

# Study says nearly half of all Kiwis affected by mental illness

It is one of society's most delicate issues, but research released today shows that nearly half of all Kiwis have in some way been affected by mental illness.

The independent study was commissioned by Movember, a charity which encourages men to grow moustaches during November to help raise awareness and funds in support of men's health.

Money raised by Movember will be donated to the Mental Health Foundation of NZ for its 'Out of the Blue' depression awareness campaign and to the Cancer Society of New Zealand in support of prostate cancer.

Five hundred men and women were interviewed as part of the nationwide study with 48 percent saying they had personally experienced mental illness or that a family member or someone they knew had.

The Chief Executive of the Mental Health Foundation of NZ, Judi Clements says depression is a serious issue with 1 in 6 New Zealanders experiencing it in their lifetime, and the World Health Organisation predicting that by 2020 depression will be the second major health issue worldwide following cardiovascular disease.

Clements says the term 'depression' is used to describe a range of feelings from 'having the blues' or 'feeling a bit down' to acute and ongoing unhappiness. It can start anytime - from

childhood through to old age - and can disrupt someone's ability to enjoy everyday activities.

"It is important to remember though, that most people can and do recover from depression when they get help, and the earlier the better," says Clements. "It doesn't necessarily need to be clinical help, support from family and friends can make all the difference."

The Clinical Director of Procure Primary Mental Health Programme, psychiatrist Dr David Codyre, says depression is highly treatable but if not addressed can have devastating consequences.

Dr Codyre says men tend to be late 'help-seekers' in the face of evolving health problems, including mental health issues.

"In part, it is the general male tendency to ignore their health, the 'macho' tough it out thing, and also the fear of being seen as weak. For depression in particular the problem is that many men don't have a good understanding of what it actually is," says Dr Codyre.

Signs of depression can include feelings of sadness that don't go away, and losing interest and pleasure in usual activities, he says. Irritable mood can also be the main obvious change particularly in men.

Excessive anxiety, agitation or worry, changes in energy levels, eating or sleeping patterns, feeling worthless or hopeless and suicidal thoughts are also common

symptoms, he says.

"If a person is experiencing any of these things for more than two weeks, it could be a sign of depression and they should get assistance.

"GPs are the best first port of call for seeking professional help as all primary care organisations now have mental health programmes including funded access to therapy," he says.

For more information about depression or about getting help or advice contact your GP or Health Line on 0800 611 116. You can also visit [www.mentalhealth.org.nz](http://www.mentalhealth.org.nz) or [www.movember.co.nz](http://www.movember.co.nz)

## "Let's educate New Zealand... we're not Fonganui"

The city and region may have two official spellings - Wanganui and Whanganui - but it is most definitely not 'Fonganui'.

That was the unanimous resolution of the Wanganui District Council last Tuesday, who supported Mayor Michael Laws in his attempt to get the New Zealand news media to pronounce our name properly.

The council will work with local Maori leaders to draw up a guideline for national media and organisations as to how the city should be pronounced.

Since the decision of Land Information Minister Maurice Williamson, many media organisations have been pronouncing the 'Wh' as a 'F'.

"The 'h' has always been silent or, at best, aspirated - as in 'what', 'where' and 'why'. It is the reason the first Europeans transcribed the name as they did. Even with the 'h' added, there is no 'f' sound. That sound does not exist in the local dialect."

The resolution was seconded by Cr Rangi Wills - a local Maori leader and proponent of the 'h' spelling.

"The 'f' is an invention," Cr Wills told the council meeting. "I fully endorse this campaign."

Mayor Laws has been tasked with meeting media organisations and the Minister of Land Information with the aim of ensuring that Wanganui/Whanganui's unique spelling, and pronunciation, receives official and media support.



### Pedestrian crossings

Since November 1, 2009, an amendment to Road User rule 2004 has come into effect. It states that drivers will be required to give way to pedestrians who are obviously waiting to cross at a pedestrian crossing and this will give more priority to pedestrians. It will also bring New Zealand into line with other jurisdictions



There is an old saying that 'you can choose your friends, but you can't choose your family'. It's usually thrown up to cover the embarrassment of someone whose relatives are making fools out of them. In recent times though, we've found that you can't always choose your friends - and it seems that this is what Maori and Ratana affiliates are currently finding. Phil Goff is preaching with evangelical enthusiasm about the warmth, breadth, depth, and height of the relationship Labour has with Maori, while the Ratana leadership have described their relationship as 'hanging by a thread'.

While Phil Goff points to a number of contact points through the year between Ratana and the Labour Party, his reported absence from Ratana Celebrations prior to becoming Labour Party leader seems to be the enduring memory.

Political affiliations sometimes seem to be a little like token religious and social affiliation. Some people wear this faith or membership like a lapel pin, discreet and unobtrusive. Selected from the top drawer or jewellery box prior to attending a meeting, it is merely to impress those in the room, and the badge is never to be seen the rest of the year. Some wear it like a fluoro vest and it's the first thing you notice about them - it is 'high-viz' but can easily be taken off at the end of the show. For others it's a secret handshake that nobody would notice outside the Order.

Labour should concede that it needs to work on the relationship with Maori and particularly Ratana, and to do what it

# Blind Spot with Margaret Seabrook

which include Australia, United Kingdom and a number of European countries.

### Overland on the Overlander

Recently I had the pleasure of joining the annual Summer Nature Programme going by bus to Taumarunui and catching the Overlander there. The object of the trip was to learn about The Raurimu Spiral which was, amazingly built in 1898. What a great piece of engineering. I did enjoy the trip.

I was recently reminded of the time many years ago when there was a train trip organised for Wellington Anniversary

Weekend to go to New Plymouth for the day. When I heard about the trip I rushed in to 'buy' a carriage. Some of the committee members of the Association of Blind Citizens were rather nervous about my decision as there were 55 seats to sell. I was determined that as many of our members as possible, with their escorts, would fill that carriage and at no more than what it has cost us to 'buy' it.

So a most happy group of "blindies" has a wonderful day out. There were several tunnels to travel through and just before each tunnel the lights would be turned on in

each carriage. However, there must have been a gremlin because in our carriage the lights did not come on. I can remember John McDonald being highly amused at this and mentioning it in his column.

### New Year's Honour

Oh, my goodness. What a surprise this was! I wish to thank all those wonderful people who phoned, sent cards, letters or emails to congratulate me on the award. It is my intention to carry on for as long as possible doing what I can to support members of the RNZ Foundation of the Blind.

## Phil Goff is no kiwi host

- Chester Borrows, National MP for Whanganui

can to regain their favour - especially given the huge benefits the party has enjoyed from their support. But it seems that to publicly confess all Maori have been treated like 'the last cab off the rank' is a concession too far from Phil Goff and his party that is struggling to find relevance.

Labour has continued to treat those parties that threaten its vote with contempt. Past form has seen Labour snuggle up to the Green Party prior to the last four elections. But when in a position to reward loyalty and recognise friendship, it pulled the rug in favour of the more expeditious friendships such as with

New Zealand First. It has done the same on the international stage, making grand statements of warmth and trust overseas, and then degrading the status and good-faith of those relationships domestically in front of their home audiences. Both the United States and the United Kingdom have been treated in this way, albeit in actions led more by Clark than Goff.

All political parties and politicians need to remember that the phrase 'quality customer service' is also most pertinent in respect to relationships. It is not for the provider to inform the recipient of the quality of the service they are receiving. The gauge will always be found with the person receiving the

service or using the product. Maori and Ratana will be the ones to gauge the warmth and closeness of the relationship - and whether they have been taken for granted or what their future affiliations will offer. What Labour makes of how good the deal has been for Maori is neither here nor there. The same goes for every other group of constituents, local or national, and whether identified by race, age, creed, social status, occupation or whatever.

Given that the customer or voter can always take their business or vote elsewhere, politicians would do well to learn what the retail sector has known for years - the customer is always right.

- Chester Borrows, MP for Whanganui.



## Theo's Log

"Our God is an awesome God!" is a phrase used by some churches. While it gets up my theological nose, as being rather "jargonish", it's quite true when you consider the awesome things God achieves through human-beings (at their best).

Haiti, for example, has experienced the Godly side of human nature evident on a massive scale amidst the earthquake's horror aftermath - the place has been obliterated, but not the better side of the human spirit. The 'knockers' have, I hope, eaten their words as the United Nations, alongside America, have responded to this humanitarian crisis in that so-poor nation.

The courage, compassion, determination and, yes, the financial aid has been impressive - especially considering the logistic difficulties.

I'm far from an admirer

of American foreign policies, especially their continuing, blindfolded and deaf bankrolling of Israel's conduct towards the equally poor Palestinians. Nor am I blind to the internal problems in activating the enormous resources of nations 'united' under the light blue U.N. banner. But there are occasions such as in Haiti, when these two institutions manage to get their 'A' into gear. The 'flesh' has proved to be strong, and the Spirit of God has moved in mysterious and quite moving (almost miraculous) ways.

Then there's the terrible, heart-rending task of mass burials of many thousands of Haitian people. I hope Priests were on hand! How many poor (and now poorer) Haitian children have been orphaned, families decimated? I've no idea how I would handle the

horrors if my family, my city, my country were to suddenly be devastated by nature (not an 'act of God!').

Most moving have been the stories and scenes of survival following days of burial and entrapment and, oh, the rescuer's elated responses! Personally, as someone who suffers from claustrophobia, I inwardly squirm at the very thought of being buried alive. So, God help me (somehow) if it should ever happen to Theo, the Christian who tentatively prays, 'Your will be done'.

Back to Haiti, the next challenge for the U.N. is how to assist the rebuilding, the infrastructures, the decimated Government - all the while respecting Haitian authority and independence.

By the way, where on earth was China in the rescue effort?

## STATION UNITED SPORTS & SOCIAL CLUB

The Membership Jackpot is back to \$225 this week after Pio struck it and Margie won the \$20, Girl and AJ won the Slotto.

Darts starts back this Friday at 7.30pm sharp, names must be in by 7.15pm or you miss out.

Don't forget to send in any sporting results you want added here to [thevegepatch@windowslive.com](mailto:thevegepatch@windowslive.com) And that's all from the vegepatch.

## Swine flu update

Next winter's seasonal influenza vaccine will contain the pandemic (swine flu) strain and be free to extra groups who are at particular risk from swine flu. Free vaccines will be available from March 2010 to people over 65, but also to pregnant women, people who are morbidly obese, and children aged six months to four years who are enrolled in particular high deprivation General Practices. Seasonal flu immunisation is already free for all people over 65, and to those aged 6 months to 64 years with certain pre-existing health conditions.

A study investigating the level of immunity NZers have to pandemic influenza (H1N1) began in November. Blood samples will be taken from 2500 people to see who has been exposed to pandemic influenza and developed immunity to it. This information will be used to establish how many people are still at risk of contracting the illness.

- Rural Bulletin