

Summary of our Advocacy Team Activity and Initiatives



May 2026

Submissions

Over the past 2 months we have made submissions on the following:

- PHARMACs second consultation on PRIME medicines
- ACC Contract Pricing
- Aged Care Ministry Advisory Group
- Data and Statistics (Census) Amendment Bill – written. Grant presenting an oral submission to the Select Committee on 5th May

Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2026: We have set up a process to collate members into to a submission on the draft Strategy. As is commonly the case, there is not a lot of time to do this as submissions close on 18th May.

Completed submissions can be found on our [website](#).

Work on Rural Primary Care Funding Arrangements

Grant continues to represent members at the PSAAP negotiations, which meets fortnightly with Health NZ to progress negotiations on the following areas:

- The annual primary care funding uplift
- Potential changes to co-payment fees
- Capitation re-weighting options and approaches to implementation
- Development of an outcomes and performance framework for primary care
- Proposed changes to the rural funding model
- Improvements to cyber security requirements

All PSAAP members, including Grant, are bound by a strict confidentiality agreement. As a result, despite recent media coverage in the *NZ Doctor* and ongoing discussion among rural general practices regarding rural funding allocations, he cannot discuss these matters with anyone outside the PSAAP forum at this time.

Engagement with our members

To ensure our advocacy remains grounded in the reality of living and working in rural communities, and in addition to the practice visits the NZLocum team make, we regularly visit members at ‘their place’. Over the past 2-3 months we have visited rural practices in Te Kuiti, Taupō, Tokoroa, Te Aroha, Ōtorohanga, Golden Bay, Matamata, Morrinsville, Great Barrier Island, Caitlins, Gore, Tapanui, Ōtautau and Riverton.

Grant, Becks, Fiona, and Marie regularly attend Chapter meetings. This enables follow up and inter-chapter connections to specific pieces of work.

Aotearoa New Zealand Declaration on Rural Health 2026

Following Rural WONCA 2026, the draft Aotearoa New Zealand Declaration on Rural Health 2026 was circulated to Council, the Board, and Te Rōpū Ārahi for final feedback and endorsement. All feedback received has been carefully considered, and the revised Declaration has now been presented to the Board for final approval.

Once approved, the Declaration will be released both nationally and internationally and will underpin our preparation and engagement for RuralFest.

Upcoming Events

- RuralFest, 20 May 2026: Planning is well underway for this important engagement with all political parties. Discussions will be grounded in the Aotearoa Declaration, with one or two

additional issues likely to be identified for members to consider and prioritise during the preparation sessions ahead of meetings with politicians.

- Mystery Creek Fielddays, 10-13 June: We will once again be joining our colleagues from Mobile Health at this year's Hauora Taiwhenua Health and Wellbeing Hub. Our clinical team includes Dr Becks Doran, Dr Sarah Clarke, RN Helen MacGregor, and Dr Jo Scott Jones. Leanne Ryan, from the University of Waikato's School of Nursing and Midwifery, is coordinating a team of third-year nursing students who will be supporting us each day. Engagement with students not only strengthens our ability to connect with the rural and farming sector, but also provides them with valuable opportunities to engage with our team and consider a future nursing career in the rural health workforce.

Sector Engagement and Relationship Building

Our advocacy team has participated in a wide range of national forums, advisory and working groups including:

- National clinical leadership forums and the National Rural Health Clinical Network
- Regular connection and advocacy meeting with Health NZ representatives, Ministry of Health officials, RNZCGP leadership, ACC primary care sector representatives
- Participating member of the newly formed HealthX (a new Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora program designed to fast-track digital and AI-driven innovations to solve workforce shortages, access inequities, and clinical inefficiencies) clinical innovation hui.

Rural Urgent Care Prototype Project

This project has now been completed. Health NZ has released the final project report, and the two videos HNZ funded Hauora Taiwhenua to produce, are now publicly available.

Marie accompanied the videographer for both pieces of work to ensure the necessary detail was captured to clearly explain the RUC. On Great Barrier Island, Tania and Darcy Kemp were exceptionally generous hosts, with Tania taking the time to drive us around the island to ensure we filmed all the *right* locations. It was an eye-opening and thoroughly rewarding experience. For someone who often jokes about farming well outside of Eketahuna, the concept of "remote" took on an entirely new meaning.

As the RUC video is highly subject-specific, we are also in the final stages of producing a separate video focused on the Aotea Health practice. This will be published on our website, as we believe it will be of strong interest to our members.

Sarah Hoyle, General Manager of Golden Bay Community Health, was also an outstanding host. She provided us with a second vehicle and ensured the entire team knew what was planned—right down to the smallest details. The kitchen staff even prepared packed lunches for us each day, which was greatly appreciated.

RUC Project links:

- [Rural and remote urgent care prototype project report: March 2026](#)
- [Aotea Great Barrier rural urgent care case study](#)
- [Tākaka, Golden Bay rural urgent care case](#)

Primary Health Care Awards

Following on from the RUC prototype project, we have made the following nominations for these awards:

- Service Innovation: Health NZ and Hauora Taiwhenua Rural Urgent Care Prototype Project
- Rural General Practice of the Year: 5 RUC prototype sites: Aotea Great Barrier, Coromandel Family Health Centre, Te Kuiti Medical, Golden Bay Community Health, Twizel Medical Centre

Advocacy Plan for Workforce Data Collection started

We are currently in the discovery phase of shaping a project plan to advance long term goals for health workforce data collection and analysis at the GCH level, by profession. The optimal approach for this work continues to evolve as we build our understanding of what workforce data is already collected and made available on request to either Health NZ or a regulatory body.

Primary Care Dementia/Mate Wareware Future Management

HNZ has formed a Primary care Dementia/Mate Wareware working group, supporting the development of practical recommendations to Health NZ/Te Whatu Ora to enhance primary care involvement in dementia assessment and management across Aotearoa. Rebekah is our rural voice on this working group.

Health Sector Plan in light of fuel crisis from Middle East War.

When the Government released its proposed staged response to fuel shortages in New Zealand, Grant reached out to Health NZ to ensure that rural health workers, including relocating locums, were being considered as essential workers should rationing start to be introduced. HNZ took this on board and included it in recommendations to Government.

Grant was then included in a primary care sector meeting to discuss potential and existing impacts of the Middle East Conflict on the NZ Health System in order that a Health Sector Fuel Plan could be developed. The impacts on rural practices, staffing, servicing rural patients and the costs for rural patients to access health care (especially specialist care away from home) have all been noted.

The NTAS has now had a 30% increase in reimbursement rates for the next 12 months or until the cost of petrol drops below \$3 a litre for 4 weeks in a row as one of these measures.