



Kia ora Friend,

The end of winter is a traditional time for climate advocacy work to increase as we approach the bigger end-of-year international climate conferences, and this year is no different. This year more than ever, the impacts of climate change are finally coming to public and political consciousness as we see prolonged droughts in Europe, massive floods in Pakistan, and closer to home the devastating rainfall event at the top of the South Island.

This has added a particular importance to Aotearoa's first National Adaptation Plan published earlier this month. Like much of the Government's climate-related output, it has some worthy elements, but fundamentally does not go far enough or fast enough in answering the critical questions. It unfortunately continues the extremely slow incorporation of health and wellbeing into our national response.

This month OraTaiao will begin a series of regular online talks on various aspects of climate change and are delighted to welcome Alex Dyer of Cycle Wellington on the 14th of September to start these. The other major area of climate action in September are the local elections. Please do due diligence on the candidates and voting process, ask candidates about their plans for climate action, get those votes in and talk about your preferred candidates to family and friends!

Ngā mihi nui

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

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1. Update on OraTaiao activities

A new strategic plan

OraTaiao is pleased to present our [Strategic Plan 2022-24](#). It's hot off the press, after being approved by the Executive Board last month. We would like to thank all the members who participated in workshopping, drafting and feeding back on the earlier versions.

While our Values/Whanonga Pono and Organisational Vision/ Whāinga remain the same, the new Strategic Plan updates OraTaiao's Mission Statement/Aronga, refines our Overarching strategic priorities/Ngā Whakaarotau and sets fresh Objectives/Ngā Hoaketanga. The new plan has a stronger focus on connecting with our members. And in accordance with the maxim to “be the change you want to see in the world”, it introduces a new commitment to enact Te Tiriti o Waitangi within OraTaiao, as well as in our external advocacy.

This plan will guide OraTaiao's work over the next two years in achieving our vision of “Healthy Climate, Healthy People – Āhuarangi Ora, Tangata Ora.”

A makeover for the website

Revitalising our digital face is the first item of business in our new Strategic Plan which has been completed. Launched on 1 August by OraTaiao Secretary and web designer Romelli Rodriguez-Jolly, the updated OraTaiao website brings our latest content to the front, streamlines key information for our audiences and presents it all in a contemporary, attractive interface. We hope it will encourage even greater engagement with OraTaiao by members and stakeholders. If you haven't paid us a visit recently, come and [take a look](#).

A health focus for the Climate Change Commission

Helping in the establishment of a Health Advisory Group for the Climate Change Commission is one the Major campaigns/Hāpaingia Matua in our new Strategic Plan 2022-24. This work follows an approach by the Commission earlier in the year. Details are under wraps for now, pending approval by the Commission. But in the two meetings held so far, OraTaiao has been advocating for a body with a diverse composition. We are keen for it to avoid a purely medical focus and to ensure that it's not dominated by older Pākehā who tend to have more ability to participate in advisory groups – especially when participation is entirely voluntary. We hope to have more details to share before the end of 2022.

Welcome to new members!

We are delighted to welcome more new members. Having surpassed 900 earlier this year, individual membership of OraTaiao continues to grow. And in an exciting new development, we welcome the first Primary Health Organisation to become an organisational member. Pegasus Health PHO in Waitaha Canterbury signed our Joint Call for Action in July and has followed this up by joining OraTaiao. The actions they are undertaking for climate and health are described in the latest issue of their *Pegasus 2025 Newsletter*. The article, which also features OraTaiao Co-convenor Dermot Coffey, can be read [here](#). We are always happy to receive membership inquiries from more health providers.

PEGASUS HEALTH SIGNS ORATAIAO CLIMATE CHANGE AND HEALTH CALL FOR ACTION

Pegasus Health is pleased to announce that we have signed the OraTaiao Health Professional's Joint Call for Action on Climate Change and Health.

OraTaiao is a climate response group, who advocate for a health-focused Te Tiriti o Waitangi-based climate response that will achieve international and ethical obligations to keep global heating to less than 1.5 degrees celsius above pre-industrial levels. They recognise that climate change is the biggest public health threat of the 21st century.

Pegasus Health signing the OraTaiao Climate Change and Health Call for Action is a significant milestone.

"Having Pegasus Health as the first Primary Health Organisation (PHO) to sign, is a major step in strengthening our collective voice and in bringing

OraTaiao is encouraging all health bodies and individuals to join OraTaiao and support the Joint Call for Action.

"Our voice is what gives us strength, and we should use our privileged position as health workers to advocate for a healthier world," says Dermot.

Anna says being a big PHO it is important that we set a positive path for primary health and do what we can to reduce our carbon footprint and be proactive in this area.

While healthcare is responsible for only 4% of Aotearoa New Zealand's overall climate emissions, OraTaiao strongly believe in addressing areas where the most rapid gains can be made.

"Switching from metered-dose inhalers to dry-powder inhalers is an example of something that is often overlooked, it minimises the use of gases like nitrous oxide. Most of the emissions in primary care are generated in dental clinics."

August *Pegasus 2025 Newsletter*

Kicking off the 'OraTaiao Climate Action Kōrero'

A key item of business in our new Strategic Plan 2022-24 is to offer new opportunities for member engagement through regular forums. So starting this month, we are launching the OraTaiao Climate Action Kōrero series. These hour-long webinars will each feature an expert speaker who introduces a topic, followed by discussion. We'd love to see you at our first webinar at **7.30pm on Thursday, 14 September**, with Alex Dyer of [Cycle Wellington](#) talking about the opportunities of rethinking and transforming how we move around. Please RSVP to attend at [this link](#). After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the Kōrero.

2. National happenings

National Adaptation Plan... The good, the bad & the ugly

The Government's first National Adaptation Plan was published at the start of August. It mentions the need for health sector resilience, for climate change to be a priority for all Government work and for an equity focus. But it's light on detail about who pays for adaptation. And it doesn't prioritise health and wellbeing, or consider that adaptation work can also drive emissions reductions. OraTaiao Co-convenor Dr Dermot Coffey spoke with TVNZ *Breakfast* and *NZ Doctor* about the good, the bad and the ugly of the plan.

- TVNZ: [New Zealand's First National Adaptation Plan](#)
- NZ Doctor: "[Adaptation plan leaves health out of loop – for now](#)" (login required)



Dr Dermot Coffey on TVNZ *Breakfast*

Decarbonising the health sector

The health sector is the largest source of carbon emissions in the public sector. At Te Whatu Ora Southern, a whopping 58.6 percent of those emissions come from coal burnt at Dunedin and Invercargill hospitals. As reported in this *Newsroom* article, Dr Matt Jenks and Dr Dermot Coffey of OraTaiao are pushing for a phase-out of coal boilers at our hospitals.

- Newsroom: "[Hospitals' slow coal switch – 'Health is the largest carbon emitter in public sector'](#)"

Waka Kotahi is Reshaping Streets

The Minister of Transport is proposing changes to legislation to make it easier for local councils to make street changes to support public transport, active travel and "placemaking" (like streetscapes with public seating, trees, and art). New Zealand Climate Action Network, which OraTaiao belongs to, is encouraging people to make a submission to Waka Kotahi ([here](#)) in support. OraTaiao's recently released policy statement contains some relevant tips.

- OraTaiao: [Active Transportation Policy Statement](#)



Photo by [Dan Freeman](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Intergenerational Climate Strike – 23 September

Youth-led climate protests are back this month, with locally organised actions as part of a Global Climate Strike on 23 September. Events have so far been announced for [Ōtautahi Christchurch](#) and [Tāmaki Makaurau](#), with more expected. OraTaiao will be there.

Vote Climate in the local elections

The 2022 local elections are just around the corner. A broad coalition of unions, climate action, public transport, walking groups and cycling groups have come together to encourage our local politicians to focus on climate action. The “Vote Climate” coalition will be asking all candidates whether they support more frequent public transport services, more affordable public transport, investment in infrastructure to make cycling and walking safer and easier and more inter-city and regional public transport. OraTaiao hasn't formally joined the coalition, but will be sharing their information. Keep an eye out for news [here](#).

3. International news

Lancet Planetary Health: “Time to implement planetary health promises”

The August issue of *Lancet Planetary Health* features an overview of the current state of global climate talks. The picture it paints is stark. The 26th Conference of Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (“COP26”), held in Glasgow last year, generated a renewed sense of momentum for the promises of the Paris Agreement. This was due in part to the a record number of health professionals advocating on the side lines of the talks.

Six months on – amid the invasion of Ukraine, escalating food and energy crises, continuing pandemic reverberations and a constant barrage of extreme weather events – countries (including New Zealand) are struggling to deliver on their promises. “The Paris Agreement is hanging on for dear life”, it concludes. “Will the health community help resuscitate it?”

- Lancet Planetary Health: [“Climate negotiations – time to implement planetary health promises”](#)

Project Drawdown: “Reasons to be optimistic”

Founded in 2014, Project Drawdown is a US-based nonprofit organisation working to provide practical solutions to global warming. Executive Director Dr Jonathan Foley recently spoke with Jesse Mulligan at *RNZ* about efforts currently being made. Much work needs to be done in agriculture, he says. “In agriculture, the big culprits are mainly deforestation, still number one on that list, especially in places like Brazil and Indonesia. But second would be ruminant agriculture, the critters that burp methane, like sheep, and cattle, and you have quite a few sheep in New Zealand.” But in contrast to the overview in *Lancet Planetary Health*, his interview focuses mainly on emerging reasons for quiet optimism. “It's not game over”, he said. “it's game on.”

- *RNZ*: [“Green shoots – Reasons to be optimistic on emissions”](#)

Institute for Health Transformation: 'Mental health and climate change'

Have you ever felt stressed, hopeless or worried about the future when you think of climate change? You are not alone! The impacts of climate change on mental health have not been explored as much as other health impacts. But a series of recent journal articles out of Deakin University in Australia is showing that young people (18-24 years) in particular are vulnerable to climate anxiety and related mental health problems. Hasini Gunasiri blogs about her team's published research in this area, and how to support young people's mental health.

- Deakin Institute for Health Transformation blog: [“Understanding young people experiencing climate anxiety”](#)



Photo by [Zac Durant](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Global snippets

The United Nations General Assembly has voted overwhelmingly to declare the ability to live in “a clean, healthy and sustainable environment” a universal human right. As reported [here](#), it also called on countries, companies and international organisations to scale up efforts to turn that into reality.

US President Joe Biden signed the oddly-named Inflation Reduction Act into law last month, enacting the largest and most consequential US climate legislation to date. [Analysis](#) of the omnibus bill shared by the Global Climate and Health Alliance (GCHA) found that it could save up to 3,900 lives in 2030 through lower particulate emissions. However, the law will also drive new oil and gas drilling in national parks and it isn't enough to meet the country's Nationally Determined Contribution under the Paris Agreement.

The Global Climate and Health Alliance is also [calling on](#) health professionals and organisations to support the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative. Like the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, this proposed Treaty aims to be an evidence-based international agreement to control a category of substances well-known to be harmful to human health. GCHA's goal is to gather as many supporting signatures as possible by early September. OraTaiao has signed and we encourage you to do likewise as individual signatories.

4. Good news, interesting links, books

CAHA is having healthy conversations

The Climate and Health Alliance (CAHA), an Australia-based network of health professionals and organisations (including OraTaiao), has begun a series of monthly “Healthy Conversation” webinars. The third in the series, on *Becoming a sustainable healthcare champion*, was held on 30 August and featured clinical and non-clinical leaders at different levels of the health system in Australia. A recording is available to watch [here](#).

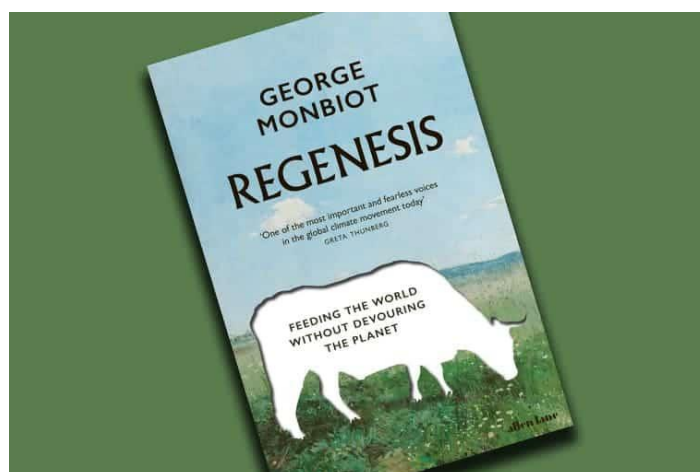
The next webinar on 19 September will illustrate the effective community-led solutions that are being implemented by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Then on 7 October,

CAHA is co-hosting a day-long forum, “Greening the healthcare sector.” Tickets for the forum are available to members of OraTaiao at the discounted price of AUD\$40. For more information and to register for these events, go [here](#) for “Healthy conversation” and [here](#) for the forum.

'Feeding the world without devouring the planet'

“Campaigners, chefs and food writers rail against 'intensive farming'. But the problem isn't the adjective. It's the noun.” So begins the blurb for *Regenesi*s, a new book by *Guardian* columnist and environmental campaigner George Monbiot. All around the world, industrial food systems are not only accelerating climate change, they're also wiping out habitats, contaminating waterways and polluting oceans, while failing to support healthy diets and leaving millions unfed. But as the subtitle of the book implies, there is another way. We are capable of “feeding the world without devouring the planet.” For a taste of Monbiot's recipe for change, here's a review of the book:

- The Conversation: [“Our current methods of food production are unsustainable”](#)



*Regenesi*s by George Monbiot

Auckland Climate Festival

Kicking off on 1 October, the Auckland Climate Festival is returning for a second year, aiming to bring the city together to accelerate climate action and secure a safe and just future for all. The organisers have chosen a theme, “Ancestor, Me”, to encourage people to think deeply about our place in the world, take us out of short term thinking, and place us in a greater story. They have produced an initial programme of events (available [here](#)), while inviting groups to add events of their own. OraTaiao is hoping to be on the list!

This newsletter was written by Grant Brookes.

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.