

## Co-convenor annual report

### November 2020

Dermot Coffey

Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēna koutou katoa. I am very happy to bring this year's co-convenor's report at the end of a very significant year for climate action in Aotearoa and worldwide, and a year of some change within OraTaiao. It is a good time to reflect on our achievements and activities over the year, to focus on the upcoming year, to welcome new personal and organisational members, to greet new members of the Exec Board and to make some farewells including to some very long-standing members.

We had a change in our co-convenor position in July when Dr Alex Macmillan took an extremely well earned step back from the position. We are hugely appreciative of the enormous amount of work Alex has done, and the experience she brought to the role.

We formed a Māori caucus within OraTaiao in May this year, have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Sustainable Health Sector National Network (SHSNN), can welcome new organisational members and have seen an increase in interest from our membership in food systems. We sent a pre-Budget letter to the Ministers of Finance advocating for a green COVID recovery which was supported by the major NZ Professional Colleges. We produced a pre-election scorecard that was well received by the media and achieved the aim of increasing the discussion about parties' climate change policies or more specifically the absence of them. We made submissions on a number of important issues including the Emissions Trading Scheme reform, the Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission Bill and the Accessible Streets Bill. We also note a growing awareness of the mental health impacts of climate change, not just due to extreme events, but from the longer-term lower-grade chronic trauma of gradual incremental deterioration in our climate.

OraTaiao celebrated its 10-year anniversary this July between lock-downs in Auckland, involving Exec Board and other OraTaiao members and in between the celebrations, we updated our strategic priorities for the periods 2020-2022. The overarching priorities for the next two years are as follows:

- Act for a just (fast, fair and based on Te Tiriti o Waitangi) transition to a climate resilient net zero emissions Aotearoa/NZ that improves health and achieves equity.
- Add our unique health and equity expertise to urgent global climate action.

The strategic plan may be accessed here:

[https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/orataiao/pages/413/attachments/original/1600043525/OraTaiao\\_STRATEGIC\\_PLAN\\_2020-2022.pdf?1600043525](https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/orataiao/pages/413/attachments/original/1600043525/OraTaiao_STRATEGIC_PLAN_2020-2022.pdf?1600043525)

I will spend a little time on both the work done and to be done towards each of these priorities.

## **Act for a just (fast, fair and based on Te Tiriti o Waitangi) transition to a climate resilient net zero emissions Aotearoa/NZ that improves health and achieves equity**

Two major campaigns were identified:

- A strong Climate Change Commission (consistent with New Zealand’s obligations to limit warming to 1.5 degrees) that centralises te Tiriti o Waitangi, health and health equity.
- To advocate for a te Tiriti-based food system that is equitable, improves health, and reduces climate pollution.

A strong Climate Change Commission (consistent with New Zealand’s obligations to limit warming to 1.5 degrees) that centralises te Tiriti o Waitangi, health and health equity.

- We are honoured that the Deputy Chair of the Commission, Lisa Tumahai will be speaking at our Annual General Meeting. We aim to build a constructive and supportive relationship with the Climate Change Commission.
- However, we recognise a gap in expertise in the commission around public health and knowledge of social system change. We have distributed a media statement highlighting this gap:  
[https://www.orataiao.org.nz/newly\\_appointed\\_climate\\_change\\_commission\\_a\\_crucial\\_step\\_with\\_major\\_expertise\\_gap](https://www.orataiao.org.nz/newly_appointed_climate_change_commission_a_crucial_step_with_major_expertise_gap)
- An op-ed published in Stuff news:  
[https://www.orataiao.org.nz/opinion\\_in\\_stuff\\_news\\_november\\_2020](https://www.orataiao.org.nz/opinion_in_stuff_news_november_2020)
- We will be advocating for public health expertise to be represented on the board.

To advocate for a te Tiriti-based food system that is equitable, improves health, and reduces climate pollution

- Research by OraTaiao members: Healthy and Climate-Friendly Eating Patterns in the New Zealand Context Environmental Health Perspectives, Vol 128, No 1, 22 January 2020.
- Five news articles and an opinion editorial about plant-based diets, health and the climate published in Stuff news, New Zealand Herald, and Newshub.
- Submission encouraging Nelson City to C40 Good Food Cities Declaration.  
[https://www.orataiao.org.nz/nelson\\_city\\_annual\\_plan\\_consultation](https://www.orataiao.org.nz/nelson_city_annual_plan_consultation)
- An OraTaiao working group looking at healthy & sustainable kai and food systems has continued to grow and strengthen. So far, they have conducted an extensive literature review, drafted a policy position statement on the procurement of healthy and sustainable food by government-funded institutions, and provided input into a NZCPHM draft sustainable food statement.
- The working group is embarking on an OraTaiao food policy.
- Gave talks on the healthier farming tour- “Time for a Change of Heart”.

Overall government policy on climate, health and equity

- Letter to the Ministers of Finance sent prior to budget 2020 We specifically recommended compliance with the Articles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, addressing our responsibility to mitigate and adapt to climate change, to enhance health and wellbeing, to end social and health inequities, prioritising structurally oppressed communities and improve economic resilience. This was well received by media and supported by 15 Professional groups including the RACP, RACS, NZSA, NZNO, NZ College of Midwives, RNZCGP, NZ College of Public Health.

[https://d3n8a8pro7vhm.cloudfront.net/orataiao/pages/600/attachments/original/1594161664/Letter re. 2020 budget from 14 health professional orgs.pdf?1594161664](https://d3n8a8pro7vhm.cloudfront.net/orataiao/pages/600/attachments/original/1594161664/Letter_re_2020_budget_from_14_health_professional_orgs.pdf?1594161664)

- Submission on the COVID-19 Recovery (Fast-track Consenting) Bill:  
[https://www.orataiao.org.nz/covid\\_19\\_recovery\\_fast\\_track\\_consenting\\_bill](https://www.orataiao.org.nz/covid_19_recovery_fast_track_consenting_bill)
- Scorecard for NZ Election 2020 - Climate Change and Health published in September. The scorecard obtained media coverage in Stuff news and Newsroom and was promoted on social media and by our members around the country. It achieved the aim of drawing focus to the lack of adequate policies from the majority of NZ political parties and the dearth of any proper debate on the climate crisis in the pre-election period.
- Submission on Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) reform: We supported the overall aims of the ETS reform, but advocated for much stronger agricultural targets and drew attention to the risks of worsening social inequality from a poorly designed ETS, and the problems of “emissions leakage”.  
[https://www.orataiao.org.nz/climate\\_change\\_response\\_emissions\\_trading\\_reform\\_amendment\\_bill\\_and\\_supplementary\\_order\\_paper\\_413](https://www.orataiao.org.nz/climate_change_response_emissions_trading_reform_amendment_bill_and_supplementary_order_paper_413)
- We developed a package to advise members on submitting on the Accessible Streets Bill, focusing on the overall health benefits but drawing attention to the risks of some changes to people with disabilities (an area not well covered by many other climate advocacy groups), and advocating for best practice changes in the first instance rather than making suboptimal concessions.  
[https://www.orataiao.org.nz/accessible\\_streets\\_package\\_of\\_rule\\_changes](https://www.orataiao.org.nz/accessible_streets_package_of_rule_changes)

#### Mental health and climate change

- We submitted on the Mental Health and Wellbeing commission Bill in December 2019 and we would like to thank the RANZCP for offering us a stand at their upcoming NZ Conference in Napier, and their focus on climate change and mental health in the conference itself.
- [https://www.orataiao.org.nz/mental\\_health\\_and\\_wellbeing\\_commission\\_bill](https://www.orataiao.org.nz/mental_health_and_wellbeing_commission_bill)

#### **Add our unique health and equity expertise to urgent global climate action**

- We continue to participate on the Board of the Global Climate and Health Alliance. We have been particularly working with the group to raise greater awareness of climate justice and equity.
- Article co-authored by some of our Exec members in The Lancet in January  
[https://www.orataiao.org.nz/should\\_health\\_professionals\\_participate\\_in\\_civil\\_disobedience\\_in\\_response\\_to\\_the\\_climate\\_change\\_health\\_emergency](https://www.orataiao.org.nz/should_health_professionals_participate_in_civil_disobedience_in_response_to_the_climate_change_health_emergency)

#### **Other highlights from the year**

- OraTaiao continues to support and maintain a close relationship with the Sustainable Health Sector National Network (SHSNN). In May 2020, a Memorandum of Understanding was agreed to strengthen and streamline co-operative work between the two parties and jointly to deliver the 2020 Sustainable Healthcare and Climate Health Aotearoa Webinar series. See the MOU here:  
[https://d3n8a8pro7vhm.cloudfront.net/orataiao/pages/72/attachments/original/1593391203/MOU\\_SHSNN\\_OT.pdf?1593391203](https://d3n8a8pro7vhm.cloudfront.net/orataiao/pages/72/attachments/original/1593391203/MOU_SHSNN_OT.pdf?1593391203)

- Webinar series: Sustainable Healthcare and Climate Health Aotearoa: A green, equitable and resilient post-COVID pathway for health and healthcare, June - October 2020. This webinar series was a collaboration between SHSNN, OraTaiao, University of Otago, and Global Green and Healthy Hospitals. OraTaiao members led or chaired several of the fortnightly webinars focusing on sustainable healthcare and climate health.  
<https://www.otago.ac.nz/wellington/news/events/otago738191.html>
- Media statement supporting and promoting NHS action to achieve net zero emissions:  
[https://www.orataiao.org.nz/mandate\\_needed\\_to\\_end\\_district\\_health\\_boards\\_climate\\_pollution](https://www.orataiao.org.nz/mandate_needed_to_end_district_health_boards_climate_pollution)
- Article in NZ Doctor on green inhaler prescribing:  
[https://www.orataiao.org.nz/new\\_zealand\\_asthma\\_guidelines\\_support\\_use\\_of\\_environmentally\\_friendly\\_inhalers](https://www.orataiao.org.nz/new_zealand_asthma_guidelines_support_use_of_environmentally_friendly_inhalers)
- Goodfellow Podcast on Greening General Practice:  
<https://www.goodfellowunit.org/podcast/greening-your-general-practice>
- Article in Kai Tiaki Nursing New Zealand:  
[https://www.orataiao.org.nz/nurses\\_are\\_crucial\\_in\\_the\\_fight\\_against\\_climate\\_change](https://www.orataiao.org.nz/nurses_are_crucial_in_the_fight_against_climate_change)
- Workshop run on climate justice for other non-governmental organisations working on climate change.
- Media: Six media releases/statements, a large number of news articles, and three opinion editorials.
- Social media presence: Regular Facebook and Twitter posts (with a policy not to use paid advertising). 1,640 followers on Facebook and 1,340 followers on Twitter.
- We welcomed new organisational members: Occupational Therapy New Zealand Occupational Therapy NZ, NZ Society of Anaesthetists, The Royal Australasian College of Physicians, NZ Orthopaedic Association, NZ College of Public Health Medicine, and College of Nurses Aotearoa NZ.
- We have another major signatory to the call to action on climate change and health: Australasian College for Emergency Medicine.
- We presently have around 720 individual members. Not all currently paying their subscription fee!

## Acknowledgements

- Thank you to all of the exec board for their ongoing contribution to reviewing submissions, reports and informing the direction of the organisation.
- Particular thanks to Dr Alexandra Macmillan for all of the work she led as Co-convenor until July this year, and also a big thanks to board members with large roles – Richard Jaine (Secretary), Mark Smith (Treasurer).
- A huge, huge thanks to Julia for all her work as co-ordinator over the year.
- Thank to Hayley Bennett for continuing in membership role and Graeme Lindsay as web administrator.
- Thanks to the Māori caucus: Rhys Jones, Summer Wright, Kera Sherwood O'Regan and George Laking.
- Thanks to all the SHSNN network and Matt Jenks that organised the webinars and for continuing to encourage the health sector to take a lead in sustainability.

- Thanks to those involved in the food working group including: Rebecca Sinclair, Summer Wright, Anna Graham-DeMello, Anne-Thea McGill, Bruce Kidd, Cristina Cleghorn, Jono Drew, Louise Manville, Penny Field, Christine Mckerchar and Chloe Corbitt.
- Thanks to Susanna Lees Watts, Apurva Kasture and Summer Wright for gathering information for the election scorecard.
- Thanks to Penelope Milsom for her work representing OraTaiao on the board of the Global Climate and Health Alliance.
- Thanks to Susanna Lees Watts for contribution to keeping our Facebook page alive.
- Thanks to Matt Jenks for leading the submission on the ETS.
- Thanks to Alex Macmillan for writing the submission on the RMA.
- Thanks to Matt Jenks and Alex Macmillan for leading the submission guide on Accessible Streets.
- Thanks to Brian Dixon and David Menkes for preparing the submission on the Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission Bill.
- Board members stepping down this year: Carmen Chan, Cameron Toogood, Maria Peach, Susanna Lees Watt, Kera Sherwood-O'Regan, Rhys Jones and Alex Macmillan
- Again huge thanks to both Alex and Rhys for their work as co-convenors over the years.

I did not see myself taking on the role of co-convenor at this time last year and I am under no illusions that I will be able to fill the shoes of either Alex or Rhys. I am extremely thankful of the messages of support that people have sent since July - I am always happy to be contacted as well when advice or criticism is needed rather than support! There have been significant changes over the year both locally with the establishment of the Climate Change Commission and a new government, and internationally where there is an increasing mood for climate action. I believe there is now a rising and undeniable public support for effective and just climate action and we will have an increasing role in making sure this happens quickly. OraTaiao can look back on a successful 10 years of advocacy and growth. Our strength lies in our diverse and active membership and most particularly in the strength and simplicity of our message. We must take every opportunity we can to communicate this as often as possible over the next 10 years.