



Kia ora Friend,

I am very pleased to announce that Summer Wright has accepted the role as Co-convenor for OraTaiao. This means that after three years of keeping the vacancy open, there will be two of us working together to oversee the governance of OraTaiao. I look forward to supporting Summer in this new role. She has already been an important member of our executive. He Manawa tītī. Nau mai, haere mai.

In November we made two submissions, held our Annual General Meeting and welcomed a new executive board. I'd very much like to thank the departing executive for the contribution they have made to OraTaiao, particularly to Richard Jaine, Matthew Jenks and Rebecca Sinclair.

Two important areas of action for the health sector have progressed in the last month. Firstly, our submission on the Pae Ora (Healthy Futures) Bill highlights the critical importance of creating a dedicated sustainability unit to oversee health sector decarbonisation. This will be a key focus in the next 6 months. We have also been in discussion with the Climate Change Commission about establishing a Health Advisory Council in the New Year, something OraTaiao has been advocating strongly for over the last 2 years.

Have a wonderful Christmas and a healthy, peaceful and climate-friendly New Year!

Ngā mihi,
Dermot

December 2021 Newsletter

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Update on OraTaiao activities

OraTaiao welcomes a new Co-convenor!

This month, Summer Wright (Ngāti Maniapoto) will take the role of Co-convenor alongside Dr Dermot Coffey. Summer has been on the executive board of OraTaiao for the past two years. She is a member of OraTaiao's Māori caucus, a member of the food working group, and has been OraTaiao's Organisational Membership Officer for the last year. She is a dietitian in training with the vision of increasing cohesiveness between environmental health and nutrition practice. She has a background in Māori health, and is passionate about food sovereignty and climate justice. Welcome Summer!



OraTaiao Co-convenor Summer Wright

Government 15-year emissions reduction plan must make health gains

Last month the government consulted on its emissions reduction plan to reduce emissions over the 15 next years from transport, energy, waste, f-gases, building, construction, agriculture and forestry. OraTaiao found that health benefits and impacts were missing in the plan. We prepared a [submission](#) and a [submission guide](#) highlighting the potential to recoup costs of emissions reducing policies with significant health gains. We also stressed the need to address agricultural sources of climate gas emissions, and asked for strengthening of Te Ao Māori.

“Our government needs to understand we can make huge health gains from well designed cuts to climate pollution,” said Dr Coffey. “This plan is Aotearoa’s next best chance to invest in our country, invest in health and secure net zero resilience much sooner.”

- OraTaiao: [Submission on Emissions Reduction Plan](#)

Thank you to OraTaiao members Dr Matthew Jenks, Liz Springford, Ingrid Mulder and Dr James Hamill for their contribution. Kia ora tātou!



OraTaiao asks for a healthy emissions reduction plan.

From left to right: Rebecca Sinclair, RN Exec and College of Nurses; Tommy Hayes, Medical Student; Jamie Hosking PHMS; Anne Sears PHMS; David Sinclair PHMS

New health care system must include sustainability

OraTaiao made a [submission](#) on the Pae Ora (Healthy Futures) Bill asking for a climate change mitigation and adaptation work programme and dedicated sustainability unit in the new health system, and for the bill to give effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi. The bill sets out some high-level direction about the structures of the new health system, which include disestablishment of all district health boards, as well as new structures which include for the first time, commissioning for health services by a new Māori health authority.

“As one of the largest single public sector source of climate emissions, the health sector requires urgent decarbonisation. Given the majority of these emissions derive from procured services and products, and with the complex organisational interlinks within the sector a dedicated sustainability unit is essential to oversee the process.”

- OraTaiao: [Submission on Pae Ora \(Healthy Futures\) Bill](#)

Thank you to OraTaiao member Kaaren Mathias for preparing the first draft of this submission.

Let's make better use of outdoor space in urban areas

OraTaiao sent a letter to all local councils recommending an increase in footpath and cycling space and in outdoor dining and hospitality opportunities as we move into the next stage of our COVID response. We highlighted the infection risk reduction and commercial benefits of this, and strongly advised that the space for commercial activities be repurposed from road and roadside parking spaces rather than footpaths. We are pleased to see [Wellington City Council](#) and Christchurch City Council putting some of these recommendations into action.



Image source: www.metromag.co.nz/food/food-cafes/fount-coffee-co-a-container-cafe-pouring-serious-brewns-in-a-mt-edn-car-park

Welcoming and farewelling some of our Executive

This year we say farewell to some long standing executive including Richard Jaine who has been OraTaiao's Secretary for 12 years, and Matthew Jenks who has been on the executive for 5 years and led many submissions, helped OraTaiao's campaigns for MAS to divest from fossil fuels, and for mandated carbon footprint reporting for DHBs. Dr Jenks remains our liaison with Sustainable Healthcare Aotearoa (previously known as SHSNN) and will take on the role of Membership Officer. We also farewell Rebecca Sinclair, Dr Andy Phillips, Bala Nair, Anna Rumbold, Siobhan Trevellyan and Greer Smit.

Romelli Rodriguez-Jolly has volunteered to take the role of Secretary, and we welcome new executives Ingrid Mulder (who is already active in our food group), Corbin Whanga, Dr Tess Luff, Dougal Thorburn and we welcome back Liz Springford who has already helped with submissions this year. Liz will take on the role of Policy Development Coordinator. For more information see [here](#).

In case you missed our Annual General Meeting you can find the Co-convenor's annual report, and OraTaiao's annual financial statement [here](#).

The next executive board meeting will be held at 7.30pm on Thursday 27 January.

Welcome new members!

We are pleased to welcome individual members and also two new organisational members Mercy Radiology, and The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists. We look forward to working with you!

National happenings

Putting a price on agricultural pollution

Nearly half of Aotearoa – NZ's greenhouse gas emissions come from agriculture and yet the sector is still not accountable for climate pollution. This month, OraTaiao signed an open letter rejecting the recent He Waka Eke Noa proposals, and instead asked for agriculture to be brought into the Emissions Trading Scheme. For more info on He Waka Eke Noa see this Newsroom article:

- Newsroom: [“Farm emissions pricing plan won't cut emissions”](#)

New Zealand food system needs an ‘overhaul’

According to OraTaiao member Dr Alex Macmillan, “We have hunger in New Zealand — one in five children live in houses, which can't afford to buy healthy food.” Dr Macmillan told the ODT she believed farmers had a “strong desire” to reduce world hunger but currently, New Zealand was not doing that. “What we are doing is selling protein to people who don't need it.”

- Otago Daily Times: [“Call for complete overhaul of New Zealand food system”](#)



Image source: Kelly Sikkema, Unsplash

Could we get rid of cars?

Urban Planner Timothy Welch points out that while electric cars reduce emissions, “More cars in cities mean more space taken for parking, less room and more danger for active modes and less efficient public transport. Plugging in a car doesn't stop it from being a lethal machine or causing congestion.”

Activists at the International Climate Change Conference COP26 protested the focus on electric cars which took central stage rather than active and public transport.

- RNZ: "[Opinion: Electric cars alone won't save the planet](#)"
- The Guardian: "[“What if we just gave up cars?”: Cop26 leaders urged to dream big](#)"



A separated bike lane intersection in Vancouver (Photo by Paul Krueger)

Public Health Survey

This survey is a joint collaboration between the Public Health Association and the Ministry of Health, aimed at those who work or volunteer in Public Health in Aotearoa. It aims to gather data on the Public Health workforce for use in workforce planning. Closes 21 Dec 2021.

Contact PHsurvey@health.govt.nz

Public Health Association and Ministry of Health: [Public Health Workforce survey](#)

International news

Climate Action Tracker provides updates post-COP26

The Climate Action Tracker (CAT) updated its ratings of New Zealand's contribution to reducing global emissions, and says that NZ has used "misleading accounting" methods raising questions of the environmental integrity of the target. See [here](#).

CAT also released a global update in November saying, "If all governments achieved their current 2030 pledges, we'll get 2.4°C of warming by 2100, and if nobody did anything more than what they're doing today (our policies & action pathway), we're heading to 2.7°C." See [here](#).

Understanding disability rights can help us build a more climate-resilient future

A new Lancet article looks at the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and how lived experiences of disability can deepen understanding of features of climate-resilient development.

The authors write, "Embracing human diversity by recognising dignity and capacity is required to counter othering and marginalisation, ensure human wellbeing and planetary

health, and achieve socially just development. As such, solidarity is not just a normative goal, but also a means of building climate-resilient development.”

- The Lancet Planetary Health: "[On CRDPs and CRPD: why the rights of people with disabilities are crucial for understanding climate-resilient development pathways](#)"

Ideas for greening healthcare

Croakey Health Media provide an in-depth article looking at ideas on how to achieve a net zero health system, including interviews with participants from the “Greening the HealthCare Sector Forum” held last month.

- Croakey Health Media: "[To achieve a net zero health system, what will it take?](#)"

Good news, events, books

Sustainable Christmas gifts

Looking for sustainable gift ideas? Check out this article in Consumer with ideas from ZeroWaste and WasteMINZ. See [here](#).



Image source: www.consumer.org.nz/articles/sustainable-christmas-gift-ideas

Newsletter written by Julia Crosfield.

OraTaiao: New Zealand Climate and Health Council
<http://www.orataiao.org.nz/>

OraTaiao: New Zealand Climate and Health Council comprises health professionals in Aotearoa/New Zealand calling for urgent and fair climate action - with real health gains now and for our future.