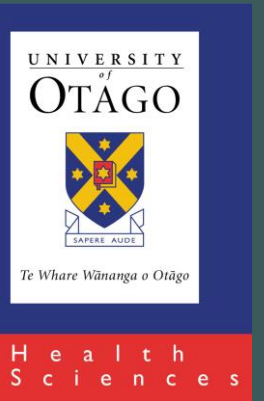




PUBLIC HEALTH COMMUNICATION CENTRE
AOTEAROA



Trust Democracy and Public Health: Much in common

Professor Michael Baker,
University of Otago, Wellington

Trust Democracy AGM 9 May 2023

- Trust Democracy is here to strengthen democracy in New Zealand through research, education and demonstrating different ways of making democracy work as it should.
- Public health: the science and art of promoting health, preventing disease and prolonging life through the organised efforts of society.

Outline

- Role of the PHCC
- Supporting evidence-informed policy
- Improving Government decision-making processes
- Informing the public on health issues, and
- Providing some protection from disinformation

Role of the PHCC

- Purpose and Rationale
- What it is
- What it does



- Funded by an endowment from the Gama Foundation.
- Small team based at University of Otago, Wellington
- Officially launched in February 2023

Purpose

To promote policy, practice, and public awareness that protect and improve the health, wellbeing, and equity of the people of Aotearoa New Zealand and health of the environment in which we live.



- Aotearoa has a wealth of public health expertise and research
- COVID-19 Pandemic highlighted the importance of independent expert commentary for public health
- Public health challenges and opportunities are increasing, with ‘transformational’ changes needed



- Pool of independent voices is **shrinking** (limitations on NGOs, Regional Public Health Units, CRIs)
- Public health research competes with well-resourced commercial and ideological interest groups



Importance of evidence-informed strategy in responding to a pandemic



This article is more than 2 months old

The conversation

Coronavirus outbreak

Michael Baker and Nick Wilson

Mon 8 Jun 2020
04.02 BST

f t e

308 205

Five ways New Zealand can keep Covid-19 cases at zero

Modelling shows it is very likely New Zealand has eliminated coronavirus. Keeping it that way is the next big challenge

- [Coronavirus - latest updates](#)
- [See all our coronavirus coverage](#)

A photograph of Jacinda Ardern, the Prime Minister of New Zealand, smiling and speaking at a podium. Behind her is a banner that reads 'COVID Alert Level'.

Effective Science +
Good Political Leadership

Who we are



Directors

Prof Michael
Baker



Prof Nick
Wilson



Prof Simon
Hales

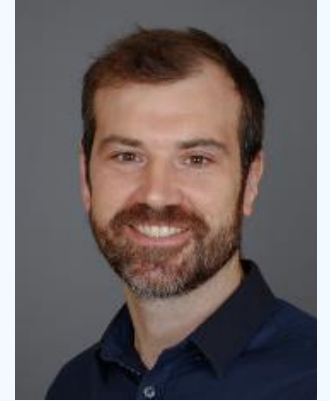
Staff



Fiona Taylor
Centre Manager



Adele Broadbent
Communications
Lead

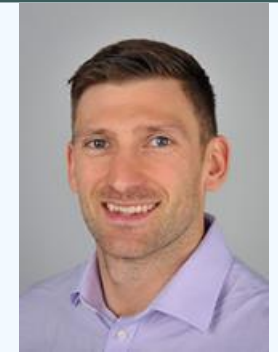


Dr John Kerr
Science
Lead

Affiliated researchers



Marnie Prickett
Research Fellow



Dr Tim Chambers
Senior Research Fellow

Advisory Board



Prof Richard Edwards
Professor of Public
Health



Dacia Herbulock
Director, Science Media
Centre



Prof Boy Swinburn
Professor of Public
Health



Teresa Wall
Director, Wall Consultants, Former
Māori Health Director, MoH



Peter Griffin
Journalist and consultant
Founder, Science Media Centre

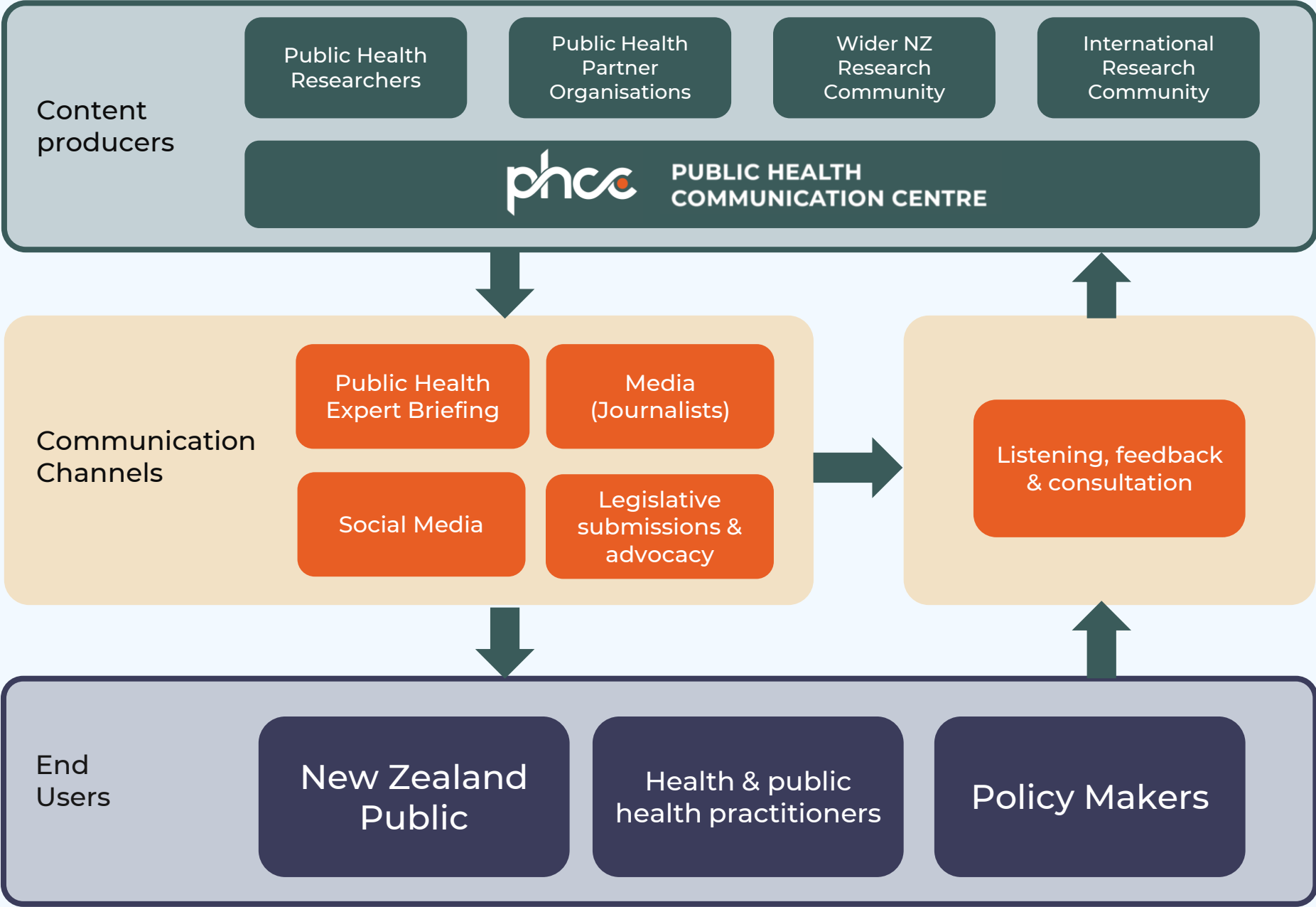


Richard Sutherland
Head of News, RNZ



What we do:

- Host **The Public Health Expert Briefing**, an online platform for sharing expert analysis and commentary (formerly the Public Health Expert Blog).
- **Highlight important research and evidence** through other channels including media releases, op-eds, social media, policy submissions, presentations.
- **Network** with researchers, journalists and policy professionals.

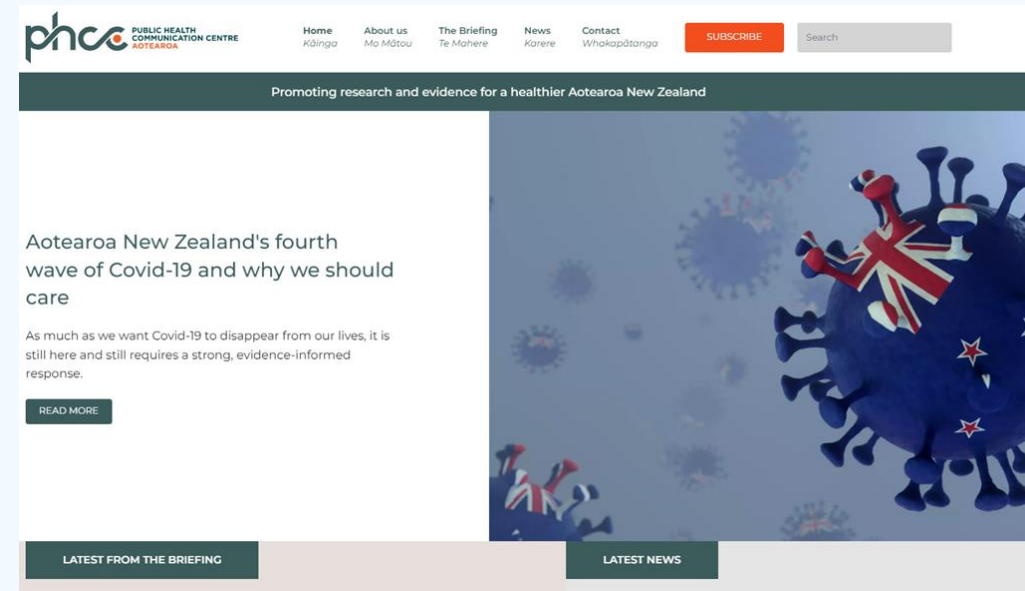


Supporting Evidence informed policy

- Agenda setting, including
 - Identifying emerging issues
 - Reframing issues
- Evidence translation, particularly improved interventions
- Tracking and updating evidence on key issues

The Briefing

- Expert commentary and analysis from public health researchers, including:
 - Highlighting new NZ research
 - Placing international research in context
 - Commentary on breaking news
 - Analysis of policy





Bruce Jenkins | iStock

Cyclone Gabrielle joins list of Aotearoa NZ's 'sudden mass fatality events'

28 March 2023 John Kerr, George Thomson, Nick Wilson

Share



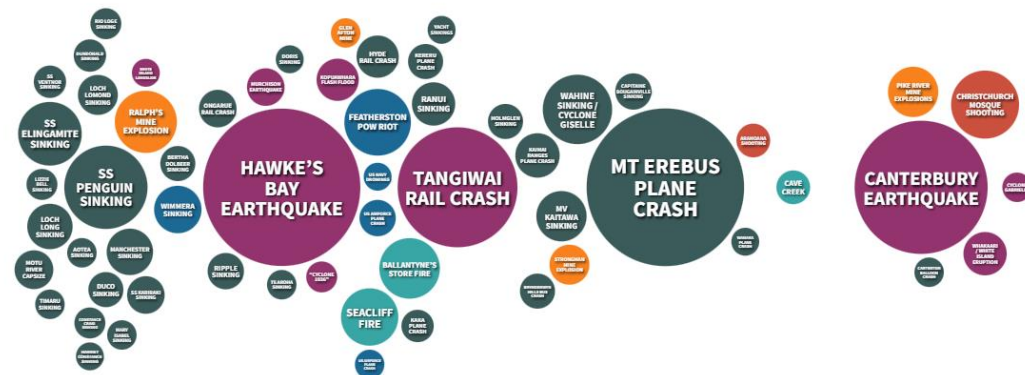
Summary

This Briefing considers the deaths caused by Cyclone Gabrielle in the context of previous 'sudden mass fatality events' in Aotearoa New Zealand since the year 1900.

New Zealand's worst mass fatality events, 1900-2023

Transport Industrial Natural War
Infra-structure Human agency

50 100 → Year of event



Stuff

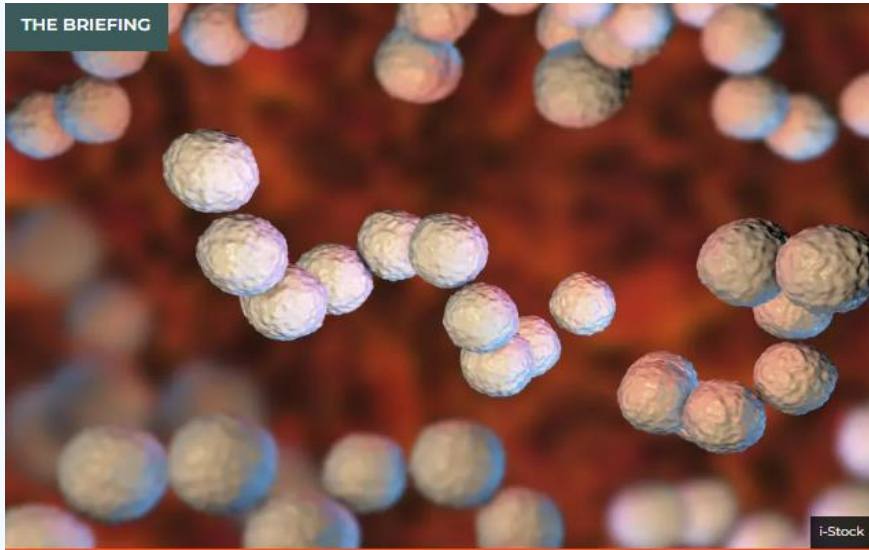
national

Cyclone Gabrielle is the 59th 'sudden mass fatality' event in 123 years

Steven Walton · 18:30, Mar 29 2023



THE BRIEFING



i-Stock

Likely rise in invasive strep infections in NZ requires a strategy

23 March 2023

Julie Bennett, Nikki Moreland, Johanna Birrell, Rachel Webb, Amanda Kvalsvig, Sally Roberts, Michael Baker

Share

Summary

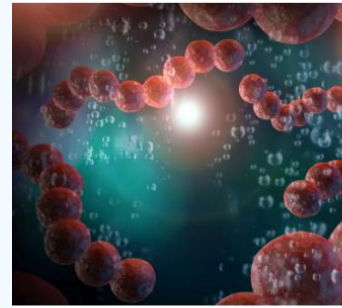
Group A streptococcus (GAS) is a common cause of sore throats and skin infections in children. In rare cases the bacteria can invade deeper into the body, causing severe, life-threatening *invasive* GAS (iGAS). Since late 2022 the World Health Organization (WHO) has described numerous high-income countries reporting increases in cases of iGAS, with

NEW ZEALAND / HEALTH

Doctors push for dangerous type of Strep A to be notifiable disease

6:50 am on 23 March 2023

Share this



A 3D rendering of strep throat, also known as Streptococcus bacteria, in the mouth. Photo: 123RF

Public health doctors want a dangerous form of the list of diseases that have to be formally reported to officials.

Doctor

A call to make Invasive Group A Strep notifiable in New Zealand

Thursday 23 March 2023, 03:30 PM
2 minutes to Read



Julie Bennett

Public Health experts say there's an increase worldwide in severe infections involving group A streptococcus and are calling for it to be made a notifiable condition in New Zealand.

Group A streptococcus (GAS) is a common cause of sore throats and skin infections in children but in rare cases the bacteria can invade deeper into the body causing severe, life-threatening invasive GAS (iGAS).

Stuff

Health experts say NZ needs to track invasive strep A as cases surge offshore

Rachel Thomas · 06:00, Mar 23 2023



An uptick in cases of invasive strep A overseas, which can cause blood poisoning (sepsis), is prompting calls for the disease to be a publicly notifiable condition here. (File photo)

Health experts are urging officials to mandate reporting of cases of the rare but deadly infection, invasive strep A, after a surge in cases overseas, saying the move could save lives.



Breaking the inequity loop

28 February 2023 Jason Gurney, Jonathan Koea

Share



PUBLIC HEALTH

PRIORITIES SERIES

Summary

History shows us that the best way to improve Māori health is to support Māori to lead and drive the improvement ourselves. That means more Māori across all aspects of health: not just doctors, nurses and other clinical workforce, but also more Māori epidemiologists, health scientists, health policy experts, and even politicians.

Since Cook set foot on Aotearoa, privilege has run in one direction

1:26pm, Monday 13 March 2023. By Contributor



Associate Professor Jason Gurney (Ngāpuhi) is an epidemiologist in the Department of Public Health at the University of Otago, Wellington (left) and Professor Jonathan Koea (Ngāti Mutunga, Ngāti Tama) is based in the Department of Surgery and Te Kupenga Hauora Māori at the University of Auckland (right). Picture / Supplied

OPINION

By Jason Gurney & Jonathan Koea

Breaking the Māori inequity loop: An all-of-population approach has failed Māori for a century

By Jason Gurney & Jonathan Koea
13 Mar, 2023 12:17 PM © 11 mins to read

Save Share

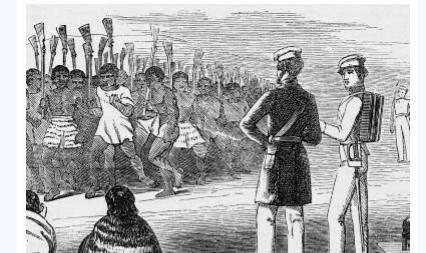


Māori urban leader John Tamihore has been fighting for Māori equality for 40-plus years.

OPINION

At the turn of the 20th century, New Zealand's first stream of Māori doctors – legendary figures like Maui Pomare and Peter Buck (Te Rangi Hiroa) – faced an extreme crisis in the health of their people.

newsroom.



Settlers to NZ brought with them diseases which decimated the Indigenous population. Image: Getty Images



FIRST PUBLISHED MAR 1, 2023
Updated Mar 3, 2023

Election 2023: Beyond The Soap Box

COMMENTS BY Patricia Scott, Bob Lawton, Peter Davis

ELECTION 2023

Breaking the inequity loop

If a change in government occurs later this year, there are strong indications from National that Te Aka Whai Ora would be swiftly disestablished and Māori health disparities instead addressed within a



Geoff Reid

Nitrate contamination in drinking water and adverse birth outcomes: emerging evidence is concerning for NZ

 23 May 2021

 Tim Chambers, Nick Wilson, Simon Hales, Michael Baker

Share



While there is growing evidence that nitrates in drinking water are a risk factor for bowel cancer, there is also emerging evidence concerning adverse birth outcomes such as prematurity. This blog takes a brief look at this new evidence and puts it into a NZ context.



Geoff Reid

Nitrate contamination in drinking water and adverse birth outcomes: emerging evidence is concerning for NZ

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While there is growing evidence that nitrates in drinking water are a risk factor for bowel cancer, there is also emerging evidence concerning adverse birth outcomes such as prematurity. This blog takes a brief look at this new evidence and puts it into a NZ context.



Calls for 'precautionary approach' after study links nitrate levels to preterm births

1:16 pm on 24 May 2021

Share this



 **Conan Young**, Reporter
@ConanYoung1 | conan.young@rnz.co.nz

New research shows a strong link between nitrate in drinking water and babies being born underweight or prematurely.



New research shows a strong link between nitrate in drinking water and babies being born underweight or prematurely. Stock photo Photo: 123RF

THE BRIEFING



Geoff Reid

Nitrate contamination in drinking water and adverse birth outcomes: emerging evidence is concerning for NZ

23 May 2021

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nzherald.co.nz

Link between nitrate levels and premature births, study finds

Otago Daily Times

Otago study links nitrate levels to preterm births

Stuff

Urgent action needed as studies link nitrates to adverse birth outcomes - Greens

1 news

Epidemiologist Michael Baker, top midwife call for lower nitrate limits in NZ water following disturbing new study

THE BRIEFING



Geoff Reid

Nitrate contamination in drinking water and adverse birth outcomes: emerging evidence is concerning for NZ

23 May 2021

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New Zealand
College of Midwives

TE KĀRETI O NGA KAIWHAKAWHANAU KI AOTEAROA

Member advisory: 27th May 2021

Nitrate levels in drinking water: risks for pregnant women and formula-fed babies



Nitrate risks for babies assessed in Liggins report for government



Geoff Reid

Nitrate contamination in drinking water and adverse birth outcomes: emerging evidence is concerning for NZ

23 May 2021

Tim Chambers, Nick Wilson, Simon Hales, Michael Baker

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While there is growing evidence that nitrates in drinking water are a risk factor for bowel cancer, there is also emerging evidence concerning adverse birth outcomes such as prematurity. This blog takes a brief look at this new evidence and puts it into a NZ context.

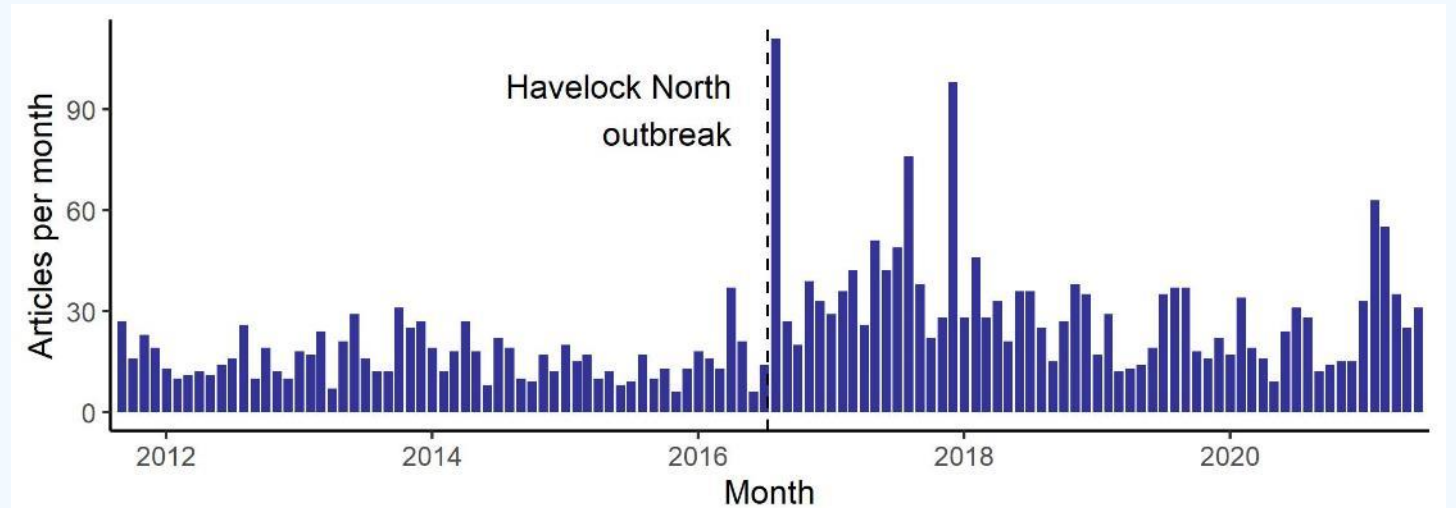
hrc nz

The impact of nitrate in drinking water on preterm birth

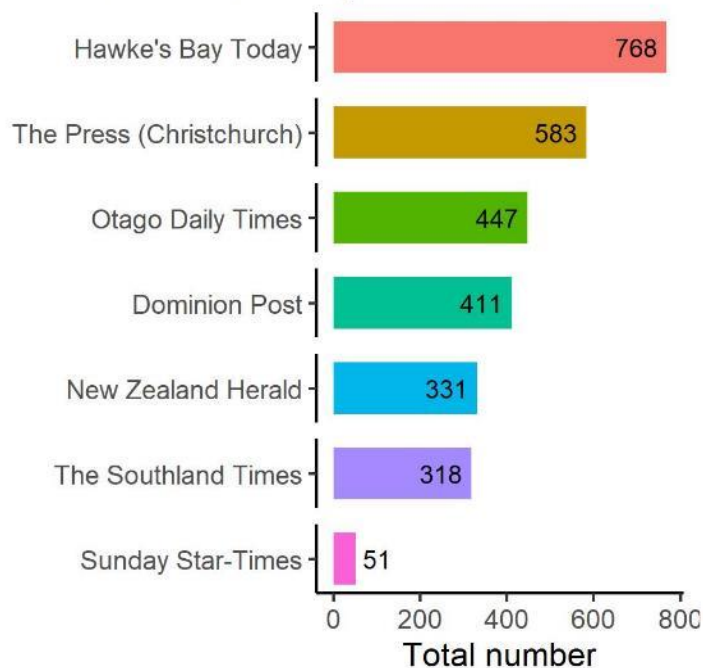
Year:	2022
Duration:	36 months
Approved budget:	\$1,199,508.73
Researchers:	Dr Tim Chambers, Professor Simon Hales, Mrs Mereana Wilson-Rooy, Associate Professor Max Berry, Dr Chris Daughney, Associate Professor Nevil Pierse, Professor Michael Baker, Professor Jeroen Douwes, Associate Professor Andrea 't Mannetje, Glenda Oben, Dr Alice Hyun Min Kim
Health issue:	Environmental health
Proposal type:	Project

Media analysis

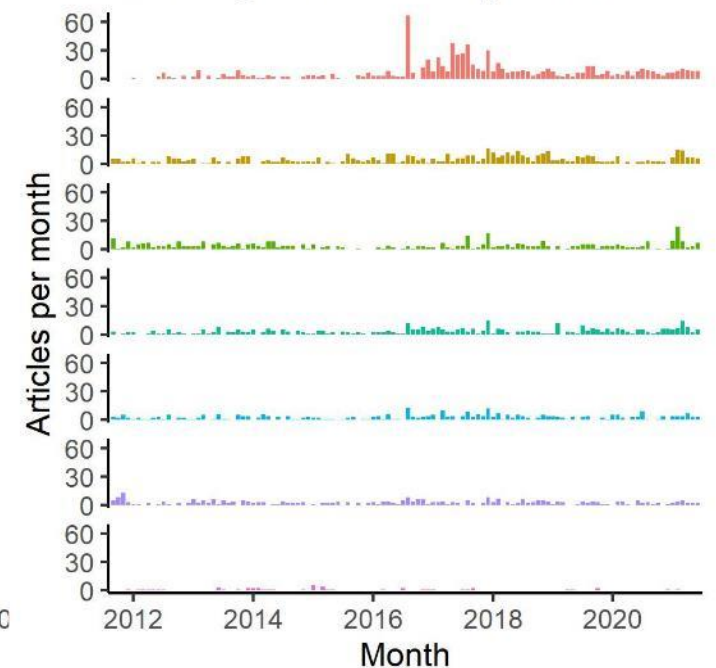
- Content analysis of coverage of water quality issues
- Proactive strategic communication on water quality



Total articles by source

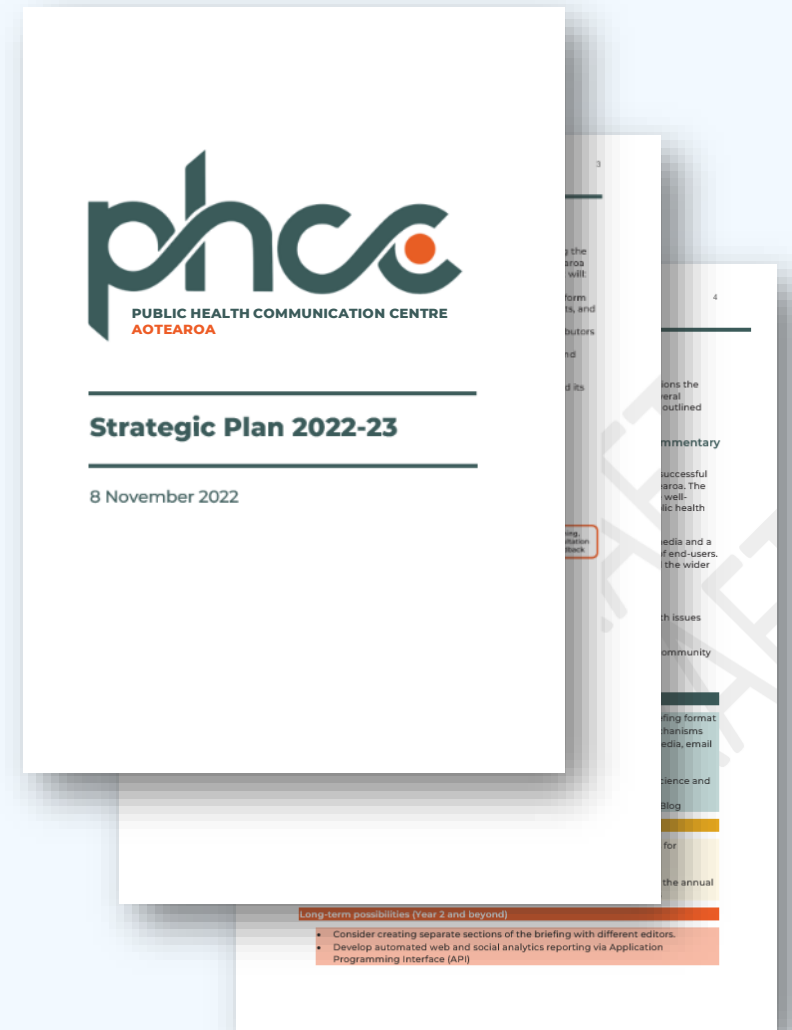


Coverage over time by source



Beyond the Briefing

- Promotion of research through social media, media releases
- A regular newsletter
- Networking with media and policy professionals
- Research
- Advice and support
- Presentations and workshops



Improving Government decision-making processes

- Supporting high-level global health and development agendas
- Managing the Commercial determinants of health, E.g. Greater transparency, Controls on lobbying
- Specific shift to long-term thinking

High-level global health & development agendas

SDG 16

“Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels”



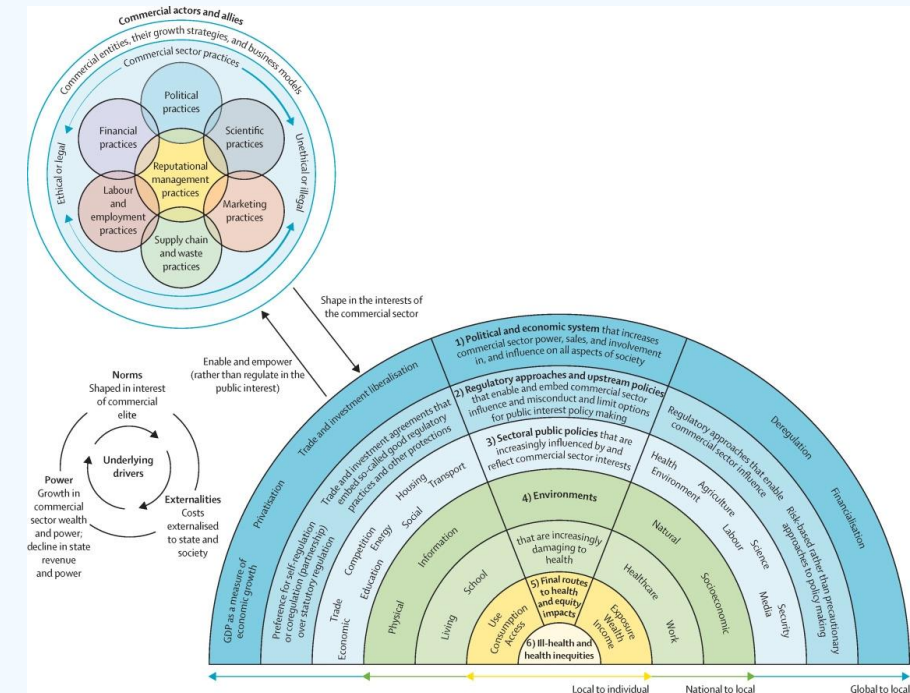
Addressing the Commercial Determinants of Health

Commercial determinants of health (CDOH) = the systems, practices, and pathways through which commercial actors drive health and equity

“...shift towards market fundamentalism and increasingly powerful transnational corporations has created a pathological system in which commercial actors are increasingly enabled to cause harm and externalise the costs of doing so.”

Anna B Gilmore, Lancet 2023; 401: 1194–213

Introductory article in Lancet series on CDOH



Improving government processes

Addressing lobbying by commercial interest groups

RNZ Home News Radio Podcasts & Series Topics Pacific

New Zealand World Politics Pacific Te Ao Māori Sport Business Country Local Democracy Reporting Comment & Analysis

NEW ZEALAND / IN DEPTH

Lobbyists in New Zealand enjoy freedoms unlike most other nations in the developed world

16:07 am on 25 March 2023

Share this     

 Guyon Espiner, Investigative reporter, In Depth
[@GuyonEspiner](#) guyon.espiner@rnz.co.nz



Home / Business PREMIUM

Sasha Borissenko: Will new rules address lobbying conflicts of interest?

By [Sasha Borissenko](#)  

23 Apr, 2023 03:00 PM 5 mins to read



Former Cabinet minister Kris Faafoi waited only a few months before launching a lobbying firm. Photo / Mark Mitchell

Shift to long-term thinking

Important re-framing to support response to catastrophic risks

THE BRIEFING

The need for long-term thinking – Especially for preventing catastrophic risks



15 February 2023



Nick Wilson, Matt Boyd, John Kerr,
Amanda Kvalsvig, Michael Baker



Politicisation of response



Informing public on health issues & providing some protection from disinformation

- Trust in science
- Impact of disinformation
- Health seeking behaviour
- Social licence

Trust in public health, science, government

Effective communication critical in a pandemic response:

- For informing and motivating essential behaviour change by individuals and organisations
- Because behaviour of individuals influences population risk
- Ultimately building trust in collective action and social license

NEW ZEALAND

Covid 19 Delta outbreak: NZ tops world for trust in scientists, govt - study



By [Jamie Morton](#)

28 Sep, 2021 12:30 PM 5 mins to read

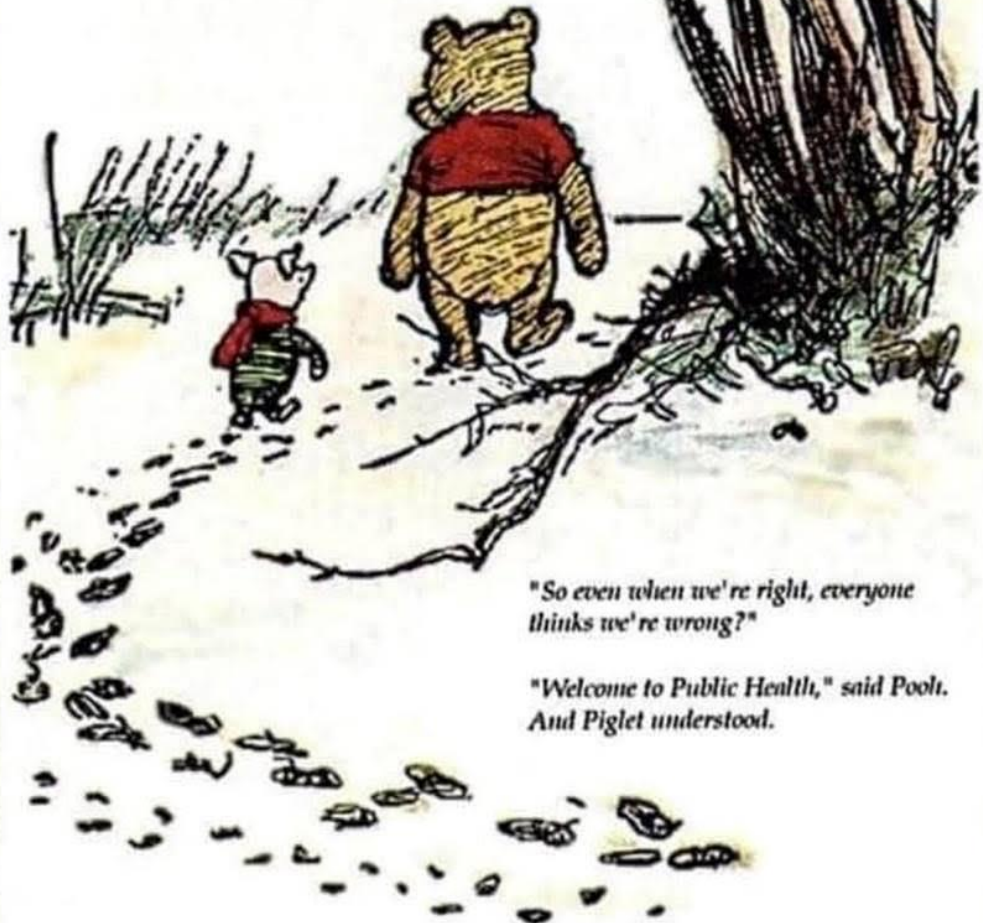
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The 90% Project is an NZ Herald initiative that aims to reach all New Zealanders to get the word out about vaccination so we can save lives and restore freedoms. Video / NZ Herald

"But how will we know if our pandemic guidelines work?" asked Piglet

"The world will think we overreacted," said Pooh.



"So even when we're right, everyone thinks we're wrong?"

"Welcome to Public Health," said Pooh. And Piglet understood.

Trust in public health, science, government

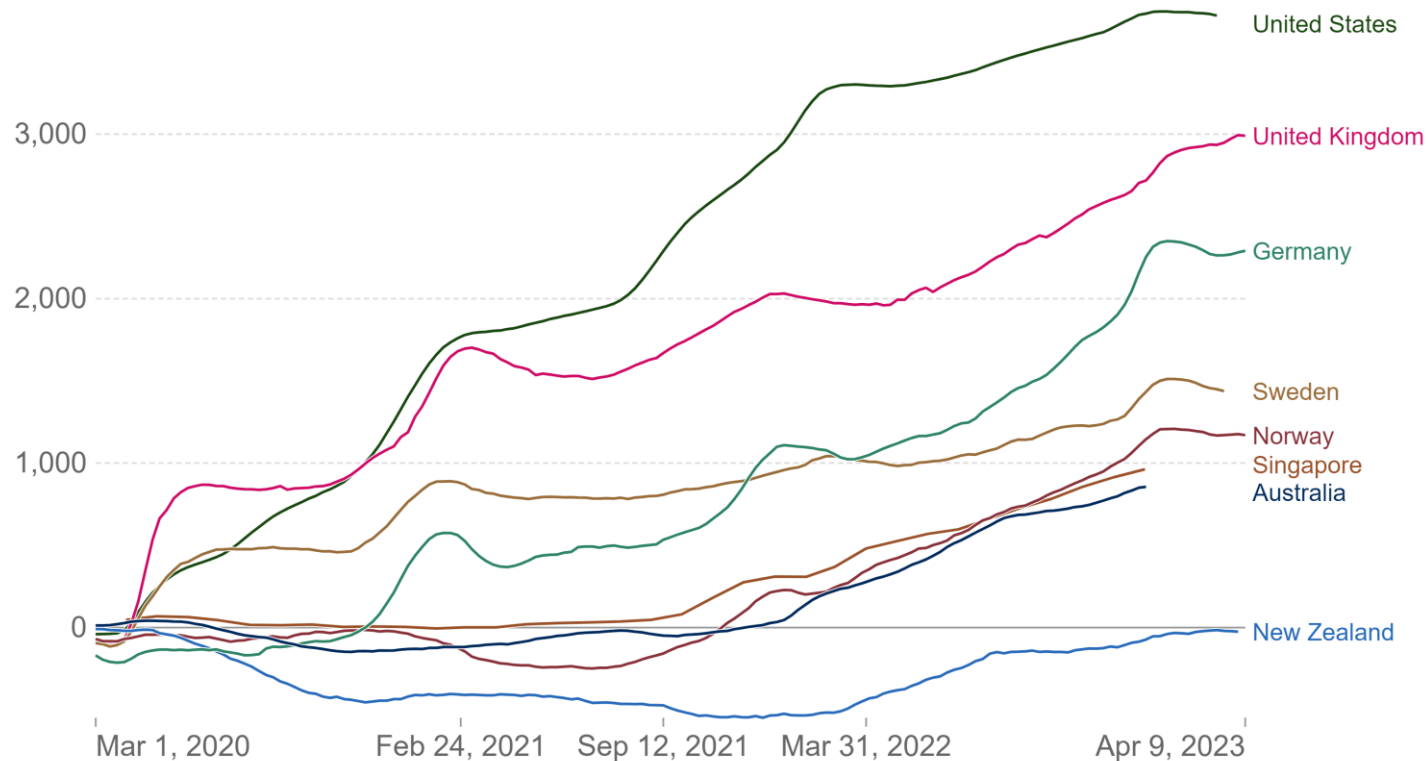
A public health triumph: nothing happened

Trust in public health, science, government

Excess mortality: Cumulative number of deaths from all causes compared to projection based on previous years, per million people

Our World
in Data

The cumulative difference between the reported number of deaths since 1 January 2020 and the projected number of deaths for the same period based on previous years. The reported number might not count all deaths that occurred due to incomplete coverage and delays in reporting.



Source: Human Mortality Database (2022), World Mortality Dataset (2022)

CC BY

Misinformation and disinformation

Misinformation = false information that is spread, regardless of intent to mislead

Disinformation = deliberately misleading or biased information; manipulated narrative or facts; propaganda.

Effectiveness of previous infection in preventing reinfection = **56.0%** against Omicron variant

Source: Altarawneh et al, NEJM, 8 Feb 2022



Misinformation and disinformation



CORONAVIRUS ●

Liz Gunn coughs through Counterspin appearance days after Wellington anti-mandate protest ends

08/03/2022



Watch: Liz Gunn appeared on Counterspin last week, days after the protest ended. Credit: Counterspin Media

Former TV host Liz Gunn coughed her way through a rant about overthrowing New Zealand's democratically elected Government days after the Wellington anti-mandate protest ended.

We ran out of foil this evening. You'll need it tomorrow before the government EMR (Electro-Magnetic Radiation) attacks that the MSM is not reporting. If you donate to [@NzFubar](#) we will distribute more foil from the First Aid tent [#EndTheMandatesNow](#) [#convoynz2022](#) [#Convoy2022NZ](#)

TE MANA WHAKAATU
**Classification
Office**

Watch carefully.
Think critically.

THE EDGE OF THE INFODEMIC

Challenging Misinformation
in Aotearoa



57%

believed they had come across
misinformation in the past six
months

82%

are 'somewhat' or 'very' concerned
about the spread of misinformation
in New Zealand.

90%

think misinformation is influencing
people's views about public health.

Impact of misinformation/disinformation

Health Belief Model: Cognitive framework for identified factors that increase or decrease health seeking behaviour

HBM Domains	Beliefs & situations that promotes action, eg Covid-19 vaccination
1. Perceived Susceptibility	I am susceptible to this health risk or problem (Covid-19)
2. Perceived Severity	The threat to my health is serious
3. Perceived Benefits	I perceive the benefits of the recommended action outweigh the barriers or costs
4. Perceived Barriers	I do not see significant barriers to acting
5. Cues to Action	Cues to action are present to remind me to act
6. Self-efficacy	I am confident I can carry out the action successfully

Impact of misinformation/disinformation

Health Belief Model: How Misinformation/Disinformation can erode key beliefs that support health seeking behaviour

HBM Domains	Beliefs & situations that promotes action, eg Covid-19 vaccination	Misinformation/Disinformation that reduces likelihood of action, eg Covid-19 vaccination
1. Perceived Susceptibility	I am susceptible to this health risk or problem (Covid-19)	Diet and wellness is sufficient to prevent illness (Covid-19)
2. Perceived Severity	The threat to my health is serious	Covid-19 is mild illness, the pandemic is fake
3. Perceived Benefits	I perceive benefits of the recommended action outweigh the barriers or costs	Vaccination is ineffective and dangerous
4. Perceived Barriers	I do not see significant barriers to acting	So much uncertainty and risk with vaccination, better to delay
5. Cues to Action	Cues to action are present to remind me to act	High exposure to antivax messages, especially for marginalised/underserved populations
6. Self-efficacy	I am confident I can carry out the action successfully	Infection is inevitable so best just to accept it like other viral infections

THE CONVERSATION

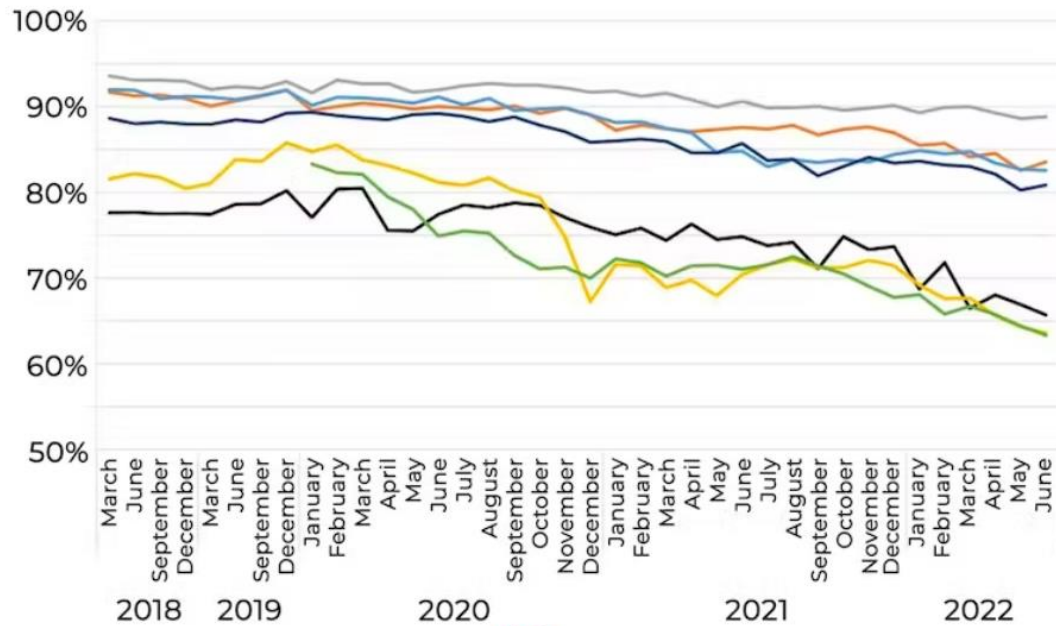
NZ children face a 'perfect storm' of dangerous diseases as immunisation rates fall

August 10, 2022 6.52am NZST

Immunisation coverage has been declining in recent years

Childhood immunisation coverage, by milestone age, 2018 to 2021, New Zealand.

- 6 months
- 8 months
- 12 months
- 18 months
- 24 months
- 54 months
- 5 years



Low vaccination rates prompt fears of severe measles outbreak

9:31 am on 29 July 2022

Share this



Jamie Tahana, Journalist
[@JamieTahana](#) jamie.tahana@rnz.co.nz

“There is a mountain of vaccine misinformation to confront”

—Teresa Olsen, Head of Hutt Valley Māori health provider Kōkiri Health

Responding: Disinformation sources

Limited role of fact-checking

Naz Khanjani said on Instagram lockdowns, travel restrictions and quarantine wasn't "necessary" and that the virus is "just like any other flu".

"I can easily say I've had other 'normal' flus which have been 100 times worse than this one,"

ENTERTAINMENT

Covid 19 coronavirus: Professor Michael Baker criticises Naz Khanjani's Instagram post

8 Jan, 2021 02:11 PM

5 minutes to read



nazzfitness • Follow

nazzfitness I'm going to keep it real with you guys and I'm not speaking for everyone with what I'm about to write as I know a flu can effect everybody differently.

It's hasn't even been two weeks and I'm feeling much better! The first week was the worst as it is with most flus (blocked sinus, low on energy, sweating, coughing & sneezing). I can easily say I've had other 'normal' flus which have been 100 times worse than this one.

I caught a really bad flu in June 2020 and I remember that one had me absolutely knocked out in bed, barely able to breathe and feeling like death

Naz Khanjani shared an Instagram post about her experience having Covid-19 on Instagram. Photo / Nazzfitness



By: [Lydia Burgham](#)

Entertainment writer, New Zealand Herald

lydia.burgham@nzme.co.nz

[@LydiaBurgham](#)



A former New Zealand Bachelor contestant and influencer has come under fire for an Instagram post about her experience with Covid-19.

Naz Khanjani said on Instagram lockdowns, travel restrictions and quarantine wasn't "necessary" and that the virus is "just like any other flu".

Top epidemiologist Professor Michael Baker says the post was a "fallacy" of generalisations and warned others against misinformation about the virus on social media.

[Read More](#)

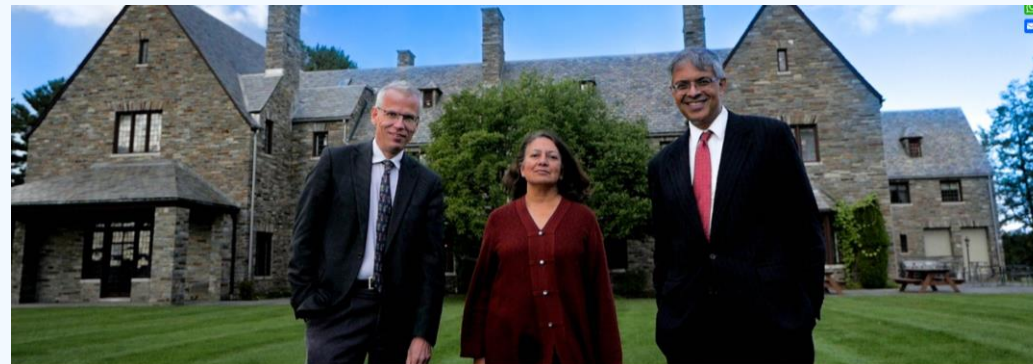
41

• [Covid 19 interactive: How do we compare? - NZ Herald](#)

Responding: Disinformation sources



Jami-Lee Ross (+ Billy Te Kahika NZ Public Party)



Sign the Declaration

Countering disinformation in public health

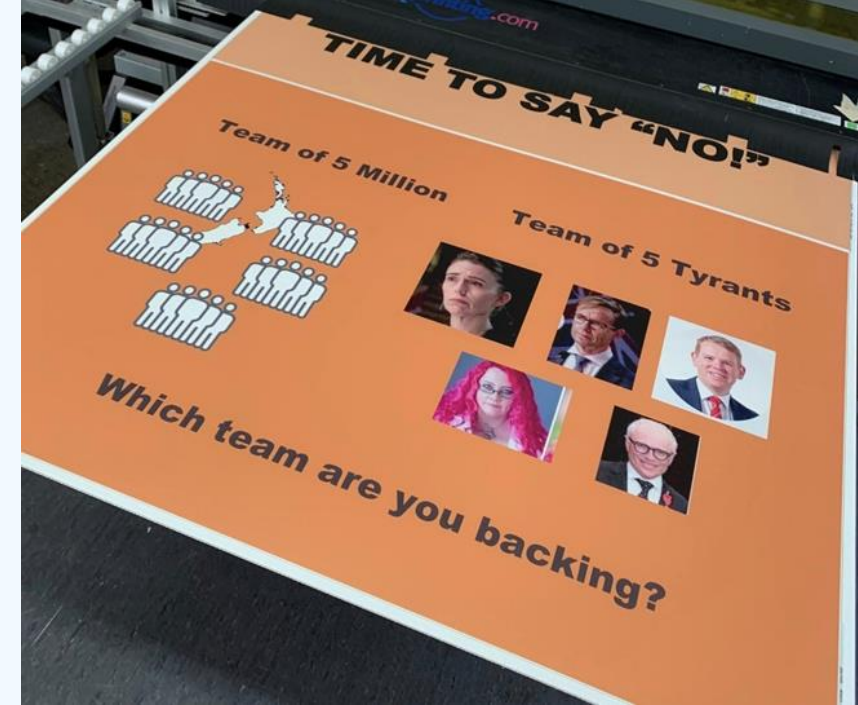
Te kaupare i te mōhiohio hē ki te Hauora ā-Iwi

Thursday 9 February 2023

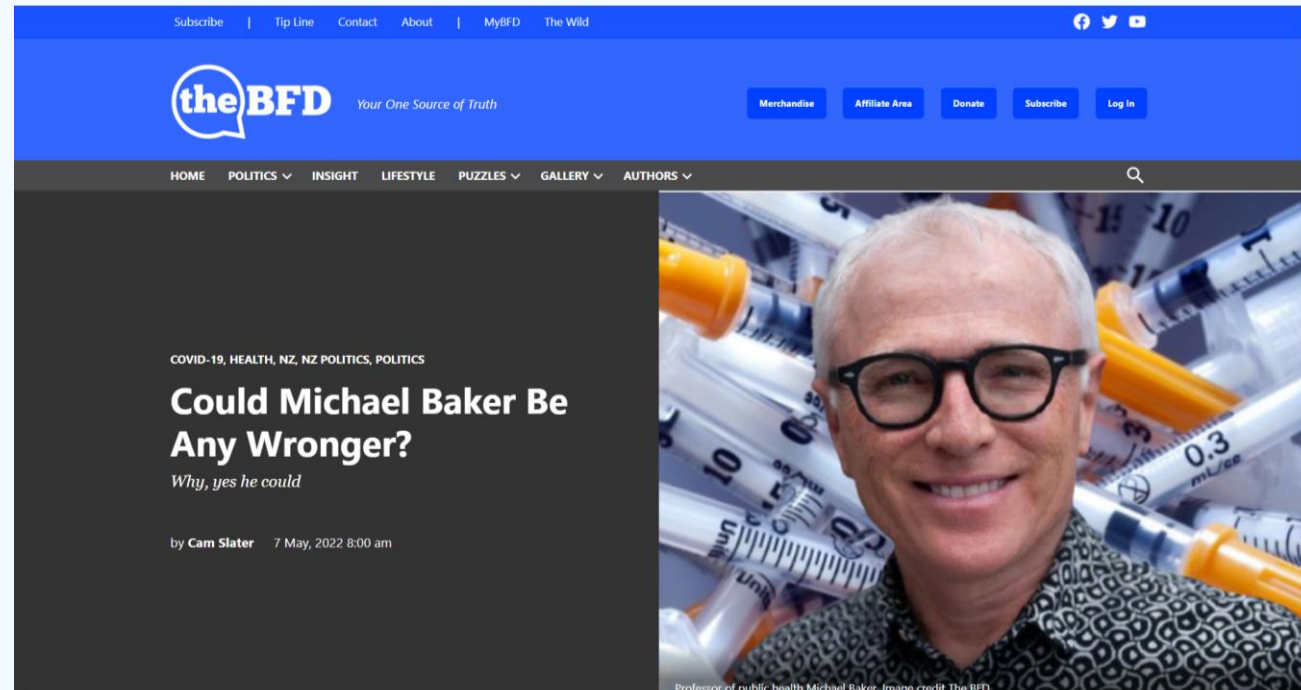
2023 PUBLIC HEALTH
SUMMER SCHOOL



Protecting the messenger



Voices for Freedom billboard campaign starting Feb 2022

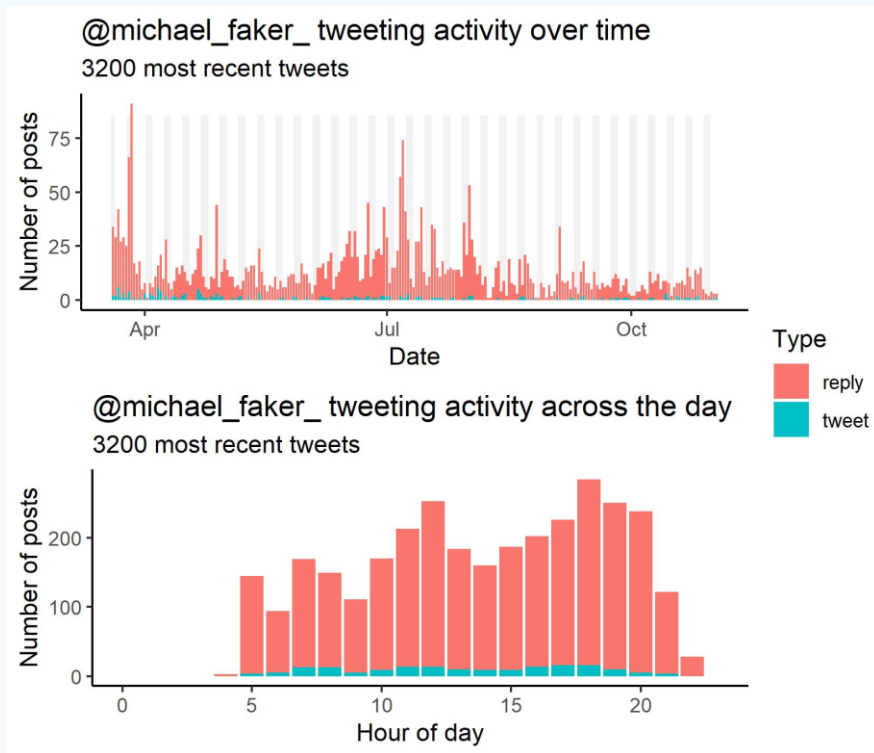


Cam Slater, right wing blogger, 7 May 2022

Protecting the messenger

Fake account

- Median of 12 tweets per day during 2022
- Active from 5.00am to 9.00pm most days



← **Dr Michael Baker - double boosted**
1,331 Tweets

national

Covid-19 modellers uncertain when to expect return to stage 2



⋮ **Follow**

Dr Michael Baker - double boosted
@michael_faker_

New Zealand of the year 2023. MBE - services to the media. Covid commentator. He/Him.

📍 Wellington City, New Zealand 📅 Joined January 2022

218 Following **545** Followers

Not followed by anyone you're following

Conclusion



- Advancing public health depends on well-functioning democratic processes, including public sector infrastructure for strategic thinking, delivering interventions, and research and evaluation.
- Fundamentally, it depends on addressing the determinants of health, including the commercial determinants of health, which requires strong democratic institutions and processes.