



Kia ora Friend,

This month we are focusing on COP26, the United Nations Climate Change Conference, which begins in Glasgow at the end of this month. We support an NZ delegation attending the conference, but are asking that they avail of the opportunity to make a much stronger commitment to reduce NZ's emissions. This needs to put health at the centre of our response and take account of both our historical emissions and our privileged status as a rich country. COVID continues to disrupt international travel, and the inequitable access to vaccines worldwide means that many poorer countries will be unable to travel to Glasgow. We must acknowledge our responsibilities as a leading Pacific country and ensure that they are given fair representation at the conference.

The health sector reforms within Aotearoa are slowly gathering pace, and will be a key focus for 2022. We strongly recommend that all healthcare practitioners, students and organisations continue to advocate strongly that a dedicated sustainability unit be embedded within both Health New Zealand and the Māori Health Authority at the outset, in order to oversee decarbonisation and other sustainability improvements. This is a relatively simple measure that has been extremely successful in the NHS England, but must be interwoven into the developing structure of both new health departments.

Finally, we are always delighted to hear from members who would be interested in getting involved in submission development or other work (see below). We will also be shortly putting out a call for anyone interested in joining our Executive Board- look out for this in the weeks before our AGM at the end of November.

Ngā mihi nui, Dermot Coffey,  
Co-convenor, OraTaiao: NZ Climate and Health Council

# October 2021 Newsletter

## Contents:

**Update on OraTaiao activities**  
**National happenings**  
**International news**  
**Good news, interesting links, books**

## Update on OraTaiao activities

### Human health must guide international climate change negotiations - COP26

OraTaiao is recommending that Aotearoa commits to making a much bigger reduction in national greenhouse gas emissions so we do our fair share globally, and that human health be the major principle guiding Aotearoa's negotiations at the UN climate change conference COP26 which takes place in Glasgow, UK, from 31 October to 12 November.

- See [OraTaiao's submission to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade](#)
- See a [joint letter to heads of state and delegations attending COP26](#) signed by OraTaiao.



**UN CLIMATE  
CHANGE  
CONFERENCE  
UK 2021**

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ITALY

### OraTaiao supports reducing free units to climate polluting industries in the Emissions Trading Scheme

OraTaiao made a submission to government, on the industrial allocation of units in the Emissions Trading Scheme, supporting all steps to reduce the allocation of free units to industry as these represent a government subsidy of climate pollution by industry and are not consistent with the rapid decarbonization required to address the climate crisis.

- OraTaiao Submission on [“Reforming industrial allocation in the New Zealand Emissions Trading scheme – Consultation document”](#)

Thank you to Dr Matthew Jenks for preparing this submission.

### **Exec news**

A huge welcome back to Julia Crosfield as OraTaiao's coordinator, and thank you to Cathy Kern for filling in from May-August 2021.

Congratulations to exec board member Summer Wright for winning in the [QING innovation track "Climate Adaptation in Food Systems"](#).

And for all those in lockdown see a [message of encouragement](#) from exec board member Rebecca Sinclair.



### **COVID-19 Health Heroes**

Executive board member Rebecca Sinclair.  
Photo from Waitemata DHB.

### **SNSNN changes its name, and more sustainable healthcare news**

The Sustainable Health Sector National Network (SHSNN) has changed its name to Sustainable Healthcare Aotearoa (SHA). Other important news is that the network has been working with the transition unit at the Ministry of Health to incorporate healthcare sustainability and climate change mitigation and adaptation into the Health NZ reforms - watch this space! In a presentation at the most recent meeting of SHA, representatives from Pharmac outlined their work on developing a sustainable procurement framework.

### **Welcome new members!**

We are delighted to welcome our new individual members and a new organisational member: the Midwifery and Employee Representation and Advisory Service (MERAS).

MERAS Organiser Karen Gray told us, "I am keen to ensure that the future generations have a world that enhances their health. I see so much waste within our hospitals which adds to the pollution of our precious world. Supporting and protecting physiological birth is a way midwives contribute to the health of generations to come. Bringing together the collective energies of health professionals united by a shared vision provides a strong voice

to promote a healthy and sustainable future.”



### **Are you available to help with making submissions to government?**

A big part of OraTaiao’s mahi is making submissions to government and these are largely done by volunteers. If you are available to help, then please let us know. This month, we seek assistance with the following consultations:

- [Land Transport \(Clean Vehicles\) Amendment Bill 2021](#)  
Submissions close Thursday 4 November 2021
- [Managing our wetlands](#)  
Submissions close Tuesday 27 October 2021. Submission will be led by Summer Wright. If you can help please contact her on [info@orataiao.org.nz](mailto:info@orataiao.org.nz)

If you have any time to help write or review one of these submissions please let us know!



Photo from <https://www.orc.govt.nz>

## **National happenings**

### **Will Christchurch be part of zero emissions solution?**

Christchurch leaders are considering signing up to the Race to Zero climate initiative which encompasses more than 730 cities worldwide.

- Stuff news: ["Climate change agreement may lead to 'zero emission zones' in Christchurch"](#)

### **Wellington surgeon calls for change in surgical practices to reduce emissions**

Ophthalmologist Dr Jesse Gale who operates in Wellington Hospital has measured the impact of the most commonly performed surgery, and shows that sterilising and re-using surgical equipment could reduce the health sector's carbon emissions.

- Stuff: [Surgical waste requires culture shift for climate goals - eye surgeon](#)



Photo from Stuff news

### **Climate change and equity central to September's NZMJ articles**

Some important articles in the current NZ Medical Journal – see:

- NZMJ Digest: ["Designing a healthy response to climate change"](#) with OraTaiao Co-convenor Dr Dermot Coffey.
- NZ Medical Journal (subscriber only): ["Iti noa ana he pito mata / from a withered tree a flower blooms: healthy and equitable climate policy in NZ"](#) with OraTaiao founders Dr Alex Macmillan and Dr Rhys Jones.
- NZ Medical Journal (subscriber only): ["New Zealand's Climate Change Commission report: the critical need to address the missing health co-benefits of reducing emissions"](#)

### **Climate Change Minister comes under criticism for planning NZ delegation to COP26**

The Minister for Climate Change James Shaw has been targeted about plans for taking an NZ delegation to COP26, the UN Climate Change Conference which takes place in Glasgow, UK. However, COP26 is not being held virtually and it is essential that NZ shows up and makes a stronger commitment. Read more about the conference [here](#).

- Newsroom: ["Manufactured outrage over Shaw's Glasgow trip"](#)

## **International news**



### **Over 200 health journals urge climate action to tackle “catastrophic harm”**

Health journals worldwide have published a joint editorial urging wealthy nations to keep average global temperature increases below 1.5°C, to halt the destruction of nature, and protect health, “In particular, countries that have disproportionately created the environmental crisis must do more to support low and middle income countries to build cleaner, healthier, and more resilient societies.” The editors ask governments to make fundamental changes to how our societies and economies are organised and how we live.

- BMJ editorial: ["Call for emergency action to limit global temperature increases, restore biodiversity, and protect health"](#)



### **Climate vulnerable Pacific islands need increased climate finance**

A Pacific forum held ahead of COP26 asked for increased climate finance to protect those most vulnerable to climate change.

- RNZ: ["Pacific Forum prepares for COP26"](#)

### **Call for contributions a the People’s Health Hearing - COP26 -November**

PHM Environment and Health circle is co-organising an upcoming event, the [People’s Health Hearing](#), due to take place online in early November during the COP26. They are calling for contributions for this health hearing.

The hearing will be a one-day event and online space that bears witness to the public/collective health impacts of extractive industries & provides a space to connect to people’s struggles and set out a vision for intersectional, transformative climate justice. They are hoping to use the event as a centre for movement building which can be continued after the hearing.



### **US and EU pledge to cut methane emissions and call on other countries to join**

The United States and European Union are pledging to cut methane emissions by at least 30 percent by the end of the decade and they are asking other countries to join a methane pledge. According to Scientific American if the initiative is successful it, “could go a long way toward blunting the impact of the planet-warming gas and curbing the worst effects of climate change.” This could be a wake-up call to NZ which is a high methane emitter, but there have been no announcements so far.

- Scientific American: [“U.S. and E.U. Pledge to Cut Methane Emissions, but Obstacles Abound”](#)
- Washington Post: [“U.S., Europe plan joint push to cut methane — and convince other nations to follow suit”](#)

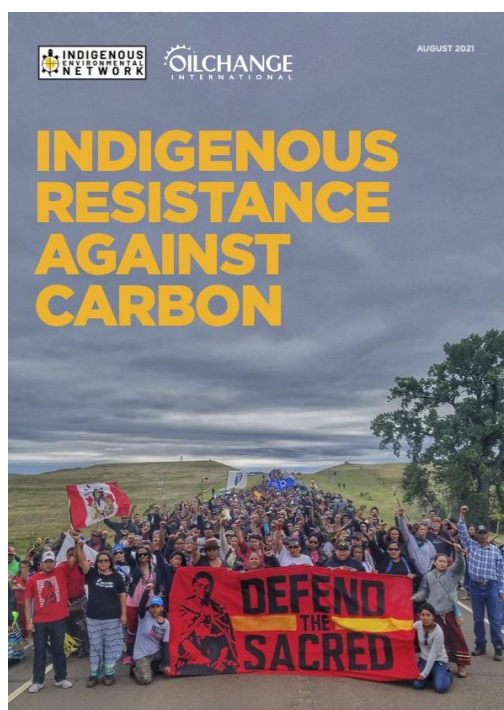


Photo by Jenny Hill on Unsplash

### **Indigenous resistance is helping reduce greenhouse gas emissions in US and Canada**

Indigenous resistance against fossil fuel projects in North America is having a big effect in

delaying or stopping greenhouse gas pollution in the region. See a [report by the Indigenous Environmental Network and Oil Change International](#).



### **Climate change affecting mental health of young people**

“Climate change is causing distress, anger and other negative emotions in children and young people worldwide, a survey of thousands of 16- to 25-year-olds has found.”

- Nature: [“Young people’s climate anxiety revealed in landmark survey”](#)

### **How do health professionals view the risks of climate change?**

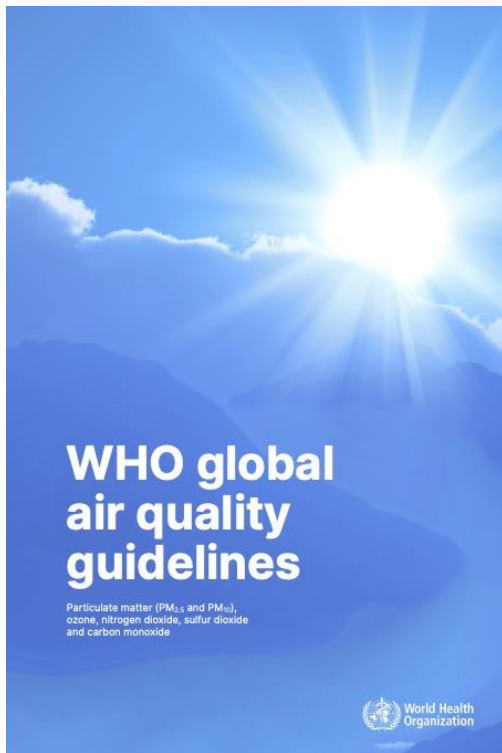
Insights gained from a survey of Australian health professionals show that many Australian health professionals agree the health sector should lead the way on climate action; and seven in ten respondents indicated that climate change is already having a moderate to great impact on public health in Australia.

- Climate and Health Alliance: [“Real, Urgent & Now: Insights from health professionals on climate and health in Australia”](#)

### **World Health Organisation releases new air quality guidelines**

The WHO has developed new air quality guideline levels which aim to save lives. According to the WHO, air pollution is one of the biggest environmental threats to human health, alongside climate change. Improving air quality can enhance climate change mitigation efforts, while reducing emissions will in turn improve air quality. See WHO press release [here](#).





## Good news, interesting links, books

### Getting Started with climate solution: A Guide for Nurses

This [guide](#) offers practical suggestions to help nurses reduce their climate impact, advocate and inspire others to act. It was created by the Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments, and Climate for Health.



Photo from "Getting Started with climate solution: A Guide for Nurses"

### Climate Impact Checkup: Carbon footprint tool for healthcare released

The [Climate Impact Checkup](#), developed by Healthcare Without Harm, aims to help health facilities calculate and track their greenhouse gas emissions. The tool calculates the carbon footprint from data collected on energy, transport, asthma inhalers, waste and gases relevant to the sector.

### Upcoming sustainable health care conferences:

- [CleanMed Europe](#), 29 November – 3 December, online. This is a leading European conference on sustainable healthcare.
- [Greening the Healthcare Sector Forum](#) - 30 Nov 2021, Brisbane and Online. This year's theme is 'Working towards a net zero emissions, climate resilient, equitable and environmentally sustainable healthcare sector: ensuring good health for all'.



### Webinars from Doctors for the Environment Australia

Watch some [webinars](#) organised by Doctors for the Environment Australia. Topics so far have included “Mental Health in a Time of Climate Crisis” and “Women’s Health and Climate Change”.



**UN Food Systems Summit 2021 is available on demand**

This first ever UN food systems summit was held in New York in September, and can be watched on-demand [here](#).

**TVNZ OnDemand Milk & Money**

Journalist Baz Macdonald travels the country, exploring the impact of the dairy industry on our environment, health, and community, and asking the question, what does sustainable dairy look like in Aotearoa? Find out more [here](#).

Newsletter written by Julia Crosfield.

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.