

Expresso



WELCOME TO OUR NEW NATIONAL BOARD

From left: Claire Williamson, Gill Naylor, Emma Higgins, Sharron Davie-Martin, Jenny McDonald, Sandra Matthews

The National Board welcomed returning member Sharron Davie-Martin and new member Sandra Matthews at its first meeting of the year which was held immediately after the Annual General Meeting on Friday, 19 November. More information on all our Board Members is available on the RWNZ website.

The Portfolio allocations and role responsibilities were allocated at this meeting. Sandra, who brings a wealth of governance experience to the Board, will take on the role of National Chair.

The Policy Portfolio Hub Convenors for this Board term are:

Business: Jenny McDonald (Convenor), Claire Williamson (Deputy)

Education: Emma Higgins, Gill Naylor (Co-Convenors)

Environment and Land Use: Emma Higgins (Convenor), Sandra Matthews (Deputy)

Health: Sandra Matthews (Convenor), Sharron Davie-Martin (Deputy)

Technology: Claire Williamson (Convenor)

Social: Sharron Davie-Martin (Convenor), Jenny McDonald (Deputy)

International: Gill Naylor (Convenor), Sharron Davie-Martin (Deputy)

Expressions of Interest by Members who are interested in joining these policy portfolios will be called for in the new year. You can read more about the portfolios on the RWNZ website or call National Office for more information.

As 2021 comes to a close, I'd like to sincerely congratulate all those who have won Awards, competitions or been otherwise honoured for your contributions to Rural Women New Zealand and to your communities in whatever shape that may have taken.

To our Regional teams, thank you for your tremendous efforts over another very interesting Covid-19 affected

year, particularly in keeping Members connected and engaged in your regions.

And to you, our Members, thank you for all that you do. It hasn't been an easy year and despite this, we have still achieved some wonderful things.

It has been so important to remain 'calm, serene and gentle' and respect other people's choices during this period

of uncertainty. We also turn to look forward positively to 2022 and continue to adjust to a 'new covid world' and the opportunities we can create in this world.

May you create some wonderful memories over the Festive Season by spending quality time with those closest to you.

My very best wishes to you all.

Ngā mihi nui, *Gill*

MEMBER OF EXCELLENCE | SANDRA CURD

It was not your usual Mid Canterbury Provincial Meeting on Friday, 10 December.

The meeting had been planned of course, but there was a huge surprise in store for one attendee. Given how this person's finger is most definitely on the pulse of activities in her Region, it must have taken some very careful and subtle footwork to surprise this year's winner of the Olive Craig Tray at the Provincial Meeting.

New Member of Excellence, Sandra Curd, received her trophy and citation in front of those she has closely worked with on the Provincial since 1999. Sandra has held RWNZ leadership roles at Branch, Provincial and Regional levels since joining the organisation in 1986. Known as a formidable organiser, Sandra has been an integral part of many fundraising and social events including the famous Calendar Girls Project which raised \$26,000 for breast cancer research.

Sandra has excelled in both organising and participating in RWNZ competitions. She has been part of the organising

committees for several special anniversaries and conferences – most recently as the Secretary for the National Conference Organising Committee this year. When the devastating flooding impacted Canterbury this year, Sandra was central in co-ordinating the relief efforts to affected farmers.

The last lines of Sandra's citation for this Award say it all:

Sandra epitomises the words of the RWNZ Women's Creed in every way and is one of the gems every organisation wishes they had. We are forever indebted to her and count ourselves so very fortunate to have someone with such skill, passion and drive, in the Rural Women NZ organisation.

Congratulations Sandra for 'Service Simply Given'.



RWNZ NATIONAL COMPETITION WINNERS

Reports

TALBOT TROPHY for Best International Officer's Report:
Melva Robb (Marlborough Provincial, Region 3)

HONORA O'NEILL TROPHY for Best Provincial President's Report:

Marg Verrall (Mid Canterbury Provincial)

Special Mention: Sue Hall (Waipa King Country Provincial)

BEST BRANCH PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

Lynley Whyte (Clifden Branch)

Writing Competitions

Marlborough Short Story Competition: Jointly awarded to:
Leanne Schmidt (Region 3) & Linda Welch (Tutaenui Branch)

Olive Burdekin Prize for Advanced Writers:

Kate Taylor (Region 4)

Craft Competitions

CORA WILDING TROPHY - Upcycled Tote Bag:

Winner: Marilyn Ellis (Lynnford Branch, Region 2)

Runner-up: Raewyn Lusk (Tumahu Branch, Region 6 Taranaki)

WOOL COMPETITION - Fancy Child's woollen hat

Winner: Sandra Curd (Winchmore Branch, Region 2)

Runner-up: Faye Carver (Meremere Ohangai Branch, Region 6 Taranaki)

Third place: Jenny Kerr (Individual, Region 2)

Very highly commended: Margaret Vickers (Midhirst Branch, Region 6 Taranaki)

Highly commended: Esther Butler (Hook Branch, Region 2)

Shown below from far left: Upcycled Tote Bag winner and runner-up. Child's Woollen Hat winner, second and third placegetters.



NZI RURAL WOMEN NZ BUSINESS AWARDS 2021



As with the AGM, some nifty manoeuvring was required to reorganise this year's NZI Rural Women NZ Business Awards celebrations. However, we were determined that this year's winners would not miss out.

In order to comply with the varying restrictions around the country, three smaller events were held near the locations of this year's Award winners. Wellington hosted Love of the Land winner Lucinda Maunsell and her business the Rahui Coastal Loop, Innovation winner Claire Edwards of Tora Collective and Rural Health and Wellbeing winner Amber Forrest from Beauty Antix.

A celebration in Queenstown was attended by Creative Arts winner Janyne Fletcher, Photographer; Emerging Business winner Tammy Taylor and Rural Champion Harriet Bremner and the star of the show, Poppy the miniature dachshund, from Gurt and Pops.

At the amazingly beautiful Tree Church in Ohaupo in the Waikato, the Region 6 Greater Waikato Area Committee held a fabulous outdoor event for Bountiful Table winner Sue Loder.

All three events ran simultaneously and via the magic of livestreaming we seamlessly flowed between the three locations and were able to be together while only distance kept us apart. It was wonderful to be able to invite Members from Regions 1, 4 and 6GW and regional representatives of our Award Sponsors to each of the locations.

The evening culminated with the announcement of this year's NZI Supreme Award Winner: Amber Forrest of Beauty Antix. In awarding the Supreme Award, Jon Watson from NZI noted that Amber's focus on developing her staff and community was outstanding.

It was a remarkable evening and the technology gremlins were nowhere to be seen. We want to thank all those that helped make this year's Awards possible across the three locations – we could not have done it without each of you. Special thanks to our Award Sponsors for taking a leap of faith with us to deliver this hybrid event:

- Our Awards Premier Partner and Supreme Award sponsor, NZI
- Love of the Land sponsored by MPI
- Innovation sponsored by Hynds Rural
- Rural Health and Wellbeing sponsored by Access Community Health
- Creative Arts sponsored by Beechbank Dairies Ltd
- Emerging Business sponsored by the Ministry for Women
- Rural Champion sponsored by Jarden
- Bountiful Table sponsored by Havana Coffee Works

Congratulations again to all our winners.

Archives Update

The National Office team is thrilled to have welcomed our Victoria University Summer Scholar, Gyle Bascon, who is joining us over the summer break to work on the Archives project. Gyle has a very desirable double major in History and Information Management Systems.

After spending the first week taking a deep dive into the Archives to gain an understanding of the range of material we hold, Gyle has now moved on to designing the infrastructure of how we catalogue our archives with a view to making them accessible to others, and able to form part of our centenary celebrations.

Gyle has also been able to draw on her networks and contacts to seek expert advice for us on what to focus on and how to do this as we work through the project. An archivist who has worked on our community based archives was particularly impressed with the listing sheets that Members have completed and sent to National Office and even described them as 'archival gold.'

Thank you to all the Members who helped us with the Archives Project so far. Once we have completed this stage, we will move on to cataloguing and some big decisions on preservation and digitisation of the collection.

Olive Burdekin Prize for Advanced Writers

This competition is for Rural Women New Zealand Members who are not eligible to enter the Marlborough Short Story Competition as they are either previous first place winners from the past two years, or have had articles or books published. The length of the story must be between 1000 and 1500 words.

The theme for this year's competitions was *What I learnt about life during the Covid-19 Lockdown* and our winning story was submitted by **Kate Taylor (Region 4)**.

Crisis doesn't create character; it reveals it. What I learnt about life during the Covid-19 Lockdown

By Kate Taylor (Region 4)

The audience looks up, expectantly.

"I now declare the World Hereford Conference open," New Zealand Herefords president Colin Corney announces from the stage in the Copthorne Hotel, Queenstown, at about 4pm on Tuesday March 9, 2020.

The audience claps and cheers. The faces in that audience are from every continent, barring Antarctica, of course, which is obviously too cold for cattle.

Four days of fun and friendship followed the opening, including a scenic ride on Lake Wakatipu's historic Earnslaw steamer, and official business: from the World Hereford Council AGM to guest speakers and in-depth panel discussions. Add the pre- and post-conference tours and the 2020 Boehringer Ingelheim World Hereford Conference was an outstanding success.

Deservedly so, the organising team was enormously proud of its efforts and the overall result. Unfortunately, the conference will always be remembered in New Zealand as one of the five initial clusters of the global pandemic that was to hit New Zealand shores.

Nobody knew what impact Covid-19 would have on people, families, businesses, and our economy. Would it devastate life as we knew it, or would we rise to the occasion and accept the challenge? Would New Zealand's natural coastal barrier and relative distance from the rest of the world offer some element of protection for what may lie ahead? What would we learn?

For the few days immediately after flying out of Queenstown my life continued as normal. I flew home and started writing the stories I'd gathered during the conference. I also attended a few routine meetings and watched the Covid-19 story unfold. Then came an email telling us one of the overseas conference participants had tested positive for Covid-19 upon returning home – then two – then the email with the dreaded news: "please self-isolate immediately, it's not looking good".

I immediately phoned those who needed to know, we pulled our son back from boarding school, and went into isolation. A highlight of those first few days was my local store taking a phone order for milk or bread and popping it in a box on the footpath when I tooted hello from my car.

As a new contractor to NZ Herefords, I wasn't party to all the handshakes and hugs that are common at gatherings of this big global family (or the late-night socialising); I thought I was a low-risk statistic and I had no symptoms, but you just never know. Thankfully, my test result four days later was negative, but those four days took so long to pass, especially with repeated phone calls from people asking about my results. I was told about some emotional and aggressive reactions towards the people I had been in contact with; the initial hysteria over this virus has passed, but those early days reminded me of people's reactions to HIV in the 1990s.

It's important to note at this stage, for the sake of history, the NZ Herefords team, at all times, did everything required of them by the Ministry of Health. But media scrutiny soon descended and I was asked by NZ Herefords to coordinate its response. The rest of the team were shattered physically after a busy few weeks, and shattered mentally because their fantastic event was being tarnished by a global pandemic.

The saving grace at this stage was the warning the whole country was facing total lockdown. Because we were in self-isolation already, our Wellington-based daughter bypassed our house (with a half-hour discussion outside our house at an appropriate distance) and drove another four hours to be with 78-year-old Grandma in Gisborne when Level 4 lockdown commenced.

Lockdown created a new world, albeit a temporary one. Ignoring the negativity that followed stag parties in Matamata and weddings in Bluff, and concentrating on the communities that stood up and looked after themselves and each other. People say they remember where they were and what they were doing when Elvis died, when JFK was shot or Princess Diana was killed. The world stopped to watch the moon landings. This time, the world just stopped. Planes stopped flying. Trains, buses and cars stopped. Schools stopped. Being an essential worker became a status (albeit a scary one for some). Our nurses became the heroes they have always deserved to be. Our primary sector provided food for New Zealand as international trade ground to a halt. Farmers kept right on farming. Growers kept right on growing.

Our community leaders gathered on Zoom – a word that became a noun, a verb and an adjective, as well as part of our daily lives. People all around New Zealand and the rest of the world opened their lounges or makeshift bedroom offices to their workmates. Pets interrupted meetings, mute buttons silenced noisy children, and politicians were snapped using feather dusters in their underwear. There were dance videos, Zoom memes, famous musicians performing in their garages, and online reunions of all sorts of

groups. My Thursday night twilight tennis was replaced with Zoom drinks (without tennis), and my Kellogg Rural Leadership cohort #36 solved the problems of the ag world from our living rooms. I also had short Zoom catchups with my fellow Central Hawke's Bay District councillors and senior leadership team every couple of days to keep in touch with the extraordinary events that were unfolding in our community. Everyday heroes putting up their hands to coordinate massive food parcel deliveries or simply buying groceries for their elderly neighbours; making sure no one was forgotten.

I usually work from home, so my daily routine was also interrupted by my son and husband also studying and working from home. That said, everyone's daily routines looked a lot different!

Lines formed at supermarkets, inside and out; masks covered noses and mouths, but people's eyes also tended to be downcast. The one time I went shopping I found it really unnerving because no one was looking at each other. Eyes were cast to the ground, perhaps in fear of someone contaminating their personal space. I learnt panic buying is weird, especially in terms of toilet paper, but not so surprising was the demand for yeast and baking supplies as people turned to their kitchens to help while away the hours of imprisonment.

Teddy bears of all shapes and sizes adorned windows around the country as people tried to find extra things to keep themselves amused on their daily walk around the block – an escape from their house. I took to walking to Takapau every day, and like many others around the country I armed myself with a rubbish bag and took advantage of the empty roads to go wombling. The amount of rubbish between home and Takapau was astounding – and shocking too, to be fair – especially when lockdown levels changed, the fast-food restaurants opened and McDonald's wrappers and disposable coffee cups reappeared on the side of my beautifully tidy road. Side note: disposable coffee cups are disposable, NOT biodegradable!

I started a Photos in Isolation NZ 2020 Facebook page with a daily theme. Sometimes these were done simply because of what I'd seen on my walk – a culvert for a circle theme, an orange pigtail fence standard for a colour and a white moth on a daisy for macro (I was lying on the ground in the sun reading my book at the time).

While many people were thanking the weather gods for fine weather during lockdown, farmers in my region were praying for rain. We were worried; it was bad enough to deal with drought conditions but worse without one-on-one contact with the outside world. The Rural Support Trust, councils, and other advisory groups stepped into overdrive.

We were rewarded with the unveiling of a few more reluctant heroes, including Poppy Renton with the Hawke's Bay Drought Facebook page, and Diana Greer with her 'Collective Hug', which involved more than 1200 goody bags being delivered to drought-affected farmers. Diana made an offer on Poppy's new drought page to make some fancy cakes for a raffle. Within minutes, dozens of others had offered baking; within hours, it was hundreds. Within days, and post-lockdown, Diana was coordinating a massive logistical event with donations of baking, fruit, juice, and even dog food. It wasn't what was in the parcels, but touching base with people in isolated areas or in isolated situations to let them know they weren't alone.

Drought shouts followed – several big ones with big sponsorship, and a few small ones at local halls in the rural ward of my council. We are all both incredulous and extremely grateful not to lose any farmers during that tough time.

What did I learn about life during Covid-19 lockdown? My main lesson was seeing the different reactions to the stress of the situation. I learnt there are people who have no hesitation stepping up to help others, whatever the cost.

Crisis doesn't create character; it reveals it.

by Kate Taylor (Region 4).

Calling for Expressions of Interest for the RWNZ Centennial Committee

The National Board finalised the Terms of Reference for the RWNZ Centennial Committee at the September Board Meeting. Accordingly, **the Board is now calling for Expressions of Interest from RWNZ Members to join the Centennial Committee** (the Committee).

The purpose of the Committee is to establish a timeline and consult with Members regarding potential centennial projects and celebrations, and thereafter, the development and oversight of the selected projects.

The term of appointment to the Centennial Committee is from the date of appointment through to the RWNZ Annual General Meeting in 2026.

The Committee will comprise of an RWNZ Board Member as Chair, an RWNZ National Office staff member and a representative from each RWNZ Region.

The Committee will meet regularly – at least every three months. Committee members must be able to commit to using technology to attend meetings. Suitable meeting dates and times will be co-ordinated once appointments to the Committee have been finalised.

The full Terms of Reference for the RWNZ Centennial Committee are available on the Members Zone of the RWNZ website or phone the National Office. Please call 0800 256 467 to request a printed copy.

To express your interest in joining the Centennial Committee, please apply in writing with a brief description of the skills and experience you would bring to the Committee to enquiries@ruralwomennz.nz or **by post to PO Box 12-021, Thorndon, Wellington 6144** by 5pm on Monday, 31 January 2022.

Branch News

MIDHURST BRANCH

90 Years

In November 2021, 90 years after its inauguration, the Midhurst Branch of Rural Women NZ held a Birthday Lunch to celebrate the end of an era, as the membership has dwindled to a point where it has become difficult to continue.

On Wednesday 18 November 1931 the Midhurst Branch of Womens Division Farmers Union was formed. The initial primary aim of the women's organisation was to support the aims of their farming husbands, with the further object of providing support and improving conditions for women and children living in isolated rural areas. In 1946 the Farmers Union changed its name to Federated Farmers, and Womens Division followed suit, making it WDFE. In 1999, a further name change took place and, now as Rural Women New Zealand, carries on the task of improving the health, conditions and welfare of women and children.

The remaining seven members and their invited guests enjoyed a finger food lunch, and many reminiscences were shared. Lobbying for better conditions for rural communities, memories of past members, humorous incidents, and many events like flower shows, entertainments, competitions, and functions to raise funds for charity and other causes were recalled. Two Awards of Branch Life Membership were made in recognition of years of service to the Midhurst Branch over a number of years.



From left: Viv Grigg, Colleen O'Sullivan, Lorna Davies, Trish Old, Peg Fawcett.
Seated: Margaret Vickers, Ruth Keller.

Viv Grigg has been the Branch Treasurer from 2006 to the present time. Her membership in the organisation began in 1963 when she joined the Ratapiko Branch, transferring to the Midhurst group when Ratapiko Branch closed in 2001.

Lorna Davies transferred to Midhurst in 2000, when Wharehuia Branch closed. She was elected to the position of President in 2013, which she has held since that time. Having joined the Whakamara Branch in 1966, her membership in the organisation has also been a long one.

The Midhurst Branch Banner which was displayed at formal Provincial and National RWNZ events and conferences will be placed in a glass cabinet in the Midhurst Hall along with historical information about the Branch and its Members.

Thank you to Lorna Davies, President of Midhurst Branch.

HENLEY BRANCH

90th Birthday Celebration

On the 7th October 2021 Henley Branch of Rural Women NZ celebrated its 90th birthday. This was held at J. Tee's Function Centre with a beautiful lunch, formalities and entertainment.

The President, Fay Taylor, welcomed 40 past and present Members. Secretary, Judy Aitken, read the apologies. A minute's silence was observed to remember Absent Friends, then the RWNZ Creed was recited.

Next on the programme was the lighting of 3 candles; for the Past by Fay Taylor, Present by Judy Aitken and the Future by Kerry Smith. As each candle was lit Marion McGuigan read appropriate words for each era. Gwenda Holmes read the Rural Women Prayer. Beth Daniell said Grace before we lined up for a lovely buffet meal - with masks on due to the COVID-19 pandemic!

Following the first course there was the cutting of the 90th birthday cake. Isobel Sutherland lit the candles and Ann Murphy fanned them out, before Fay Taylor cut the cake. Judy Aitken then read the first minutes from October 8th 1931,

held in the Henley Hall, and a history of the Branch. Once again we lined up with masks on, this time to receive our dessert.

Much to her surprise, Judy Aitken was awarded a Branch Life Membership along with beautiful flowers. Judy has been a Member of Henley Branch since 2003 and has been secretary since 2016.

The day ended with music and a sing-a-long with Rosemary and Ian Chalmers as we had cake and tea/coffee. A raffle for the Rural Women National fundraising project for Ovarian Cancer was drawn and prizes distributed.

The final event for the day was the singing of the RWNZ song accompanied by Rosemary and Ian. An enjoyable event celebrating 90 years of service with fun, friendship and fellowship.

Thank you to Judy Aitken for this report.



LAKE ŌHAU LADIES

Don't lose what you have because of what you have lost...

Wise words to twenty eight women from the Lake Ōhau community who came together on Sat 13 November, for a wellness day. With so many houses lost in the October 2020 wildfire, women who would usually be at Lake Ōhau haven't been able to, making friendships and connections difficult.

The wildfire and its aftermath continues to impact on the wellbeing of the community. The focus was on women for this day, as women often find coming together to talk and share is a way to help one another and then take these learnings home.

Kat Wolinski, Clinical Psychologist from Timaru lead discussion about the impacts you can experience after a traumatic event and the things you can do for your wellbeing. Pip Walter provided information about support available. Being together for the day at the lovely Matuka Lodge was an opportunity to reflect, share and learn about our experiences.

The take aways from Kat's presentation, are relevant to everyone's lives:

- We are in charge of our lives and how we live
- Manage the stress in your life
- Live your values
- Make time to nurture your mind and body
- Hold tight to the sisterhood.

Food, laughter and new experiences were a large part of the day. Matuka Lodge owners, Jo and Pete Johnston and Brad Alty provided scrumptious food. Brad finished the day with a demonstration of how to fillet a salmon for sashimi and ceviche – greatly appreciated by the willing tasters of the finished dishes.

"It was such a lovely day and the food was awesome!"

Everyone received a sweet cloth bag (sewn by Marley Mueller from the Village) of gifts, including a turned larch wooden bowl made from trees in the Village removed after the fire. A shakti mat, an acupuncture mat, was also given to each woman.

"It was very, very, very, very enjoyable – it was great, there were lots of laughs – you have to have laughs...the food was great."



The LōL event was able to be held through very generous sponsorship and support from a number of people and organisations.

Our gratitude and thanks for funding from: the Lake Ōhau Fire Mayoral Fund – Waitaki District Council; Rural Women New Zealand Ngā Wāhine Taiwhenua o Aotearoa; Mackenzie Lodge no 93, Freemasons; and High Country Medical Trust, Twizel.

LōL was been supported by these generous people and organisations, Matuka Lodge, the venue – Jo and Pete Johnston; Kat Wolinski – Clinical Psychologist, Timaru; Sue Dykes – Clinical Psychologist, Auckland; Brad Alty – Chef, Twizel; Aoraki Solutions – Dani Mello, Graphic Design, Twizel; Printing.com @ Copyfast – Nathan Kippenberger, Timaru; and Waitaki District Council – Helen Algar and other staff.

"I'm sure we all benefited in some way from being part of it."

Gifts and treats were generously supported and supplied by: NZ Alpine Lavender; Ian McCully – wood turner extraordinaire; Head Kandy; High Country Salmon; CS Cosmetics, organised by Rural Women NZ; and Shakti Mat NZ - www.shaktimat.co.nz

This feedback sums up the day: *"Everyone left touched by the strong sense of community and shared love of Ōhau."*

Thank you for this item to Michelle Paterson, Viv Smith-Campbell and Pip Walter.



Photo: Kat and the LōL women



Brad Alty demonstrating salmon filleting for sashimi and ceviche



An Update on Remits

Remits are usually discussed as part of the Annual General Meeting, however, this year, the Board has deferred Remits due to the COVID-19 enforced disruption to the National Conference and Annual General Meeting. As a consequence, the Remits will be discussed on Thursday, 3 March and chaired by Board Chair Sandra Matthews. The debate will be held on Zoom and in two sessions to allow for a lunch break – 10am-12noon and then 2pm-4pm – with each session focused on each of the two different types of remits, internal and external. The decision on which set of remits will be discussed in which session has not yet been decided.

Each Member will need to register to attend the Zoom Remit Debate. Members will be able to gather as groups, as appropriate under the Covid19 Protection Framework, and one attendee might need to be chosen to support the counting of the votes of the group when a vote is called. However, it is vital that each Member registers to determine the voting strength.



This and more information plus registration details will be advised by Member Advisory and Social Media posts in January – so please keep an eye on your inbox and make plans to share that advisory with those you know who do not have email.

In the meantime, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Angela McLeod at National Office.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2021

One of the hallmarks of Rural Women New Zealand and its forebears has been innovation and resilience in the face of adverse circumstances. These characteristics have certainly been much in demand this year as Aotearoa New Zealand continues to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In response to the disappointment of being unable to hold our AGM in person, the National Office quickly pivoted so we were able to hold our first ever online AGM on Friday, 19

November. We were very pleased with the turnout and special thanks to areas that got groups together to attend online.

While the formal motions of the meeting were tabled pending the postal vote results, it was a wonderful opportunity to celebrate our National Competition winners, formally farewell retired Board Member Malvina Dick, welcome new North Island Board Member Sandra Matthews and congratulate returning South Island Board Member Sharron Davie-Martin.

Welcome to our new intern, Grace

Hi, My name is Grace Gregan and I was born and raised in the mighty Waikato. I am currently at the University of Waikato studying political science and international relations with one semester left!

I was looking for work experience over summer and when the opportunity to intern with Rural Women NZ came up, I knew that it would be an amazing experience for me.

I am so excited to contribute to the policy process and learn more about how Rural Women NZ contributes to New Zealand's local and national political debate.



Congratulations to...

Margaret Chapman

We were thrilled that Margaret's incredible contribution to rural women and rural communities was recognised in this year's Queen's Birthday Honours. Margaret was made an Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit at her investiture which was held at Government House in Wellington on Tuesday, 6 December.

Kristy McGregor

Editor-in-Chief, Founder and Publisher of Shepherdess magazine, Kristy McGregor has been named as a finalist in the Primary Industries Category of the Women of Influence Awards 2021.

Kristy's contribution to building connection between rural women and communities by celebrating their diversity, resilience and entrepreneurship in each issue of Shepherdess is the perfect antidote at a time when many New Zealanders report feeling disconnected.

Due to COVID-19 disruptions, the Women of Influence Awards Celebration will now take place on Thursday, 10 February. Congratulations Kristy!

Pat Macaulay

The fabulous Pat Macaulay has been recognised as one of ten semi-finalists in the Ryman Healthcare Senior New Zealander of the Year category of the 2022 Kiwibank New Zealander of the Year Awards.

Pat has been a Member of RWNZ for nearly 50 years and has also been involved with the Otago Rural Support Trust since 1997, beginning as a trustee before moving into a co-ordinator role in 2015, working on the ground with farmers and their families. We are delighted that Pat's decades of voluntary service in nurturing and building rural resilience and connection has been acknowledged. Congratulations Pat, this recognition is so richly deserved!



Margaret Chapman with the Governor-General,
Her Excellency The Rt Hon Dame Cindy Kiro



GRANTS & BURSARIES

Closing Soon

The RWNZ Scotlands Te Kiteroa Charitable fund provides grants to support individuals, groups and organisations in country areas and rural towns.

Grants are awarded in support of projects and activities in categories such as: care for children or the elderly, community work, conservation efforts, counselling support and education. Applications close on 31 December 2021.

For more information and an application form, please visit the RWNZ website or phone National Office.

So far this year, we have awarded the following bursaries and grants:

July - Education Fund

Ashleigh McCormick - Waipukurau (Region 4)

Michelle Smith - Alexandra (Region 1)

Sigourney Kelly - Glenorchy (Region 1)

September - Boarding Bursaries

Florence Polson - Millie Higinbottom, Masterton (Region 4)

Year 12-13 - Jacob Pointon, Murchison (Region 3)

Nellie Shroder - Charlotte Jephson, Featherston (Region 4)

Secondary School Boarding - Anya Sugden, Great Barrier Island, (Region 7); Kyla Rabone, Stratford (Region 6 Taranaki)

October - Audrey Reid

Brooke Tohiariki - Benhar (Region 1).



Marlborough Short Story Competition

This competition is open to all amateur writers who are Rural Women New Zealand Members and who have not won this competition in the previous two years or had their writing published - apart from contributions to newspapers or in the RWNZ Express magazine.

The theme for this year's competition was **What I learnt about life during the Covid-19 Lockdown** and our joint winners were Leanne Schmidt (Region 3) and Linda Welch (Region 4).

A Mum's Unfinished Journey: What I learnt about life during the Covid-19 Lockdown

By Linda Welch (Region 4)

It was the second to last day of November of 2019. The wider world was suspicious of a creeping illness that knocked the breath from people's struggling lungs. China was already grappling with galloping deaths which they shielded from the world.

The warmth of the late sun's rays reflected off our son's ute as he and Melissa walked slowly towards us. His cheeky grin was absent and her tired eyes only flickered in our direction. Life-changing news indeed, but at least it was an answer to Tom's pain and increasing tiredness. The key word being life. I had brought him into this world. Was he going to leave before me? Silent hugs cemented us. My breath was fighting as early summer zephyrs danced through our tight huddle, seemingly unaware of our new predicament. Our lockdown had just begun.

"We don't have to plant tomorrow," I whispered, knowing the expensive pumpkin seed was crucially timed to be sown.

Tom eyed me. "We will." That was final.

The pumpkins spread their tendrils as the bright yellow pollen laden stamens beckoned the bees to feast, opening in response to the dawns growing warmth. The paddocks fair hummed. The swelling golden balls dominated the landscape. Their large green seeds forcefully expanding entire cavities. Proud satisfaction radiated from Tom's thinning face as harvesting days approached.

March 25th 2020, New Zealand declared itself locked down from the world. Our Prime Minister instructed everyone to form a bubble. It was strange that now everyone else had to self-isolate, just as we had to since receiving Tom's news. Socially distance, wear a mask, wash your hands, sanitize. The only difference being Tom could not avoid or escape what was attacking him.

We wrapped three French Woofers into our bubble. Young and apprehensive, feeling far away from home. Their enthusiasm to join our farming family was infectious. Our two houses were full of laughter, tired bodies but always well fed. How

fortunate we were to feed off our own vegetables and meat. During the seven weeks of Lockdown, I only went to the supermarket twice. Toilet paper and flour were rationed. We all felt for seven weeks, protected. No visitors, no reason to leave. The French flavours were welcomed. Our three young grandsons filled the days helping their tiring Dad. They rolled stray pumpkins into line and collected pinecones as autumn broke the long dry spell. Life was settled, predictable and safe.

One of our French boys appeared so quiet at breakfast four weeks into their stay. He shared in his stilted English that his Uncle in Paris has just passed due to Covid 19. Life was indeed not safe for all in the world.

I learned that New Zealand was so fortunate to be geographically placed away from the Covid 19 Virus. I learned to respect a Prime Minister who gave daily encouragement to our family of five million. For me, Lockdown was magical. Our milieu priceless.

Tom's unwavering attitude to push on and achieve despite the war of uncertainty that he must have been battling internally. Lockdown cemented our family team. We were resilient, strong, united.

Once the edible pumpkin seeds had been separated from the flesh, the continuing process required washing, drying and finally stratifying ready for storage and sale. Our Lockdown team's synergy blossomed with reliability, strength and perseverance. New Zealanders became appreciative of their farmers. No work subsidies for them. Cows still needed milking. Sheep, beef and pigs still needed to be fed. Crops still sown. Silent essential workers indeed. I learned that New Zealanders were becoming very aware of where their food was sourced. The wave to buy New Zealand Made was rolling strong.

I learned that Tom could not escape the cruelty of Myelofibrosis, that was gradually clogging up his struggling bone marrow.

Sixteen months on, and New Zealand is just entering its second National Lockdown.

Tom is very tired. Limited time and energy to share skills with his three young sons, all home schooling due to closures.

Lockdown or not, he does not have time to die, nor will we be ready.

What I learnt about life during the Covid-19 Lockdown

By *Leanne Schmidt, Tennyson Inlet*

We live and work from home in rural New Zealand, so can be occasionally cut off in a physical sense. Such as no power, internet or road. The Covid-19 lockdown was similar to an infrastructure or weather-imposed exile, but raised a new challenge. The impact to our health and well-being.

Being rurally based was not representative of what most of the team of 5 million went through. Not much of our lifestyle had to change. We work from home, are already isolated; we know this and are used to it. We feel safer from a virus.

However, the level of isolation affected our feelings of security and connectedness. We no longer had a choice, and it was in fear of our health. In rural New Zealand we rely so much more on freedom of movement for connecting with others, not just supplies.

In late March 2020 when the call came to go to Alert Level 4, our family were less prepared when we ordinarily would be. We were due for our monthly exodus for supplies, not just groceries. Being a monthly raid on a supermarket, hardware stores, rural and vehicle parts suppliers. We have widely different shopping quantities than others, such as 24 rolls of toilet paper at a time. No, we do not need to see a doctor for needing this much toilet paper for one month.

So “shop normal NZ” did not work for us. Glares from other shoppers were keenly felt. Many items, such as 5kg of Flour were unavailable.

The chances of being stopped on the road by the Police and questioned about our travel was up there, heightening anxiety. Thankfully local (one hour drive) support kicked in. A café took groceries orders by email, relying on honesty and access to internet (hah!) banking to pay the bill. The owners made wide-ranging contactless deliveries.

There was nothing in our supply list out of the ordinary for us, but many items were unobtainable due to the high demand from those in town. So, there was economy-related work delayed. At least the dog did not starve.

Lastly came the essential retrieval of the teenager from boarding school. Hell! Add that to the supplies list. It was supposed to be an ordinary school holiday. It was not. Teenager was highly unappreciative of being locked down in the middle of nowhere with no usable internet for eight weeks.

Enter One News.

The teenager could not connect with teachers and classmates after the holidays, due to a poorly timed Chorus network downgrade just prior to the lockdown. The best outcome for the teenager was a different kind of life experience – being on national news. She was quoted saying she lost her English

Assessment three times. Art was a subject that did not need the internet. Many of the interior doors got painted as a substitute assessment.

At this point I was resigned to anything that might happen and just rolled with it.

On one foray to a local village, I had birds surfing the wind in front of the vehicle. There was no beech tree die-off, and fish were jumping in the sea. The dawn chorus was like I've never heard before. I feel I cannot explain as to why any of these things could happen in a rural, sparsely populated area, with no poison predator control for circa six years. But they did. A tumbleweed would not have looked out of place on our road.

Then came the recent snap lockdown in August 2021, again poorly timed as we were almost out of supplies. This time we had no opportunity to plan. I grabbed the teenager, what food I could, and retired home to twiddle my thumbs as no property or vehicle work could be done at all. Our 4WD vehicle was in the workshop at the time, and, as I write, still is. I am guessing I might not get it back for a few weeks.

Unfortunately, that vehicle has our face masks in it.

Enter the weather.

High rainfall has affected our road, which is constantly challenged by slips, rock falls and trees down. A 4WD vehicle would be very handy right now. We've booked Covid-19 vaccinations, but at this stage it's possible we may not get there.

At least the internet is fixed. The new Starlink satellite BETA program became available for our area in July. We received our “dishy” and it is up to 1000x faster than our prior less than dial-up speeds. I've ordered replacement face masks online and I am able to pay our bills the same.

The teenager then confessed she lied on national television last year. She didn't even attempt her English Assessment. The vacant houses in our area are getting their doors painted as well. I learnt different things from each lockdown;

Lockdown # 1 - Nature thrived, we survived. It's cool to paint your doors.

Lockdown # 2 – It's a whole lot better with decent internet. If teenagers get away with something once, they get bolder and do it again.

I would be remiss in finishing this story if I did not mention the effects of lockdown and Covid-19 on our wider NZ communities. Many businesses have struggled or failed due to a lack of migrant workers or countless other impacts. Families have been isolated from loved ones. The list goes on. Be kind New Zealand. Look out for your neighbours. Find some way to connect and look after yourselves.

We all need to take the good lessons that we've learnt from lockdown, and make it part of our daily lives.

O is for... National Project extended

Thank you to everyone who has been fundraising for our “O is for ...” National Project this year. We appreciate that many of the events planned had to be postponed or sometimes cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions.

The Project was due to end in February 2022. However, at its November Meeting the National Board decided to extend the end date of the Project to 30 June 2022. This will tie in very nicely with end of year financial reporting and give an opportunity for postponed events to be re-scheduled.



Supporting local ovarian cancer advocacy and awareness, and global research on a hard to treat ovarian cancer killing young wahine.



K9MD's mission is to improve the health of all New Zealanders by using specially trained dogs working in a controlled clinical environment to assist in the early detection of cancer.



Talk Peach informs New Zealanders on gynaecological disease and connects and supports those who are diagnosed.



The three hugely deserving organisations for which the O is for... National Project is raising funds are very grateful for this extended deadline and are very keen to support all our fundraising initiatives.

Don't forget that February is Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month and an excellent opportunity to raise awareness and funds. Please don't hesitate to contact Lisa at the National Office if you would like some assistance, leaflets or information to help you with your events.

Black Heels & Tractor Wheels Podcast

The Black Heels and Tractor Wheels podcast is now underway with its second season. Kristy McGregor of Shepherdess kicked us off with a bang, sharing her challenges of isolated wife-life and running Shepherdess while raising two young children.

Rural New Zealand has no shortage of incredible rural women who are keen to share their experiences, ideas, and words of wisdom with our audience. The feedback we have received from women all over the country, who tune in each week to listen has been extremely positive.

We were very lucky to have some fantastic women join us on the first season. Another massive thank you to Laura Koot, Chelsea Millar, Emma Higgins, Chanelle O'Sullivan, Gill Naylor, Rowena Duncum, Keri Moore, Claire Williamson, Julia Jones, Jen Corkran, and Sarah Perriam who all bravely jumped into the hot seat and very candidly shared their journeys with us.

The podcast has moved from strength to strength, with over 3,500 listeners for our first season. We have hit our target audience, with 67% of our audience being under the age of 40. We can't wait to see what the future holds and continue to boost our listenership above and beyond.

Stay tuned to see the next lineup of rural women, with episodes being released weekly on Wednesdays. You can find the podcast on Spotify, iHeartRadio, Apple Podcasts, and on our RWNZ website.



End of Year Information from National Office

The National Office team, like so many others after this very challenging year, is thoroughly looking forward to an end of year break.

The National Office will close at 12pm on Wednesday, 22 December 2021 and reopen in the new year on Monday, 10 January 2022.

Should any urgent matters arise during the period the Office is closed, please contact Gabrielle on her mobile 021 186 9172.

For non-urgent matters, please leave a message on our voicemail on 0800 256 467 so that we can attend to it on our return.

