



Kia ora Friend --

The recent election has been interesting, to say the least. We saw unprecedented outcomes for Te Pāti Māori and The Green Party, who have the best climate health policies of the bunch, but the drift to the right means there will be a period of uncertainty and adaptation for all climate advocacy groups.

With the expected 'coalition of climate chaos', we are intending to pivot our energy towards the flaxroots of climate advocacy, as we push for evidence-based action in Government, and build alliances with the Opposition.

Any attempts to sideline the Climate Change Commission, disestablish Te Aka Whai Ora or challenge Te Tiriti o Waitangi will be met with fierce resistance from OraTaiao.

The 'Health COP' is starting later this month. This 28th iteration of COP will be the first to feature a health day. Our advocacy, with our international partners in [CAHA](#), [GCHA](#) and [CAN International](#), will be to ensure this does not focus solely on adaptation of health systems to climate impacts, but to bring the enormous health benefits from well-designed climate action to the fore.

Climate Justice Taranaki rose up to commemorate Parihaka and draw attention to the connections between health, te taiao, and climate justice. We hope to see these connections inform Aotearoa's climate response to a much larger degree in the coming years.

This month OraTaiao will host our 2023 AGM on November 30. We hope to see you there, and will welcome our guest speaker, Rob Campbell for some insights into the health system and how best to direct our advocacy and resources.

Ngā mihi nui

Dermot and Summer,
Co-convenors, OraTaiao: NZ Climate & Health Council

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1. Update on OraTaiao activities

OraTaiao's strategy in the new political environment

New Zealand has voted. The newly elected government comprises parties with no “good” policies for climate and health, according to the [2023 OraTaiao Climate and Health Scorecard](#), and with more policies rated as “harmful” than not. What is to be done now?

OraTaiao is taking stock of our strategy in the new political environment, through internal discussion and consultation with key stakeholders. We will be adjusting our approach, to maximise our effectiveness in achieving our two [overarching strategic priorities](#):

1. Advocate for a much faster just transition to a low emissions, climate-resilient Aotearoa, that:
 - fairly contributes to limiting global warming within 1.5°C as a good global citizen; and
 - grows health and gains equity in ways that are fast, fair, and founded on tikanga and Te Tiriti o Waitangi.
2. Add our unique climate-health and equity expertise to the work for climate justice, and improve Aotearoa's contribution to global climate action.

Over the coming months and years, OraTaiao will:

- Continue making submissions to central government agencies, however with Ministers likely to be less receptive to our views this won't be such a high priority
- Find common ground with individual government MPs and parties on specific issues, and frame our evidence-based submissions in terms they can accept
- Focus more on networking with health professional organisations and influencing health sector leaders
- Ramp up our advocacy at the local government level
- Connect more closely with our members in the regions and with flaxroots climate campaigners
- Build strong relationships with opposition parties, and get them to commit to OraTaiao's positions ahead of a future change of government
- Critique government policy in the public sphere when needed, including over co-governance, with more media releases, op-eds and interviews
- Campaign against the disestablishment of Te Aka Whai Ora and any referendum on Te Tiriti o Waitangi

We are mindful that OraTaiao was formed under a National-led government in 2009 and was still able to successfully advocate for healthy climate action, such as creation of an extensive network of urban cycle ways.

And we are in a much stronger place now, with a larger membership that includes influential professional groups. We are also rowing with the tide. Public concern about climate change is much higher. In a [2009 poll](#), 43 percent of New Zealanders agreed that climate change is a serious or very serious concern. [Today](#), 80 percent are worried about the impacts of climate change that are already being seen in New Zealand. Horizon Research [reports](#), “Climate change is now seen as the most important environmental issue facing New Zealand, surpassing freshwater issues for the first time since surveys into environmental perceptions started in 2000.”

For climate and health, it is onward and upward.

OraTaiao in the media

As the political environment was shifting last month, OraTaiao was already moving to critique government policy – both outgoing and incoming – with op-eds and interviews.

Writing in *NZ Doctor Rata Aotearoa*, Co-convenor Dermot Coffey called out both Chrises for using “recycling” in the first TVNZ leaders’ debate as an example of how they are personally taking on the climate challenge. “As worthy as recycling is”, said Dermot, “it’s a well-worn truism that anyone using it as an example of an effective climate-mitigation tool is woefully ignorant of how important it actually is.” Yet he also pointed to hopeful signs, such as an ongoing drop in our national emissions from 2019 and international pressure on exporters like Fonterra, and encouraged readers to keep working for the health (and health economic) benefits from well-designed climate action. We are grateful to *NZ Doctor* for removing the paywall on Dermot’s op-ed and encourage OraTaiao members to [subscribe](#) for more great content like this.

Over at Australia’s *Croakey Health Media*, meanwhile, Co-convenors Dermot Coffey and Summer Wright (Ngāti Maniapoto) both responded to interview requests, criticising the shameless racism on display during the election campaign, the side-lining of the climate and the lack of focus on public health. Read more from Dermot and Summer below.

- NZ Doctor: ["Throwing fuel at the bonfire no substitute for climate action"](#)
- Croakey: ["Health fares poorly in Aotearoa/New Zealand election campaign"](#)

Join us at the OraTaiao AGM

OraTaiao will hold its 2023 Annual General Meeting at 7.30pm on Thursday 30 November. All members are warmly invited. As well as the usual AGM business and election of Officers, we are delighted to have Rob Campbell as guest speaker.

Rob needs little introduction. He has over 40 years of experience in board governance in private, public and social organisations. The last government made him a Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit for services to governance then sacked him from his roles as Chair of Te Whatu Ora and Environmental Protection Authority. Rob continues to think that

health and the environment are linked and badly governed. Join us on 30 November to hear Rob's insights, at [this Zoom link](#).



Rob Campbell

CNZM | Photo: [DPMC](#)

2. National happenings

Where now for climate and health policy?

Rumours are swirling as we write about just where the axe is going to fall on current government policies. With confidential coalition negotiations still taking place, some likely attacks in the health and climate space can nonetheless be seen. Identifying early where attacks are likely to come enables health and climate advocates to prepare our response.

RNZ has analysed where National, ACT and NZ First have had disagreements, and where they agree. One area where the three parties are in accord is the purchase of international carbon credits to help meet New Zealand's commitments under the Paris Agreement. All three parties expressed disagreement with the outgoing government's plan. *RNZ* commented, "It will be difficult to meet the international target of halving net emissions by 2030 without looking overseas, without bold new climate policies." Bold new climate policies is OraTaiao's preferred option, too, but ACT has a different idea – renege on the 2030 target.

Another area of likely agreement is methane emissions, which need to be cut by 10 percent by 2030 and 24-47 percent by 2050. National has pledged to "review" these targets and is likely to find little disagreement. One climate policy not mentioned by *RNZ* is the ban on new offshore oil and gas exploration, imposed by the Labour-led government in 2018. Greenpeace Aotearoa is already gathering names of people who "pledge to do everything

we can to resist the oil and gas industry if the New Zealand government overturns the ban”, and has over 10,000 signatures so far.

In the health space, virtually certain to face the axe is Te Aka Whai Ora. Māori health providers and [Health Coalition Aotearoa](#), which represents 45 health-related NGOs and 75 individual public health academics and professionals, has already called on all parties to retain Te Aka Whai Ora as a Māori-led, independent Crown agency advocating for and commissioning services and policies to improve the health of Māori and address unacceptable inequities and institutional racism.

OraTaiao will work with health professional bodies and grassroots campaigners to defend – and extend – the gains made through these climate and health policies. We encourage our members to do the same.

- RNZ: [“Coalition of climate chaos? Where National, ACT and NZ First differ on emissions”](#)
- Greenpeace Aotearoa: [“Open letter to the oil industry”](#)
- Stuff: [“‘Stop playing party politics with our people's health’ - National's plans to scrap Te Aka Whai Ora worry Māori health providers”](#)

NZ College of Public Health Medicine – ‘Priority one: climate changes’

As part of OraTaiao's renewed focus on networking with health professional organisations, we would like give a shout out to NZCPHM and their latest policy statement. Hot off the press last month, [Health for Everyone | O Taāou Hauora](#) outlines the four most important public health priorities for Aotearoa New Zealand and the steps needed to achieve them. Priority one is “Stabilise climate changes with decisive mitigation, optimise healthy adaptation and ensure healthy environments.” NZCPHM have produced a comprehensive set of policy actions which should guide decision-making for public health. And they've produced a downloadable [one-page infographic summary](#), which would look great on the noticeboard in any health setting.

Health For Everyone | Ō Tātou Hauora

He Ara ki te Tihi o Pae Ora (a pathway to the pinnacle of healthy futures)

INVESTING IN PUBLIC HEALTH MAKES SENSE

Public health approaches boost the health & well-being of all New Zealanders

- Public health programmes protect natural, social, physical and cultural environments, reduce harm to people and communities and support communities to build their own health-promoting environments.

Investing in public health is value for money

- Spending on public health programmes is an investment, reduces demands on health care services and improves quality of life for individuals and communities.
- Public health interventions are cost-effective and help improve health outcomes over the short to long term. Investing \$1 in public health interventions delivers up to \$14.30 in health benefits.

ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE



Climate change is the biggest threat to the health and wellbeing of people and communities in Aotearoa New Zealand, in both the short and long term.

Aotearoa New Zealand's climate actions must accelerate so that we fairly contribute to the global efforts to limit planetary heating to within the humanly adaptable 1.5 degrees Celsius. We must act decisively to rapidly mitigate climate change impacts in our country and ensure health outcomes are prioritised.

THE NZCPHM CALLS FOR ACTION TO

- Stabilise climate changes with decisive rapid mitigation and optimise health adaptation
- Create healthy and health promoting urban environments
 - Ensure safe indoor and outdoor air quality
 - Protect and improve the quality of freshwater
 - Provide for safe, secure and healthy housing
 - Reduce the threat of anti-microbial resistance.

ACHIEVE PAE ORA



A future-focussed, long-term governance approach will be needed to fulfil the purpose of the Pae Ora (Healthy Futures) Act 2022. This should:

- Centre the health system on te Tiriti o Waitangi, including through support for Te Aka Whai Ora
- Achieve health equity for Māori, Pacific Peoples and other priority populations,
- Ensure good health for all tamariki and rangatahi, whānau and communities.

THE NZCPHM CALLS FOR ACTION TO

- Optimise the first 1000 days of life
 - Eliminate child poverty
- Ensure high childhood immunisation coverage to protect all communities
- Achieve good mental health and wellbeing
 - Eliminate inequity in Rheumatic Fever
 - Attain good oral health for everyone.

STOP HEALTH HARM



Tobacco, alcohol and unhealthy food environments cause harm to our people. Together they are responsible for the preventable loss of over 370,000 healthy life years in Aotearoa New Zealand, every year. This increases costs in the health care sector and impacts on national productivity and community wellbeing.

THE NZCPHM CALLS FOR ACTION TO

- Make the vision of Smokefree Aotearoa a reality by 2025
 - Change legislation to cut alcohol harm
- Stop the harm from unhealthy food environments.

INVEST IN THE HEALTH SYSTEM



Ongoing investment in the publicly funded health system is needed to deliver better health outcomes for all. This includes investment in workforce planning and development, evidence-based health services planning and implementation, infrastructure and building programmes, equipment upgrades, and funding mechanisms.

THE NZCPHM CALLS FOR ACTION TO

- Invest in the health workforce
- Continue to grow public health infrastructure
- Address misinformation & disinformation
- Use technology wisely to improve health outcomes.

WHO ARE WE?



The NZCPHM represents the medical speciality of public health medicine in New Zealand.

Public health medicine is defined as the branch of medicine concerned with the epidemiological analysis of the health and health care of populations and population groups. It involves the assessment of population health and health care needs, the development of policy and strategy, health promotion, the control and prevention of disease, and the organisation of services.

Public health is focussed on achieving health equity across ethnic, socioeconomic, age, and cultural groups, and promoting environments in which everyone can be healthy.

For further information, see our Health for Everyone - Ō Tātou Hauora document, as well as the other policies available on our website www.nzcpmh.org.nz

Polishing a cowpat

“Fonterra's had the squeeze from its biggest customers including Nestlé and Danone to reduce its carbon footprint and is now taking steps to slash its emissions. At the moment 86 percent of the dairy giant's emissions come from on the farm, and today the country's biggest emitter announced it's targeting a reduction of 30 percent from 2018 levels by 2030.”

This is how *1News* reported the publication of Fonterra's [Climate Roadmap](#) and [Voluntary Climate Disclosure Report](#) on 9 November. Fonterra's publications attracted widespread coverage. But most media outlets overlooked a line in the [company's media release](#), which clarified that it was not an actual emissions reduction target, but an “intensity reduction” target of 30 percent “per tonne.”

Not to be fooled was *RNZ*, which said, “it is an intensity target - not an overall reduction target - so the company has not actually committed to reducing the heating it is causing, only the heating per kilo of product. Setting an intensity-based target goes against the recommendations of a high level UN expert group.” *Stuff* also picked up on this point, reporting, “Fonterra’s actual footprint is unlikely to fall 30% – because the goal relates to each litre of milk. If its suppliers meet the bar, but produce more milk, that would result in a smaller impact on the co-op’s carbon total.” Fonterra will achieve a quarter of its intensity target by doing nothing, because historical liabilities for deforestation related to dairy conversions will automatically come off the company's balance sheet by 2030, under emissions accounting rules.

Rather than support the shift to a diet rich in plant-based foods and with fewer animal source foods, which is needed for both improved health and the environment according to the [EAT-Lancet Commission](#), Fonterra is greenwashing its high-volume, high emission model of unsustainable production for export. The glowing praise for the company in the media has concealed, as Greenpeace Aotearoa put it, that it's “just polishing a turd.”

- *RNZ*: “[Fonterra adopts emissions 'intensity' reduction target](#)”
- *Stuff*: “[Fonterra pledges to make milk production 30% greener by 2030](#)”
- Greenpeace Aotearoa: “[Fonterra’s new Scope 3 Emissions Reduction roadmap just polishing a turd](#)”

Rising up for climate justice in Taranaki

On 5 November 1881, colonial troops invaded Parihaka, after 22 years of bloody war across the country for land, resources and power. The day, known ever since as Te Pāhua (Invasion Day), was marked this year by blockades of the Whareroa Fonterra Dairy factory, the Kapuni Ballance fertiliser factory and the Todd Energy gas plant.

“Te tangata tōmua, te whenua tōmuri”, said Climate Justice Taranaki spokesperson and Parihaka Papakāinga Trust chairperson Tuhi-Ao Bailey (Ngāti Mutunga, Te Āti Awa and Taranaki). “Today in 1881, our tupuna put their bodies on the line to protect our whenua, as we are doing again here now. We need to protect not just our whenua but to protect the entire planet.

“We organised this process to highlight how climate change is connected to colonisation and the oil and gas, the dairy industry, the fertiliser industry companies are direct profiteers and polluters that arose from the confiscation of Māori lands to export resources to Europe to feed the people there.

“We want those in our wider community to see that there is a much healthier and happier way to live that does not destroy our planet, if we ditch fossil fuels and dairy and give land back for reforestation and communities.”

Climate Justice Taranaki is promising to keep up direct action. In the new political environment, with a government less receptive to evidence-based submissions and corporate greenwashing on the rise, growing flaxroots actions like these becomes more important for securing a safe climate and healthy environments.

- Te Āo Māori News: [“Activists block big polluters on Parihaka Day”](#)
- Waatea News: [“Agribusiness and energy in Taranaki climate blockade”](#)



Whareroa
Fonterra Dairy factory blockade | Photo: [Climate Justice Taranaki](#)

Liberate the lane in 2024

People in Tāmaki Makaurau have been promised a fully walkable and bikeable harbour crossing since even before the Harbour Bridge was built. Though several ideas have been discussed, planned and cancelled, they still do not have a way to get across Te Waitematā.

OraTaiao Board member Michael Brenndorfer is a Nurse Practitioner who commutes regularly across the harbour bridge to work on the North Shore several times per week. “Finally having the ability to cycle to work would be a hugely positive improvement to connect the North Shore with the rest of the city, in a way that reduces our impact on the climate while increasing the health of the population. Climate change will have drastic impacts on human health, but positive intervention such as improving active transport infrastructure not only reduces carbon emissions, it also improves health and wellbeing.”

OraTaiao is pleased to promote Bike Auckland’s “Liberate the Lane” crowd funding campaign to keep the pressure on Waka Kotahi to reallocate one of the eight lanes on the Harbour Bridge to walking, cycling and wheeling.

- Bike Auckland: "[Help Bike Auckland share the vision for a more joyous, inclusive, and climate-friendly Auckland Harbour Bridge](#)"

3. International news

The COP clock is ticking

"Absolutely gobsmackingly bananas." This is how Dr Zeke Hausfather of the Berkeley Earth climate data project described global temperature measurements released last month. September 2023 was the hottest ever recorded – 1.8°C warmer than pre-industrial levels – and it followed the hottest August ever recorded and the hottest July. With little over a month remaining, "We can say with near certainty that 2023 will be the warmest year on record, and is currently 1.43C above the pre-industrial average," says Samantha Burgess, the deputy director of the Copernicus Climate Change Service.

This news comes as [new research](#) published in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* shows that warming beyond 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels will be devastating for human health across the planet – especially for older adults and young people. Dr Camilla Kingdon, the president of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, has issued a stark warning: "Climate change poses an existential risk to the health and wellbeing of all children."

Against this backdrop, the global health community is working strenuously to bolster global efforts ahead of the COP28 climate summit in Dubai at the end of this month. For the first time in the history of these annual United Nations climate negotiations, health is officially on the agenda. Last month, over 200 world-leading health journals came together to simultaneously publish an editorial calling on the UN, political leaders and health professionals to recognise that joint action is essential for planetary and human health, stressing how, "Indigenous peoples' approaches to land and sea management have a particularly important role."

Meeting in Sydney at the end of October, the conference of the World Organisation of Family Doctors launched an open letter to governments attending COP28, signed by 40 professional groups – including OraTaiao – representing three million healthcare professionals.

High level health ministry representatives from over 40 countries are already lining up to attend COP28. OraTaiao [wrote to Foreign Affairs Minister Nanaia Mahuta](#) in August, strongly recommending that New Zealand's COP28 delegation include dedicated expertise from members who have experience in public and planetary health and the presence of one of our health ministers. Sadly, she rejected our call.

- The Guardian: "['Gobsmackingly bananas': scientists stunned by planet's record September heat](#)"
- The Guardian: "[2023 on track to be the hottest year on record, say scientists](#)"
- Climate & Capitalism: "[Above 1.5°C, heat and humidity can be deadly for billions](#)"

- The Guardian: “[Children at ‘existential risk’ from climate crisis, UK’s top paediatrician says](#)”
- BMJ (et al.): “[Time to treat the climate and nature crisis as one indivisible global health emergency](#)”
- Royal Australian College of GPs: “[Doctors send climate change message ahead of crucial UN conference](#)”



WONCA

delegates launch open letter | Photo: [RACGP](#)

Overcoming the commercial interests behind harmful car dependence

“We know what a transport system that is fair and healthy for people and the planet looks like, and we understand the pathways to get there. Yet despite collective endeavours, progress is insufficient. We need to focus our efforts on understanding how commercial interests are holding the current system in place.”

Charting the most effective research and advocacy direction to tackle these commercial interests is the focus of a new article by OraTaiao co-founder Dr Alex Macmillan and Associate Professor Caroline Shaw, both of University of Otago University, which was published last month in *The BMJ*.

“We now need a shift in health research and action to deal with the powerful roadblocks to change”, they say. Three strategies are proposed. Firstly, “We need to use recent frameworks and methods already common in alcohol and tobacco research to understand how the transport sector is influencing population and planetary health and health equity.” “Secondly, we should count the harms of perpetuating the current system.” “Finally, we need enduring alliances between transport and health.”

“Common cause can, and should, be built between civil society health groups, such as asthma and cancer societies and climate and active travel advocacy groups”, they write, “as well as aligned transport sector groups and businesses, with a view to rebalancing whose voice is heard in transport policy making.”

- The BMJ: [“Overcoming resistance and rebalancing power: shifting gears for cross sectoral collaboration on transport and climate change”](#)

‘Indigenous ways of knowing & being must be central to climate responses’

“As health professionals we are taught that the first step in diagnosing and managing medical problems is to take a history. Similarly, in order truly to understand and tackle the health impacts of the climate crisis, we need to take a proper history—one that goes beyond the presenting complaint and seeks to reveal the antecedents or root causes.”

OraTaiao co-founder Dr Rhys Jones (Ngāti Kahungunu) has done this in an opinion piece in *The BMJ* last month. “A detailed history”, he writes, “allows us to identify colonialism as a fundamental driver of the climate crisis (and myriad other ecological crises). Its associated capitalist systems are also responsible for modern health crises, including powerful commercial interests promoting products that are harmful to population health and acting to block or delay critical public health action.”

“Indigenous ways of knowing and being must be central to climate responses. Critical actions include re-establishing the authority of Indigenous natural law, recognising the rights of nature, providing for Indigenous self-determination, and honouring Indigenous rights agreements.

“The recommended treatment regimen involves deep processes of decolonisation and transforming social, cultural, political, and economic systems according to the original instructions.”

- The BMJ: [“To tackle the climate crisis, we need to transform systems according to ancestral original instructions”](#)

4. Good news, interesting links, books

Emissions down, down south

Murihiku Southland’s greenhouse gas emissions have fallen 14.8 percent in the past five years, according to [a new report](#) from regional development agency Great South. The rate of decline is increasing too, with over half the reduction occurring since 2021.

The report says the overall reduction in livestock numbers was the most significant factor in reducing emissions (highlighting how Fonterra could really reduce its carbon footprint). There are 45,000 fewer dairy cattle and almost half a million fewer sheep in the region, as some farmers decided to plant tress while others had reduced stock intensity to improve their production outputs. Emissions from stationary energy are also down, with 91 of Southland’s 189 coal-powered boilers converted to predominantly electricity and wood biomass-fired boilers. Great South wants much bigger emissions reductions and is urging all decision makers to support its strategy for [Net Zero Southland 2050](#). Big ups for down there!

- Stuff: “[Fewer sheep and dairy cattle equals less greenhouse gases in Southland, report says](#)”

War is also a war on the climate

Climate activists usually focus on the world’s biggest polluters, from fossil fuel companies, to the meat industry and industrial farming. Yet there’s a lesser known climate culprit that’s often forgotten – the military.

[According to Neta Crawford](#), Montague Burton Chair in International Relations at the University of Oxford, the US Department of Defense is the world’s single largest greenhouse gas emitter. If all of the world’s militaries were a country they’d be the fourth largest emitter across the globe. With the loss of life and access to healthcare in conflict zones occupying our minds today, we hope you agree that this episode of *The Stream on Al Jazeera* from a few months back is an interesting link.

- Al Jazeera: “[Are militaries driving the climate crisis?](#)”



This newsletter was written by Grant Brookes.

OraTaiao: New Zealand Climate and Health Council

<https://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.