

Monthly Newsletter

STUDENT ISSUE

JULY 2025



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

Kia ora koutou,

Here's our July newsletter and that means Semester 2 is here!

Welcome back, and a warm welcome to our new staff and students – including our new cohort of NZ Certificate students. We're also pleased to welcome two new teaching staff: Choong Kwan, who is teaching Sports Nutrition, and Sam Jeffrey, who is teaching Nutrition 1, both within the Diploma in Holistic Nutrition. Emma Gardiner, who has previously worked in the Clinic Dispensary and supported DDPE, is now teaching Biochemistry of Foods in the degree programme and supervising in clinic.

I love that the College is now offering three programmes! This is the final semester for our Year 3 students, with a strong focus on clinic.

The courses our Nutrition students are taking this semester are especially exciting,

one focused on the microbiome and another on sports nutrition. We're looking forward to hearing how they're going! It's always special to see Certificate students beginning their study journey as well.

Please check The Robyn Report on Moodle under the Student Resources page (just above College Announcements). There's a welcome video there, and I post video updates from time to time. Let me know if there are any topics you'd like me to cover.

I usually give a shout-out to a staff member, but this month it's timely to acknowledge our Board of Directors. The College is owned by an Incorporated Society made up of graduates. We have just held our AGM. Members of the Board are drawn from the Society and from external experts.

The BoD is responsible for the governance of the College (and I report to them).

Our newly elected Chair is Rebecca George, a graduate of the College. Jontel Kiwikiwi is the other Board member from the Incorporated Society. We also have Suzette Major, CE of another tertiary college; Mal Robson, who works in Māori health in Northland; and we welcome back Rachelle Hardie-Neill, who has previously served on the Board. Rachelle brings extensive experience in tertiary education and a financial background. You can view their profiles on the [website](#).

When you graduate, you'll not only become an [Alumni member](#) but also be eligible to join the [Incorporated Society](#), a great opportunity to have a say in the future of the College.

Kia kaha for the end of winter, the days are getting lighter, and it will get warmer soon!

Robyn Carruthers

PAIGE'S FAVOURITE NERVOUS SYSTEM TOOL FOR SEMESTER 2

Vagus Nerve Breath Activation

Vagus nerve breath activation is a brief, focused breathing practice that supports nervous system regulation by stimulating the vagus nerve. This activation helps shift the body into a parasympathetic state, enhancing digestion, improving emotional resilience, and promoting a sense of calm and clarity. It's particularly effective before meals or between busy tasks, helping to reset the system in just a few breaths.

What makes this practice especially useful is its simplicity and built-in feedback: an increase in saliva production. This subtle but reliable sign confirms that the body has moved into a 'rest and digest' state. Easy to remember, quick to implement, and clinically relevant, it's a valuable tool for both personal use and client care, supporting stress recovery, digestive function, and overall nervous system tone in just a few minutes a day.

Directions for Practice

1. Sit comfortably with a relaxed posture.
2. Inhale slowly through your nose to full lung capacity.
3. Hold your breath gently, just long enough to feel a soft flutter or twitch in your diaphragm. Avoid holding to the point of discomfort or gasping.
4. Exhale slowly through your nose, extending the exhale for as long as is comfortable.
5. Repeat for 4–5 breaths. Ideally, practise this before meals and 3–5 times per day.
6. **Look for increased saliva as a sign your vagus nerve has been activated and your body has shifted into a parasympathetic state.**

Tip: Set gentle phone reminders or place notes in visible places on your fridge, laptop, or bathroom mirror to help build consistency.



Podcast of the Month

The MediHerb Podcast: Dr Libby Weaver - Iron Deficiency: Beyond Fatigue

Dr Libby unpacks the far-reaching impacts of iron beyond just energy and fatigue including its role in thyroid function, neurotransmitter synthesis, immune health, and mood regulation.

She also highlights less obvious clinical signs of iron deficiency and offers insights that go beyond standard textbook definitions. A valuable resource for deepening your understanding and refining your clinical lens.



Library book of the month

Healing Adaptogens by Tero Isokauppila

This practitioner-friendly guide explores the clinical use of adaptogenic herbs and mushrooms, including reishi, rhodiola, ashwagandha, and more. Backed by research and written in an accessible format, it's a great resource for understanding how adaptogens support the HPA axis, immune resilience, stress response, and overall vitality. Perfect for students building their herbal dispensary confidence or looking to deepen their knowledge of tonic medicine in modern naturopathic care.

UPCOMING EVENTS



1:1 Graduate and success meetings

Available every Wednesday

Book a free 30-minute 1:1 Graduate Success Meeting with SPCNM College Liaison Paige.

These individual sessions support students and recent graduates in building a successful career in natural medicine and making the most of their qualification.

What we can discuss:

- Career pathways and opportunities in natural medicine
- Finding clarity and confidence in your direction
- Practical steps to transition from study to the workforce
- Continued support to help you thrive in your chosen path

[Book your session here](#)

Te Wiki Hauora Wāhine (Women's Health Week)

August 11th - 17th 2025

Women's Health Week is a nationwide campaign dedicated to raising awareness and supporting the health and wellbeing of women, girls, and gender-diverse people across Aotearoa.

This is a great opportunity to kōrero with your community, share credible health information, and empower others with simple, preventative steps for better long-term health. Whether you're having a chat with whānau, posting online, or running an event – your voice matters.

Check out the resources and themes at www.womenshealthweek.nz and get involved!



August Grad Chats

6th August Online 6pm - 7pm

Join us for Grad Chats with Katie Boyd, founder of The Boyd Clinic and one of Aotearoa's most successful naturopathic practitioners. Katie will share how she built a thriving private practice, what's helped her stay fully booked, and her top insights for building confidence and momentum after graduation. Whether you're preparing to enter the profession or refining your path, this is a valuable opportunity to learn from someone who's built a career with clarity, care, and impact. [@theboydclinic](https://theboydclinic.co.nz) theboydclinic.co.nz

Find the Zoom link on Moodle under Graduate Resources.

SPCNM STUDENT COMPEITION

Plastic Free July at SPCNM – Join the Challenge and Win!

Make a simple swap – and be in to WIN!
Plastic Free July is a global movement encouraging us all to reduce single-use plastics and protect our environment – one small swap at a time. Join SPCNM's campus challenge and go in the draw for some incredible eco prizes!

HOW TO ENTER:

1. Make a plastic-free swap
2. (e.g. use a reusable cup, beeswax wrap, or refill bottle)
3. Take a photo
4. Submit your entry
 - a. Share it to your Instagram story and tag @spcnm.nz,
 - b. OR email your photo to paige.dunlop@spcnm.ac.nz

Each swap = 1 entry. More swaps = more chances to win!



COMPETITION DATES

- Entries open: Wednesday 23 July
- Entries close: Wednesday 6 August
- Winners announced: Friday 8 August

PRIZES TO BE WON

- **1st Prize** – DAZZ Eco-Friendly Cleaning Spray Set
- **2nd Prize** – Ecostore Floral Skin Trio
- **3rd Prize** – DAZZ Foaming Hand Soap Bundle
- **5 x Consolation Prizes** – Ecostore Soap Bar + Soap Saver Bag



STUDENT COUNCIL

We are Recruiting!

We are looking for new members to join our student council team to address student needs, help organise events and promote SPCNM school spirit. If you are keen to join us please email Kelly Billing.

kelly.billing@spcnmstudent.ac.nz



SPCNM Regional Gatherings

Save the Date- Saturday 9th August, 3-6pm

Purpose- To connect with other students, in-person

Hopefully by now you have all heard about this upcoming event. It will go ahead in regions where enough people have expressed interest. Please let us know asap if you are keen to attend. Email Kelly Billing.



Podcast / Book / Film Circle

Sundays 9am- 10am, July 27th, September 7th, October 19th, November 30th

If anyone is interested in forming an online group to discuss books, podcasts and films, with a naturopathic focus, please email Kelly Billing.

Next Student Council Meeting

Next Student Council meeting- Semester 2

Please send any feedback you have to any council members prior to the next meeting

SPCNM Regional Gatherings!

Gatherings have been organised in Auckland, Christchurch, Queenstown and Bay of Plenty.



SOME OF OUR GRADUATES

Shaz Andrew, 2021 Cohort

Shaz blends science and soul in her private naturopathic practice, Natural Healing Company, where she supports clients through a fusion of herbal medicine, nutrition, and mind-body healing. She is also the creative force behind Earth Raised and Wild, a nature-inspired brand that celebrates ancestral wellness and wild living. Alongside her clinical work, Shaz writes health content for HANA, bringing a clear, accessible voice to complex health topics.



Her academic background is both deep and diverse: a Bachelor of Science in Psychology & Human Physiology, a Diploma of Nutrition, and a Master's thesis on Autism & Auditory Evoked Potentials, which continues to inform her interest in neurodiversity and sensory health. You can follow her on Instagram at [@shazandrew.naturopath](https://www.instagram.com/shazandrew.naturopath) or explore her offerings at www.naturalhealingcompany.org.



Melissa Rivard, 2021 Cohort

Founder of WellKind, a Wellington-based naturopathic practice offering support for women navigating hormonal shifts, digestive imbalances, and nervous system dysregulation. With considered branding, a calm and confident tone, and a clearly defined service structure, WellKind reflects a thoughtful translation of naturopathic values into a contemporary practice model.

Melissa's work is grounded in pattern recognition and nervous system-informed care, with three core consultation types designed to deliver depth while avoiding overwhelm. You can learn more at www.wellkind.co.nz or follow her work on Instagram at [@wellkind.co.nz](https://www.instagram.com/wellkind.co.nz).

Andrea McAll, 2022 Cohort

Andrea McAll is a naturopath, medical herbalist, and skincare specialist who has built a practice at the intersection of integrative skin health and personalised natural medicine. She is the founder of Skin Within, a boutique clinic offering bespoke skincare treatments alongside naturopathic consultations. Andrea also consults at The Tonic Room, where she supports clients with skin concerns using a combination of topical and internal strategies.



Her work focuses on conditions such as acne, eczema, and barrier dysfunction, combining herbal medicine, gut-skin insights, and tailored formulations. With a calm and detailed approach, Andrea helps clients address both root causes and visible symptoms. Learn more at www.skinwithin.co.nz or follow her at [@skin.within.nz](https://www.instagram.com/skin.within.nz).

Thank you for reading!

CONTACT PAIGE	NEXT ISSUE
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