


## Rural Matters



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**Rural Matters 1 - 31 March 2016**

### Welcome to 'Rural Matters' Issue 1 2016

First, I want to say thank you and tell you how thrilled we are that so many of you want to join us for lunch at the Trans-Tasman conference. We introduced this event at last year's NZPF conference in Wellington and it was a great success then too. Getting direct feedback from you on what's going on out there in rural and sole charge schools is great! It gives us the evidence we need to advocate more strongly for you.



As you will already know, we have had three rural advisors appointed to support, coach and mentor principals in Northland, Southland and the East Coast as a result of our persistent lobbying and we want to establish more positions before long. Providing evidence of what type of advisory services are required goes a long way when we are lobbying. That evidence can only come from you!

Below are a few sections on issues that keep coming up for rural principals.

#### School Transport

We are half way through the first term now, so school buses are well and truly front of mind for many of you. Remind your community and staff that the speed limit is 20km/h when passing school buses that have stopped to drop off or pick up children. The rule applies whichever direction you are travelling in.

#### Relationships

For good reason it is often said that the 3R's of principalship are relationships, relationships, relationships. In rural areas this advice is even more applicable because families, factions and familiarity make for complex community relations. These are enduring aspects of rural communities and much of it we love. However there can be 'hidden' fishhooks for the unsuspecting, newly appointed principal! Here are some tips to keep relationships with your community members mutually advantageous

- Be friendly
- Be available
- Show you are welcoming and kind to their children
- If you are a teaching principal – teaching comes first, this is how you will be judged by the community.
- If you are asked out to dinner – go! Reach for the diary straight away. Don't wait because many will not ask a second time.
- Remember that small communities are often factional and inter related so avoid becoming tightly connected to any single social group in the community.
- Be interested in the community, its history, events, personalities, traditions etc.
- If you are not sure, be straight up and say so! Then call someone and find out.
- Don't rush into significant changes before you know the reasons and background/history about why things are the way they are now.
- Build a professional network. Rural principals are very good at supporting one another.
- Build a strong communication link with your Board Chairperson. Be honest with them and keep them informed.

#### Stress

Many rural families experience acute stress during periods of drought or economic downturn, as in the case of dairy farmers right now. Perhaps include these contacts in your school newsletter:

**Rural Women NZ:** Ring 04 473 5524, to get the contact number for your local branch.

There are a number of free confidential services to help people experiencing stress or depression.

Rural Support Trusts: 0800 787 254

Depression.org.nz: 0800 111 757

Resilient Farmer: 03 575 7208

## Swimming Pools

Do you have a school swimming pool that the community uses outside of school hours? Are you are worried about how changes to the Health and Safety Act might impact on this practice?

If so then read on . . .

This is the advice from NZSTA:

There is comprehensive information regarding health, safety, and maintenance requirements for school swimming pools. This includes allowing community use of the pool. The link is below.

<http://www.education.govt.nz/school/property/state-schools/school-facilities/swimming-pools/#Managing>

Basically, nothing is changing in respect of swimming pool use with the new legislation coming into force. Parents/adults are responsible for their children using the pool outside of school hours. The board would not be held liable as long as the swimming facility is safe and has good, clear rules and safety information available to pool users – and pool users are made aware of these rules. This has always been a requirement.

Ernie Buutveld from Marlborough is happy to share the document his community members sign before they are allocated a season swimming pool key. The document is comprehensive and will be a great resource to adapt to your own context.

Thanks Ernie for this offer. You can contact Ernie at

[principal@havelock.school.nz](mailto:principal@havelock.school.nz)

Finally, here is a short video clip about what teachers do. There are so many elements that you will relate to, not to mention that it is peppered with lovely bits of humour. Enjoy a treat!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2zMbspRhqJc>

I look forward to meeting many more of you at our luncheon in Auckland at the Trans-Tasman conference.

Noho ora mai ra



Iain Taylor

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For a map showing the location of the National Office in Wellington [click here](#)

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