



Kia ora Friend --

Though the year is still new, the realm of climate and health have remained eventful. Severe storms and flooding battering Te Ika a Māui continue to be a solemn expression of the critical importance of climate action to protect planetary and human wellbeing. With lives and homes lost, the immediate stress must be on support and recovery for those affected, but we – and our politicians – need to maintain a clear awareness that without a just, equitable and healthy transition to a climate-friendly and resilient Aotearoa, these events will become overwhelmingly frequent.

With Te Rā o Waitangi recently commemorated, we get an opportunity to reflect on the importance of Te Tiriti o Waitangi as a living document in Aotearoa, and to acknowledge the repeated violations of it by the Crown, and to use this as motivation to make it a real, central part of our climate response. Waitangi was an apt time to complete a submission on the reforms of Resource Management in Aotearoa. While it fails to enact Te Tiriti in its current form, there is still momentous opportunity to rehabilitate ecosystems through genuine co-governance.

With numerous productive opportunities on the 2023 horizon, OraTaiao is particularly looking forward to this year's biennial Sustainable Healthcare and Climate Health Conference, to be held from July 5-6 in Te Whanganui-a-Tara. We will also be restarting our regular Climate Kōrero Zooms on March 16, with a report back from representatives who attended COP27. As discussed below, Climate Change in Aotearoa in 2023 is going to be even more political than usual. This is the time of year when councils consult on their annual budgets – consider making a submission, or even better, an in-person deposition, to your local council to ask for healthy climate action.

Ngā mihi nui

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

February 2023 Newsletter

Contents:

1. Update on OraTaiao activities
2. National happenings
3. International news
4. Good news, interesting links, books

1. Update on OraTaiao activities

Welcome to new members

As 2023 unfolds, OraTaiao continues to grow. Welcome to the new members who have joined us in December and January. Nau mai! Piki mai! We are especially excited to welcome our eighteenth organisational member. The Association of Salaried Medical Specialists Toi Mata Hauora represents over five thousand senior salaried doctors and dentists – many of whom have already been active in OraTaiao in an individual capacity. Together we will rise to the escalating challenges facing climate and health. Mā pango, mā whero, ka oti te mahi.



[Article](#) by ASMS member and former OraTaiao Board member, Dr Russell Tregonning.

Meetings with Te Whatu Ora

Following on from the series of meetings with the Climate Change Commission He Pou a Rangi reported in our [December Newsletter](#), OraTaiao representatives are now engaging with Te Whatu Ora (TWO).

In the week before Christmas, Co-convenors Summer Wright and Dr Dermot Coffey and Coordinator Grant Brookes held an initial meeting with TWO Chair Rob Campbell. Rob reported the setting up of a new board sustainability committee. There was agreement on the need to bring in strong voices from the health sector and clinical expertise. OraTaiao will follow up on an invitation to meet with this committee, based on a shared commitment to building a healthy society in a healthy environment through Tiriti-based solutions.

This month, Dermot was part of a group from RNZCGP who met with Rob Burrell, Clinical Lead in the Sustainability Unit. A campaign to lower the use of metered-dose inhalers will be starting soon, with prescribing data being used as a monthly reminder (an approach which has worked with desflurane in anaesthetic departments). OraTaiao will encourage our organisational members and wider non-healthcare networks to support the campaign, and to maybe design some graphics to help – email coordinator@orataiao.org.nz if you're interested!

Finally, OraTaiao executive members Liz Springford and Silvia Purdie have been invited to a workshop hosted by the TWO Climate Change Working Group to develop Climate Change Action Plans for New Zealand's healthcare services. These plans stem from the National Adaptation Plan launched by Climate Change Minister James Shaw in August, which included an objective that, "The health sector is prepared and can support vulnerable communities affected by climate change."

Thanks are due to OraTaiao associate member Vicktoria Blake for helping to set up these opportunities.

Adding climate justice to the Formulary

The New Zealand Hospital Pharmacy Association Te Kāhui Whakarite Rongoā Hōhipera o Aotearoa is a not-for-profit voluntary member organisation which represents the views of and advocates for hospital pharmacy staff. At their recent Annual Conference in Tāmaki Makaurau, OraTaiao Co-convenor Summer Wright (Ngāti Maniapoto) and ActionStation Climate Justice Advisor India Logan-Riley (Ngāti Kahungunu ki Ngāti Hawea, Rongomaiwahine, Rangitāne) were invited to speak on "Climate Change as a Health Equity Issue."

They explained that climate change is an effect multiplier, exacerbating existing health inequities. Climate change has a whakapapa or genealogy, rooted in extractive practices and embedded in colonialism. So health is highly political, because it is our environments – including the health of nature, and economic and political paradigms – that influence lives. Their message was that health workers need to collectivise and get politically active. See their presentation slides here.

- ["Climate Change as a Health Equity Issue"](#) – Presentation to NZHPA



Title slide of Presentation to NZHPA

RMA reform – ditch ‘resource management’ for Te Oranga o te Taiao

Two pieces of legislation to repeal and replace the ageing Resource Management Act 1991 are now before Parliament’s Environment Committee. Over four years in the making and almost a thousand pages long, the Natural and Built Environments and Spatial Planning Bills are massive and complex sets of rules which will shape environmental health for decades to come.

Unfortunately, the Bills continue a perspective which sees nature as separate from humans and land, water, air and biodiversity as “resources” to be exploited. They fail to effect Te Tiriti o Waitangi and are unclear about how they support climate action.

OraTaiao supports genuinely embedding an integrated Māori view of the environment as a key policy intent of the bills, not just in order to uphold te Tiriti obligations, but because a genuine Te Oranga o te Taiao approach reflects the core concept that the health of ecosystems is integral to the health and wellbeing of people and communities.

Prepared by representative members of OraTaiao, including Co-convenors Summer Wright and Dr Dermot Coffey, our submission is focused on optimising the benefits to human and planetary wellbeing by protecting and restoring the natural environment, by effecting Te Tiriti o Waitangi and grounding reforms in goals for intergenerational and equitable health outcomes. Read our full submission here.

- [Submission on the Natural and Built Environment & Spatial Planning Bills](#)

Upcoming submissions – your chance to get involved

OraTaiao is planning to submit on the [Review into the Future for Local Government](#) (closing 28 February), the [Therapeutic Products Bill](#) (closing 5 March) and the [Equitable Transitions Strategy](#) being developed by MBIE and MSD (April). We encourage our members to get involved – either with a submission of your own, or by [emailing us](#) with any thoughts (even just a sentence or two!) on what we should be saying.

2. National happenings

Taking the political temperature

“In 2023, climate will get political.” This prediction, made in mid-January by *Newsroom* senior political reporter Marc Daalder, could hardly have been more prescient.

Within a fortnight, a tropical storm in the upper North Island claimed lives, damaged homes and infrastructure, and broke rainfall records as a corresponding political storm was engulfing Auckland Council Te Kaunihera o Tāmaki Makaurau. The day after declaring a state of emergency, Auckland Mayor Wayne Brown [insisted on RNZ](#) that it was “a bit early” to say the historic flooding was an example of climate change. Elected Councillors who disagreed and wanted action consistent with Auckland’s 2019 declaration of climate emergency, like Cr Josephine Bartley, were [gagged by the Mayor](#) from speaking publicly. It took political intervention by Chris Hipkins to gain [agreement](#) that, “As the Prime Minister has said, this is climate change.”

Daalder's *Newsroom* article is an attempt to take stock of where we're currently at as a country, in terms of climate action, and to analyse what this election year might hold. *Stuff* Climate Editor Eloise Gibson and senior journalist Olivia Wannan have produced another. OraTaiao has also engaged in this political discussion through the media, which has intensified after the surprise resignation of Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern. We have contributed to *NZ Doctor Rata Aotearoa*, the *Dr NOS* podcast and providing background material for an article from US-based outlet, *Inside Climate News*.

- Newsroom: "[In 2023, climate will get political](#)"
- NZ Herald: "[After the storm - Chloë Swarbrick & Josephine Bartley on Auckland's flood response](#)"
- Stuff: "[Ardern, Hipkins and the phrase that became a rod for the prime minister's back](#)"
- NZ Doctor: "[Turn up the heat on emissions goals: Short-changed on climate in year of disaster after disaster](#)"
- Dr NOS: "[Dr NOS interview with Dr Dermot Coffey](#)"
- Inside Climate News: "[On The Global Stage, Jacinda Ardern Was a Climate Champion, But Victories Were Hard to Come by at Home](#)"



Photo by [Kelly Sikkema](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Te Whatu Ora feels the heat over coal boilers

Political pressure to phase out coal boilers in our hospitals is ramping up.

As reported in the [September Newsletter](#), OraTaiao has long pushed for a move to renewable energy sources to heat our hospitals. The following month, we were very pleased to support a [Greenpeace Community campaign](#) to switch from lignite to wood chips at Te Whatu Ora Southern. Our work bore fruit in [December](#), when the Climate Change Commission He Pou a Rangī agreed to a localised study of health impacts from hospital coal boilers.

Now Nelson Mayor Nick Smith is calling on his Council to block an application from Te Whatu Ora Nelson Marlborough for consent to burn 4,000 tonnes of coal each year for the next seven years. We look forward to the Council vote due this Thursday.

- Stuff: "[Nelson Hospital coal burning bid clashes with climate goals, says mayor](#)"

Building for the Sustainable Healthcare & Climate Health Conference 2023

Examples of healthcare services which are neither sustainable nor climate safe give extra impetus to Aotearoa's national summit on climate and health. Organised by Climate Health Aotearoa, Sustainable Healthcare Aotearoa, the Climate and Health Alliance and OraTaiao, with support from University of Otago Te Whare Wānanga o Otāgo, it's an event not to be missed! Mark your diary now, for 5-6 July, 2023. More details to come.

3. International news

MET call! The UNFCCC is in resus

"There is no kind way to put it," UN Secretary General António Guterres [said last year](#), referring to the most celebrated achievement in the 2015 Paris Accord. "The 1.5-degree goal is on life support. It is in intensive care. And we must tell it like it is."

That was before the COP27 Conference of Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in November scuttled attempts to "phase down" fossil fuels. It was before the United Arab Emirates – the biggest oil producer in OPEC after Saudi Arabia and Iraq – assumed the presidency for COP28 and promptly appointed the Chair of its state-owned oil company to lead the global climate talks in Dubai later this year. And it was before that company announced plans to invest US\$150 billion over the next five years to expand oil and gas production.

Writing now in *Monthly Review Online*, Professor Luiz Marques of the State University of Campinas has pronounced the UNFCCC clinically dead. "It is imperative that it be revived, redefined in a much more radical way, to make it effective", he says. Looking forward to COP29 and 30, likely to be held in Belém do Pará in the heart of the Amazon, he gives a Brazilian perspective on the resuscitation of global climate efforts – including an end to deforestation, deglobalised food systems, a shift to planetary health diets, protection for Indigenous lands and a global Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty. Read his prescription [here](#).

- MR Online: "[The framework convention on climate is dead. Now what?](#)"

Lancet Planetary Health: 'Indigenous knowledges in health education'

Internationally, the health-care sector has been slower than many other sectors in reducing its carbon emissions and broader environmental footprint. Tertiary education institutions are beginning to integrate environmental and social objectives into teaching, research, and how the campus is operated. However, planetary health courses have largely been limited to knowledge rooted in western epistemology which does not consider the complex interdependence of ecosystems and human health and which pathologises Indigenous peoples.

Writing in the January issue of *Lancet Planetary Health*, Associate Professor Gabrielle Brand from Monash Nursing and Midwifery and her Australian co-authors provide a case study of education that engages learners and encourages them to discover new ways of seeing, knowing, and understanding planetary health by embedding Indigenous knowledges.

- The Lancet: "[Embedding Indigenous knowledges and voices in planetary health education](#)"



Strengths-based narrative portrait titled *Speak from the Heart*.
Image: [The Lancet](#)

4. Good news, interesting links, books

News about news

Carbon News is a New Zealand-based online news service. It has a focus on the carbon markets and sustainable business but also covers climate change news more generally.

Subscriber-only content, including a daily bulletin and a database of 20,000 stories, is available for “just” \$600 per year (plus GST). The website also hosts free content, however, including a “latest news” feed and a “Climate Calendar” of talks, events, conferences, consultations, and petitions – updated daily. Interested? Head to:

- [Carbon News](#)

Good news

The once-feared ozone hole is set to be completely healed over most of the world within two decades following decisive action by governments to phase out ozone-depleting substances, a new UN assessment has found. Petteri Taalas, secretary-general of the World Meteorological Organization, pointed out that, “Ozone action sets a precedent for climate action.”

- The Guardian: “[Earth’s ozone layer on course to be healed within decades, UN report finds](#)”



Image by [Arek Socha](#) from [Pixabay](#)

The icing on the cake

The good people at *Stuff's* [Forever Project](#) have teamed up with illustrators and data reporters to produce a delightful interactive webpage, which draws on a journal article co-authored by OraTaiao co-founder Dr Alex MacMillan. The article, published in *Environmental Health Perspectives*, calculates greenhouse gas emissions associated with the production of various foods, in the New Zealand context. It uses these to estimate climate, health, and health system cost impacts if current consumption patterns shifted to align with the New Zealand dietary guidelines. The Forever Project has packaged this information in a beautiful, shareable format.

The icing on the cake (or should that be, the milk on the Weetbix?) is another story from the [Forever Project](#) featuring New Zealand research into carbon emissions from food production. The study, commissioned by Boring Oat Milk and Agmardt, showed oat farming released only 7% of the greenhouse gases that were emitted by dairy farming on a per-litre-of-milk basis. Oats also used 70% less land than dairy. However, the study found that dairy farming will still be more lucrative than growing oats under the subsidised agricultural emissions pricing expected to start in 2025 – providing a compelling case to strengthen the incentives for regenerative agriculture!

- *Stuff*: “[Heat and Eat – The climate impact of food](#)”

- Stuff: "[Oat milk trade-off: Fewer greenhouse gases, but less profit, study shows](#)"

If you'd like more stories like this delivered to your inbox, you can subscribe to the Forever Project newsletter [here](#).

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.