

Monthly Newsletter

STUDENT ISSUE

AUGUST 2025



Here's what has happened in the last month and what's to come!

Kia ora koutou,

Here-turi-kōkā – August – Août!
And almost the end of this month.

I'm a little bit reflective today and in general at the moment, so instead of my normal debrief about the weather and the cold and how much I dislike winter, I thought I would talk about health! Topical considering where we are and what we do!

I'm thinking about the importance of gratitude for our health. Without wanting to be morbid it can change so quickly. I've just had a sharp reminder this week injuring my back. Back injuries just make you so acutely aware of how you move and the way the whole body is affected! I find myself blaming my age but actually I did something similar 20 years ago – maybe I blamed my age then too!

None of that really has much to do with College, except I'm not there.

Great immersion day on Saturday – thanks to those of you who came and especially to staff who prepared and then gave up a Saturday to join in and support. I really enjoyed the presence of Teresa Hart, a colleague from up north who runs a rongoa Māori practice through the Te Houtaewa Māori Charitable Trust. I love the variety of input and activities that we offer. Please come to the next one if you are able – It will be February/March next year.

Shout out to a staff member: Nixie Manson, our Academic Administrator. Nixie started with us in January and works online from home a lot of the time. It's a treat to see her here on Tuesdays and Fridays, her on-campus days.

Nixie has taken over the role from Vardhana, leaving her free to focus on Moodle. Nixie manages student assessments – tracking that they have been submitted and when they are graded, extensions, organises our moderation, student surveys – which are just about to be released, and prepares documents for the new semester – Course Guidelines. I value the new ideas that she brings and having a fresh perspective.

Looking forward to some warmer weather (I did get the weather in...)

Warm regards,

Robyn Carruthers



Robyn & Teresa from Te Houtaewa Māori Charitable Trust at Immersion Day.

GRAD CHATS KEY TAKEAWAYS - KAYTEE BOYD



1. Master the Basics Before Chasing Complexity

Don't feel pressured to prescribe the most advanced tests or protocols straight away. Success in practice starts with nailing the foundations: sleep, hydration, digestion, movement, and food.

2. Remember – You Are the Medicine: Your presence, ability to listen without rushing in to fix, and the trust you build with clients is often just as therapeutic as the herbs or supplements you prescribe. Hold space, empower your clients, and avoid fostering dependency.

3. Stay Curious & Keep Learning: Real learning begins after graduation. Follow cases, attend conferences, find mentors, and never stop asking “why?”. Curiosity will keep you growing and help you uncover better tools for complex client presentations.

4. Science and Tradition Are Not Enemies: Blend evidence-based testing and pharmacology with herbal traditions, energetics, and intuition. Both streams of knowledge bring value clinical success often comes from integrating them rather than choosing one over the other.

5. Boundaries Protect Your Energy It's easy to over-give when clients are desperate, but protecting your time and wellbeing is essential to longevity in practice. Learn to say no, consider group work to support more people at once, and set clear boundaries around availability.

6. Focus on Being Good, Not Looking Good

The best marketing is clinical results and word of mouth. Early in practice, don't get stuck worrying about logos, branding, or social media. Prioritise getting clients results, being transparent (“I don't know, but I'll find out”), and building trust, your reputation will naturally follow.



2025 Huang Scholarship Recipients

The South Pacific College of Natural Medicine is delighted to announce the recipients of the 2025 Annette Huang Scholarships. These awards honour the legacy of Annette Huang, SPCNM Librarian from 2004–2012, who generously left a bequest to support students in their studies of natural medicine.

Totara Scholarship for Academic Excellence – Antonia Scott
Harakeke Scholarship for Resilience and Perseverance – Marcela Teixeira-Harrison
Kawakawa Scholarship – Te Ara Whakapakari – Vanessa Treloar

We warmly congratulate Antonia, Marcela, and Vanessa on their achievements. These scholarships recognise not only academic dedication, but also resilience, leadership, and contribution to community.

A sincere thank you to all who applied, we are inspired by your journeys and commitment to natural medicine. The Annette Huang Scholarships will continue to be awarded annually.

UPCOMING EVENTS



SPCNM Run/Walk Club

Every Friday on Campus

Join us each Friday at 8:00am for the SPCNM Run/Walk Club. We leave from college at 8:10am and return by 8:50am, making it a 40-minute loop. Whether you prefer running or walking, everyone is welcome, come along for fitness, fresh air, and connection before class!



Student Hub

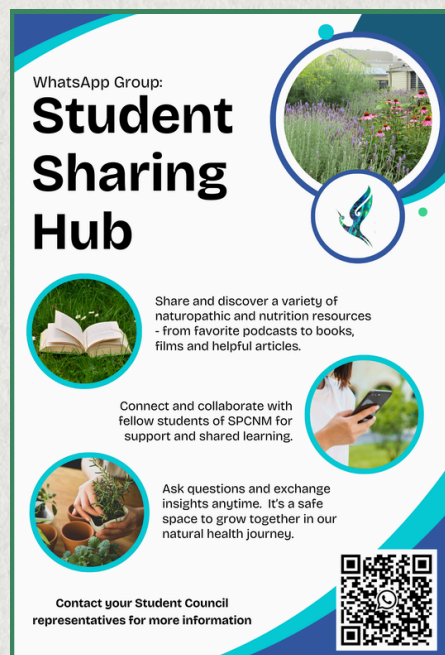
Now Available to Students!

Join the new SPCNM Student Sharing Hub on WhatsApp, a space to connect, share resources, and support each other on the natural health journey.

Pacific Health Inaugural Symposium 2025

August 30 to 31st 2025

A premier two-day event showcasing internationally acclaimed speakers, cutting-edge clinical education, and valuable networking opportunities. Over the course of the weekend, attendees will gain fresh insights into key areas of naturopathic and integrative practice, while connecting with leading voices and like-minded professionals in the industry. Special student pricing is available, with flexible payment plans offered, making it easier than ever to take part. To top it off, every attendee will receive a goodie bag valued at over \$600, adding even more value to this inspiring weekend.



September Grad Chats

3rd September Online 6pm - 7pm

Join us for Grad Chats with Rebekah Paddy, founder of Mother-Well and one of New Zealand's most respected naturopaths in fertility, pregnancy, and family health. With years of clinical experience, teaching, and community education behind her, Rebekah brings practical wisdom and inspiration for graduates ready to step into practice. Whether you're interested in women's health or simply want to hear from someone who's built a career with passion, collaboration, and impact, this is a conversation not to be missed.

@motherwellnz
motherwell.co.nz

Find the Zoom link on Moodle under Graduate Resources.

STUDENT COUNCIL REGIONAL GATHERINGS

Christchurch

At our Canterbury regional gathering, we connected with Christchurch-based Naturopath and Medical Herbalist Michael McCammon, who shared insights from over 30 years of practice. With passions in Iridology, Herbal Medicine, and Homeopathy, Michael inspired us with his reminder to “live, love, and breathe naturopathy” and that true learning begins after graduation. Despite the grey August weather, the atmosphere was warm, uplifting, and a meaningful reminder that together we are stronger.



Tauranga

Meeting fellow SPCNM students and local naturopath Maria made our regional gathering feel deeply meaningful, bringing a real sense of community and connection. We shared our experiences, asked Maria about her journey in practice, and came away inspired and reassured that although study has its challenges, we are not alone, and one day soon we will be naturopaths. Maria encouraged us to trust ourselves and follow our intuition, and the mix of light conversation and deeper insights was a powerful reminder of the value of connection, especially when studying online. Heart full.



Auckland

It was awesome to see everyone outside the classroom, dressed up and socialising at the Viaduct, and even meeting one of our online classmates in person for the first time. Guest speaker Sarita Solvig Blankenburg, Founder and Director of Ayurveda New Zealand, shared her 16+ years of experience as an Ayurvedic Practitioner, including her travels and studies in India, and her own healing journey where she once poured medicated goat's milk on her head for an hour to balance her Pitta dosha. She also introduced Panchakarma, a full-body detox therapy she offers in her clinic, and spoke about the amazing results her patients have achieved. It was a fun and insightful evening, with the chance to connect more deeply with classmates and explore how Ayurvedic principles can be applied to modern health concerns.



Queenstown

Only two of us were able to make it to the regional gathering in Queenstown, but it turned out to be a lovely and meaningful catch-up. We had the chance to sit down for a relaxed cuppa with Wanaka-based naturopath Hanna McLeay, an inspiring SPCNM graduate who now runs her own practice, Nature's Road Naturopathy. Over a hot drink, we chatted about the real-life experiences of being a new graduate in the field, from the rewarding client moments to the challenges of building a practice from the ground up.

GRADUATE SPOTLIGHT - EMILY EWEN

Graduating from SPCNM in 2024 with a BNatMed, Emily has established her own naturopathic practice in Hamilton and also works in a local herbal dispensary.

What inspired you to establish your own clinical practice, and how has the experience shaped you as a practitioner?

Establishing my own clinical practice was inspired by a desire to become part of a healing space within the community here in Hamilton that truly reflects the values of naturopathic medicine, one that prioritises individualised care, connection, and empowerment. I have freedom to practice in a way that honours my values and reflects the science and the art of natural health care, where time, presence, and a holistic lens are central to every consultation. It has been a profound journey of growth, marked by both challenges and rewards. It's taught me to trust my intuition as a practitioner, to be adaptive, and to keep learning, both clinically and personally. It has helped me become more grounded and more confident in the way I hold space for others on their healing journey.

How has working in a herbal dispensary alongside your client consultations enriched your knowledge and confidence as a naturopath?

I feel genuinely grateful to be part of a well-respected and trusted herbal dispensary that plays such an important role in the community. Having direct access to a wide range of herbal tinctures including many natives has significantly deepened my practical understanding of herbal medicine and enhanced the way I tailor formulations for my clients.



Working alongside experienced practitioners has also been invaluable, providing a rich environment for ongoing learning, collaboration, and professional growth.

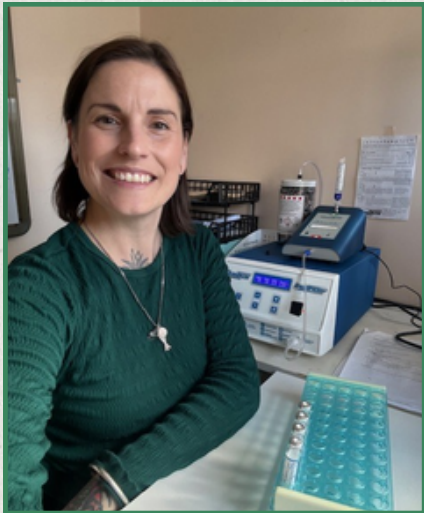
Reflecting on your time at SPCNM, which experiences or skills have proven most valuable in shaping your current practice?

My time at SPCNM provided a really strong foundation in both the science and philosophy of naturopathic medicine. The clinical training, particularly through the Pāua clinic was incredibly valuable, giving me hands-on experience in case-taking, treatment planning, and building therapeutic relationships. It taught me how to think critically, and how to apply traditional wisdom in a modern, evidence-informed context.

Thank you for reading!

What advice would you give to current students who aspire to create a fulfilling career in natural medicine?

Be gentle with yourself and resist the urge to compare your journey to others. Allow yourself the time and space to explore what a career in natural medicine might look like for you, it doesn't have to follow the traditional clinical path. Stay connected with your peers and support networks, ask questions often, and keep your curiosity alive. Most importantly, treat yourself and your journey with kindness and patience.



How do you see your career evolving over the next few years, and what excites you most about the future?

I look forward to dedicating more time to clinical practice, strengthening collaborations with other holistic healthcare practitioners, refining my focus on specific areas of health, and continuing to elevate the role of naturopathic medicine within the broader healthcare community. I'm excited for the future and grateful to be part of such a meaningful vocation.

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