



Contd. from front page

### **Psychotropic medications may mask and exacerbate symptoms of physical illness.**

Medications too have, in some cases, added to the problem with the second generation antipsychotic medications being more highly associated with weight gain, diabetes, dyslipidemia, insulin resistance and the metabolic syndrome.

Two years ago, Te Pou, Tui Ora Ltd and Pathways brought Ken Jue, an international expert and founder and leader of *InSHAPE*, to New Plymouth. He gave an inspiring address on this very matter to a rapt well represented audience.

**Ken Jue believes that we need a whole new approach to mental health.** One where the individual and their health team are engaged with one another in an open, transparent manner involving full social inclusion. It is more than just empowerment. It is about ensuring people have the necessary social skills and social organisational skills to determine and work towards achieving their optimal wellness.

KEN JUE & ASSOCIATES

Home InSHAPE Services About Login



This philosophy is supported by the Blueprint II by the Mental Health Commission, 2012, about **'How things need to be'**.

Blueprint II championed a bold new vision to improve the health and well-being of all New Zealanders.

It appears, in my opinion anyway, that this wonderful initiative has, like the Mental Health Commission, been largely consigned to the 'too hard' basket.

**Blueprint II identified a number of priorities. Among them were:**

#### **Providing a good start:**

Respond earlier to mental health and addiction issues in children and young people to reduce life-time impact.

#### **Positively influencing high risk pathways:**

Provide earlier and more effective responses for youth and adults who are at risk or involved with social, justice, or forensic mental health and addiction services.

#### **Supporting people with episodic needs:**

Support return to health, functioning and independence for people with episodic mental health and addiction issues.

#### **Supporting people with severe needs:**

Support return to health, functioning and independence for people most severely affected by mental health and addiction issues.

#### **Supporting people with complex needs:**

Support people with complex combinations of mental health issues, disabilities, long term conditions and/or dementia to achieve the best quality of life.

#### **Promoting wellbeing, reducing stigma and discrimination:**

Promote mental health and wellbeing to individuals, families and communities and reduce stigma and discrimination against individuals with mental illness and addictions.

#### **What has changed since - locally and/or nationally?**

#### **Has the former Mental Health Commission's 'Blueprint II' report been enacted upon in any way?**

Health promotion and self-care is not an area where the mental health and addiction sector can take sole responsibility. It needs a broader support base including people, their families, communities and employers alongside the health and wider social sector.

#### **Te Pou and Platform are initiating a new physical health initiative – 'Equally Well'.**

'Equally well' aims to improve the relatively poor physical health of people with a serious mental illness, including depressive disorder, bi-polar, schizophrenia and/or addiction.

#### **They recognise that:**

Changes are needed in the way health care services are structured to improve integration between mental and physical health care services and particularly to improve shared care

between primary and secondary services.

Clinical guidelines are needed to clearly identify roles, responsibilities and best practices in the monitoring and ongoing management of the physical health care of people with experience of mental illness and/or drug addiction.

There is a need for behaviour change interventions to focus on the broader physical, social, emotional and cultural needs of people with serious mental health and/or addiction issues.

Let us hope that the efforts of Te Pou and Platform are able to benefit from World leaders such as Ken Jue and the thinking of the Mental Health Commission and successfully influence Tertiary and GP services as well as the wider community to make *'Equally Well'* work for those that need it most.

Much has been achieved in promoting mental health to the wider population and much more in decreasing stigma and discrimination but much, much more needs to be achieved if these appalling morbidity and mortality rates are to be reduced.

#### **It is an issue of civil and human rights.**

Opinion: Gordon Hudson



#### **Blueprint II**

*Improving mental health and wellbeing for all New Zealanders  
How things need to be.*

June 2012

Mental Health Commission

<http://www.hdc.org.nz/media/207642/blueprint%20ii%20how%20things%20need%20to%20be.pdf>

# On Common Ground...

Around one in five New Zealanders experience a mental health issue during their teens, and many of these issues, like depression or anxiety, can continue to affect them throughout their lives. Whanau and friends can play a vital role in supporting young people through challenging times in their lives but, sometimes they don't recognize the signs of an emerging mental health issue until a crisis point has been reached.

Moira Clunie, project manager for a new website called Common Ground, acknowledges that the internet is often the first place that young people and their whanau turn to for information about issues they are facing. *"We were aware that some of the information about issues affecting young people's mental health and wellbeing on the internet may be unreliable or even unsafe. We've created a resource that is relevant to a New Zealand audience, and targeted at young people and their families, rather than health professionals,"*

The Minister for Social Development, Hon. Paula Bennett launched the innovative project on the 10<sup>th</sup> of this



*"Smart and innovative ideas like this will go a long way to keeping the conversation around youth mental health issues going, an important part in making it easier for young people to get help."*  
Hon. Paula Bennett  
[www.commonground.org.nz](http://www.commonground.org.nz)

provides space for sharing ideas and experiences acknowledging the expertise and wisdom of parents, whanau and young people themselves. People can connect to share their own experiences and suggestions about supporting the young people in their lives. It will also feature a series of videos exploring the challenges faced by young people within a fictional community. At

the end of each video, viewers will be asked for suggestions and lived expertise – what's worked for them, which services have helped, and the best advice they can offer. This will then form the first part of the next episode where this feedback will be explored.

Common Ground aims to ensure parents, families, whanau and friends of young people have easy access to information that will help them support young people to manage hard times, and enjoy positive mental health and wellbeing. The website, phone line and information pack series give whanau access to information, tools and support, so they can support young people to get the right kind of help when they need it. The Common Ground website also

*"Common Ground is also a fantastic example of government working alongside community organisations to develop an effective solution to the tough issue of youth mental health"* - Hon. Paula Bennett.

Common Ground supporters hope to make a difference, by being a first point of contact for parents, caregivers, siblings and friends to go to, and get the support they need.

## Tui Ora Ltd - Getting Physical!

Sam Heath is the programme co-ordinator at Tui Ora of a physical health outcomes service which offers physical fitness and wellness opportunities for tangata whai ora. The programmes are aimed at improving their physical outcomes such as weight management, improved fitness, smoking reduction, healthy eating and improved sleep. Programmes may include personally tailored gym sessions and activities such as: *Walking groups Swimming Eco therapy Tramps and other Outdoor activities Team sports (softball, netball, soccer etc)* Prior to starting the wellness gym programme Sam will help to arrange

a clearance from a GP and will then work with the client to formulate an individual Wellness Plan. He ensures that the client can work to achieve their goals while making sure that the programme is fun and therefore easy to adhere to.

Sam also offers support for healthy eating and cooking, smoking reduction strategies and stress management. Anyone who requires information or support are welcome to contact Tui Ora and assessment and treatment options will be explained and discussed with them, referrals can be made via your GP or hospital or community services.



For more information, please

contact Sam at Tui Ora Ltd on: 06 759 4064 or 027 277 2327



*Enhancing whānau health and wellbeing*

[www.tuiora.co.nz](http://www.tuiora.co.nz)

Maru Wehi Hauora Complex  
26 Maratahu Street

[reception@tuiora.co.nz](mailto:reception@tuiora.co.nz)

Another  
Like Minds Taranaki  
Project



Supported by the



# WHAT'S ON

# NGĀ KAUPAPA O TE WĀ

Issue 84—Compiled BY people on limited incomes FOR people on limited incomes...

## AUGUST 2014

**Fri 1 Hui-A-Toi—Needle Felting**—Level 1, Puke Ariki Library—10am—12pm. Get crafty with like-minded people and learn new skills. All welcome whatever your experience level and all materials are supplied. No bookings required. **FREE**

**Sat 2 Justice Of The Peace Service Desk**  
Level 1, Puke Ariki Library—10am—12:30. If you need to have your signature witnessed, make a declaration or have originals or copies certified, a Justice of the Peace will be available to help you out, every Tuesday and Saturday. **FREE**

**2 & 3 Te Kupenga Stone Sculpture Open Day**—78 Centennial Drive. Watch stone carving in progress and meet the artists. **FREE**

**Sun 3 Explorer Day—Pot a Plant from Pukeiti**—Pukeiti Rainforest—10am-3pm. Join the garden team for a guided walk and talk through the Pukeiti rainforest. Learn about the native forest eco systems, seedlings and their names. Pot a plant and take it home to watch it grow. **FREE**

**Thu 7 Mental Health Matters - Access Radio 104.4FM**—9:30-10am—An interview with clinical psychologist Dan Goodkind. **FREE**

**Thu 7 Crackerjacks at Bell Block**—Bell Block Library—10am—10:30am. Get the little ones hooked on books. Storytelling and songs finishing up with a simple craft activity. **FREE**

**Fri 8 Govett-Brewster Seniors@Puke Ariki**—Daily News Café, Puke Ariki Library - 10-11:30am. Bookings are essential: 759 6060. **FREE**

**Sat 9 Speaking Workshop for Non-Native English Speakers**—2-4pm—ELP Taranaki Centre (cnr Liardet & Pendarves Streets) If you want to improve the confidence and clarity with which you speak in English then this is a workshop for you. Contact Yuka: Taranaki@englishlanguage.org.nz **FREE** for ELP members otherwise: **\$5**

**Sun 10 Winter Pruning at Tupare**—Tupare Garden, 487 Mangorei Road—2-4pm. Winter pruning

for ornamentals shrubs and climbers such as hydrangeas and camellias. Instructions for good pruning techniques for your favourite floral displays later in the season with hot tips for cool plants. **FREE**

**Wed 13 Poetry Day: Michele Leggott**—Puke Ariki—5:30—6:30pm. Join Michele for a reading from her latest collection of poetry, Heartland. Michele was born in Taranaki and received the 2013 Prime Minister's Award for Literary Achievement in Poetry and was the inaugural New Zealand Poet Laureate (2007—2009). **FREE**

**Sat 16 Home Work: Street Sketching Workshop**—Main Exhibition Gallery, Puke Ariki—1:30—3pm. Home Work artist Brian Gnyp will give a short talk about street sketching methods and then it will be your turn to head out and give it a go. Please bring a sketch pad and pencils. **FREE**

**17 (10am-3pm) & 18 (8:40am-3:30pm) Taranaki Careers Expo**—TSB Stadium. Discover a huge range of career options available to you. **FREE**

**Wed 20 Home Work: Artist Talk and Demonstration with Paul Hutchinson**—Puke Ariki Foyer—6—7pm. Paul discusses and demonstrates his use of unconventional materials and techniques. **FREE**

**Sun 24 Seed Sowing and Soul Testing**—Hollard Garden, **STRATFORD**—2-4pm. Test the PH of your soil and get tips for sprouting robust seeds and what to prepare now for spring and summer. **FREE**

**Mon 25 Understanding Epilepsy Seminar**—Community House 32 Leach Street—1-3pm. **FREE**

### Community Conversations

Join Mayor Andrew Judd, Councillors and NPDC staff to discuss the future of our district. **FREE**

**Tue 5 URENUI** Community Centre 7-8pm

**Mon 11 WAITARA** War Memorial Hall 7-8:30pm

**Tue 26 OAKURA** Hall 7-8pm.

*"What's On" is emailed to almost 300 organisations in Taranaki and sent on to 100s more via their email networks and displayed on many notice boards etc. It has become quite wide-reaching and could be worthwhile for you to consider using it to promote your educational and/or recreation activity – if it is free or \$5 or less.*



Taranaki Kowhaiwhai panel - The Hammerhead shark, Mangopare - 'keep positive, see it through'

## REGULAR SUPPORT GROUPS

**Peer Support Group—STRATFORD**—Second Thursday of each month, 10am-12pm. For people and families with mental health and/or addiction issues. Come and talk, listen and offer each other coping strategies towards recovery. Stratford Community House, 52 Juliet St. For more details phone Mihi at Tui Ora Hawera 06-278-6603 or Kevin at Tui Ora NP 06-759-4064. This month: 14th **GOLD COIN**

**Peer Support Group—HAWERA**—Every 2nd Monday, 10am-12pm. 164 Princes Street. This month: 4th & 18th of August. For people and families with mental health and/or addiction issues. Come and talk, listen and offer each other coping strategies towards recovery. Also a "Coffee Group" every Wed 2 – 3pm. For further details phone Mihi at Tui Ora's Hawera office 06-278-6603 or Kevin at Tui Ora NP 06-759-4064. **GOLD COIN**

**MATES Men's Meeting**—45 Regent St, **HAWERA** on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month 7-9:30pm and at TDIC, 28 Young St **NP** on the 2nd and last Thursday of the month 7-9:30pm. There is also a group aimed at men living with the challenge of mental health issues held on the last Thursday of every month at Progress To Health, 15 Dawson St, **NP** 2-4pm. **FREE**

**Peer Support Group - NEW PLYMOUTH** For people and families/whanau with experience of mental illness. Held fortnightly on a Thursday -10am-12pm. This peer-led group will provide an opportunity to meet with other people who understand and who share similar experiences. For further information please phone Kevin or Bronwen at Tui Ora Ltd on 759 4064. This month: 7th and 21st of August. **FREE**

**Taranaki Touched by Suicide Support Group** Led by experienced group facilitators, you will receive peer support and education, which research has shown to be helpful in overcoming the grief from this type of loss. Meet every third Thursday of the month at 83 Hine Street, 7-9pm. All welcome—any enquiries by texting or calling 021 027 369 35. **FREE**

**Women's Carers Group**—A support group for female carers of people with dementia. St. Mary's Cathedral lounge 10am-12pm held on the last Wednesday of the month. Next one to be held 27th of August. Linda Wilkinson will be talking on the Power of Attorney, wills, legal issues with rest homes etc. **FREE**

**Support Group for Carers & Families of people with dementia—HAWERA** Catholic Church- 1:30pm Wednesday 30th August. The speaker for this month is from Pathways. **FREE**

**Memory Cafés**—An opportunity for people with dementia and their carers to get together, to socialise in a supportive group. Crowded House, 10am every 2nd Wed of the month (13th of Aug) and at Nelson Café, 198 Broadway **STRATFORD** at 10am, every last Friday of the month, next one to be held on the 25th. **FREE**

## REGULAR ACTIVITIES

**Every Tue Active in Age Programme**—TSB Stadium—10am-12pm—Tai Chi session 11-12pm. **\$3**

**Every Tue Migrant Women Meet** - Puke Ariki - 11am-12:30pm, Community Lounge, Level 1. **FREE**

**Every Tue Rotary Club Walking**—Hawera Tower Grounds, **HAWERA**—5:30pm. Walk at your own pace and socialise and get some fresh air at the same time, good for mind and body. **FREE**

**Every Wed Crackerjacks**—Discover it! Puke Ariki. 10:30am –11am. Get children hooked on books! Come along for a crafty and creative storytime for pre-schoolers. **FREE**

**Every Wed Crackerjacks**—Waitara Library- **WAITARA**—10-10:30am. As above. **FREE**

**Every Mon Table Tennis**—St Josephs Scout Hall, Calver Rd.—7:30—9:30pm. This runs from now until the end of October. Casual player **\$2**

**Every Thur E-book Troubleshooting**—Puke Ariki - 9:30-10:30am. Come along and learn how to download free e-books on to your device. **FREE**

**Every Fri Tai Chi**—Stratford War Memorial Facilities Room, Miranda St, **STRATFORD**—9:30-10:30. **\$5**

**Every Fri Whizzy Walkers**—Meet at Plunket House at 10am. A walking group specifically for caregivers who would like a brisk walk with their child and buggy for about an hour. **FREE**

**Every Fri Knit and Natter**—1-3pm—Community House, McLean Street, **WAITARA**. This knitting group is now meeting every Friday and concludes with a cuppa. All are welcome. **FREE**

**Every Sat Mah Jong**—Beach Street Hall, Fitzroy. 1-4pm The small charge per person includes a cup of tea and biscuits and there is a small prize for the hand of the day. Everyone is welcome. For more information phone Betty: 757 5913. **\$3**

**Every Sun New Plymouth Joggers and Walkers** Meet at Bellringer Pavilion at 8am for an hour. All ages—all stages—there is a walking or jogging group for your ability. All welcome. **FREE**

**1st & 3rd Wed Table Games**—1pm—3pm—Community House, McLean Street **WAITARA** Come along for a game of cards or scrabble, and a cuppa to finish up with. **FREE**

**Every Weekend NP Potters**—Te Henui Vicarage—1-4pm. Local potters have their gallery in the historic vicarage which was built in 1846. Call in and have a look at the wonderful works which are available for sale. (No EFTPOS) Tour groups anytime by prior arrangement.

*This space could be used to promote one of your events, please contact Stephanie Mapley at Like Minds Taranaki We are very keen to hear of events from Central, Coastal and South Taranaki - ring us on 0800-454-536 or email us here at Like Minds Taranaki at [mental.health@xtra.co.nz](mailto:mental.health@xtra.co.nz) The next "What's On" will be in late August for September*

## Learn Suicide First Aid



**ASIST**

Learn suicide intervention skills

**2 Day Workshop – New Plymouth**  
Lifeline Aotearoa are offering this 2 day workshop on the 2<sup>nd</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2014.

This is an ASIST programme where you will learn to:

- Recognise suicidal signs through changes in behaviour
- Confidently raise the issue of suicide
- Know what to say and access risk and safety needs
- Know where to access further support and other professional assistance.

Cost: \$380 pp however there are some spaces available with a \$190 partial subsidy if you meet the right criteria. There are some free spaces for whanau, hapu, iwi members where cost is prohibitive for the individual.

Register:

[www.suicideprevention.org.nz](http://www.suicideprevention.org.nz)



## Platform Fair Funding Campaign

Most, if not all NGOs in the Taranaki Mental Health Sector will agree with Marion Blake, CEO of Platform Trust, that we are being "driven into the ground" through inconsistent funding of services, overly bureaucratic contracting systems and additional funding never meeting additional cost increases. On top of that we are continually being asked to provide more services to more people with less resources.

Marion Blake states that, "Only four of the 20 DHBs in NZ consistently pass on the Contribution to Cost Pressure (CCP) that DHBs receive from government to meet inflationary and other increases. On top of that, DHBs often fund NGO mental health and addiction services at a lower rate than their own services—and prices paid vary dramatically across the country." Platform have taken the initiative to launch the 'Fair Funding' campaign to seek an urgent restoration to a sustainable funding path for the mental health and addiction NGO sector. Well done Platform!!!!



## New Op Shop for New WAVES

The New WAVES Op Shop is now up and running and happy to take any donations that you may have.

The shop, which is operating from the basement area of New WAVES at 74 Powderham Street, officially opened early in July. Money raised from the sales go directly into the extensive programmes and services offered by New Waves and the feedback from customers has been very positive.



Photo by Yvette Batten/Fairfax NZ

The shop sells men's, women's and children's clothing, books, toys, kitchenware and bric-a-brac. Op shop hours are Wednesday, Thursday and Friday from 10am – 2pm.



## Mindful Ways - your attention please!

Last year Like Minds Taranaki ran, fortnightly, a series of stories on mental health in the Taranaki Daily News. The brainchild of talented writer Virginia Winder, who was the Manager of Like Minds Taranaki at the time, the series shared stories to foster understanding and openness about mental health. The stories offered tools and tips of ways to wellness either through the story of a mental health expert/clinician or the stigma-challenging story of a Tangata Whaiora.

It was started by Virginia with the aim to:

- Increase the number of Taranaki people who able to talk freely about mental health with friends and family
- Help Tangata Whaiora become more confident to share their stories
- Increase the number of people able to ask for help
- An improvement in understanding about mental illness
- In the hope that the number of people contacting LMT with stories or asking about pathways to wellness would increase.

These stories were widely read by newspaper subscribers and were also shared online via the Taranaki Daily News and Stuff website, our LMT website and also posted on the LMT Facebook page.

At this stage we are after some feedback with the view to restarting this wonderful series which finished earlier in the year so would really appreciate it if you could email us with your opinion on the Mindful Ways stories, whether it is through your own personal experience or if someone has shared with you the impact that the stories had made on their own life.

Your feedback would be most appreciated. Please email:

[mental.health@xtra.co.nz](mailto:mental.health@xtra.co.nz)





**Rainbow Taranaki OPEN NIGHT - Friday 1st August - 5:30pm**

Support, networking and advocacy for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth in Taranaki. Formed by youth to meet the needs of youth, Rainbow Taranaki offers:

- Peer support
- Safe social activities
- Age-appropriate subsets for youth from 13 to 24 years of age
- Mentoring by adult support advisors
- Referral to social agencies for specialist support services
- Facebook chat group for peer support of rural youth

Fortnightly meetings and regular social events, workshops and activities are held in New Plymouth.

This group is resident at New WAVES, 74 Powderham Street

[rainbowtaranaki@gmail.com](mailto:rainbowtaranaki@gmail.com)

Ph: 06 757 9901

**Employment:**

*Taking the first step...*



A 64-page guidebook for jobseekers with health issues.

**Free copies** available from Like Minds Taranaki. 06-759-0966

**Coming Soon on Access Radio...**



**“Mental Health Matters”**

**AUGUST**

Cecily Bull interviews clinical psychologist/ neuropsychologist, Dan Goodkind

**9.30am every Thursday of each month**

**Hawera support group:**

The venue for this group is at Tui Ora Ltd: 164 Princes Street, Hawera  
Held alternate Mondays 10-12 noon  
Next Meetings—Aug 4 & 18  
Contact Mihi 06-278-6603 or Kevin 06-759-4064.

**Stratford support group:**

For people and Families/Whanau with mental health and/or addiction problems. Usually held at the Stratford Community House, 52 Juliet St.

Every 2nd Thursday, 10am-12pm.  
Contact Mihi 06-278-6603 or Kevin 06-759-4064 to check the venue.

This month's meeting: August 14



The Green Prescription (GRx) team are updating their physical activity directory and would like to invite any new programmes and courses to be a part of it so they can refer potential clients.

This allows the GRx team to have better knowledge of what programmes are available to recommend their clients to. If you would like to be in the directory please contact either Gaylene Phillips:

[gaylene@sporttaranaki.org.nz](mailto:gaylene@sporttaranaki.org.nz),

Martin Pugh:

[martinpugh@sporttaranaki.org.nz](mailto:martinpugh@sporttaranaki.org.nz)

or:

Jaimee van Praagh:

[jaimee.vanpraagh@sporttaranaki.org.nz](mailto:jaimee.vanpraagh@sporttaranaki.org.nz).



**LifeLine**  
WE PROMISE TO LISTEN.

**Taranaki**  
0800 543 354

[www.lifeline.co.nz](http://www.lifeline.co.nz)

**Mental Wellness Groups**

Like Minds Taranaki hosts regular support and discussion groups, where you can share your stories and experiences with others who are also on the journey to recovery. Enjoy a friendly, relaxed atmosphere and speak with complete confidentiality.

You can also benefit from an arts groups that allows you to tap into your creative side.

The post-natal group is a non-clinical group offering support with child care available.

**NEW PLYMOUTH GROUP TIMES AND LOCATIONS**

**Discussion Group:**

2nd & 4th Wednesday each month  
**10.30am—12 noon**

Like Minds Taranaki Office  
3rd Floor Brougham House  
50 Devon Street West

**Real Arts Group:**

Every Wednesday  
**1—4pm**

Real TArt Community Gallery  
19 Egmont Street, NP

**Post-natal Support Group:**

1st and 3rd Wednesdays  
**10am-12noon**

of each month  
NP Women's Centre

**For more information contact:**

Like Minds Taranaki 06-759-0966  
NP Women's Centre 06-758-4957

TDHB Peri Natal Team  
06-753-7749

**Thought for the issue:**

*“What good is the warmth of summer without the cold of winter to give it sweetness”*

*- John Steinbeck*



# Technology Addiction

We take it for granted that our rooms will be lit up with the flick of a switch. We don't often stop and think how amazing it is that we can see and hear what's happening on the other side of the world via our televisions.

As the saying goes, "You never miss the water till the well runs dry." This is especially true of our relationship with technology.

It's usually only during a power cut when we're left groping for torches and candles in the darkness, that we realise how truly reliant we are on electricity and the many devices it brings to life.

It doesn't even need to be a full blown power outage; sometimes all it takes is for a computer system to crash and EFTPOS to go down, and you'll see scenes of confusion in the shops. Having a magic card you can swipe to pay for everything is great, when it works...

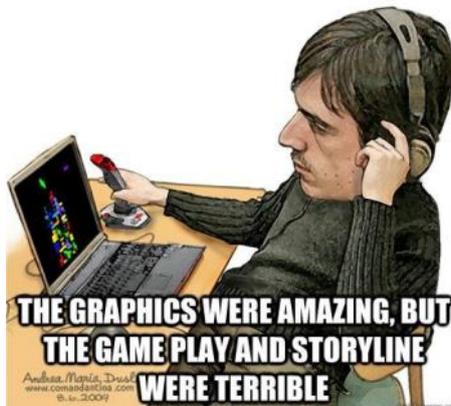
Paper seems to be on the way out, both as currency and as a medium for the written word itself. Why buy a book, when you can use an electronic device like a Kindle and have a whole library's worth of books in a tiny footprint?

Technology has had an impact on everyone's lives in one way or another. It seems that the amount of potential difference it is able to make, be it positive or

negative, is dependent on when a given person is born.

Take myself for example. Born in the late 70's, I'm part of Generation X. The Atari 2600 was the pinnacle of home video gaming consoles at this time, and the days of the internet and smart phones we know now were still far in the future.

## I WENT OUTSIDE ONCE



I grew up alongside much of the technology we have today. I've seen computer graphics go from primitive blobs on the screen, to the almost photorealistic masterpieces we now know.

Technology is an important part of my life, during both my leisure time and while I'm at work. The article you're reading now was written on a computer; to me it feels more natural to type my thoughts out rather than write them down.

I bought a new computer last year, with money I'd saved from quitting smoking. There's a certain element of irony in that; I gave up one addiction to help finance another. There, I said it. I'm addicted to technology.

In my opinion, mine is something of a benign addiction—similar to being addicted to caffeine. I can quite happily go the whole day without sending or receiving a text message, and my Facebook account almost goes untouched.

I'm under no illusion that had I been born later, I'd share the compulsive need to stay up to date and connected with society and friends that many of today's youth exhibit.

Instead, computer gaming is my vice. That, and keeping up with the latest developments in the world via the internet. In fact, my computer is my entertainment hub—I also use it to listen to music and watch movies. Sometimes it's almost like having an electronic pet.

From past experience, when things inevitably go wrong and the time comes for "my precious" to go away to be serviced, things can be a little rough. It can lead to feelings of boredom and stress; I suppose you could even say I experience withdrawal symptoms.

There is much debate about including the diagnosis of "internet addiction" as a condition in psychiatry. In some countries, clinics have already been set up to help curb the habits of those seen to overuse technology.

Is this an overreaction? This remains to be seen. In any case, I know how I'll be keeping up with future developments - on my computer, through the internet...

Tony Spencer

This month's "Korero Mai" and "What's On" are edited by Stephanie Mapley and "Whakaaro Pai" by Tony Spencer— from Like Minds Taranaki. Your news and views are eagerly sought. Like Minds Taranaki, PO Box 5015, New Plymouth, 3rd Floor, Brougham House, 50 Devon Street West, NP, ph. 06-759-0966 [mental.health@xtra.co.nz](mailto:mental.health@xtra.co.nz). [www.likemindstaranaki.org.nz](http://www.likemindstaranaki.org.nz)

September 2014 issue will be distributed in late August. Contributions by Friday, August 15th please.