

Promoting health through plays at national farmer health forum

VETERAN Australian actor and playwright, Alan Hopgood, is coming to Hamilton to promote health awareness.

The actor will bring two of his health plays, *A Pill, a Pump and a Needle* and *For Better or Worse*, to Hamilton next month as part of the National Centre for Farmer Health (NCFH) Conference, Opening the Gates on Farmer Health.

Mr Hopgood has an extensive resume both as a playwright and as an actor, performing regular roles in *The Flying Doctors*, *Neighbours*, *Bellbird* and *Prisoner* mixed with other writing and acting duties for the film and the stage.

In 2005, Mr Hopgood became a member of the Order of Australia for both his services to the performing arts and his services to the community, raising awareness on men's health issues.

The actor said his play, *A Pill a Pump and a Needle*, was a look at personal stories of living with diabetes and *For Better or Worse* follows his own journey through prostate cancer.

"Men's health became a bit of a crusade

for me. At the time there was nothing around in the field so I guess I became part of a men's health revolution," Mr Hopgood said.

He has now created and delivered eight health-related plays dealing with topics as diverse as geriatric sex and the role of carers.

"There is a wonderful reaction to them," Mr Hopgood said. "There is nothing better than the interaction in the live forums

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– Alan Hopgood.

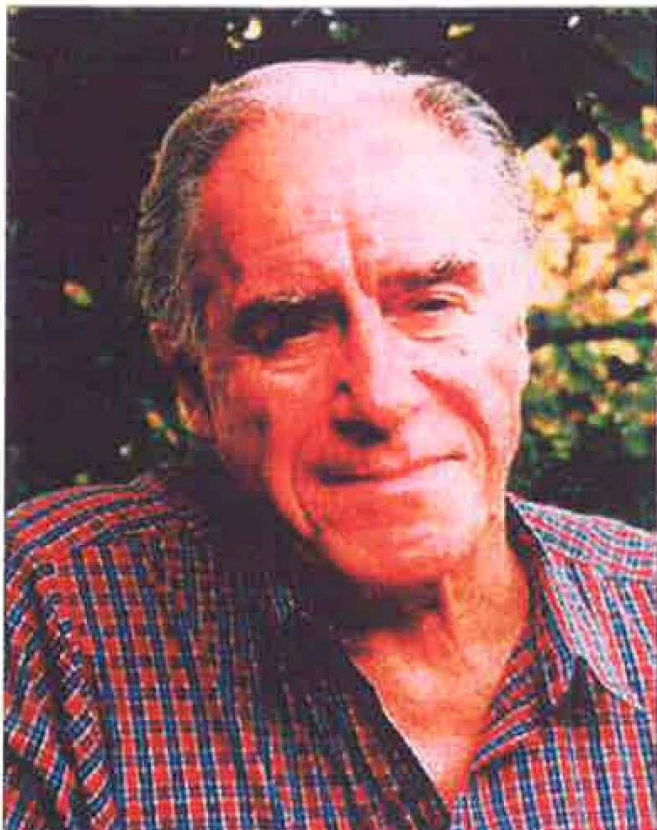
and being able to bring important health topics out into the open in an entertaining way."

The plays will be followed by a forum on each of the topics led by Mr Hopgood and medical professionals, Dr Rob Grenfell and Dr

Richard Grills.

NCFH director, Sue Brumby, said incorporating arts into health awareness was a great way to involve the community in a humorous way about a serious subject.

The performance will be held at the Hamilton PAC on October 12 and tickets cost \$25 each.



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