

# ● ● ● Regional Leadership Reports

We have changed the format for the Regional Leaders Annual Reports this year. We asked the Leadership Team to answer the following questions to provide an overview of the year in their Region:

What has your Region focused on this year?

Are there any specific events or achievements you would like to mention?

How has your Region celebrated success this year?

Has your Region faced challenges this year? How have you addressed these challenges?

## 1

### Region 1: Lower South Island

Submitted by Raewyn van Vugt, Regional Leader

#### **Focus:**

I am very proud of Region One and the Regional Committee as our main focus has been the wellbeing of our Members and to connect, educate and inform our Members as best as we can. We have all experienced things that have tested our limits, our ability to cope and get through day to day living. This has been very difficult for some Members sometimes due to events out of their control. I feel we have come through stronger and mostly not afraid to reach out for help. As a Committee I feel it is our duty to work on this and make every Member feel they are part of a great supportive organisation.

We have set a goal to increase our membership to 500 - at the moment it sits around at 450.

#### **Achievements:**

Triple F Challenge in Te Anau - 3 days of Fun, Fitness and Friendship organised by Lynley Whyte and Eunice Roberts with the help of Pat Macaulay and the Organising Committee.

Cooking classes for Shepherds and Shepherdesses and the resulting recipe book.

Region One Conference held in Mosgiel.

Two of our Members, Gloria McHutchon and Irene Mosley, being awarded Queen's Service Medals for service and contributions to their communities.

#### **Celebrations:**

Just to be able to meet up face to face. To be able to hold events, get togethers and meetings without them being cancelled has been reason enough to celebrated.

#### **Challenges:**

Region One has been faced with closings of Branches, saying goodbye to Members who have passed away, and not been able to hold events.

One of our challenges is being able to connect our Members to each other. We have a large Region with a lot of members who are isolated by either distance or lack of means of communications.

We are in the process of arranging get togethers around the area by way of pop-up meet and greet sessions with Committee Members.

When a new Member joins RWNZ, I send them a welcome letter and request the closest Regional Committee Member also makes contact.

In my opinion, our biggest challenge is making people aware of RWNZ, getting the word out there and letting people know who we are and what we stand for. We do a lot but are not usually credited for the input.

# 2

## Region 2: Canterbury

Submitted by Margaret Chapman, Regional Chair.

### **Focus:**

The 2021-2022 year for Canterbury RWNZ revolved around floods, Covid, mandates and masks. They have all played a large part in how we were able to function and meet over the last 12 months. The ongoing effects of the May 2021 flood in Mid and South Canterbury, flooding on Banks Peninsula in December, support of the West Coast flooding event in March and flooding again South & Mid Canterbury at the end of June meant Canterbury RWNZ Members did what they have always done, they rose to the task of support and helping their rural communities in need.

Connecting with members has been very important this year. If not in person, then by phone or text.

### **Achievements:**

Ashburton District Council recognised Mid Canterbury Provincial RWNZ for their work during the major flood event and awarded them with the 2021 Ashburton District Council Community Service Award.

Sandra Curd won the RWNZ Member of Excellence Award.

North Canterbury RWNZ in conjunction with Nth Canterbury RST held a number of Ladies Lunch events to acknowledge the support of local women through the time of Covid.

SC held a rescheduled event with Pauline Bloomfield from K9MD. Other events were held around the Region in support of Ovarian cancer research.

Winchmore Branch managed to hold three of its annual events: A Christmas community get-together, a dinner for the men of the district and the annual Women's dinner.

### **Celebrations:**

The 2021 Canterbury Regional Conference was held just prior to the August lockdown and was a welcome chance to reconnect with RWNZ Members from around the Region. Both National President Gill Naylor and CEO Gabe O'Brien were present which gave Members an opportunity to discuss a myriad of RWNZ matters.

The National AGM was held via Zoom with a number of Members meeting together to participate and support.

### **Challenges:**

Covid defined the year – a lockdown, vaccinations, mandatory vaccination passes and mask wearing meant that many meetings, events and activities were postponed or cancelled altogether. One positive is that most Members now know how to use Zoom, Teams or Messenger as a means of communication and keeping in contact with friends and family.

The Regional Committee meet 6 times, 3 times by Zoom. The Canterbury Newsletter went out to all Members four times over the year. The Canterbury Facebook page continues to have an increasing number of followers and hits. It is an increasingly important tool for communication to connect with a younger generation of rural women.

# 3

## Region 3: Top of the South

Submitted by Dot Dixon (Regional Leader) and Melva Robb (Regional Chair)

### **Focus, Achievements, Celebrations and Challenges:**

The Region 3 Conference was moved from Westport to Murchison and the dates changed a couple of times before we finally met in June. Branch meetings were held with the help of Zoom and other electronic mediums. This has brought to the fore the lack of connectivity in our rural areas. Branches still managed to hold some amazing gatherings for rural ladies and fundraising during the year.

Funds were raised for the “O is for...” National Project across the Region. Golden Bay Members provided items for Region 6 Greater Waikato’s online Auction worth \$750. Marlborough sold their Calendar Girls calendar and donated \$1654 to the Project, and donated the same amount to the Marlborough Cancer Society. Brightwater Branch held a Pink Ribbon High Tea and the ladies were able to dust their bone china and silver teapots for the occasion and raised \$850. Golden Bay held a Pink Ribbon Lunch and raised a total of \$380.

Nelson Provincial with 4 Branches: St Arnaud Branch’s twenty-seven Members have been active in their community: they formed a playgroup, held a successful “Gumboots off” day for 100 ladies, ran a Christmas workshop for the school children and held their Annual Book Sale are some of their activities this year. Murchison Branch manned a display at a Ladies Day event and recruited 14 new Members. Our most remote Branch, Maruia, dealt with 2 floods and were isolated and without power on one occasion.

Brightwater Branch celebrated 90 years with a lunch at the Brightwater Motor Inn and special guests joined Members from other Branches and a number of Individual Members from around the Region.

Golden Bay’s Takaka, Pakawau and Bainham Branches have created meeting and activity pathways that have kept their Members’ health and wellbeing paramount.

Marlborough Provincial’s four Branches found the year challenging with serious floods and road closures. Provincial was able to cater 100 guests at the Marlborough Sheep and Beef Awards which had been postponed from 2021.

A display tent and providing a tasting plate of locally grown produce went down very well with visitors from around the world at the NZ National Ploughing Competitions.

It has been a difficult year coping with the pandemic rules and regulations and then the floods throughout the year.

Members have continued to give to different charities and have helped support families who suffered in the July 2021 storm.

Our sympathies to Members who have lost loved ones during the year.

Lastly, our thanks to all Members for their support and understanding when events had to be changed or cancelled. Let us all look forward to a better year ahead with many interesting events and meetings.

# 4

## Region 4: Lower North Island

Submitted by Tamzin Coull (Regional Leader) and Pauline Masters (Regional Chair)

### **Focus:**

The theme for this year has been connection. Branches have focused on getting together and supporting their Members through the Covid-19 pandemic and the uncertainty that came with it. Where we have been able, regional activities have taken place. Both the Regional Lunch in October 2021 and the Regional Conference in June 2022 were well supported and it was nice to see new faces attending these events.

Two new Groups have formed in the Region - Tinakori Rural Connectors in Wellington and one in Manawatu.

We have also recently introduced “KTog Online” a monthly zoom meeting for members with an interest in knitting to connect. This group supports the Project Warmth initiative.

### **Achievements:**

Region 4 was again well represented in the winners announced at 2021 NZI Rural Women New Zealand Business Awards. Amber Forrest, Beauty Antix in Wairoa won both the Rural Health and Wellbeing Award and the Supreme Award. Claire Edwards, Tora Collective in Tora, South Wairarapa won the Innovation Award and Lucinda Maunsell, Rahui Coastal Loop in Masterton won the Love of the Land Award.

As a Region we have supported families affected by adverse weather. Members baked fruitcakes, provided grocery items and baby packs as a contribution to Connecting Rural Wairoa.

Fruitcakes were also distributed to those in Horowhenua affected by adverse weather. Assistance from Region 5 and Region 6 Waikato District to these contributions was much appreciated. Recently we have gifted vouchers, rugs and children's knitting to residents whose houses are still red stickered following the tornado which hit the Horowhenua.

We have utilised our Pat Evans Fund to support a family who were involved in an horrific accident on Christmas Eve, sponsor Shaz Dagg as a speaker at the East Coast Expo in Wairoa and contributed to a first aid course for Members and the community hosted by Tutaenui Branch.

### ***Celebrations:***

It has been great to see a number of new people stepping up for roles both at Branch and Regional level. We look forward to seeing new ideas and suggestions come to fruition.

Scholarships have been awarded to students by a number of Branches during the year:

Korokipo Branch awarded \$2,000 to a second-year student studying Agriculture at Lincoln University.

Mangamahu Fordell awarded \$3,080.40 to year 8 students moving to college education to assist with chromebooks and uniforms.

Tutaenui awarded \$1,000.00 to an agricultural student studying at Massey University.

Several Branches held fundraising events for Talk Peach during the year to support our successful Remit.

### ***Challenges:***

Our sympathies go to Members who have lost loved ones especially Jacky Stafford (who lost both parents within a few weeks) and Jean Simonsen.

Covid 19 restrictions have meant many of our events have been cancelled or run within the tight framework guidelines and rules. We have combined our Summer Celebration and Annual Regional luncheon and called it a Spring Fling to be held at Kawhatau Valley in October.

We are looking forward to being able to run events again to attract new Members and for existing Members to connect for fun, fellowship and friendship.

# 5

**Region 5: Rimanui**

**Submitted by Mary McTavish, Regional Leader**

### ***Focus:***

Our primary focus for the year has been to keep our RWNZ name to the fore in our region. We have struggled to work with the Covid-19 cancellations and delays. Events or special days, which have entailed lots of work to organise only to have to have them cancelled at the last minute. Some of our big days of regular annual activities have succumbed to this situation over the last 12 months.

Regular articles of interest to women living rurally have been published in a monthly regional newspaper "Coast & Country News" which delivers 31,000 copies to its target audience of farmers, growers and lifestylers. Topics such as rural education, environment, calf-club days, women's health, NZI RWNZ Business Awards, school buses, biosecurity, water issues and horticultural study opportunities to name a few.

Regular articles on similar topics have been published in all the local community newspapers.

Connecting with Members has been in different ways this year, with zoom meetings being used on several occasions.

Newsletters and phone calls to members have been a high priority as well as posts on our local facebook page.

### **Achievements:**

Despite cancellations our “Talk Peach, O is for....., Women’s Health Day” finally went very successfully ahead. Thanks to Te Puke/Rotoehu Branch and Alex Eagles-Tully for their perseverance and to Tash Crosby for attending with several other local women on their own cancer journeys.

We have a number of Members who love knitting so we are keeping the local Plunket well stocked with knitted baby items. Riding for the Disabled received funding to assist with more children benefitting from this service.

Zoom meetings have become the norm amongst our Members - starting with last year’s National AGM.

At various local primary school Calf-club Days the outstanding helpers at each school were recognised by Tauranga Provincial RWNZ for their support of these iconic days.

Local records, minutes and memorabilia were gathered, sorted and deposited with the Tauranga Library archives - a big job well done.

### **Celebrations:**

A great programme with speakers and a weekend retreat were planned for the Regional Conference this year but all had to be cancelled due to illness and Covid-19 amongst members.

We were subsequently pleased to see and welcome Sandra Matthews who came over from Gisborne to present the RWNZ Action Plan for 2022 which we were all interested to hear about.

### **Challenges:**

The Region has faced challenges regarding meetings, events and gatherings that have had to be either postponed or cancelled this year due to Covid-19.

Other challenges are most likely similar to the other RWNZ Regions around the country - our Branch members continue to get older and there appears to be little or no interest from younger members willing to take on roles of office. To date we have addressed these challenges by re-cycling existing Members who continue to step up into the office holding roles of necessity to keep the branches functioning.

Individual Members (maybe we can drop this term in the future?) continue to be elusive with no reciprocal connection if we contact any of them.

Again, Zoom has kept us connected and in touch with regular meetings on all levels - Branch, Provincial and Regional.

# 6

**Region 6 Greater Waikato**

**Submitted by Bronwyn Main, Regional Leader**

### **Focus:**

Our Region has focussed on:

Retaining existing Members;

Increasing membership numbers;

Greater connectivity with our Members by all means;

Continuing to build presence and “brand” awareness within the rural and greater communities of our Region by a planned programme of contribution, action, participation, giving and support to individuals, groups at need, and community events.

### **Achievements:**

Te Kuiti Hospital - toilet bags initiative whereby beautiful handbags were collected and repurposed by being filled with toiletries for patients who unexpectedly are admitted to Hospital and literally arrive with no personal care items.

Being part of a Soup in the Park Programme during colder winter months where homemade soup is distributed at parks to people in need.

Make Up and Personal Care Packs for Women's Refuge.

Make Up Treat Packs for women in need: the Area Committee used these throughout the year when they became aware of or were in contact with a woman in need. Having the Packs readily available meant we could make an immediate response.

Online auction fundraiser for the O is for... National Project and Ovarian Cancer Research. We are very grateful that this was supported throughout the country.

### ***Celebrations:***

By being humble, learning from it and developing ways we can extend and improve our goals, and reach to both members and community and cases of need.

By using opportunities and momentum to do more: bigger better and wider.

By acknowledging and thanking our tribe and the Members in it and the part everyone has played in the end result.

By joining together in friendship and fellowship for a meal.

### ***Challenges:***

The continuance of Covid-19 lockdowns has reduced the number of actual face to face meetings/events and also created a degree of "reluctance" within our membership to go out.

To address this we implemented a number of very successful Learn To Zoom initiatives which has allowed members to learn basics of Zoom and in particular, become empowered to Zoom. This has been subsidised by the Region and was extremely well received.

This, together with the introduction of a monthly regional newsletter and active Facebook page (updated at least weekly), has enabled us to continue remaining connected with our Region.

# 6

**Region 6 Taranaki**

**Submitted by Shirley Read, Regional Leader**

### ***Focus, Achievements, Celebrations and Challenges:***

International Day was celebrated on July 8th, in Stratford with our National President, Gill Naylor attending. Numbers were down on previous years with 30 attending, but competitions relating to the country of study, Cameroon, were well supported, along with knitted hats and tote bags going forward to National Competitions. Three differing versions of the Marlborough Short Story were read by their authors prior to sending the entries into the competition. Covid-19 vaccination roll out details for Taranaki were explained and contacts in rural areas were put forward.

The AGM and general meeting were held on Friday 30th July 2021, at Farm Source, Stratford. There were almost as many apologies as attendees. Expressions of interest for the Area Executive Committee had been asked for and only one, from a current member was put forward. It was moved that the current Committee remain plus a second motion to elect Jo Morgan to the Committee. The Committee consists of Shirley Read, Helen Bayliss, Joyce Lawrence, Margaret Vickers, Jennie Purdon, Viv Grigg and Jo Morgan.

Our September meeting with planned speakers, was cancelled at late notice as the venue staff came down with Covid-19. To get everyone together, a luncheon was planned at a café on October 15th. This was well attended and we gathered at outside tables to hold a brief meeting covering topics such as AGM Conference and the Elections updates.

Plans for a Health Day in November were postponed and a bi-monthly meeting was held at the Shakee

Pear Café meeting room. Because we were meeting in a Café, the pandemic rules on meeting venues were overcome. With the AGM/Conference cancelled the voting and the online aspects were discussed. With the RWNZ Centennial coming in 2025, we had some discussion on the history of WDFU/ WDFP/ RWNZ in Taranaki. Oakura was the first branch of WDFU, formed in 1925.

Our January 28th, 2022 meeting plans had to change from a public venue to a home. The Executive Committee was encouraged to attend, with the goal of putting a programme together for the year. Remits were discussed in February prior to the 3rd March Remit Debate which was held via Zoom.

Women Walk the World, held on Friday 29th April had several members walking the Trimble Walk in Inglewood. We took the opportunity to have a meeting sharing details and planning around upcoming events.

Our May meeting was back at the Stratford Café venue. We had a wonderful speaker about Advanced Care Planning, from the DHB. We began our meeting before lunch. The Election process for our Region was under way with nominations to be into National Office by 23rd June. The timeline concludes prior to our AGM on July 29th.

It has been a struggle to keep members involved and connected during these times of uncertainty. Many Branches are closing, and the Area Committee activities are Individual Members point of contact. It is still important to join in the RWNZ fellowship – you are still welcome.

# 7

## Region 7

Submitted by Heather Sorenson, Regional Leader

### ***Focus, Achievements, Celebrations and Challenges:***

It is my pleasure to present this report for Region 7 as we reflect on the past year. It has been a year of disruptions but throughout the time members of RWNZ have continued their activities in one way or another.

Our Talk Health Day in Waipu was a great success. This day was attended by both Members and non-members who enjoyed a variety of speakers on various health topics. Our raffle proceeds were donated to Talk Peach. It was great to be working in a new community to showcase our organisation and gain a couple of new Members.

After a great start to the year the disruptions came and we were affected by the Covid-19 pandemic just like everyone else. This meant that we had to be creative about how we operated during this time. Our Regional Committee conducted all its business via Zoom calls meaning we all added a new skill to our tool kit! Our Branches met where and when they could, providing social networking for Members along with opportunities with guest speakers covering a wide range of topics. Charitable work was also undertaken with support being given to local needs such as Foodbanks, hospitals, Plunket etc. We are always very grateful to our Members who give tirelessly of their time and energy to support others in their community, especially those who have vulnerability and needs.

We were sorry to see our Great Barrier Island Branch decide to disband. We acknowledge that these decisions have to be made as the membership ages in many Branches. Today we are seeing new Members joining us, often as Individual Members. This is a change in structure for our organisation so our challenge now is to ensure that we have opportunities for these Members to be active as Rural Women New Zealand Individual Members.

Our organisation was established by women from the country who were concerned about conditions in their communities – roading, bridges, health services, education services etc. We know that these all

remain as issues in our communities hence RWNZ continues to be a very relevant organisation. We must all stand together and work to support and strengthen our communities and we are so lucky to have the strength of a well-established machine in RWNZ to be able to do this.

We have a small, dedicated team as our Regional Committee who have risen to the challenge over the last year of working via Zoom and having so many uncertainties to deal with, especially having to postpone planned events. I thank these ladies for all their tireless work in the name of RWNZ over the years and acknowledge that they have indicated that they would like to stand down as Committee Members in the coming year. What a wonderful opportunity for others to put their hand up and become a Committee Member!! With this in mind, I look forward to connecting with potential new Members and exciting times ahead for Region 7.

