Find out more/forward any you receive to Scamwatch - www.scamwatch.org.nz or contact your local Citizen's Advice Bureau.

Government Surplus Exceeds Forecast by \$1.3 Billion

The government has recorded an operating surplus of around \$5.5 billion for the seven months to January this year. Treasury says that's about \$1.3 billion ahead of its forecasts. However, much of that money is a result of investment returns from super-annuation funds and can't be spent. Once those investments are taken into account the operating surplus comes in at around four and half billion dollars, up around a hundred million dollars on forecast.

Tax revenue to the government was down around \$100 million for the seven months to January, but that was offset by delays in some spending.

Financial Assets Overtake Housing

New Zealanders' financial assets grew faster than the value of their homes last year for the first time in six years as the housing market slowed and households looked to other means of accumulating wealth. Wealth manager Spicers' quarterly Household Savings Indicators showed overall household net worth - assets minus liabilities - rose 9.7% or \$49 billion to \$552 billion. Per household that represents an \$11,700 quarterly increase or \$26,600 over the year to \$352,000.

The largest portion of the annual \$14.4 billion increase in total financial assets was the \$9.6 billion more NZers poured into bank deposits, the biggest annual rise in the 16 years that Spicers has produced the data.

Some of the increase in financial assets was due to the strong performance of shares. The value of private shareholdings increased by an estimated 12.8%, or \$1.8 billion over the three months to the end of the year. Meanwhile, the value of managed funds held by households increased by 4.8% over the year to \$43 billion.

Law Changes to Relax Tax Penalties

Legislation planned for introduction in May will relax a whole range of tax penalties and update associated legislation, to encourage voluntary compliance. The idea behind the changes is to have tax penalties that reflect the seriousness of the offence,

since people comply with the law more willingly when they see it as reasonable. The current system of penalties does not always distinguish between people who try to do the right thing but fail, and people who have little regard for the law. There are also several areas in the law where the rules about what behaviour attracts a penalty could be clearer, more consistent and better targeted at making people want to comply with the law. One of the main changes to be introduced will reduce the number of penalties faced by people who have a tax shortfall if they tell Inland Revenue about it before being advised that they are to be audited. Other changes include updating the definition of "tax agent" to allow the Commissioner of Inland Revenue to exclude certain people from the definition in limited circumstances. The new legislation will also clarify when a shortfall penalty for not taking reasonable care may be imposed on taxpayers who have used a tax agent, an area that is not black and white under current law.

Housing

Real Estate Agent Complaints Procedures: Review

The government has announced that the Act governing the way complaints are handled in the real estate industry is to be reviewed. The review will consider:

- the merit of an independent complaints system;
- whether compulsory membership of the Real Estate Institute of NZ (REINZ) is still appropriate; and
- whether licensing of real estate agents should be independent of the industry.

Currently the REINZ decides how complaints are handled. While the Real Estate Agents' Licensing Board has the ability to impose serious penalties for misconduct, most complaints to date have been handled in-house. In 2004 the REINZ received 132 complaints and none were referred to the Licensing Board. In 2005 seven of the 163 complaints it received were referred to the Board.

The Real Estate Agents Act 1976 is at: [http://www.legislation.govt.nz/libraries/contents/om_isapi.dll?clientID=3238468618&hitsperheading=on&infobase=pal_statutes.nfo&record=\(7CE38\)&softpage=DOC](http://www.legislation.govt.nz/libraries/contents/om_isapi.dll?clientID=3238468618&hitsperheading=on&infobase=pal_statutes.nfo&record=(7CE38)&softpage=DOC)

Latest Home (Un)Affordability Figures

A recent study shows almost three-quarters of take-home pay is needed to service the mortgage on an average house. In some areas, the average wage earner would have to spend all their pay on mortgage payments to afford the average house.

The most unaffordable region is Central Otago, which includes the resort boom towns of Queenstown and Wanaka. The average payment for the average house has ballooned to 105.2% of the average salary from 91.1% in December 2004.

There are only a handful of areas in NZ now where the percentage is around the prudent level of 40% (the rule of thumb for most banks is that repayments should be below 40% of take-home pay), including Southland on 38%, although this is up from 29.3% two years ago.

The percentage required in Auckland is now 92.8% of average take-home pay, compared with 71.1% just over two years ago. Affordability in Wellington has deteriorated in line with the rest of the country - with 75% of average income needed to finance an average home, even though wage growth has been stronger because of ballooning government spending in the capital.

In Canterbury, aspiring home owners are looking at paying 62.4% of their average take-home pay. Hawke's Bay home buyers would need to give up 64.6% of take-home pay to service the mortgage on an average home, up from 56.5% in December 2004. Manawatu home buyers need to sacrifice 52.6% of their pay.

The study, by interest.co.nz and going back to the start of the house-price boom in 2003, says 73.5% of the average Kiwi's take-home pay is needed now to buy the average-priced house, up from 43.5% four years ago.

The full report can be found at: <http://www.interest.co.nz/HLA/HLA-NZ-March2007.asp>

Insulated Houses Are Healthy Houses...

University of Otago researchers have found that when homes are properly insulated there are significant health gains, and that living with damp and cold is a home hazard that has an impact on the health of whole communities. In the study 1350 houses from low income communities in the North Island were divided into two groups. The first group did not have insulation, while the second group had a standard retro-fitted insulation package, including ceiling insulation and draught stopping around doors and windows.

The study shows that for every dollar spent on insulating old, cold houses, there is close to a two dollar benefit in terms of health saving from not ending up in hospital, or in less time off work or school. In addition, people in warm homes are less likely to shift house, resulting in positive benefits for children's education.

More is at http://www.otago.ac.nz/news/news/2007/05-03-07_press_release.html

...and Landlords Rental Properties: Insulation Deal

Landlords are being offered a 55% subsidy on a full house retrofit of insulation and other energy efficiency measures for their rental properties. The tenants in the rental properties must be on a low income and eligible for a community services card, and applications must be received before 31 May this year. Full house retrofits cost around \$2,000 so this offer could save landlords over \$1000.

The offer, a joint initiative from the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (EECA) and the NZ Property Investors'

Federation (NZPIF), includes ceiling and underfloor insulation where accessible; hot water cylinder wraps and pipe lagging; energy efficient light bulbs; low flow showerheads; underfloor polythene; and draught-proofing of doors. To be eligible for the offer, landlords must be a member of the NZPIF. Membership costs between \$100 and \$200.

The offer is part of the EnergyWise home grants programme, which aims to insulate properties built prior to 1978. Over 28,000 homes have been retrofitted since the installation of energy efficient measures began through EECA programmes in 1995.

To find out about joining the NZPIF, call (03) 357 9243, or contact your local Property Investors' Association: www.nzpif.org.nz. Applications close 31 May 2007. Application forms can be found at www.ecoinsulation.co.nz

Leaky Homes: Information Sheets Available

An information sheet for stand-alone properties, and one for properties within a multi-unit complex, outline the provisions of the Weathertight Homes Resolution Service Act, and also how an existing claim will proceed after 1 April.

More information is at <http://www.dbh.govt.nz/transition-info>

Business

Productivity Figures

Statistics NZ (SNZ) figures show that productivity grew 0.4% in the measured sector for the March 2006 year. This is below the 18-year average of 2.5% annual growth and down on the 2.1% recorded in the March 2005 year. Labour productivity growth for the March 2006 year is the lowest since the series began in 1988.

The comparatively low growth for the 2006 year was driven by relatively weak output growth (1.4%) and sustained employment growth over the period. Labour productivity growth tends to decline when the economy slows, as firms hold on to existing staff despite easing demand.

Manufacturing Sales

Seasonally adjusted manufacturing sales decreased 2.2% in the December 2006 quarter, according to Statistics NZ. The largest contributor to the decrease was the meat and dairy product manufacturing industry which fell 6.3%.

Meat and dairy product manufacturing volumes fell 3.8% in the December 2006 quarter, while lower prices were received for both meat manufacturing (down 6.1%) and dairy manufacturing (down 4.6%). This coincided with an appreciation of the NZ dollar in the December 2006 quarter. Machinery and equipment manufacturing contributed the next-largest decrease in seasonally adjusted sales. The falls were partly offset by a rise in trans-

port equipment manufacturing. The manufacturing sales trend has eased recently, following a period of increase since the June 2005 quarter.

Excluding the meat and dairy product manufacturing industry, seasonally adjusted manufacturing sales fell 0.6%, the first fall since the December 2005 quarter.

Business Incubators Help with Exports

Business incubators were first set up in 2001. They give aspiring entrepreneurs an opportunity to develop their innovative ideas and set up new businesses in order to commercialise them (see box for more information).

New figures from 2006 show that the 164 companies using incubator services earned a total of \$28.8 million during those 12 months, of which nearly \$10 million was from exports. The 2006 figures also reveal companies using the incubator service raised \$20.1 million in capital. This was 46% more than in the previous year.

Roughly \$89 million is earned annually by companies that have graduated from or are currently in incubation, of which more than \$20 million comprises new export dollars.

About Business Incubators

A business incubator is a facility designed to assist businesses to become established and sustainable during their start up phase. Through its Incubator Support Programme, NZ Trade and Enterprise (NZTE) currently assists eight incubators nationwide to deliver support such as: introduction to markets and market networks; advice on strategy, risk management and governance; help with raising capital; and introduction to experts in fields such as intellectual property and marketing that early stage companies might not otherwise have ready access to.

For more information see www.nzte.govt.nz/incubators

E-Business Guide

New Zealand Trade and Enterprise has revamped its E-Business Guide to allow small and medium sized businesses to develop their online presence at their own pace. The self-service guide features checklists, background information and good practice examples on a range of e-business subjects. These cover the basics such as assessing the information technology needs of the business and choosing equipment to meet them, to more advanced features such as building websites which use the latest online technologies.

Other modules covered in the guide include using e-business technology to assist with exporting, and monitoring the effectiveness of e-business strategies long term.

The guide is at: <http://ebusinessguide.biz.org.nz/>

Sale of Yellow Pages

Telecom has sold its Yellow Pages Group ("YPG") to a private equity consortium consisting of CCMP Capital and Teachers'

Private Capital, the private investment arm of the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan, for NZ\$2.24 billion. The total value of NZ\$2.24 billion represents NZ\$2.165 billion cash settlement plus approximately NZ\$75 million of YPG debtors retained by Telecom. Telecom expects the transaction will be completed by the end of April subject to Overseas Investment Office approval and normal closing conditions.

The Law

Auckland Medical Testing: High Court Decision

The High Court has ruled that the joint Auckland, Waitemata and Counties-Manukau district health boards did not conduct a fair tender process before awarding the medical testing contract to Labtests Auckland. The reason was that information acquired by the Labtests chief executive who was also an Auckland District Health Board member throughout the tender process "greatly advantaged the Labtests bid and thereby damaged the integrity of the tendering process".

The judge also found the joint health boards had acted outside their jurisdiction by not consulting groups representing Auckland GPs.

The three Auckland regional District Health Boards have since reached agreement with Diagnostic Medlab Ltd for the ongoing provision of full primary referred pathology services across the Auckland region for the next 18 months.

Importing Honey from Oz: High Court Decision

The High Court has upheld MAF Biosecurity NZ's actions in allowing imports of honey products from Australia, and it has also ordered the lifting of the current injunction placed on imported honey. The decision is subject to appeal.

Go to <http://www.courtsfnz.govt.nz/from/decisions/documents/DiagnosticMedlabLtdVADHBORS.pdf>

Family Violence Courts

Two Family Violence Courts are currently operating in Manukau and in Waitakere, and four more are to be established in Lower Hutt, Masterton, Porirua and Auckland City.

The Family Violence Courts have been set up to provide rapid resolution of family violence matters in order to reduce the risk of further violence happening while a case is waiting to be heard. As well as improving the safety of victims, Family Violence Courts make sure that offenders are accountable, and can access the right support and programmes to help them live without violence.

Internet

New Web Standards

New web design and operational standards for government agencies have been published by the State Services Commission (SSC). The new standards follow a review process by a working group of 10 representatives of government, people with disabilities and usability professionals. While not radically different from the previous guidelines, they remove duplications and dated material and are focussed on making the standards more useable by government agencies.

The new standards can be downloaded from: <http://www.e.govt.nz/standards/web-guidelines/web-standards-v1.0>

Telecommunications Services Report

The latest Ministry of Economic Development telecommunications benchmarking report, assesses the performance of the NZ telecommunications services market against other OECD countries. The information covers the period to June 2006 (it was written before the December passing of Telecommunications Amendment Act, which provides for the operational separation of Telecom and "unbundling" the local telephone loop to promote competition). It was also written before the 7 March Statistics NZ survey that showed broadband subscribers rose by nearly 30% in the six months to 30 September 2006.

It finds that NZ has good broadband access availability, but that uptake of broadband as of June 2006 was an unchanged 22nd place out of the 30 Organisation for Economic and Cooperation (OECD) member countries.

The report is at http://www.med.govt.nz/templates/MultipageDocumentTOC___25611.aspx

Public Libraries: Aotearoa People's Network

The roll out of the first phase of the Aotearoa People's Network is sending 22 public libraries into the digital future by providing them the hardware, software, staff training and tools to take them forward into an internet-based information environment. The Aotearoa People's Network will eventually give every public library in NZ - and therefore every NZer - access to each other and to the world. It is expected the first phase will be fully operational by September 2007. Plans will then be developed to take the project nationwide.

The People's Network is a joint project between National Library of NZ, NZ's public libraries, Sun Microsystems, and Telecom NZ. It is modelled on the hugely successful United Kingdom People's Network. That project put 30,000 computer terminals into 4,300 public libraries, upskilled United Kingdom citizens, and connected them with high speed access to each other and the world.

Public libraries in Wairarapa/Tararua, Taranaki, the West Coast of the South Island, and in Kawerau (Eastern Bay of

Plenty) have been chosen as the first libraries to connect to the project. The twenty-two phase one libraries are: Wairarapa/Tararua (Masterton District Library, Carterton Library, Greytown Library, Featherston Library, Martinborough Library, Dannevirke Community Library, Woodville Community Library, Pahiatua Community Library, Eketahuna Library and Service Centre); Taranaki (New Plymouth District Libraries, Inglewood Library and Service Centre, Waitara Library and Service Centre, Bell Block Library, Oakura Library, Urenui Library, Stratford and District Centennial Library Wanganui District Library); West Coast (South Island) (Grey District Library [Greymouth], Sue Thompson Casey Memorial Library [Westport], Westland District Library [Hokitika], Inangahua County Library, Kawerau District Library).

Google Alerts: Google Alerts are email updates from Google of the latest relevant Google results (web, news, etc.) To create a Google Alert based on your choice of query or topic go to <http://www.google.com/alerts?hl=en&t=1>. Uses of Google Alerts include: monitoring a developing news story; keeping current on a competitor or industry; getting the latest on a celebrity or event; and/or keeping tabs on your favorite sports teams.

To Pick a Marriage or Civil Union Celebrant: go to www.bdm.govt.nz, then look in the Civil Union or Marriage sections. The Department of Internal Affairs is providing this new online service to help people choose a marriage or civil union celebrant. The website is divided into two categories, organisational and independent celebrants. Organisational celebrants are priests or ministers of churches or are attached to other organisations or fellowships. There are 7,552 religious and organisational celebrants. You can search for these celebrants by name or organisation. The second group is the 1,622 independent celebrants listed by name and region. The 680 civil union celebrants are listed on a separate web page. You can also get information by phoning call free, 0800 22 52 52.

Buy Kiwi Made has a new website at www.buykiwimade.govt.nz. The site, which has been set up for consumers and businesses, includes information on Buy Kiwi Made regional events, and on a \$3 million regional fund available for regional and sector projects. It also includes information on the Buy Kiwimade media marketing campaign for which \$6.3 million has been set aside.

TVNZ ondemand is a new website at http://tvnzondemand.co.nz/content/ondemand_index/ondemand_skin. You can visit the site to catch up on any favourite shows that you may have missed on TV, or want to watch again. Shows are catalogued into six categories:

- Catch Up: new episodes that were broadcast on TV ONE or TV2 in the last 7 days;
- Classics: NZers' favourite and iconic shows, including footage from the TVNZ archive;
- Weekly Recaps - recaps a week's worth of shows compiled into a half hour programme;
- Coming Soon: as it says, shows coming to TV ONE or TV2;
- What's Hot: content that was popular in Catch Up, but is now older than 7 days; and
- Insider Info: for out cast and crew interviews, bloopers and behind the scenes footage.

Files will have a single advertisement before the programme commences but there will be no commercial breaks once the programme has started. Note that www.tvnz.co.nz is a source of current, written and interactive content.

An online *Ethnic Affairs Directory* is at http://www.ethnicaffairs.govt.nz/oeawebsite.nsf/wpg_URL/community-directory-Index. The directory lists organisations that work with ethnic communities, families and individuals.

For *Solar Water Heating Information* go to <http://www.solarsmarter.org.nz/>. A well designed and installed solar water heating system can heat between 50% and 75% of your hot water a year, even in less sunny parts of NZ. Using a sustainable energy source, solar water heaters pay for themselves over time through lower power bills. The site has information for home owners, the building industry and the solar industry.

A *New National Parenting Website*, www.kiwifamilies.co.nz, aims to help families across the country by providing free, high quality information for parents that is easily accessible at any time of the day. The site offers advice from professionals on: activities, babies, back to school, birth, birthdays, education, entertainment, festivals, health, parenting, pregnancy and school holidays. Kiwifamilies also lists support groups for: abuse, addictions, disability, financial matters, grief/death, illness, parenting, pregnancy/babies, and relationships.

The *Building Good Behaviour in Your Child* Teamup's site at <http://www.teamup.co.nz/earlyyears/parenting/Building+good+behaviour+in+your+child.htm> has been developed to help parents build good behaviour in their children. The page also contains links to other useful resources.

Fishing

Kahawai Fishery Ruling

The High Court has ruled that the government erred when making decisions in 2004 and 2005 about the allocation of kahawai, and the Minister of Fisheries has been asked to reconsider this 2005 decision. The ruling has come shortly after submissions closed on shared fishery proposals covering the allocation of fisheries amongst commercial, recreational and customary fisheries closed. The Fisheries Ministry received 610 submissions on the proposals.

New Iwi Fisheries Partnership

A new fisheries partnership, the Te Tau Ihu Forum, has been established with eight iwi organisations in the Tasman / Marlborough area. The forum provides an opportunity for iwi across the top of the South Island to address fisheries issues in their individual rohe, as well as working together to define common fisheries values and goals. In practice, this will mean that when someone goes down to the sea to exercise their customary fishing rights, the issues to which rohe applies, and how the rules apply to manage the fishery will be clearer.

Te Tau Ihu Forum members are: Ngati Apa ki te Waipounamu Trust; Ngati Koata Trust; Ngati Rarua Iwi Trust; Ngati Tama Manawhenua Ki Te Tau Ihu Trust; Ngati Toa Rangitira Manawhenua Ki Te Tau Ihu Trust; Te Atiawa Manawhenua Ki Te Tau Ihu Trust; Te Runanga A Rangitane O Wairau; and Te Runanga o Ngati Kuia Trust.

Iwi fisheries forums such as Te Tau Ihu are a way of addressing the treaty responsibilities that result from the 1992 Fisheries Deed of Settlement and the Fisheries Act 1996. Iwi and hapu in

other regions are also seeking to establish their own regional groups.

Koura/Freshwater Crayfish Farming

A proposed amendment to the Freshwater Fisheries Regulations would allow for new licenses to be issued for new koura farms, where the brood stock come from existing farms. Under the amendment applications for the supervised collection of limited numbers of wild koura for the improvement of brood stock quality would also be considered. Regulation changes are also proposed for the protection of non-harvested freshwater fish species, like mudfish, which are endangered and subject to species recovery programmes.

A press release is available at <http://www.beehive.govt.nz/ViewDocument.aspx?DocumentID=28648>

The Arts

Literary Achievement Awards

Readers, writers, groups and organisations are invited to participate in the Prime Minister's Awards for Literary Achievement 2007 by nominating an outstanding NZ writer in poetry, fiction and non-fiction. Worth \$60,000 each, the awards recognise writers who have made a significant contribution to NZ literature. Eligible nominations will be assessed by a literary panel whose recommendations will go to the Council of Creative NZ for approval.

Writers of fiction (includes novels, short stories, plays, children's fiction and scriptwriting) and non-fiction (includes all disciplines, e.g. biography, history, travel, culture, the environment) are eligible. They must be NZ citizens or resident in NZ.

Nominations close 15 June. Nomination forms are available from any of Creative NZ's offices (Auckland: tel: 09 373 3066; Christchurch: tel: 03 366 2072; Wellington: tel: 04 473 0880). You can also download the nomination forms from the Creative NZ website at <http://www.creativenz.govt.nz/news/pressreleases.html?record=2198>

General

Submissions to Parliament Go Electronic...

People making submissions to Parliament are now able to make their submissions online to two select committees - The Commerce Committee and the Justice and Electoral Committee - as part of a pilot of a new information management system.

Using the new online submission facility, submitters can upload electronic documents or type a brief submission on the form provided, rather than sending copies of their submissions in hard copy, for the two pilot select committees.

More information is at <http://www.parliament.nz/en-NZ/3/9/7/3979990666f04fda800a2e703ae7503f.htm>

...As Do Court Notices

A new system of electronic filing of Court infringement notices is expected to result in the saving of more than 1 million pieces of paper a year. The electronic system will enable prosecuting authorities such as councils and the Police to file their infringement notices in an electronic template and submit them online.

Up until now prosecuting agencies have had to file paper copies of Reminder Notices at the local District Court (sometimes also giving the court the information on a disk).

Electronic filing became available on 1 March and it will be mandatory from 1 September.

Change Phone Provider and Keep Your Number

Consumers are now able to keep their existing home and mobile telephone numbers when they change service providers. Local number portability lets fixed (landline) customers change service provider but keep the same telephone number within a local calling area. Cellular number portability will let a mobile customer change provider and keep the same mobile number, including the same cellular network access code.

Local and cellular telephone number portability are both regulated services under the Telecommunications Act 2001.

Telecom Favourite Place Plan: Price Drop

Telecom has dropped the price of its Favourite Place product. The Favourite Place Neighbouring Area (allows you to make as many calls as you like, night and day, to a neighbouring calling area) has dropped from \$19.95 a month to \$5 a month. There are a couple of new national and international plans out as well.

Customers can either register online (go to www.telecom.co.nz/fpna - you can also check which are your neighbouring calling areas here) or by calling 0800 100 100

Road User Charges Rise

Road user charges for vehicles over six tonnes have gone up by an average of 11%. Charges for these vehicles have not risen since 1989, though road user charges for vehicles under six tonnes have almost doubled over the same period.

Road user charges are set according to vehicle types and weights and are intended to reflect the direct cost of vehicles using roads.

Road user charges for vehicles under six tonnes increased by \$0.64 per 1000 km with the annual Consumer Price Index (CPI)

adjustment. The CPI increase for the year ending 31 December 2006 was 2.66%.

Petrol excise duty has also increased by 0.69 cents per litre.

Indigenous Knowledge Exploration: New Research

The Foundation for Research, Science and Technology recently announced seven research projects with innovative potential using Maori knowledge, people and resources. They include:

- \$1 million to the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA) over four years for a pilot programme in Northland to improve tipai (scallop) harvest and build an export industry;
- \$150,000 over two years to NIWA for research that will help manage biosecurity risks to marine and freshwater species of cultural importance;
- \$1 million to NIWA over four years for a customary fisheries project that will incorporate Maori knowledge in coastal fisheries management;
- \$1 million over four years to the University of Otago for research into ongoing sustainable management of coastal fisheries resources;
- \$165,000 over 12 months to Otago University for research to improve protection of the Sooty Shearwater (muttonbird) on offshore island nature reserves;
- \$500,000 over two years to Crop & Food Research for researching unique NZ export food products based on traditional Maori knowledge of ingredients and flavours; and
- \$500,000 over two years to the University of Auckland to develop a framework for building the contribution Maori knowledge can make to science and biotechnology.

The "Anti-Smacking" Bill

Currently Section 59 of the Crimes Act 1961 states that the parent of a child, or a person in the place of a parent "is justified in using force by way of correction towards a child if that force is reasonable in the circumstances". It is up to a jury to decide if the force used was reasonable in the circumstances.

The purpose of the current Member's Bill (from Sue Bradford - Green Party) is "to stop force, and associated violence and harm under the pretence of domestic discipline, being inflicted on children. Presently, section 59 of the Crimes Act 1961 acts as a justification, excuse or defence for parents and guardians using force against their children where they are doing so for the purposes of correction and the force used is reasonable in the circumstances. The Bill would repeal that provision. The effect of this amendment is that the statutory protection for use of force by parents and guardians will be removed. They will now be in the same position as everyone else so far as the use of force against children is concerned. The use of force on a child may constitute an assault under section 194(a) of the Crimes Act, a comparatively new provision in the criminal law, and the repeal of section 59 ought not revive any old common law justification, excuse or defence that the provision may have codified. Clause 4 simply repeals section 59."

On 14 March the Bill was debated but did not reach the voting stage.

Affirmative Action OK: HRC

The Human Rights Commission (HRC) and the Institute of Policy Studies have published a book examining the role in NZ of special measures (affirmative action programmes). Called "Special Measures to Reduce Ethnic Disadvantage in New Zealand" it examines the history of affirmative action in NZ and looks at circumstances when it is likely to be effective as well as politically acceptable.

The HRC says that, properly used, affirmative action programmes can make a major contribution to reducing the effects of discrimination, and the Human Rights Act 1993 specifically upholds their use. The Act states that special measures directed to a particular ethnic group are not discriminatory when applied to "those persons or groups that need or may reasonably be supposed to need assistance or advancement in order to achieve an equal place with other members of the community".

The HRC has released a leaflet on the subject called "Guidelines on Measures to Ensure Equality, For Private And Public Sector Organisations Seeking To Put In Place Policies To Reduce Ethnic Disadvantage".

More information is at <http://www.hrc.co.nz/home/hrc/introduction/racerelationsday/upcominglaunches.php>

Strengthening Community Relations

The government is developing a new programme to strengthen relationships between NZ's different ethnic, cultural and religious communities. The programme is called "Connecting Diverse Communities" and it pulls together existing, enhanced and new programmes from across all aspects of government.

Consultation about the programme is beginning with interested groups. More information is at www.ethnicaffairs.govt.nz

Mana Wahine Week Coming

The Mana Wahine Week programme runs from 23-29 April. Amongst the events planned are: a Maori Weavers Collective exhibition; regional celebrations of Maori women in iwi governance, and a panel discussion from the "Aunties" of the TV show "Ask your Auntie".

More information is at <http://www.mwa.govt.nz/women-in-nz/maoriwomen/manawahine2007>

Families: Blue Skies Funding

The Families Commission's Blue Skies Fund provides an opportunity for researchers, academics, family practitioners, community group members and other interested people to promote debate on topics or issues that sit outside the Commission's work programme. Studies should address gaps in knowledge, or aim to describe or create new or innovative ideas and approaches on issues, relating to families.

Proposals for this March funding round must be submitted by 20 April. Send them by email as a MS Word attachment to: karen.stewart@nzfamilies.org.nz, tel 04 931 7090 for more information.

Community Sector Taskforce: Regional Meetings

In the run up to a national forum in June the Community Sector Taskforce is running regional forums, fono and national forums covering relationships with local and central government, resourcing, representations and regional networks.

Two of the forums - in Wellington and Waitemata - were held earlier this month. Dates for the others are: South Auckland: 17 April; Waikato: 18 April; Southland: 24 April; Otago: 27 April; Canterbury: 28 April; Northland: 30 April; Hawkes Bay; 2 May; Tairāwhiti 4 May; Whanganui: 7 May; and Nelson: 9 May.

More information and registration details are at <http://cst.org.nz/index.html> or you can email hpahau@paradise.net.nz

Non-Profit Community Groups: Measuring Outcomes

The Urban Institute and the Center for What Works have developed a list of outcomes of non-profit organisations to enable them to measure the quality of their work. The project was developed to help non-profit organisations reduce the time and cost of setting up their own measurement process. Improved reporting from non-profits also enables funders to better assess and compare the results of their grants.

More information is at <http://www.urban.org/publications/411404.html>

"Bumped" and Delayed Passengers: Compensation

Domestic airline passengers who have been "bumped" off flights due to overbooking by airlines or been delayed can seek compensation from the airline. Under Civil Aviation legislation, consumers are entitled to compensation from the airline if they are delayed - unless the delay is caused by factors beyond the airline's control, such as weather conditions, or safety issues. "Delay" includes being "bumped" on overbooked flights, and also covers flights that have been delayed or cancelled because of internal airline issues, such as rostering.

Airlines are liable to pay compensation to passengers - up to 10 times the price of their ticket, or the actual cost of the passenger's delay, whichever is the lesser. The compensation would cover loss (e.g., missing a game or concert) or extra costs incurred by delays (e.g., lunch, taxi fare or missed connection).

Consumers who have been "bumped" or delayed should claim compensation from the airline. If the airline refuses to pay compensation then consumers can take their claim to the Disputes Tribunal.

The airline's liability for costs comes under the Civil Aviation Act (Part 9B).

Disputes tribunals are quick, informal and inexpensive forums where disputes are heard by a referee who will either help you to come to your own solution or will determine your dispute. Any ruling they make is binding and will, if necessary, be enforced by the Courts. See the Disputes Tribunal - <http://www.justice.govt.nz/pubs/courts-publications/115-disputes-tribunal.html> - or contact your Community law centre or Citizens Advice Bureau.

Duty Free Arrangements with Australia Unchanged

There will be no change to the current duty free arrangements with Australia when new security measures relating to liquids, aerosols and gels came into effect on 31 March. This means that, after passengers have been through security screening, they will continue to be able to buy duty free liquids, aerosols and gels in NZ, and travel to Australia with these items in their carry-on luggage. These include items such as liquor and perfume, and also drink or food purchased in the airport after passengers have been screened.

Passengers who have more than one international flight to reach their final destinations and are transiting may, however, be re-screened when they change flights. At this point, these passengers may be affected by security measures in place in the countries they are transiting through. Passengers should check with their airlines before travelling.

Further information regarding the rules for duty free goods can be found on www.flysmart.govt.nz

Cat Animal Welfare Code

The National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (NAWAC) has released a code of welfare for cats, which applies to every person owning, or in charge of a cat. The code outlines the minimum standards of care, and also includes practical information on food and feeding, body condition, water, caged cats, hygiene, signs of ill health, injured cats, use of collars, transportation and euthanasia.

More information is at <http://www.biosecurity.govt.nz/animal-welfare/codes/companion-cats>

Consulate General for Guangzhou

New Zealand is to open a Consulate General in Guangzhou, China, in April, the first diplomatic office to open in China since the Shanghai Consulate General was opened in 1991. The new Consulate General is expected to provide an even better environment for boosting trade and government links with Guangzhou and the surrounding provinces. With increasing numbers of NZers travelling to and working in China, the Consulate General will provide additional consular resources in the south.

Indonesia Scholarships on Offer

The Indonesian Embassy is inviting NZ college or university students to enter a writing competition. Contestants will be judged on an original 3000 word essay or story based on one of the following themes; What Fascinates Me Most About Indonesia; Promoting the NZ-Indonesia Relationship; Why Indonesia is the Place I Would Choose to Visit; and The Importance of Indonesia to NZ.

Three winners will receive a ten-day trip worth \$15,000 to Indonesia's main cities - Jakarta, Yogyakarta and Denpasar.

Entries close 15 July. All contestants must be aged between 16 and 25. More information: Budi Putra at kbriwell@ihug.co.nz or tel: 04 475 8699, or 04 475 8697 ext 720.

First NZ Hindu Conference Coming Up

The theme of the first NZ Hindu Conference is about the contribution the Hindu community has made over time to NZ society and culture. The conference aims to cover economic, health, environmental, social and cultural aspects and it will include invited and voluntary papers, an exhibition, and some workshops.

The 2006 Census showed that nearly 66,000 people here identify themselves as Hindu, up from nearly 37,000 in 2001.

The conference will be held at the Hindu Heritage Centre, Mangere East in Auckland on 12-13 May. For more information, contact Dr Magesan at the Hindu Council of NZ at hindu.nz@gmail.com

JR McKenzie Trust Round Open

The JR McKenzie trust provides grants to groups working with NZers who face special needs or disadvantage. Closing date for applications from groups without a national structure: 31 May 2007. Closing date for national groups: 31 August 2007.

More information: A Glen, JR McKenzie Trust, PO Box 10 006, The Terrace, Wellington, tel: 04 472 8876, fax 04 472 5367, email info@jrmckenzie.org.nz, web www.jrmckenzie.org.nz

Lottery Grants Board Grants

The National Community Committee of the Lottery Grants Board Lottery Community makes grants to not-for-profit organisations for projects that encourage or enable community self-reliance, capacity building and stability, or opportunities for social, civil or cultural participation, and reducing or overcoming barriers to such participation.

Applications close 4 May. For more information/online applications (preferred) go to www.cdgo.govt.nz or send them to Lottery Community National, c/o Local Government and Community Branch, Department of Internal Affairs, PO Box 805, Wellington.

Mens' Grooming Survey Results

Auckland men are the NZers most likely to have silky smooth legs and baby soft skin according to the recently released Gillette Fusion Grooming Survey. Out of NZ's major cities, almost a quarter of the Auckland men surveyed admitted to having shaved their legs, a trend which is less common elsewhere and seemingly non-existent south of the Cook Strait.

Over half of the men surveyed admitted to using skin care products. Auckland blokes in particular lived up to their metrosexual stereotype, being identified as the nation's biggest spenders on personal grooming products and services.

When it comes to spending time in the bathroom females are still ahead of males. However, nearly one in four of the men surveyed admitted to spending up to an hour grooming themselves each day. Christchurch men were found most likely to "musk up" with Eau de Toilette. The survey also revealed that more men in the Waikato have shaved their groin area than the men in Auckland, Christchurch, Dunedin and Wellington combined.

Washington Post's "Neologism" Contest Winners...

The Washington Post has published the winning submissions to its yearly neologism contest, in which readers are asked to supply alternate meanings for common words. Amongst the winners were the following:

- Coffee (n.), the person upon whom one coughs.
- Flabbergasted (adj.), appalled over how much weight you have gained.
- Abdicate (v.), to give up all hope of ever having a flat stomach.
- Esplanade (v.), to attempt an explanation while drunk.
- Willy-nilly (adj.), impotent.
- Negligent (adj.), describes a condition in which you absentmindedly answer the door in your nightgown.
- Lymph (v.), to walk with a lisp.
- Gargoyle (n.), olive - flavoured mouthwash.
- Flatulence (n.), emergency vehicle that picks you up after you are run over by a steamroller.
- Balderdash (n.), a rapidly receding hairline.
- Testicle (n.), a humorous question on an exam.
- Oyster (n.), a person who sprinkles his conversation with Yiddishisms.
- Frisbeetarianism (n.), (back by popular demand): The belief that, when you die, your Soul flies up onto the roof and gets stuck there.

...and The Style Invitational

The Washington Post's Style Invitational also asked readers to take any word from the dictionary, alter it by adding, subtracting, or changing one letter, and supply a new definition.

Amongst this years' winners are:

- Bozone (n.): The substance surrounding stupid people that stops bright ideas from penetrating.
- Cashtration (n.): The act of buying a house, which renders the subject financially impotent for an indefinite period.
- Giraffiti (n): Vandalism spray-painted very, very high.
- Sarchasm (n): The gulf between the author of sarcastic wit and the person who doesn't get it.
- Inoculatte (v): To take coffee intravenously when you are running late.
- Hipatitis (n): Terminal coolness.
- Osteopornosis (n): A degenerate disease. (This one got extra credit.)
- Karmageddon (n): its like, when everybody is sending off all these really bad vibes, right? And then, like, the Earth explodes and it's like, a serious bummer.

- Decafalon (n.): The grueling event of getting through the day consuming only things that are good for you.
- Glibido (v): All talk and no action.
- Dopeler effect (n): The tendency of stupid ideas to seem smarter when they come at you rapidly.
- Arachnoleptic fit (n.): The frantic dance performed just after you've accidentally walked through a spider web.
- Beelzebug (n.): Satan in the form of a mosquito that gets into your bedroom at three in the morning and cannot be cast out.
- Caterpollor (n.): The colour you turn after finding half a grub in the fruit you're eating.

Thanks to the Washington Post for these items.

Appointments

Dame Sylvia Cartwright has been appointed *Chair of the NZ National Commission for UNESCO*. Career diplomat Peter Kennedy will be NZ's next *Ambassador to the European Union and Belgium*. *Waitangi Tribunal* chairperson Joseph Williams has been reappointed to the position for five years. Christchurch lawyer Paul René Kellar and Auckland lawyer Allan Christopher Roberts have been appointed *District Court Judges*.

Colin MacDonald has been asked to act as *Commissioner and Chief Executive for Inland Revenue*. Dallas Welch has been asked to act as *Chief Executive and Government Statistician for Statistics NZ*. Dr Graham Stoop has been appointed as *Chief Executive and Chief Review Officer, Education Review Office*. Jan Wright is to be the next *Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment*. Justice Lowell Goddard has been appointed to head the *Police Complaints Authority*. Jane Wrightson is the new *NZ On Air Chief Executive*. The new *Chief Adjudicator of the Weathertight Homes Resolution Service* is Patricia Connel. Four new members to the *Weathertight Homes Tribunal* are: Murray Carter, Judge Simon Lockhart, Susan Pezaro and Roger Pitchforth. Andrew Jackson has been appointed *Deputy Secretary Competition, Trade and Investment at the Ministry of Economic Development*. Judith Aitken has been appointed *Chairperson of the Capital and Coast District Health Board*. Mark Ford, CE of Watercare Services, is the new *Chair of the Auckland Regional Transport Authority*. Dr Marie Bismark has been appointed to the *ACC Board*. Steve Smith has replaced Brent Marris as *Chair of the Air NZ Wine Awards*.

Craig Matthews and Paddy Twist
Editors
Rural Bulletin

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

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

Craig Matthews/Paddy Twist

Editors Rural Bulletin
Tel: 04 473 5524
Fax: 04 472 8946
Email ruralbulletin@ruralwomen.org.nz

Noeline Holt

Executive Officer
Rural Women New Zealand
Tel: 04 473 5524
Fax 04 472 8946
Email: enquiries@ruralwomen.org.nz

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Jackie Edkins

Communications Officer
Rural Women New Zealand
Tel: 04 473 5524
Fax 04 472 8946
Email: enquiries@ruralwomen.org.nz

Website: www.ruralwomen.org