



National Board Portfolios Report

This report provides an overview of activity in relation to each of the Rural Women New Zealand public policy portfolios over the last financial year.

The current Convenors for each of the portfolios are:

Portfolio	Convenor(s)
Community and Social Inclusion	Sharron Davie-Martin
Connectivity and Business	Claire Williamson
Education	Emma Higgins and Gill Naylor (Co-Convenors)
Environment and Land Use	Emma Higgins
Health	Sandra Matthews
International	Gill Naylor (President)

During the reporting year, Policy Action Advisory Groups (PAAGS) were formed for each of the portfolio areas. An information session was held regarding the appointment process and to encourage and assist members in identifying the skills and experience they could bring to the groups. Expressions of Interest were invited from RWNZ members with the intent of having one representative from each Region for each PAAG. There are still some opportunities to join a PAAG and interest is encouraged from those regions that are not yet represented in any particular portfolio area.

Focus of Activity for reporting period

Community and Social Inclusion

- Regular involvement in Toka Tu Ake EQC National Reference Group and the National Adverse Event Committee convened by MPI
- Participation in early discussion on the Women’s Health Strategy (led by Health Portfolio)
- Participation in Leptospirosis Forum
- Engagement with Consumer New Zealand regarding possible collaboration opportunities
- Regular involvement in NIWA long range forecasting presentations
- Participation in Food and Fibre Leadership Project Focus group
- Engagement in Safer Farms ‘Farm without Harm’ Campaign and pledge signing.
- Collaboration with other interested parties on campaign regarding postal services resulting in interviews on several mainstream current affairs programmes
- Written submission and engagement with the Independent Electoral Review Panel
- Written submission on the Sale and Supply of Alcohol (community Participation) Amendment Bill
- Written submission to the Inquiry into local body elections
- Engagement and written feedback on the draft Women’s Equality Strategy



Connectivity and Business

- A key focus has been, and continues to be, to advocate for rural communities with any rollout or intended rollout of new technology to support connectivity. This includes:
 - Promoting equitable access to connectivity through engagements with Chorus, The Commerce Commission and the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) in a variety of forums
 - Identifying options to improve the uptake of The Remote Users Scheme announced at the end of 2022 – an ongoing focus
 - Participating in a panel at the Technical Users Association of New Zealand (TUANZ) Rural Connectivity Symposium
- Focus for the PAAG currently:
- Engagement with the Commerce Commission regarding the Rural Connectivity Study
- Follow up with Internet New Zealand about the plans for the Combined broadband connectivity map
- Opportunities for further support and education regarding AI, internet safety and connectivity options for those living in rural areas
- Ongoing discussions regarding best options for rural communities e.g. In 2023 Starlink has become a disrupter in NZ – but it's not a solution that works for everyone, and we still need a geographically based approach
- Building collaboration within the rural space to continue to drive change.

Education

- Representation on the Rural Education Reference Group. This forum meets quarterly and brings together all sectors involved in education in rural New Zealand. Topics covered include the impacts of the Cyclones on schooling in the affected areas and challenges that are unique to small rural schools. The Minister for Education, Hon Jan Tinetti, and National Party Education spokesperson, Erica Stanford, have both attended to connect with the group.
- Coordination and Chairing of Education Bursaries and Grants Committee (see Education Bursaries report for further details).
- Follow up on the remit at last year's conference regarding teaching basic cooking skills through correspondence with Ministry of Education officials on the health and physical education curriculum.
- Liaison with concerned parents and members regarding various issues around the country with school buses and children travelling to school.
- A key focus for the PAAG for this year will be these school transport issues along with issues regarding boarding allowances.

Environment and Land Use

- A written submission as part of the Pricing Agricultural Emissions Consultation in November 2022. This drew on a survey of members which sought feedback on how communities might be impacted and what solutions/options could make a difference.
- An oral submission to the Environment Select Committee on the Natural and Built Environment Bill in early 2023. This was a follow-on from the submission on the Natural and Built Environment Bill Exposure Draft in 2021. Our key messages were rural representation, gender balance, and that the rural environment must be adequately provided for in the Bill.
- Focus for the PAAG in recent months has included work on consultations relating to the Emissions Trading Scheme and Genetically modified organisms (GMOs) used in laboratory settings and for biomedical therapies,

Health

- Regular participation in Rural Communities Chapter Meetings of the Hauora Taiwhenua Rural Health Network. This engagement included discussions across the health sector with regard to issues impacting on rural communities including:
 - Rural staffing shortages of doctors and nurses
 - Maternity services
 - Aged care
 - Ambulance services
 - The Rural Health Strategy and Women's Health Strategy and changes proposed as part of the health reforms
- Engagement at the Hauora Taiwhenua Health Alliance Workshop with other Rural Health Network members to build a united representative voice
- Engagement with Manatū Hauora, Ministry of Health officials on the Pae Ora Healthy Futures Strategies particularly the Rural Health Strategy and the Women's Health Strategy
- Written submission on the Women's Health Strategy
- Engagement Zoom with RWNZ members on the Women's Health Strategy
- Engagement with Aged Care Commissioner – Health and Disability Commission, Carolyn Cooper
- Engagement with Primary Sector Wellbeing Reference Group
- Participation at Haoura Taiwhenua RuralFest incorporating Members of Parliament

International Portfolio - Report from the President

Our work in the international portfolio area encompasses our links to the global organisation, Associated Country Women of the World (ACWW), and work with the International Women's Caucus here in New Zealand. The latter is a collaborative group which is facilitated by Manatu Wahine, the Ministry for Women. This group brings together government and civil organisations from all facets of society dedicated to empowerment and equity for women and girls. The group aids New Zealand's participation at an international level in forums where this is the focus, including the United Nations.

Our ACWW links focus on our usual member efforts through Women Walk the World events, raising funds and awareness of the work that ACWW does for women living rurally all around the world and International Day of Rural Women, where events are held that celebrate all things women and rural.

Our country of study this year has been "Aotearoa New Zealand, Know Your Local Community". The focus of this was intended to encourage members to reach out to those in their communities from different cultures and countries and learn more about their traditions and cultures. The aim being to accentuate an inclusive and open-minded approach for all in our communities and give us a better understanding of those who live around us. We thank those who embraced this somewhat different approach enthusiastically, however the uptake of the whole concept in general was disappointing.

On a brighter note the Associated Country Women of the World Triennial World Conference in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in May was a real highlight. A delegation of eleven members attended from Rural Women New Zealand, including Claire Mahon, who was elected to the ACWW Board at the Conference. It is valuable to have representation at that level. We congratulate and thank Claire for stepping up to this global role, and look forward to welcoming her to present in person at our conference and AGM in Christchurch this year. At the World Conference we also thanked Gail Commens for her time as South Pacific Area President, and welcome Lyn Braico, from New South Wales, as her replacement.

Rural Women New Zealand had two resolutions accepted for discussion and decision at the ACWW World Conference, which I was incredibly proud and honoured to present. One on Women's Employment Action Plans and one calling for Rural and Gender Analysis to be implemented across all legislation. Both were passed almost unanimously. I thank all who have worked on these resolutions in the long lead up to presenting them at this global conference.

We were honoured to have Claire Williamson, on behalf of RWNZ, as a panellist at an online event

hosted by ACWW during CSW 67 (Commission for the Status of Women) titled “Rural Women as Agents of Change”, continuing what has been an annual presence at this global forum over recent years.

Gill Naylor
International Portfolio Convenor

“No amount of words, can say how thankful an grateful I am to everyone. This honestly will help out immensely.....”

“It has been a very testing time for my family and me and any help is truly appreciated.”

“We are very grateful for your kind donation.....This gives us hope that things are getting better.”



Charitable Funding

Scotlands Te Kiteroa Charitable Fund

This Fund originated from proceeds from the sale of the Scotlands (Auckland) and Te Kiteroa (Waimate) Rest Homes. Each year interest from the Fund is disbursed to the community in the form of grants for up to \$1500. These grants support projects and activities related to the welfare of children and the elderly, community, conservation and education.

Grants made this year for 11 successful applications totalled \$15,500 and included projects covering support for therapy for people living with the experience of Alzheimers, tree planting conservation initiatives and outdoor pursuits programmes and jamborees for youth.

Committee:

Gill Naylor (Chair)	National President
Annette Marr	National Finance Chair
Sharron Davie-Martin	South Island representative
Cheyenne Wilson	South Island representative
Wendy Coup	North Island representative
Tamzin Coull	North Island representative

Education Bursaries

This financial year \$17,300 was paid out in Education Bursaries and Text Book Grants. Grants were made up as follows:

Grants	Grants Made	Total Amount Paid
Boarding Bursaries	9	\$8,200
Other Bursaries	2	\$4,500
Education fund	1	\$500
Diamond Jubilee Agricultural Tertiary	1	\$1000
Textbook Grants	6	\$3000
Miss Harris Nursing Bursary	3	\$2000
Audrey Reid Grant	1	\$600
	23	17,300

Committee:

Emma Higgins (Chair)	RWNZ Education Portfolio Convenor
Gill Naylor	National President and Education Portfolio Co-Convenor
Annette Marr	National Finance Chair
Jane Hall	South Island representative
Rachel Whalley	North Island representative

We have seen a marked increase in applicants for our bursaries and grants over the last few rounds, which has made for some extremely difficult decision-making. Lots of excellent feedback from recipients, along with interesting updates on their respective journeys makes the Education and Bursaries Committee very rewarding to be part of.

Community Fund

The Community Fund is administered by the RWNZ Board. The fund is open to grant applications of up to \$1000 to assist those in rural New Zealand who have suffered hardship in situations that are not covered by the Adverse Events Relief Fund.

All details of the grants are confidential due to their sensitive nature.

In the 2022/2023 financial year, a total of \$5000 was granted to recipients in need.

Adverse Events Relief Fund

When the Adverse Events Relief Fund was developed in 2016 following the Kaikura earthquakes, we did not envisage it addressing the huge number of applications that we have seen this year following the Cyclones.

At the year ending 30 June 2023 we had processed 149 applications and paid out \$122,164 in 123 grants. This was made possible by all the generous donations that have been received. These donations have been directed to where they have been needed and that has covered all areas impacted by the cyclones.

Although the number of applications received have slowed now, we are still seeing pockets where Rural Support Trust are describing it as still looking like a war zone with little headway being made on the cleanup. Many areas are still awaiting a decision on the future of both homes and land.

The increased demand for the fund has highlighted some process improvements that will be useful in the future particularly during times of high demand. Changes to the Terms of Reference and application form are currently being finalised based on feedback from the Committee and a review by the Board. Although the increased demand has brought challenges at times, it has been an honour to work in this space and to have the opportunity to assist people in need.

Committee:

Sharron Davie-Martin (Chair)	Board Member
Gill Naylor	National President
Annette Marr	National Finance Chair
Melva Robb	South Island representative
Bronwyn Main	North Island representative

“The support from you, RST my vets has been absolutely wonderful there are so many people who actually care and want to help. I have found it all very humbling.”

