

# on mas

WINTER 2020

Ravi Dass

## An eye on social enterprise

**Greater good** Social science / Did the lockdown make us better people?

**Money** Economy / Navigating the great uncertainty

**Good living** Travel / Islands in the stream (Kiwi style)

mas

# on mas

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For more stories, videos and to share your views, visit the MAS Hub at [hub.mas.co.nz](http://hub.mas.co.nz). The hub is the go-to site for features from *OnMAS* issues, as well as helpful information and useful tips on all the things that matter to us – and to you. You can easily share stories from the hub with friends and family, see videos that delve deeper and have your say on issues affecting you and your community.

## SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION

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## From MAS

What a year 2020 has been – and we're only halfway through it.

Here in New Zealand, we seem to have avoided the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic, and now we're turning our minds to what we do as a business to support Members in the new post-COVID normal.

MAS was established in 1921 as a mutual, and events like the pandemic demonstrate the importance of the mutual ethos and a collective approach. We're grateful MAS was not seriously affected by the lockdown, since that meant we were in a position to carry on meeting Member needs and able to offer a relief package for Members who were struggling.

Fittingly, then, this issue of *OnMAS* looks at the importance of community in this post-pandemic world. Our cover story is one of two profiles that discuss what's being done to treat avoidable blindness and sight issues here in New Zealand and around the Pacific.

We find out about the MAS Foundation's first round of grants, which saw almost \$350,000 distributed to

10 organisations working on COVID-19-related programmes in New Zealand communities.

We consider how our brains are wired for social connection and how students have been affected by the lack of hands-on tutoring and we look at some of the ways our Members have been working to help their communities during the lockdown.

I hope you enjoy this issue of *OnMAS*, and remember we are here to support you. If you have any concerns or questions about your insurance or investments, please contact one of our advisers to see how we can help.

*Kātahi rā te tau ko te 2020, me te mea hoki - kua tae ki te hauruatanga noa iho.*

*Ki Aotearoa nei, te āhua nei kua karo tātou i ngā tino taumahatanga i tau ki whenua kē i tāwāhi, ā, ka huri ināiane ngā whakaaro o tēnei pakihi ki te tautoko i ngā Mema i tēnei ao hou [whai muri i te Mate Korona].*

*Nō te tau 1921 a MAS i tīmata ai hei pakihi tauawhiawhi nō ngā mema, ā, ka whakaatu ngā kaupapa pēnei i te urutū i te whakahirahira o ngā mātāpono tauawhiawhi me te kotahitanga. Māringanui mātou kāore a MAS i kaha raru i te taratahi, i te mea i taea tonutia e mātou te whakaea i ngā wawata o ngā Mema me te rarau i ngā pūtea tautoko mō ngā Mema e raru ana.*

*Nā whai anō, ka aro atu tēnei wāhanga o te OnMAS ki te hira*

*o tēnei mea te hapori i tēnei ao hou whai muri i te urutā. Ko tā mātou kaupapa matua i te uhi-pukapuka ko tētahi tuhinga (o ngā tuhinga e rua) e matapaki ana i ngā mea e mahia ana ki te whakaora i te mate kerepō e taea te karo, ki Aotearoa nei, ki te Moananui-a-Kiwa whānui hoki.*

*Ka whakamōhio atu i ngā tukunga pūtea o te tukunga tuatahi o te MAS Foundation, he kaupapa i tuku i te neke atu i te \$300,000 ki ngā rōpū 10 e kawe ana i ngā mahi e hāngai ana ki ngā kaupapa KOWHEORI-19 i ngā hapori huri noa i Aotearoa.*

*Ka wānangahia te wāhi o te whanaungatanga ki te roro o te tangata; ngā uauatanga kua pā atu ki ngā ākonga [kua mahue] [nā te kore] te tautoko waiwai kanohi-ki-te-kanohi; ka titiro hoki ki ētahi huarahi i tautoko ai ngā Mema i ō rātou hapori i ēnei rā o te taratahi.*

*Ko taku tino wawata, ka pai tēnei wāhanga o OnMAS ki a koe, kia kua e wareware, kei kōnei mātou ki te āwhina i a koe. Mehemea he pātai, he āwangawanga rānei e pā ana ki tō inihua, ō haumi moni rānei, tēnā, me whakapā atu ki tētahi o ō mātou kaitautoko, māna koe e āwhina.*

*Kia kaha, kia māia, kia manawanui.*

**Mike Davy**  
General Manager, Marketing  
and Products

## On the cover



MAS Member and  
optometrist Ravi Dass.

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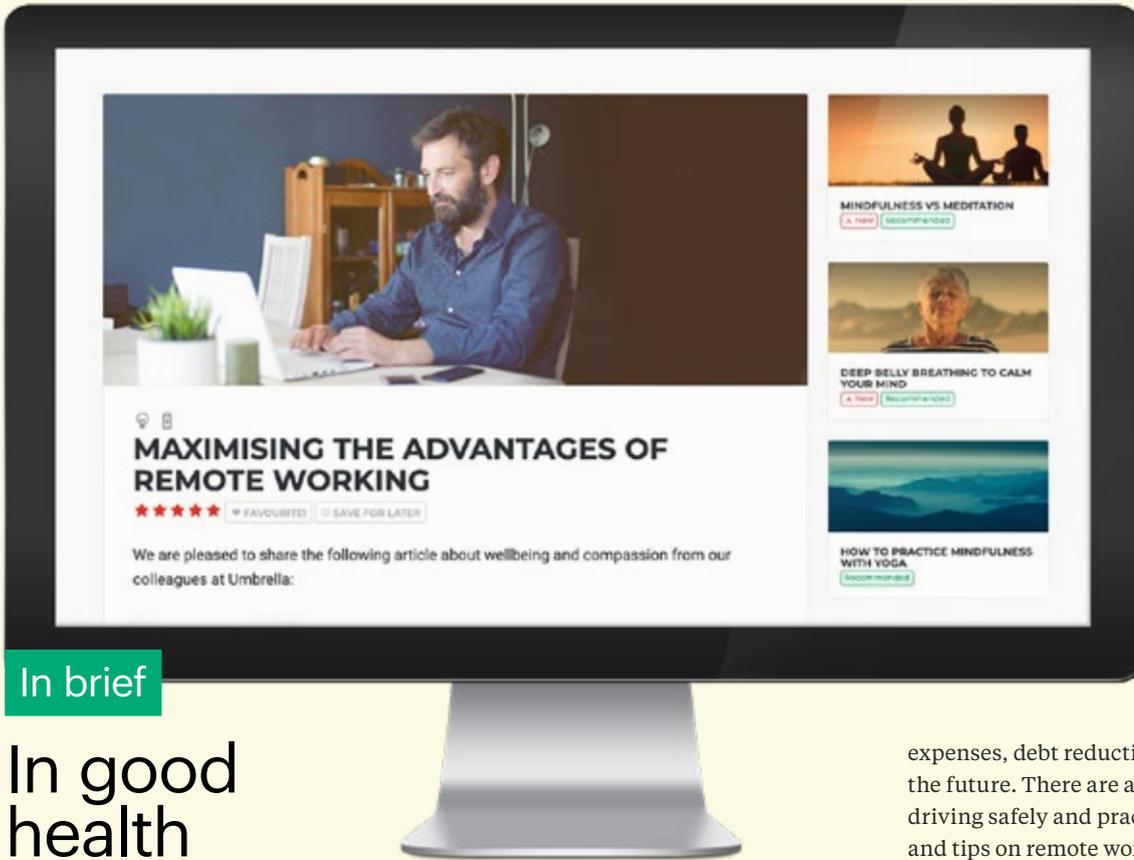
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# News briefs



## In brief

## In good health

MAS's new health and wellbeing portal can help you improve your mental and physical wellness. Best of all, it's free for MAS Members, their families and friends.

MAS is challenging its Members to improve their health and wellbeing in four closely interlocked areas: physical, mental, spiritual and financial.

The new MAS Wellbeing Portal is free to join and offers a personalised experience to help Members develop a holistic approach to managing their wellbeing in a way that is designed to be fun, easy and engaging.

After completing a short needs analysis in the form of a questionnaire, the portal delivers resources tailored to each user's

specific needs and goals, helping busy people make healthy life choices and improve their overall wellbeing and quality of life. The content is regularly updated and is designed to respond to users' needs.

The portal also provides users access to special offers with discounts available on health-related products, which include shakti mats, Fitbits, HelloFresh meal kits and Les Mills On Demand memberships.

Developed in conjunction with Synergy Health, the portal is loaded with different challenges depending on your needs. You could try the Sugar Crash challenge to reduce your sugar intake over two weeks or Money Talks challenges to help you allocate future income to your expected living

expenses, debt reduction and saving for the future. There are also challenges for driving safely and practising gratitude and tips on remote working.

Challenges offer small incremental ways to improve your health, with most requiring just minutes each day to complete and update how you're tracking.

More than 800 Members have signed up since the portal launched in April, with the most popular areas being those focused on physical and mental wellbeing as well as tips for improving sleep.

MAS and Synergy Health take privacy very seriously. Any personal information entered into the portal cannot be viewed by anyone else, including MAS, so Members are encouraged to be as open and honest as they want to be.

To find out more or to sign up for the MAS Wellbeing Portal, visit [mas.co.nz/mas-wellbeing-portal](https://mas.co.nz/mas-wellbeing-portal).

# One hundred years of memories

100 YEARS OF LOGOS

In 2021, MAS will celebrate 100 years of care and service for our Members, and we want you to share your memories with us.

MAS was established in 1921 in Napier by a group of doctors, and over the past 100 years, we've grown to more than 37,000 Members as we've welcomed in more professionals from different sectors.

Ahead of our centenary, we're looking for memorabilia, photos, stories and people who were central to the growth and success of MAS. Was your relative one of the first Members of MAS? Do you have items that show the way the professions have evolved over the past 100 years? We'd love to hear from you. Email us at [onmas@mas.co.nz](mailto:onmas@mas.co.nz) and share your memories with us.



## MAS is now emailing policy documents

As part of our ongoing commitment to sustainability, policy documents, including annual policy renewal notices, are now being emailed to Members.

Previously, policy documents have been sent by post, but switching to emailed versions will reduce the amount of paper we use and ensure Members can always access their policy documents wherever they are and whenever suits them.

We have been inviting Members to either confirm the email address they would like us to use or register a new email address. If you have not yet confirmed these details, please email [documents@mas.co.nz](mailto:documents@mas.co.nz) with your name and your Member number.

Alternatively, you can log in to the Member area, choose the **My details** option and update your primary email address.

## Keep your diary free

Join meeting

The MAS Annual General Meeting is being held this year on 26 August and, for the first time in our history, will be held solely online. It's a great opportunity to hear about MAS's key activities over the past year including business results, major milestones and membership achievements.

We'll provide a formal invitation to the AGM when we send out the Annual Report in early August. At the same time, we will also provide forms for Full Members to vote on business items at the meeting, including for the two Practitioner Trustee roles.

If you have any questions about the AGM or your eligibility to vote, please email [agm@mas.co.nz](mailto:agm@mas.co.nz).

# Charities with Vision

Maintaining good eyesight is something most of us take for granted in the developed world, but it's a major problem in some underprivileged communities here in New Zealand and in developing countries in our region. *OnMAS* looks at how two charities are helping people improve their vision and the difference this work is making to their communities.

*Opposite / Founder of Foureyes the Foundation  
Ravi Dass  
01 / Titahi Bay School pupil Bronté Reti, who  
received glasses from the Foureyes Foundation*

## An eye on the future

One in 10 children have issues with their eyesight, but many of these problems go undiagnosed. The Foureyes Foundation is working to identify these school-age children in the Wellington region and supply them with glasses.

Titahi Bay's Bronté Reti is feeling the force of clear vision thanks to his new Star Wars glasses.

The seven-year-old could still have been struggling with blurred vision if he hadn't received free eye screening and testing through the Foureyes Foundation.

Established in 2016, the charity has screened more than 5,000 children in 30 schools across Wairarapa and Porirua. More than 500 were referred for further eye testing, and of this group, more than 300 received glasses.

The initiative is spearheaded by MAS Member and optometrist Ravi Dass, owner of social enterprise business Mr Foureyes, which funds the work of the Foundation.

While a system is already in place to screen children's vision at a national level, Ravi says it's inevitable some vision problems will be missed. Left undiagnosed too long, the risk is that children will slip through the system, leading to learning difficulties and poorer outcomes later in life.

Bronté's mum Viv says the family had no idea that Bronté was having trouble with his eyesight, and since he started wearing glasses, he has suffered from fewer headaches and is now watching TV from the couch rather than sitting close to the screen.

"At first we were quite shocked. We had no idea that Bronté was having trouble with his vision at all as he hadn't mentioned it and it wasn't obvious."

Bronté is so happy with the process and his new Star Wars glasses he now wants to be an optometrist when he grows up.

"I want to be a YouTuber until I grow up, and then I'm going to be a builder, doctor,

DJ, dentist and now an optometrist too. I love wearing my glasses. I can see from a far distance like when I'm sitting on the mat far away from the board or computer at school and after-school care ... it's not blurry any more."

### Unequal screening

Ravi says the Foundation's findings show one in 10 children need glasses. The issue is even more pronounced in low-decile schools, where students are twice as likely to experience trouble with their eyesight. Māori and Pacific Island communities also see higher rates, he says.

"What we're trying to do is to reduce barriers for children through free vision screening, free eye tests and free glasses

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for children and in the long run, this allows them to be more engaged in school and has a positive outcome for their schooling.”

The flow-on effect from reading and learning difficulties at primary school grows exponentially as the child grows up, with Māori and Pacific youth four times less likely to go on to tertiary education, putting them at greater risk of material hardship.

### School screening

When Ravi started Mr Foureyes, he aimed his work at low-decile schools, launching a pilot programme at Titahi Bay School in conjunction with KidsCan. He takes his screening machine to schools where he can get through the entire school in a day. From there, students who need further testing are notified.

Mr Foureyes also has clinics that operate out of general practices that serve Māori communities – in Maraeroa in Wellington, Ora Toa in Porirua and Wahiora in Wairarapa. Ravi says the free eye exams are partially subsidised by the medical centres.

If glasses are required, they are either heavily subsidised at about \$25 a pair or free if the family cannot afford them.

The business allows Ravi to volunteer his time, and the Foundation is funded by an ongoing Givealittle campaign. He is looking to grow the not-for-profit work outside of the Wellington region, with interest from schools as far afield as Northland.



02

02 / Ravi Dass checking Bronté Reti's eyesight  
03 / Bronté says his eyesight is not blurry any more



**Every \$15 donated can get a child into glasses, which we know has a direct impact on their ability to focus and learn in the classroom.**

Ravi says it's satisfying to hear back from teachers, parents and students about the positive impact their glasses have had on their learning.

“I've always been a socially minded person, and it's really rewarding to hear kids are doing well in school as a result of their glasses. We are proud of the work to date, but we know there are still kids sitting in classrooms today who are struggling to learn or concentrate due to poor eyesight.

“Every \$15 donated can get a child into glasses, which we know has a direct impact on their ability to focus and learn in the classroom.”



03

Visit [mrfoureyes.co.nz](http://mrfoureyes.co.nz) to learn more about Ravi's work or [givealittle.co.nz/org/foureyesfoundation](http://givealittle.co.nz/org/foureyesfoundation) to donate.



04 / Village chief and keen gardener Jesse from Vanuatu had his eyesight restored after developing cataracts 05 / The Fred Hollows Foundation NZ Engagement Director Margi Mellso



05

Fred Hollows was born in 1929 and raised in Dunedin and Palmerston North. He attended Otago Medical School before training in ophthalmology in the UK. He began practising in Australia in the early 1960s and was moved by the plight of remote Aboriginal communities where he noted an alarming incidence of trachoma, an eye disease that can lead to blindness that is prevalent in developing societies where hygiene is poor.

Determined to help, Fred looked for ways to reduce the cost of surgery, inventing the much cheaper intraocular lens for a fraction of the original cost. He established factories in Nepal and Eritrea – both of which are still operating today.

The intraocular lens that Fred invented costs \$5 each, but combined with other consumables, the total cost of the surgery is \$25. Even this is too expensive for people in many developing countries, so the Foundation was established to help fund surgeries and train eye specialists for communities in need.

The New Zealand arm of the Foundation began operations in the Pacific and established the Pacific Eye Institute to provide eye care services in Fiji and also to train eye doctors and nurses throughout the Pacific.

More than 300 doctors and nurses have been trained so far, and they return to their home countries to

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## Lens on the Pacific

The Fred Hollows Foundation NZ has been working in the Pacific Islands for decades to cure preventable blindness.

Vanuatu weatherman Edgar devoted his professional life to reading weather patterns around the world. Proud of his work, he was responsible for making sure his country's population was aware of any changes in weather conditions, including the cyclones that hammer the region several times every wet season. He found the work important and satisfying.

But when Edgar started getting cataracts and losing his sight, suddenly his ability to work slipped away, affecting the entire community who depended on his reports.

Edgar's is just one of thousands of stories in the Pacific Islands of people affected by preventable sight loss. The Fred Hollows Foundation NZ has been working in the Pacific for 18 years, restoring eyesight and training new generations of eye doctors.

For MAS Member Margi Mellso, it's stories like these that drive her work.

Margi is the Engagement Director for The Fred Hollows Foundation NZ, and she looks for opportunities to raise awareness and donations for the work the not-for-profit does in the Pacific.

She is particularly drawn to the Foundation's ethos of ending avoidable blindness by teaching, rather than charity.

"In some ways, it's an anti-charity we want to ensure that we do ourselves out of a job. The idea is that, instead of going in to do the work ourselves, we train local eye doctors and nurses to do the job for their own communities," Margi says.

06 / Dr Nola Pikacha treats a patient in the Solomon Islands

07 / A patient during a vision check at the eye clinic at Madang Hospital, Papua New Guinea

08 / A patient recovers after cataract surgery in Tonga

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 treat their communities. The Fred Hollows Foundation NZ fully funds the scholarships of these trainee eye doctors and nurses but relies on donations from individuals and organisations to support this work.

Margi says it's a huge commitment. Doctors spend an additional four years' training on top of their initial medical studies and have to live away from their home country, family or children during this time.

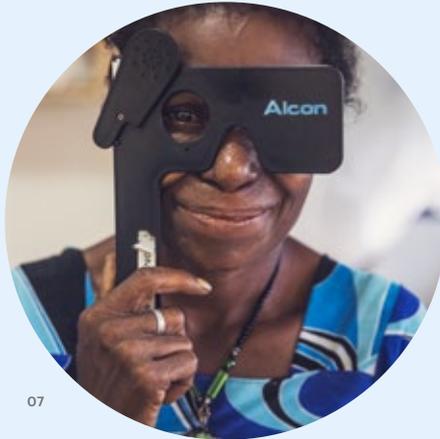
"The doctors have to travel a considerable way for the speciality training, and when they return back to their country, there are often limited mentorship programmes and the hospitals are not in any way equipped the way New Zealand hospitals are."

Once they are set up in eye clinics, the doctors could be doing anything from surgery for cataracts to laser eye surgery and treating eye trauma.

08



06



07

The more doctors working in one country, the better the overall care for the population.

"We now have the requisite number of eye doctors in the Solomon Islands, which has enabled some to sub-specialise, so it is building a robust eye care system, whereas in Tonga, there's only one eye doctor."

While the biggest cause of avoidable blindness in the Pacific is cataracts, diabetes is a growing issue, which can cause diabetic retinopathy. According to the International Diabetes Foundation, in 2018, Pacific nations made up nine of the 10 countries with the highest rates of the disease per capita.

The rising rates of diabetes are linked to socioeconomic conditions that see many people selling the fresh fruit and

**In some ways, it's an anti-charity. We want to ensure that we do ourselves out of a job.**

Margi Mellisop

vegetables they grow to be able to buy large bags of white rice, known to be a big contributor to the disease.

"If you travel to Vanuatu, you are aware there are not a lot of obese people or fast food, but type 2 diabetes is still a huge issue. People produce fresh fruit, but they can't afford to buy it themselves. So they will sell it to buy a 20kg bag of rice that will feed their family for a couple of weeks," Margi says.

Globally, The Fred Hollows Foundation is looking at ways to reduce the cost of treatment for diabetic retinopathy. If successful, the initiative could benefit communities and countries around the world affected by increasing rates of type 2 diabetes. ♥

# Our response to COVID-19 for Members

While medical professionals have been at the frontline in the fight against COVID-19, many have faced financial stress due to decreased patronage in medical practices and an increase in costs related to COVID-19 prevention.

That's why MAS put together a significant relief package for its Members, built around a \$2 million hardship fund for those who have found themselves in financial difficulty.

The package also includes a pass-back to Members with motor vehicle insurance of savings that MAS has made on reduced motor vehicle claims, a series of grants from the MAS Foundation to community organisations involved in the fight against COVID-19 and a broader series of health and wellbeing initiatives for Members.

Chief Executive Martin Stokes says MAS was set up in 1921 to help support doctors, and continuing to protect Members in the medical professions remains a primary focus as the nation emerges from our biggest ever public health crisis.

"We see it as our duty to ensure our Members are able to get through in these challenging times and, importantly, retain insurance coverage wherever possible.

"We are particularly aware of our responsibility to New Zealand's medical professionals who have been so crucial in the past few months providing safe testing and care for Kiwis with COVID-19.

"We believe the resilience of the professional sector is vital to New Zealand, and our Members across the professions will remain core to regrowing our economy as we transition beyond lockdown, so we want to do our part to ensure they can keep working and providing Kiwis with world-class care and support going forward," Stokes says.



## Relief fund

A \$2 million relief fund has been set up to help Members retain their insurance cover if they find themselves in financial hardship.

Those who are unable to pay their regular bills and have exhausted other options provided by the government or their bank can apply for this help from MAS. If they qualify, MAS will pay the premiums for their general insurance, life, disability and income protection policies for three months.

Members wishing to apply to the relief fund should email [hardship@mas.co.nz](mailto:hardship@mas.co.nz)



## Motor vehicle Claim savings

With fewer people driving during the lockdown, any savings MAS has made on motor vehicle claims are being passed back to Members with motor vehicle insurance.



## Community grants

The recently established MAS Foundation (see pages 10–12) made almost \$350,000 of grants in April for COVID-related relief and recovery initiatives around the country. These grants are helping communities where needs are greatest, yet their wellbeing is persistently compromised.

Find out more at [mas.co.nz/about-mas/mas-foundation/grant-stories](https://mas.co.nz/about-mas/mas-foundation/grant-stories)



## Health and wellbeing

MAS is funding three free counselling sessions for each Member with independent counselling agency EAP Services. In addition, MAS has launched an online health and wellbeing portal that is free for every Member and their family. (see page 2) ♥



# MAS Foundation makes its first grants

The MAS Foundation delivered its first round of funding in April, donating almost \$350,000 to 10 not-for-profits focused on helping their communities fight COVID-19.

## Chatbot eases healthcare system pressure

Almost half a million messages have been sent through two contagious disease chatbots, created by Kiwi doctors to help deliver accurate information to the public on measles and COVID-19.

Canaan Aumua, a public health registrar and part-time GP, and Sanjeev Krishna, who works in urgent care and as a teaching fellow at the University of Auckland, set up their first chatbot in October 2019 to give reliable advice about measles via Facebook Messenger as the 2019 measles outbreak was gaining momentum in New Zealand and the Pacific Islands.

Canaan says they were concerned by the level of false information being shared on social media about measles, and with two million Kiwis on Facebook, it made sense to create a bot that would operate through Facebook Messenger.

A chatbot is an automated question and answer function that appears on a website and can answer a huge volume of questions in multiple languages in a short time. Most chatbots also have machine learning capabilities that allow them to become more effective over time as they learn what kind of information users want and how best to present that information.

“There was a stigma around vaccination for measles, which was something we were really trying to combat, and we thought what’s an easy way to get accurate information out there and still be able to do that at scale. The easiest, most innovative way to do that was a chatbot on Facebook Messenger,” Canaan says.



01

The result was Mitara, which ran through the Stop Measles NZ Facebook page. It launched in October 2019 and has racked up about 250,000 messages to people in New Zealand, the Pacific Islands and further afield.

With the addition of general practitioner Cole Rudolph to their team, the trio saw the potential of using the same approach with other public health issues, and as they watched the COVID-19 crisis escalate, they created Āmio, a chatbot to disseminate the most up-to-date information from reliable sources. Since February 2020, the chatbot has sent more than 240,000 messages.

Canaan said Facebook Messenger was an ideal platform for the chatbot because it was easily updated and already an important part of many people's everyday communication networks, which was especially important in the early days of the crisis when information was changing so fast.

"We'd update every time there was a new announcement, like early on when border restrictions were changing rapidly, and there were questions such as whether or not to use ibuprofen. We find anything that comes up in the media stimulates the questions people ask."

They also incorporated an algorithm into the chatbot that used the symptom

checklist to allow users to determine whether or not they need to be tested. So far, more than 4,000 COVID-19 test self-assessments have been completed.

"This helped relieve the pressure on the healthcare sector, especially early on when people were calling Healthline and taking 10 hours to get through to get simple information. It also helped stop GPs getting bogged down in similar questioning."

Both chatbots provide a very smooth user experience, which makes it surprising that none of the team members had previous experience with chatbot development. Instead, they relied on a combination of Google searches, YouTube videos and hours of experimenting.

"We had such a wealth of experience from the measles chatbot so transferring that knowledge to COVID-19 was easily done. We had it up and running in six days with us all still working full-time, spending whatever time we could on it."

"Because we were working in the clinical side of things, we knew what we needed to build, which made the development side of things easier."

*Opposite / Ark Health Discovery cofounders (from left) Sanjeev Krishna, Cole Rudolph and Canaan Aumua*

*01 / Āmio chatbot is designed to help provide reliable advice and information during the COVID-19 pandemic*

## Other recipients

GOODFELLAS PROJECT – MEN'S HEALTH TRUST NZ  
[menshealthnz.org.nz](https://menshealthnz.org.nz)

The trust promotes good health for New Zealand men, and the MAS Foundation funding will support the trust's new Good fellas project. **\$60,000–\$90,000**

TŪ TAIKĀKĀ – TE WHĀNAU TOKOTOKORANGI TRUST  
[tokotokorangi.co.nz](https://tokotokorangi.co.nz)

This Rotorua-based trust is a kaupapa Māori organisation that provides health and disability services to youth who are most at risk. MAS Foundation funding is going to support a new project to build a community-based programme for the most at-risk young people in Rotorua. **\$78,310**

RAPID EVIDENCE REVIEW ONLINE PLATFORM – NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH INNOVATION (NIHI)  
[nihi.auckland.ac.nz](https://nihi.auckland.ac.nz)

NIHI, based at the University of Auckland, is currently bridging academia, policy makers and decision makers. MAS Foundation funding will support the development of an online platform to make this process faster and less labour-intensive. **\$16,000**

*Continued on page 12 >>*

<< Continued from page 11

PACIFIC LEADERSHIP FORUM

[plf.org.nz](http://plf.org.nz)

The Pacific Leadership Forum represents a network of senior Pasifika leaders from inter-denominational church and community groups across New Zealand. The MAS Foundation funding will help the Forum coordinate their leaders to better educate their communities about COVID-19 and the precautions they need to take and to build communities' long-term resilience and help them adapt to the post-COVID-19 environment.

**\$50,000**

ŌTARA HEALTH CHARITABLE TRUST

[otarahealth.org.nz](http://otarahealth.org.nz)

Ōtara Health has been part of the Ōtara community since 1998, providing a wide range of social and community services to help break the inter-generational effects of poverty. The grant to Ōtara Health will boost the capacity of this organisation to assist members of their community to access other available help and resources.

**\$50,000**

WELLINGTON STUDENT VOLUNTEER ARMY

[vuwsa.org.nz/sva](http://vuwsa.org.nz/sva)

The Wellington Student Volunteer Army mobilised to help those in need during the COVID-19 lockdown by doing a range of things such as collecting shopping and running errands for people with mobility issues. The MAS Foundation funding will help the Wellington Student Volunteer Army continue to provide its services throughout 2020 as the COVID-19 situation develops.

**\$11,500**



**This is the first funding we've received. It was a welcome bit of a breather for us after having self-funded everything so far.**

*Canaan Aumua*

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The three doctors have established a social enterprise, Ark Health Discovery, which received \$38,500 in funding from the MAS Foundation to help them grow.

“This is the first funding we've received. It was a welcome bit of a breather for us after having self-funded everything so far.”

Canaan says they plan to use the money to help develop new chatbots for diseases such as diabetes as well as translating the existing chatbots into more languages. Amio can be used in Mandarin Chinese as well as English.

“As a social enterprise, we aim to provide solutions that are freely accessible for anyone to use. We're looking to progress into non-communicable diseases that have a heavy burden on New Zealand.”



TUKAU COMMUNITY FUND

Established in 2017, the Tukau Community Fund and Legacy Clothing Fund to enhance rangatiratanga (self-determination) and empower the Moerewa and Kawakawa communities in the Far North. The MAS Foundation funding is going to support this group, particularly to provide free reusable sanitary products for women.

**\$10,000**

TE KŌHAO HEALTH

[tekohahealth.co.nz](http://tekohahealth.co.nz)

Te Kōhao Health has been operating for 25 years across the Waikato region, providing healthcare, education, and social and justice services to around 8,500 people. The MAS Foundation funding will help Te Kōhao take care of whānau as winter approaches, including providing food, blankets and other necessities.

**\$10,000**

HOME GUARD

[homeguardnz.org](http://homeguardnz.org)

Home Guard was founded in Auckland in early March 2020 to support New Zealand's healthcare workforce in the face of COVID-19. The MAS Foundation funding will help support Home Guard and allow it to develop its service.

**\$5,000**

*The Student Volunteer Army at work*





The Peace Palace in The Hague

## Rising star descends on The Hague



Last year, Madison Dobie, who had been a lawyer at Engineering New Zealand, won the New Zealand Law Society's Young In-House Lawyer of the Year, an award sponsored by MAS. She used the award's scholarship to travel to The Hague to undertake an intensive three-week study programme on international and human rights law. *OnMAS* spoke to Madison about her experience of The Hague and what she's been up to since.

**What was your experience studying at The Hague like?** Since I was young, I was fascinated by The Hague and its Peace Palace. It's one of the most important places in the world for international and human rights law and houses the International Court of Justice, the Permanent Court of Arbitration and The Hague Academy of International Law. Professionals and students come from all over the world to attend their three-week intensive course on international law, which is taught by world-renowned scholars in international law.

We were taught by experts from Germany, Canada, Argentina, Brazil, France and Cameroon. We also received guest lectures from judges of the International Court of Justice and International Criminal Court and international ambassadors.

**What did you take away from the experience?** Without a doubt, the people I met were the highlight of the experience. As the course was so intensive, we became very close and spent long hours in the Peace Palace Library discussing our countries' respective challenges and successes. It was truly special to meet young lawyers from all around the globe who are passionate about rights protection and international law.

**How did winning Young In-House Lawyer of the Year help make this happen?**

I am incredibly grateful to MAS for sponsoring the award and to Engineering New Zealand for nominating me because I wouldn't have been able to attend The Hague Academy and have this experience without the award scholarship. Experiences like this make all my struggles and hard work worth it.

**You were also listed in the Rising Star list of up and coming lawyers. How did that feel?**

It was an absolute honour to be included on the Rising Star list. In July 2019, I joined the Public Law Litigation Team at Dentons Kensington Swan. Our team provides dispute resolution and public law advice to a wide variety of clients, including central and local government, private companies, Crown entities and regulatory bodies.

Making the shift from in-house to private practice was nerve-racking, but receiving such a nomination from Dentons Kensington Swan was a huge vote of confidence. I am especially grateful to my partners Linda Clark and Hayden Wilson for their support and faith in me. ♥

# Did the lockdown make us *better people?*

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the world in ways that seemed unthinkable at the start of the year, inflicting major damage to the world's health and global economy in the process. But if there has been a silver lining to the lockdown at all, it has been the reminder that New Zealanders need each other more than ever.

New Zealand's lockdown had barely begun when social scientists started thinking about how the experience might influence the way Kiwis think about the world around them.

There was plenty of cause for concern. The immediate health and economic damage is obvious. Early on in the lockdown, figures from New Zealand Police and Women's Refuge indicated levels of domestic violence were increasing. And then there was the harder to measure but no less serious mental health cost of the enforced isolation.

On the other hand, the lockdown also seems to have had an immediate impact on our sense of and need for social connectedness with each other.

Former Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor Sir Peter Gluckman noted the level of community compliance and collective purpose shown during the fight against COVID-19 has rarely been seen outside wartime. News coverage highlighted acts of neighbourhood solidarity, and a Reid Research Poll found 91% of New Zealanders backed the government's call to put the country into lockdown.

So why did the lockdown provoke this response, and will this crisis have any lasting effects on our sense of national solidarity?

## **Our social brains**

Neuroscientists like Matthew Lieberman from UCLA wouldn't be surprised by the heightened sense of social cohesion fostered by the lockdown. Lieberman's 2013 book *Social: Why Our Brains are Wired to Connect* looked to neuroscience to explain why our need for social connection is our most powerful instinct.

Winning money, for example, gives us a positive neural charge, but so does giving it away. Dr Lieberman observed how pleasure centres in the brain fire up equally under MRI examination when giving and receiving.

Our brains have become wired to harmonise and connect with each other, he explains, as an evolutionary response. As humans have overcome challenges in the world around us through social connection and cooperation, the norms of altruism and cohesion became ingrained in our neural networks as a species.

### **Lack of connection**

But there's a downside to our neural wiring for social connectivity. Lieberman's research also observed that negative social interactions – or the lack of them – produces the same neural responses as physical pain. Emotional pain, like being ignored, can generate the same neural activity as an injury like a sore leg.

This explains why loneliness and social isolation are growing burdens on health systems across the globe. Dr Sue Varma, founding medical director of the World Trade Center mental health programme at New York University, was recently quoted in *The New Yorker* as saying the health consequences of prolonged loneliness are equivalent to smoking 15 cigarettes a day. The condition can prompt cardiovascular disease as well as stroke, obesity or premature death.

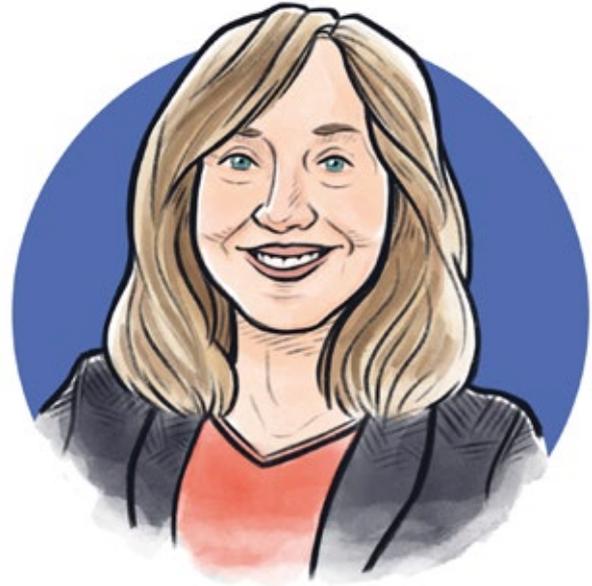
Around the world, governments are taking these findings seriously. In 2018, the UK established a Minister for Loneliness and in many countries, doctors have started giving socially isolated patients social prescriptions that refer patients to support in the community in order to improve their health and wellbeing.

Clinical psychologist and MAS Member Fiona Howard says social support acts as a buffer to life's stressors and provides vital stimulation and meaning in our lives.

“Without connection to others, we have little opportunity for emotional support or to maintain perspective during adverse events.”

In times of crisis, she says, many people instinctively reach out and connect with others. This was seen in Christchurch after the 2010 and 2011 earthquakes, and it has happened again during the lockdown.

“People were able to give and receive care, compassion and help through connection. People were able to help each other endure and process difficult experiences. People were able to find meaning in what they were going through and join in a sense of community spirit,” Fiona says.



Fiona Howard

**People were able to find meaning in what they were going through and join in a sense of community spirit.**

### **Commodification weakens connection**

Community development expert Anneleise Hall from Project Lyttelton, which aims to create a vibrant sustainable community in the Canterbury port town, says the pandemic has revealed the weaknesses in our increasingly commodified lives.

“We've moved into a time when pretty much all our human activity has now been assigned with economic value. We've become quite fragmented. Through the pandemic, we've discovered we need each other more than ever and cannot put a price on social connections.”

Feeling a sense of belonging is important for our wellbeing collectively as it helps form resilient communities, she says, which are those with

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“good relationships, regular communication, a good level of trust, a sense of genuine belonging and a sense of safety”.

Resilience allows people to feel and express positive emotions even during crises, solve problems together and adapt, allowing them to cope with and recover from traumatic experiences.

### **Expect more disruptions**

The pandemic was unexpected for most of the population, but it’s unlikely to be the last time our society is challenged with a major crisis, whether that be through disasters like earthquakes or the slower disruptions caused by climate change.



Anneleise Hall

**If our material assets are stripped away, who we are and how we are become the most important things.**

Anneleise says we should see this as a “dress rehearsal” for the onslaught of climate change and use it as an opportunity to change the way we live and work.

“Maybe we’ll end up with cycles of lockdowns and there’ll be more intentional consideration of how people form their bubbles, like two or three households knocking out their back fences because we recognise we really need each other.

“Maybe we rethink where we choose to live and who we choose to live with. We could see the revitalisation of smaller communities with a sense of being in it together, like cooperative farming.”

Fiona Howard agrees, saying finding more communal ways of living will make us more resilient.

“I hope that people – particularly Pākehā like me have shifted to seeing themselves in a less individualistic way, a way that shifts the priorities we would normally have for ourselves to a more community-based orientation.”

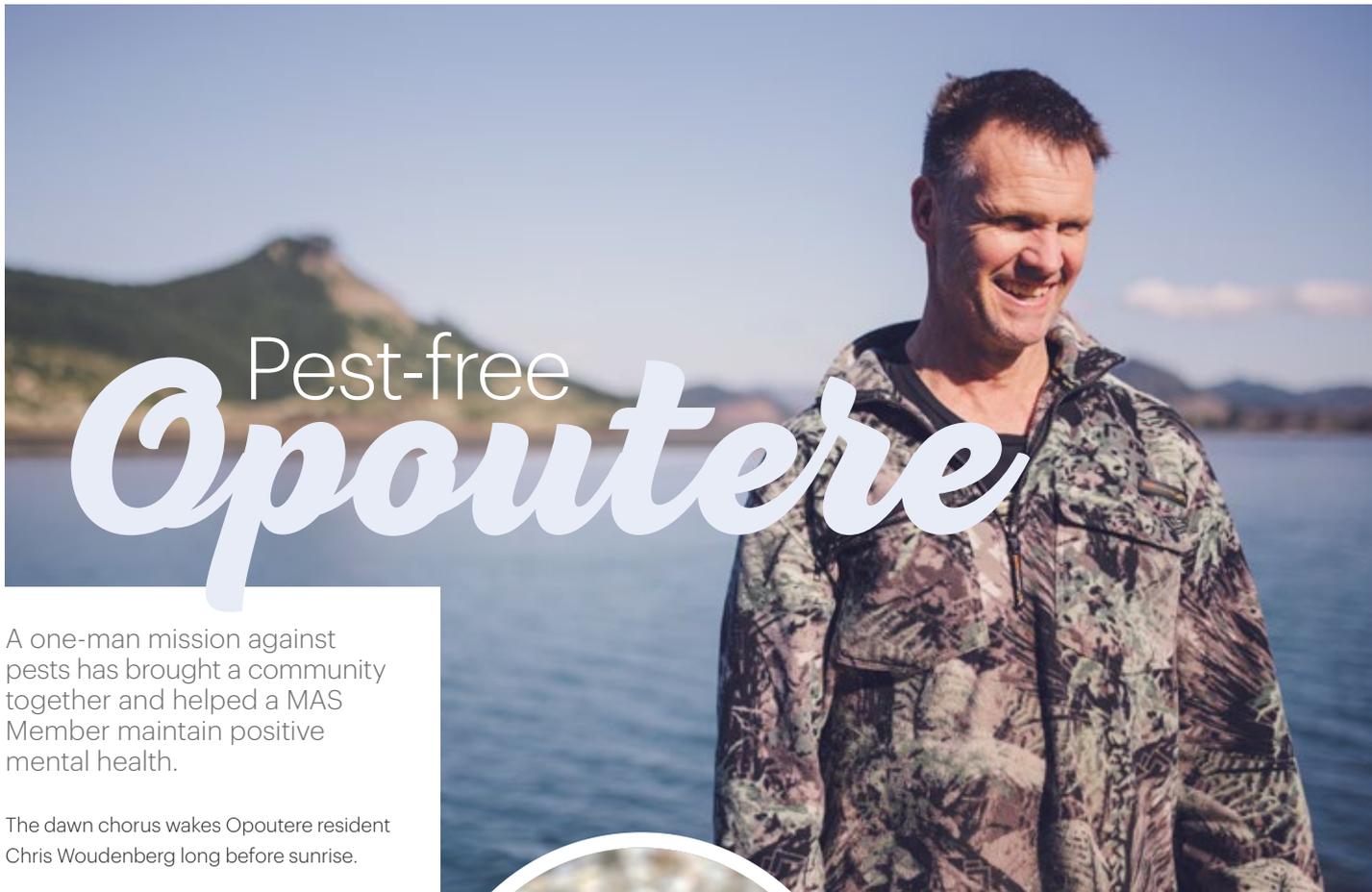
### **Back to normal?**

Whether or not we return to the old normal or seek greater connectedness and more community links is in part up to the individual. Many people want to retain some of the good parts of lockdown as we move into a less restrictive period – more time with family, a slower pace of life and a focus on the quality of their work over the sheer number of hours logged.

“We get so dazzled by the frenetic pace of the world, but I’d really urge people to deeply think through the crisis, particularly about the things you don’t want to lose,” says Anneleise.

“If our material assets are stripped away, who we are and how we are become the most important things. We should nurture these as a foundation of how we construct our lives in the future, how we value life and wellbeing and how we do good for our people and do good in the world.

“This pandemic is one of those things that can lift the veil away from our eyes and allow us to finally see clearly.” ♥



# Pest-free *Opoutere*

A one-man mission against pests has brought a community together and helped a MAS Member maintain positive mental health.

The dawn chorus wakes Opoutere resident Chris Woudenberg long before sunrise.

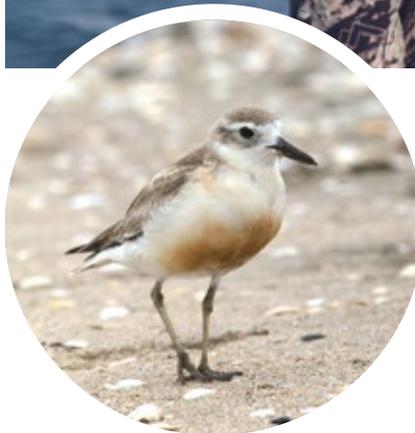
“The kākā start first,” he says. “Around 3am. The dawn chorus here is deafening, but it’s a beautiful sound.”

This wasn’t always the case. When Chris moved to the small Coromandel community about seven years ago, birdsong was a rare thing – not that he noticed at first. “You don’t always notice what’s missing – not until you get it back.”

The engineer and MAS Member soon fell in love with Opoutere and made it his personal mission to rid the area of the rats, stoats and possums that were keeping native birds away and destroying native trees.

“It was very quiet, there was very little birdlife around and slowly and gradually whole trees were being wiped out.”

In particular, the local dotterel population was under threat, with a DOC ranger required to protect them from pests and human interference during the breeding season.



**You don’t always  
notice what’s  
missing – not until  
you get it back.**

*Chris Woudenberg*

**Above top /** *Chris Woudenberg is passionate about restoring Opoutere’s native ecosystem by removing pests and weeds*

**Above /** *Endangered native birds like dotterels have benefited from the reduction in pests in Opoutere*

Chris’s personal project began when he stumbled upon some abandoned traps on some tracks nearby and decided to put them to use eradicating pest populations. Quietly, he set to work, mapping the area, self-funding more traps and bait stations and regularly checking the traps.

Chris, who co-founded instrument and calibration business CPS, said he made his project work by fitting pest trapping in between work and family life. He roped in his family and friends to help, and pretty soon the community started getting on board.

Initially, things started with an initiative where locals donated traps. A huge boost came with funding grants from organisations including the Department of Conservation, Thames-Coromandel District Council and Waikato Regional Council, which allowed him to set up more than 300 additional traps and bait stations across a wider area of Opoutere.

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"I mapped the area we were looking after and it was 200 hectares, so not a big space but it backs onto the dotterels' breeding ground. They're what drove the funding success, Opoutere is a space of national environmental significance and one of their main breeding grounds on the Coromandel."

Within about six months, Chris started to hear more birdsong, and since then, the recovery of native bird populations has exploded with piwakawaka, tūi and kererū filling the trees and skies. The kākā numbers have been a noticeable success, going from around 14 at the start of the project to around 80 now, with flocks of up to a dozen flying overhead.

"My property is on their flight path, and it feels like they are saying thank you each time they squawk and fly over.

"One of the things that popped up was a banded rail [moho pererū]. They're very endangered, and they hadn't been spotted for a long time. They're a very cautious ground-based bird living in the marshes, and you don't usually see them in the wild because they get hammered by rats and stoats.

"We saw four pairs and two chicks in one go. We got a photo of them crossing the road. If you've got those, you've got very good predator control."

Chris says the key to the project's success is hitting all the pests hard and fast.

"The community has been blown away by my support. I came in and stunned the place basically, and I still get comments when I walk down the road. 'I can't believe what you've done in Opoutere, Chris'."

While the project has boosted the health of the local flora and fauna, Chris also acknowledges that his own mental health has benefited significantly as well.

01





02



03

01 / Chris Woudenberg and his godson Logan with two of the targeted 100,000 native plants Chris intends to plant in Opoutere

02 / Chris checks a trap 03 / Opoutere's stunning natural beauty is benefiting from a reduction in weeds

Chris has struggled with depression off and on for years and says having a project to focus on – something that got him out in nature doing physical activity – was a huge help in maintaining positive mental health, alongside medication and counselling.

A marriage breakup caused another low, but it was Opoutere that helped him get through.

“My partner sold me her half of the Opoutere place saying the community needed me. Two years later, those words finally made sense to me – but it also would save me. I reached out to my neighbours and built a community here.

“Now I have more positive days than negative days, I started seeing the light at the end of the tunnel and my energy for work has returned.”

But it was making a difference in Opoutere that got him out of bed each day.

His ecology project flourished initially as an underground initiative, but as it got bigger and encountered more red tape, it was in danger of losing momentum. It took another pest – weeds – to give new momentum to Chris and the Opoutere community's eco-movement. Invasive exotic plants including wild ginger and *Elaeagnus* were strangling the peninsula and growing worse by the year. So Chris established working bees where teams of volunteers cleared more than 2.5 hectares of weeds.



Above / The endangered moho pererū or banded rail

**We saw four pairs [of moho pererū] and two chicks in one go. We got a photo of them crossing the road. If you've got those, you've got very good predator control.**

Chris Woudenberg

“It brought the community together on a massive scale. We organised something like 28 working bees across two years with up to 30 people working – everyone from eight-year-old kids to people in their 80s.”

Now Chris has established a native tree nursery on his property and has a goal of planting 100,000 trees by 2040.

“My neighbours say I can't do it. It might be my biggest goal ever.”

He has identified 42 native species that can thrive in the area and is sourcing seedlings from around the region, with neighbours dropping off plants. An automated watering system on his quarter-hectare section allows him to grow between 3,000 and 5,000 plants a year, and he's looking for other places in the area to nurture the natives to bump that number up even higher.

“What's made it a success is that Opoutere is so sheltered and provides the perfect growing environment. The birds love it here when there are no pests. It gets me excited walking on a track seeing pōhutukawa trees in flower when they've never flowered before and the trees we planted getting taller than I am.”

Chris says Opoutere offers hope for every other community in New Zealand where invasive pests and plants have taken over the land.

“This place is unlike anything else the way it bounces back.” ❤️



01

# The comeback kid

MAS Senior Adviser Dane Boswell's elite rowing career ended prematurely due to confusion over a prescription for an injury, but out of that tragedy, came a career he loves.

Dane Boswell's elite rowing career began with a chance meeting in the street with an old friend of his father.

"In 2003, I was 19, working as a roofer, walking through Hamilton one day and I bumped into Dad's mate – he asked me what I was doing on Saturday. I said I'd probably be recovering from a hangover. He said 'No, you're coming for a row. Meet me at the club at 7am, don't be late'. And that was it," Dane says.

Dane's recruiter knew he was dealing with the product of Kiwi rowing royalty. Dane's

father Darien Boswell had been one of New Zealand's top international rowers of the early 1960s. At a time when international success was rare for Kiwi rowers, Boswell senior had won a silver medal in the coxed four at the 1962 Empire Games and the Prince Phillip Cup at the 1963 Henley Regatta (the nearest thing at the time to a world championship) and had been a finalist at the Tokyo Olympics in 1964. But Dane had no idea about the extent of his father's achievements. His dad's innate Kiwi modesty meant he'd never boasted about his success or pushed his son into rowing as a sport.

After that first hangover-free Saturday morning, it didn't take long for Dane to realise he'd inherited the family talent and passion for rowing. He gave up roofing and six months later was selected for the New Zealand Under-21 Rowing Academy.



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**I told them that  
I'd been on  
antibiotics and  
I disclosed the  
medication that  
I was taking.**

*Dane Boswell*

By 2005, he was studying sports science at Wintec and business and computer programming at Waikato University on a Prime Minister's Athlete Scholarship.

In 2006, he earned his black singlet in the New Zealand coxed four that won gold in a world record time at the 2006 Under-23 World Championships in Belgium. They followed that with bronze at the 2006 World Championships in the UK. The next few years saw him selected as one of the New Zealand eight that competed at the World Rowing Cups in Amsterdam and Lucerne and as an Olympic reserve. For someone who hadn't picked up an oar until his late teens, it was a meteoric rise.

### The end of the Olympic road

But Dane's Olympic rowing ambitions ended one night when he sought treatment for a severe hand infection he'd picked up during a gruelling trial for the 2008 Rowing NZ summer squad.

"I had an infection from a blister underneath a callus that caused my whole arm to swell up. I couldn't hold an oar or bend my fingers," he recalls.

In pain, Dane sought treatment at a local after-hours clinic before he could get in with the team doctor. Unfortunately, alongside antibiotics, he was also given probenecid, which is commonly prescribed in conjunction with antibiotics to aid absorption in the bloodstream.

Unknown to the prescribing doctor or Dane, probenecid can also be used as a masking agent by drug cheats in elite sport and is one of more than 300 banned substances listed by the World Anti-Doping Agency. Dane told the doctor that he was an athlete subject to drug testing but didn't realise that the system placed the onus on him – not the doctor – to ensure he wasn't taking banned substances.

When Dane got back to his flat in Cambridge that night, he was asked to complete a random drug test, which was a common occurrence.

"I told them that I'd been on antibiotics and I disclosed the medication that I was taking. Then I got a phone call pretty quickly saying my sample had come back positive for probenecid."

### When honesty doesn't cut it

Eventually, Dane's defence that it was an innocent mistake was accepted and his initial two-year ban was reduced to two months. But the disruption effectively derailed his international rowing career for 12 months, and after an injury-hit 2010 season, he decided to hang up his oar and retire.

Despite a philosophical approach to life, Dane still carries a lingering sense of injustice. It's a tough system that places all the responsibility on a badly injured and exhausted young athlete to ensure he is not being prescribed one of more than 300 banned substances.

"From my side of things, I felt like I'd done everything right. It was really difficult to hear that I should've known this was a restricted substance and shouldn't have taken it. Back in 2008, not many of us had smartphones so we weren't able to look up the banned substance list," he says.

### When one door closes, another opens

Dane's advice to anyone dealing with a similarly tough situation is to have an idea of where you want to go and work backwards from there.

"When one door closes, another one usually opens. If you're willing to grasp any new opportunities that come out of a hard time, you could end up in a pretty amazing place," he says.

For Dane, the door that opened was the insurance industry. He says he fell in love with the industry for deeply personal reasons based on another even tougher life experience.

"When I was 20, my Mum passed away in an accident on our farm in Kerikeri. She sat on the mudguard of the tractor, and she and Dad headed off down the hill.

*01 / (From front) MAS Senior Adviser Dane Boswell competes in the 2008 NZ Rowing Championships with Eric Murray, James Dallinger and Ben Scott*

*02 / Nelson-based MAS Senior Adviser Dane Boswell today*

*03 / The New Zealand's men's coxed four (top from left) Dane Boswell, James Dallinger, (bottom from left) Daniel Quigley (cox), Paul Gerritsen and Steven Cottle won bronze at the 2006 World Rowing Championships in England*

The engine on the tractor stalled, there were no brakes, no steering, and Mum bounced off and broke her neck. Six weeks before that, Mum had cancelled their life cover. Dad had to work through to his late 70s and passed away last February.

"No one had had the insurance conversation with enough conviction with my parents to ensure they had enough cover in place. Now it's my job to make sure Members don't end up in the same situation and they are protected in case the worst happens," he says. ♥

03



# Automation in an era of COVID-19

*Writer Alan Chew*

In professional practices, labour is the biggest business cost. The answer to improving productivity and reducing cost could be in automation. According to MAS Member Alan Chew, founder of Houston Productivity in Hamilton, an IT consultancy firm of 34 years that specialises in helping clients to improve productivity, we should expect to see more automation in the workplace in the post-COVID-19 world.

We hear a lot about how automation through assembly-line robots in industries like automotive manufacturing creates improvements in product quality and reduces costs, but few of us working in the professions realise that we're also on the brink of a similar robotic revolution.

Office robots aren't as obvious as the giant mechanical arms welding and painting in a BMW factory, but these robotic process automation robots (RPA bots) are just as useful, processing data in settings like a medical centre or lawyer's office.

As with mechanical robots, RPA bots can be programmed to do the work that humans normally do. These bots can mimic most human-computer interactions to carry out huge numbers of error-free tasks at high volume and speed and at very low cost. One outcome is that it frees staff from performing tedious tasks to focus on customer-based and value-adding activities.

As we look at business life in the immediate future, it looks like automation will become one tool in the professional business arsenal

to reduce costs as we look for ways to become more efficient and get through the coming recession. In the wake of the pandemic, many businesses are wondering whether automation is still a valid business improvement strategy. It seems intuitive that any rise in unemployment will make human labour relatively cheaper. Businesses may also decrease capital expenditure spending overall as a result of lost revenue during the lockdown.

**Never allow a good crisis to go to waste. It's an opportunity to do the things you once thought were impossible.**

*Rahm Emanuel, a former Chief of Staff to President Obama.*

## **Post-pandemic automation opportunities**

In fact, if past recessions are anything to go by, we're likely to see the pace of automation speed up in the post-COVID-19 world.

A report by American market research company Forrester said many companies are set to invest more in automation than in rehiring in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic.

The report urges companies who haven't already done so to ramp up their automation plans. Indeed, Forrester argues that automation may become key to surviving a coronavirus recession, at least as far as businesses are concerned.

## **Benefits of automation**

Automation can be used to outsource mundane tasks to bots, allowing staff to focus on spending more time with clients. To best explain how RPA works, let's look at how one busy accident and emergency medical centre is using an RPA bot, dubbed Meng.

This practice operates with two very efficient receptionists handling everything from answering phones to making appointments to entering data into practice management software Medtech. As with many A&E clinics, the flow of patients can fluctuate during various times of the day and different days of the week.

One particular process that caused a lot of stress on the team was the processing of forms such as ACC45. When patients



presented with ACC injuries, they were handed a paper form to complete by hand, which was then given to the receptionist to enter into the system.

The issue was that at hectic times, entry of forms into Medtech was delaying receptionists from processing other waiting patients. This created a lot of pressure on the reception team, at times even impeding the flow of patients to the doctors.

To resolve this issue, the practice digitised the form onto a touch screen in a kiosk. The patient enters their own information into the form with the data stored in a database. Meng, the RPA bot, then autonomously extracts the data and punches it into Medtech.

Not only has Meng totally eliminated manual data entry by clinic staff, but the accuracy of information transferred to ACC has also improved, reducing the time the practice manager spends on rectifying data errors.

Of the numerous automation tools that I have studied, RPA is one of the most

**EVERY PROFESSION HAS  
EXAMPLES OF TEDIOUS  
TASKS THAT COULD BE  
OUTSOURCED TO BOTS  
LIKE MENG:**

Processing accounts payable

Filing correspondence and emails into client files

HR on-boarding

Invoicing time charges

Reconciling bank statements including entering direct credits into client accounts

Handling insurance claims

Processing applications (such as for course enrolments)

cost-effective. This is because the cost of the technology is low, the development and implementation timeline is short and the labour savings are very high. For example, in the case of Meng, the early results show that, for every \$1 spent on the technology, the clinic is able to save between \$1.50 and \$2.50 of labour.

Such savings are not atypical. A 2017 article in *Forbes* magazine suggests that intelligent automation typically results in cost savings of 40–75%.

Rahm Emanuel, a former Chief of Staff to President Obama, once said, “Never allow a good crisis to go to waste. It’s an opportunity to do the things you once thought were impossible.”

The COVID-19 crisis presents the sort of opportunity Emanuel had in mind. It poses threats to workplaces around the world, but at the same time, it gives us the chance to rethink the way we do things. Automation may not be the right move for every business, but as we look to carry out more tasks with diminishing resources, it opens up new possibilities for the way we work. ❤️

Life in

# lock

for MAS Members

# down

The COVID-19 lockdown might have brought large parts of the New Zealand economy to a halt and confined most of our population indoors, but for many MAS Members, the lockdown was a chance to help their communities and those on the frontline of the pandemic response in other ways.



*Bulls flying doctor Dave Baldwin (inset) flew COVID-19 swabs to be tested in Christchurch as lockdown resulted in a cancellation of commercial flights*

When Bulls GP and flying doctor Dave Baldwin got the call that his help was needed in the fight against COVID-19, he flew at the chance.

It was early in the lockdown, and regional testing for COVID-19 wasn't yet available in Manawatū. When Air New Zealand halted its regional flights, Dave stepped in to help.

Using his small Cessna plane, he flew an urgent shipment of about 120 swabs from Palmerston North to an airfield just south of Rangiora in Canterbury. From there, the swabs were whisked to a lab in Christchurch to be tested for COVID-19.

"It was a very good experience because it meant that I could help in an unusual way. It also meant I was able to be part of the team, and that's all I want."

Dave has a long history of working as a flying doctor, having spent three years as a doctor in the Royal New Zealand Air Force before buying the general practice in Bulls with colleague and friend Ken Young. Dave simultaneously set up the Bulls Flying Doctor Service, and for the past few decades, he has been flying medical supplies and providing treatment in remote communities across the country.

**DAVE BALDWIN**

## **Flying in to help the fight against COVID-19**



MALCOLM DACKER

## Emergency dental care during lockdown



MAS Member Malcolm Dacker was part of a team of volunteers offering emergency dental care during the lockdown.

Out of 281 dentist chairs in the University of Otago's Faculty of Dentistry in the Clinical Services Building, the risk of COVID-19 transmission meant just two to four were occupied at any one time with patients during the lockdown.

Ministry of Health and Dental Council guidelines for alert level 3 and 4 stipulated dentists couldn't use drills. This technology generates considerable aerosol and greatly increases the risk of transmission, which meant no fillings or root canals. Instead, dentists were only able to treat trauma and undertake extractions when it was determined to be absolutely necessary.

Throughout lockdown, a team of about 40 dentists, dental assistants and administration staff volunteered at the Faculty of Dentistry to meet the emergency dental needs of Dunedin residents, with a limited range of treatment options for about 12 patients a day.

Dunedin dentist Malcolm Dacker, full-time professional practice fellow in undergraduate oral surgery at the Faculty of Dentistry and part-time general dental practitioner at

Palmerston Dental Surgery, says there was no option other than the strict restrictions.

"Any oral health practitioners can understand why we couldn't pick up a drill, which causes a huge aerosol at high speed that's dealing directly where the virus comes out of – the mouth."

But this didn't make it any less difficult for Malcolm and the other dentists involved to turn people away on the phone when they didn't meet the treatment criteria and having a lack of treatment options available for those who could be seen.

"It's not a nice thing to turn people away for stuff we'd usually treat them for. There were limits on what we could do, and we had to talk to patients who weren't sore enough about coming back two weeks later where they had progressed to the point where their pain wasn't controllable."

"Most patients were very honest with their level of pain and infection and were very understanding if we wouldn't treat them."

Malcolm says that, while there were tough times, he is proud of the work they did to keep the worst infections and trauma under control.

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### An important mission

Dave says that, before regional laboratories were established, the country was scrambling to provide the government with good statistics by ramping up testing for COVID-19. The test samples – both throat swabs and nasopharyngeal – needed to be processed in the lab as quickly as possible, so being unable to transport them on commercial airlines became a huge problem for the MidCentral District Health Board.

The morning after Air New Zealand announced it was stopping regional flights, Dave was called and asked to urgently get

the swabs to Christchurch the following day. With little time to delay, he flew into action, organising clearance from traffic control, submitting his flight plan and preparing his Cessna for the flight.

Since then, testing has been set up in Manawatū, eliminating the need for further trips, but Dave would gladly have continued to help had he been needed. •

## On Saturday at 12pm, the big blue box of swabs was put in the plane and I was goneburger.

*Dr Dave Baldwin*

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"We've dealt with this, on the whole, very well, making sure it hasn't gone out of control. We're in good spirits in the dental school. We're a tight team, and we've been helping as much as we can and working well with each other under trying circumstances."

Establishing the clinic was possible thanks to the Faculty of Dentistry's good supply of PPE and enough dentists, dental assistants and administrators willing to volunteer to keep treating patients. Two dentists provided treatment in clinics, two dentists were on the phones and a house surgeon was on call. Specialist dentists from all disciplines and maxillofacial consultants made themselves available when needed. Dentists were working two to three-hour shifts.

The clinic operated through a phone triage system. The patients spoke first with an administrator and, if suitable, were referred through to a dentist to determine their level of pain or trauma. If determined to be severe enough, they were booked in for a consultation or treatment. Otherwise, advice and prescriptions for antibiotics and pain relief were provided when needed.

The Faculty of Dentistry also acquired a mobile dental clinic from the Southern District Health Board for treating confirmed COVID-19 patients, which they haven't yet needed to use. Malcolm has his fingers crossed they won't need to.

Early on, there was concern about the safety of the dentists but ensuring a steady supply of PPE helped allay the fears.

"We had N95 masks and face shields. We were wearing double gloves, double hats, double shoe covers, double masks. We were also in those lovely banana suits, which are very hot – extremely hot."

The clinic will keep running as long as it's required, and Malcolm says they were looking forward to being able to treat more patients with a wider range of treatments. •



CHRISTINE COULTER

## Equipping frontline soldiers and maintaining care

A Kāpiti Coast GP has been part of the Shields Up team creating personal protection screens for frontline primary care staff tackling COVID-19.

As co-owner and a founder of Team Medical in Paraparaumu, MAS Member Christine Coulter became increasingly concerned about how she could help her employees feel safe at work as the alert level 4 lockdown loomed and the scale of the health crisis New Zealand faced was still uncertain.

Martin Vieregg, a local teacher and patient, offered to use 3D printers to reproduce the components needed at no cost. Christine found inspiration in a local hardware store. Martin sourced a 3D print pattern and delivered the first 20 shields to Team Medical the next day.



Between them, the social networking began, and within seven days, there were 6,000 people supplied with shields across New Zealand, with a further 20,000 ordered. At the height of the pandemic, up to 10,000 shields were being printed each day by 500 volunteers.

These were supplied free of charge to GPs, paramedics, pharmacists, carers and any other essential workers who requested them.

"It was absolutely crazy organising that," Christine says.

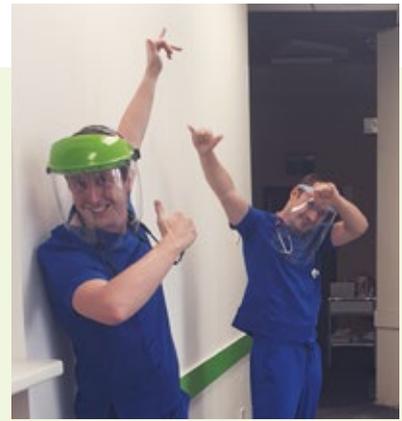
The shields cost about \$1 each in materials to create, and a Givealittle page was set up to help fund the costs for the owners of the 3D printers, but the "kind people who are choosing to create them refused

to accept the money". Instead, the more than \$100,000 raised was used to help get shields out to those who otherwise couldn't access them.

Christine says wearing the shields helped remove the scariness and impersonal nature of doctors wearing facemasks as it allows people to see their doctors' full faces.

"A colleague said their daughter said she wasn't so scared of the monsters in masks, and it meant we weren't transmitting among our work bubble," she says.

It also meant that, if carers did need to wear a facemask underneath, they could be reused as they hadn't been directly exposed to potentially infectious people or come into contact with any other potentially infectious items. •



02

**A colleague said their daughter said she wasn't so scared of the monsters in masks.**

*Dr Christine Coulter*

01 / Paraparaumu GP Christine Coulter wears a shield to treat patients during lockdown

02 / Shields Up provided face shields to frontline healthcare workers across the country



BRAD ATKINSON

## Coffee shouts for Southland healthcare workers

An initiative by medical students based at Southland Hospital has seen almost 1,000 coffees donated to hospital workers by the local community.

Brad Atkinson, a final year medical student from Otago University, saw a similar initiative in Dunedin and decided to replicate it in Invercargill. Together with the six other medical students based at Southland Hospital, they worked with the hospital's café owners Compass Group to set up a donation option through their new online ordering system.

During alert level 4, almost 1,000 coffees have been paid for by members of the public for healthcare workers at the hospital – a total of over \$4,000.

"It's awesome I'm really stoked to see the community knit together in these tough

times, and it's really nice to see everyone showing support for healthcare.

"It's sad that it takes a worldwide pandemic to do that, but it's really cool to see people recognising that different sectors of the community and society are a lot more important than we previously thought."

Brad says Compass Group was very supportive of the idea, donating \$500 to get the project up and running.

"They were already working on setting up an online ordering system for staff to buy coffees and meals, so they took the bull by the horns and added an option to donate a coffee."

Those wanting to donate a coffee to a Southland healthcare worker can visit: [food-4me.co.nz/locations/52/details](https://food-4me.co.nz/locations/52/details)



# Navigating the **great uncertainty**

*Writer* Martin Stokes, MAS CEO



On 18 May, for the first time in more than half a century, not a single person arrived or left New Zealand by plane.

By way of comparison, only four months earlier on 18 January, 24,686 people flew into New Zealand and 22,585 people departed. It takes a lot for news to surprise me in 2020, but this really made me stop and think.

What surprised me most was the lack of fanfare this news created. We seem to have become unshockable after months of overwhelming headlines. Zero arrivals or departures in the age of globalisation, when we've come to take international travel as a given. But it barely raised an eyebrow.

Obviously zero in and zero out isn't going to be the new normal over the long term, but who knows how long it will be until a reliable vaccine is found? Professor Graham Le Gros, director at the Wellington-based Malaghan Institute, reckons it will be at least two years if all goes well.

Until then, we have to adapt to a very different kind of world. Nothing describes it better than the state of the global airline industry. In February, the global airline industry's top seven listed companies employed more than 600,000 people and had a combined market capitalisation of US\$121.3 billion.

By mid-May, video conferencing company Zoom with just 2,500 employees and a market capitalisation of US\$48 billion was worth more than the top seven airlines combined, whose value had plummeted in just three months.

Personally, I'm avoiding bold predictions about what's coming next in a world where the status quo flips on its head so quickly. It feels like we've been talking about nothing but COVID-19 forever, but in fact these are still relatively early days. Perhaps the only thing we can say with certainty is that things are going to get worse, and being prepared for anything is crucial.

At MAS, we have been relatively insulated from the impact of the pandemic. We were in a strong financial position going into the lockdown, which meant we could put together a strong relief package for Members. And our long-term business strategy, which includes diversifying the ways we engage with our Members and investing more heavily in our community partnerships, has been given further impetus by what has happened.

On the downside, this year has seen more volatility in global equity markets than during the Great Depression, driven by COVID-19 lockdowns, the Saudi-Russian oil price war, and heightened geopolitical tensions. Monetary expansion by central banks around the world has averted a financial system collapse, but a recession-

**At MAS ... we were in a strong financial position going into the lockdown, which meant we could put together a strong relief package for Members.**

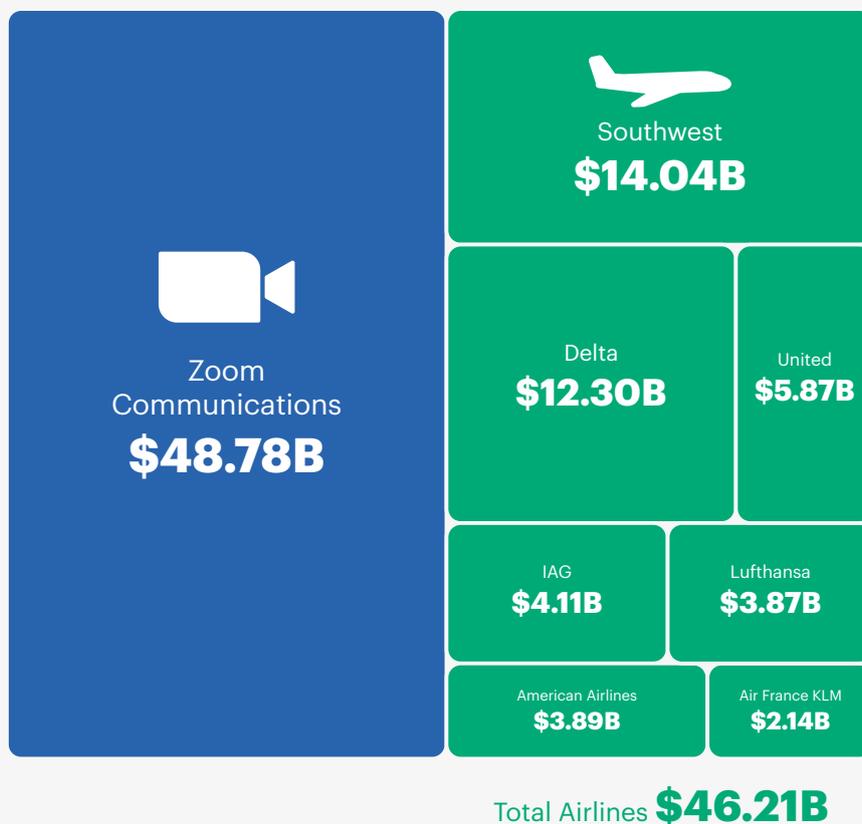
fuelled bear market looks likely to most informed observers.

The outlook for New Zealand's economy is also uncertain. On the bright side, New Zealand's total commodity exports for the year to 13 May 2020 held steady - \$18.11 billion compared with \$18.31 billion for the year to 13 May 2019. Our agricultural sector is proving resilient. Dairy exports, for example, were up \$590 million for the year to \$5.25 billion.

In other sectors, the situation is concerning. Consumer spending

## MARKET CAPITALISATION OF ZOOM VERSUS TOP SEVEN AIRLINES

As of 15 May 2020. Source / [visualcapitalist.com/zoom-boom-biggest-airlines](https://visualcapitalist.com/zoom-boom-biggest-airlines).



We've seen Kiwi businesses make these sorts of dramatic changes relatively quickly. You need look no further than our health professionals, who shifted almost overnight from a business model involving face-to-face interactions to one incorporating online consultations. It's still a work in progress and clearly tele-medicine by itself is not necessarily the way of the future. Having said that, there is certainly scope to rebalance our working lives in such a way that we can use new technologies for more transactional tasks while retaining in-person conversations for interactions that demand more creativity or empathetic connection.

That's certainly the approach we're taking here at MAS. We're accelerating the digital transformation of our business processes, and we're trying to understand and assist our Members as you face the greatest economic uncertainty any of us have lived through.

We're acutely aware that many of our Members who operate professional businesses have taken severe hits this year, and we're looking for ways to help. Our advisers are here to offer advice, and our relief fund is helping Members maintain their insurance cover when they've exhausted all other avenues for funding (see page 9 for more information).

If you're concerned about any element of your risk or investment management, please don't hesitate to get in touch with your MAS adviser. We're riding stormy seas unlike any we've seen in our lifetimes. Let's navigate them together.

<sup>1</sup> [www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/future-of-work/from-surviving-to-thriving-reimagining-the-post-covid-19-return](https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/future-of-work/from-surviving-to-thriving-reimagining-the-post-covid-19-return)

makes up 60% of New Zealand's GDP, and lockdown saw electronic card transactions drop by half from \$7.37 billion in March to \$3.63 billion in April, although some indicators of economic activity such as electricity consumption and traffic volumes had recovered to pre-lockdown levels by late May.

The plight of our critical tourism sector is far more serious, with international tourist arrivals reduced literally to zero. Around 10% of New Zealand's GDP (\$27.4 billion) and 14% of our jobs (around 400,000) are directly or indirectly dependent on the tourism industry. It was our largest foreign exchange earner until COVID-19.

We're all holding out hopes for a domestic tourism boom and the prospect of a

trans-Tasman bubble. I know my family will be doing our bit to support local tourism operators as soon as we can, but who knows how many will be out of business by the end of the year?

The only certainty is ongoing uncertainty. Those who survive and prosper in these times will be those who are prepared to pivot fast.

Global consultancy McKinsey recently published advice on how businesses can move from surviving to thriving as we navigate the "next normal" of an uncertain world before a reliable COVID-19 vaccine is developed.<sup>1</sup> Their message is that every business needs to fundamentally rethink the way it works, embrace digital change and to do it fast.

# Students on pandemic disruptions



Ruby Wills

Students have lost critical clinical hours and valuable hands-on experience as their classes shifted online during the COVID-19 crisis. Our student association presidents tell us what it has been like.

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## Ruby Wills

*President*

*New Zealand Dental Students' Association*

### **How have you been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic?**

I am in my final year of my Bachelor of Dental Surgery. I would say the year is 90% practical, so currently, our degree feels like it is on pause. We have been continuing our lectures online, but I cannot wait to be back in clinic.

I was supposed to be in Tonga in May on my five-week practical placement but instead was in my freezing cold flat in Dunedin. I am beyond sad to be missing out on what would have been invaluable learning time both for my dentistry skills and for my understanding of Tongan culture.

### **How does it feel to be studying to enter a profession during such a huge health crisis?**

For me personally, stepping back has given me awesome clarity and drive in terms of where I want to go with dentistry and where my passion lies within community health. Life moves rapidly, and given our class is about to move to the next massive stage of life, this pause has come at a good time

to reflect so we make the right decisions as we enter our profession.

### **As students preparing to work in the dentistry profession, how do you see the future for the industry?**

My vision for the future of the dental profession has changed dramatically in the past couple of months. While the sense of community has always been strong in the profession, a challenging time like this has seen everyone pull together and develop stronger connections within our industry, which for someone about to enter is super exciting.

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## Maithreyi Sundaresan

*President*

*Massey University Veterinary Students' Association*

### **How have you been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic?**

Going to an online platform for university means that we've had to adapt to a different way of studying. Additionally, the practical aspects of our course have had to either be adapted or pushed back. This has definitely impacted our final year students the most, who are supposed to be doing rosters in various clinics and hospitals.

### **How does it feel to be studying to enter a profession during such a huge health crisis?**

It's been quite an adjustment to try and visualise our future in such a disrupted time. This pandemic really highlights the need for more holistic views into health. Now more



Maithreyi Sundaresan



Ellie Baxter

than ever we know our skills and knowledge will be needed to navigate the health concerns of animals as this pandemic passes.

**Do you see any potential improvements to the industry off the back of the pandemic?** I think this pandemic has shown the importance of adaptability. It has tested everyone at every level and reminds us that the field of health is unpredictable. The success of our responses to health challenges in the future will be directly related to our ability to adapt to ever-changing situations.

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## Ellie Baxter

*President*

*New Zealand Medical Students' Association*

**How have you been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic?** I've been very fortunate to have been minimally affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. One of my placements got cut short and we've been extra busy at NZMSA, but on the grand scheme of things, I feel very lucky. The biggest change would probably be how much more baking and playing card games my flat has been doing.

**How does it feel to be studying to enter a profession during such a huge health crisis?** In a word, important. While there has been a lot of uncertainty and changes in the medical field at the moment, this crisis has really demonstrated to me just how important

medicine is and how meaningful my career will be. There is a huge capacity for us to help, not just by treating our own patients but also by being advocates for health for all New Zealanders. Knowing that what you do is worthwhile really makes it easier to show up to the hospital each day.

**Do you see any potential improvements to the industry off the back of this?** In the healthcare space, I wouldn't be surprised if we continued to use the technology and systems we adopted to keep everything running during lockdown. Things like virtual general practice and outpatient appointments could be used more, which would be really beneficial to our rural or low socioeconomic communities who may not otherwise be able to access those services.

**Do you think that, as students about to enter the profession, you have unique perspectives that can help drive innovation?** I think students or those new to any profession always bring new ideas and enthusiasm and potential with them, which would help drive innovation. We will also remember this pandemic for the rest of our careers, so it's likely we will use this experience to help shape medicine over that time. In 30 years or so, we will be the consultants telling the medical students about the pandemic back in our day. ♥

# Graduating with financial confidence

Each year, MAS encourages graduating students to take part in a financial review with a MAS adviser where they can plan their financial goals and what it will take to get there. Everyone who took part in 2019 went into a draw for \$2,000, which was won by Priscilla Leow who is now working in her postgraduate year 1 at Waikato Hospital.

Priscilla Leow's level of financial literacy was not high as a student. She wasn't taught about it in school or university and had little experience managing her own finances.

"My only concept of managing money was having a weekly saving goal to ensure that I didn't spend all my allowances."

In 2019, Priscilla was finishing her medical studies at the University of Auckland and preparing for her first job at Waikato Hospital when she spoke with a MAS adviser to complete a financial review and help set her up for the future.

Her financial goals were to kick off a long-term savings plan and establish a passive income through investments. She'd also like to buy a car within two years and a house in the next five.

"My adviser helped me compare the differences between KiwiSaver and the MAS Retirement Savings Plan and explained the various types

of investment schemes, including their estimated risks and profits.

"He also introduced me to the Investment Risk Profile to evaluate my willingness and ability to take on financial risks so that I can make responsible investments."

Priscilla says she feels her financial literacy has improved through the process of talking to a MAS adviser.

"I am now aware of the vast range of investment and saving schemes out there that suit my personal financial needs and goals."

Each year, MAS encourages graduating students to complete a financial review with a MAS adviser, helping them set financial goals and be prepared for when they enter the workforce. When Priscilla completed her review, she was entered into a \$2,000 prize draw competition, which she then won. Originally from Singapore, being an international student



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Students can sign up and join the conversation with MAS. Get student and life hacks, budgeting tips and health and wellbeing advice delivered straight to your inbox and chances to win prizes each month. Visit [mas.co.nz/jointheconversation](https://mas.co.nz/jointheconversation) or text **JOIN to 3118**.



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Priscilla is now a postgraduate year 1 (PGY1) working on an orthopaedic rotation at Waikato Hospital and is enjoying working and earning in a profession she cares about.

"My role involves looking after patients on the ward, booking them for theatre, ordering necessary investigations and facilitating their safe discharge from hospital.

"It's great to be earning a living and working towards my financial goals while also knowing I'm making a difference in helping to provide the best care possible." ♥

meant she was ineligible for student loans and relied on her parents to fund her education.

She says the prize money is earmarked to go towards a family holiday to thank them for their support, although those plans are on hold due to COVID-19.

Her advice to students is to learn how to manage their finances as early as possible.

"It is always good to start early, even if it means just setting aside a weekly budget and saving goal," she says.

01 / Priscilla Leow on graduation day  
02 / Finding balance in the Waikato

# Islands in the stream

Writer Sharon Stephenson



Five minutes after arriving on Ulva Island, I'm humming the theme tune to *Jurassic Park*.

But this 267ha sanctuary will do that to a person.

A lush slash of greenery off the coast of Stewart Island, Ulva Island is what Aotearoa must have looked like before humans started messing with it. Yet few of us have ever been there.

For many Kiwis, holidays usually mean passports and exotic overseas destinations. But since COVID-19 upended life as we know it and countries around the world – including ours – bolted their doors, travel has been confined to our backyard.

You could, if you wanted to, head for the usual city hotspots. Or you could visit an island. There is, after all, no shortage of the latter, more than 600 islands lie within 50km of the New Zealand coastline. Some are more popular than others – take a bow Waiheke and Rangitoto – but there are others where the only footprints in the sand will be yours.

We've rounded up some of our favourite islands for your next holiday – no passport required.



## ULVA ISLAND

Ulva Island (Te Wharawhara) is brought to you by Forgotten New Zealand. This pest-free open sanctuary in the deep south is seemingly untouched by humans, a place alive with birdsong and blindingly green rainforest.

Bird spotters will be in heaven. Stewart Island brown kiwi, saddlebacks, robins, tūi, kererū, Stewart Island weka, fantails, bellbirds and blue penguins all call this tiny island home, as do sea lions and fur seals, which can often be found lolling on the beach.



## MOU WAHO ISLAND

This is an island in a lake in an island in a lake in an island in an ocean.

We realise that's a lot of islands and lakes in one sentence, but Mau Waho in Lake Wanaka is as stunning as it is confounding. (For the record, Mau Waho means 'outer island' and is one of five in Lake Wanaka.)

It's also a scientific reserve that can only be reached by boat. It's gloriously pest free, so expect to see bellbirds, fantails New Zealand falcons, wood pigeons, tomtits, grey warblers, wax eyes and weka.

It's also mainly people-free, even in summer, so you can often have the glorious 120ha island almost to yourself.

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### GREAT BARRIER ISLAND

Early Māori settlers called it Aotea, or white cloud, while Captain James Cook settled on the name Great Barrier Island for this rugged paradise in the Hauraki Gulf.

It takes four and a bit hours by boat from Auckland – or a 30-minute flight – to reach the island, most of which has been dedicated as a protected reserve.

Barrier, as the locals call it, is like the department store of islands – there’s something for everyone under one roof, from golden sand beaches to inlets, deep water coves and thick native bush.

That’s why Barrier is often seen as a retreat for the burned-out, the tired and those looking for solitude. Just leave your urban expectations at the door, the island runs on solar and generator power, and there’s limited phone/internet connection.



### KĀPITI ISLAND

A tranquil bird sanctuary and one of New Zealand’s most accessible nature reserves, Kāpiti Island received more than 7,500 visitors last year.

Thanks to more than a century of protection – including being entirely pest-free for the last 20 years – this rectangular-shaped island provides a unique visitor experience, pulling back the curtains on a previous world where native birds such as kākā, kiwi, kōkako, takahē and hihi roamed free. It’s so prehistoric, you almost expect to see dinosaurs grazing on native bush.

Either pop over for the day or stay overnight in glamping accommodation at the northern end of the island.

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### MATIU/SOMES ISLAND

New Zealand’s version of Alcatraz is a 25-minute ferry ride from Wellington. First named Matiu by Kupe, this island in the centre of Wellington Harbour boasts a 1,000-year history including being a lighthouse site, a quarantine station, a defence post and an internment camp.

It’s now operated by the Department of Conservation as a pest-free scientific and historic reserve, home to kākāriki, tuatara, giant wētā and little blue penguins, which you can spot during a day or overnight visit (staying in DOC accommodation).



### WAIHEKE ISLAND

A wine island just 40 minutes from downtown Auckland is as good as it sounds. Once the preserve of artists and hippies, this hilly island in the Hauraki Gulf has morphed into the postcode of choice for those who can afford it.

The artists are still there, selling locally made art and crafts, but they’ve been joined by dozens of boutique award-winning wineries such as Mudbrick Vineyard and Poderi Crisci. The beaches are spectacular, and it’s always sunny in Waiheke – or at least that’s how it appears through Instagram’s filters.

Oneroa is the island’s largest village and hosts restaurants, cafés and shops. And although the whole island vibe is laid-back, when you can tear yourself away from those spectacular watery views, there’s no end of surfing, sailing, kayaking, diving and even a zip-line tour.



### D'URVILLE ISLAND

New Zealand's eighth largest island is just a 15-minute boat ride away from French Pass. Named for the French explorer Jules Dumont d'Urville, this 163 km<sup>2</sup> island in the Marlborough Sounds is home to a lucky 52 permanent residents, many of them hardy, off-the-grid types drawn to a remote life of extremes.

But you can see why they'd come here: dense predator-free bush, spectacular sunsets and 60km of dirt roads (and three intersections).

Don't miss a selfie with the large bronze statue of Pelorus Jack at Collinet Point on the mainland, which commemorates the plucky Risso's dolphin who spent much of his life around these parts. The rare white dolphin was famous for guiding ships safely across Cook Strait from 1888 to 1912.



### SLIPPER ISLAND

One of New Zealand's few private islands lies about four kilometres off the Coromandel Peninsula or a 15-minute water taxi ride from Tairua.

This 224ha slice of paradise began life as a farm, but most of it was recently sold to an Auckland property developer who, thankfully, has ensured that accommodation is limited (it includes five chalets, glamping tents and dorm rooms).

Think crystal-clear water, gentle bush-clad hills and a colony of friendly baby pigs who wander the island and will gladly pose for selfies (which you can only post to social media once you're back on the mainland because Slipper Island is happily wifi free).



### POOR KNIGHTS ISLANDS

French oceanographer Jacques Cousteau called these islands off Northland's east coast one of the top 10 dive spots in the world. And who are we to argue with Mr Cousteau?

This protected marine nature reserve, a 35-minute boat ride from Tutukaka, is a place of exciting undersea discoveries, such as the ancient volcanoes that have gifted divers and snorkellers a complex wonderland of caves, tunnels and cliffs.

There's also incredible marine biodiversity with more than 125 different kinds of fish as well as coral and sponges. ♥

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Wellington-based pastry chef Jackie Lee Morrison loves using pantry staples to create delicious, satisfying meals

## So, you bought enough tinned tomatoes to last a lifetime. *Now what?*

Back in March, supermarket trolleys were filled to the brim with toilet paper, tinned tomatoes and kilos of rice and pasta. As a result, many households are now working through their improbably large collections of long-life products, but it also made us think about what long-life staples we should keep in our pantries as a matter of course. We talked to some food professionals for insights into their pantry strategies.

Pastry chef Jackie Lee Morrison, who owns Wellington brownie bar Lashings, spearheaded a lockdown project with a team of other Wellington chefs to create The Pandemic Pack Collaborative Cookbook – an e-book about how to transform humdrum pantry staples into delicious and nutritious dishes.

“We’re a big fan of cupboard staples in our house. If you open our pantry, you’ll be greeted with an array of tinned and dried goods. With recent events, we’ve definitely stocked up more than we

normally would, but we tend to make our way through all of these things on a regular basis.

“It isn’t a bad thing to know how to throw a meal together with only what you have on hand and maybe a few extra fresh bits and pieces,” Jackie says.

### **It’s all in the sauce**

Jackie says it all starts with the sauce. She makes big batches of different sauces, then freezes them in individual

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portions to form the base for quick and easy meals. She says it's a great way to use up a range of excess tinned foods.

"My husband and I will make a big batch of ragu or chilli, and we always add in some interesting tinned beans, lentils or chickpeas. It stretches everything a little bit further, and because you've added protein, it keeps you satisfied for longer. Just add your carb of choice – some of our favourites are pasta, rice or on top of a baked potato," she says.

#### **Pantry must-haves**

Jackie's pantry is always stocked with a range of dried staples as well. Various forms of pasta, grains and nuts are always on hand.

"You should have pasta in lots of shapes and size, but my go-to is orzo pasta. It's a nice small rice-sized grain that you can use as pasta or faux-risotto rice – you can add it into soups or have it on its own. Israeli couscous is another one of my favourites, and I'm a big fan of freekeh. It's an ancient grain full of protein and fibre that keeps you fuller for longer."

"Olive oil is another absolute must-have. I always have one big container of olive oil for cooking and one smaller high-quality olive oil for finishing dishes. Adding a little element with a complex and different flavour elevates a meal compared to only using standard olive oil. I'm a big

fan of the Kapiti brand olive oils, which are also locally made," she says.

"Seeds and nuts are also great additions to elevate a dish – things like cashews, sunflower seeds and peanuts. Add these into meals for texture and additional nutritional value. Whole and sliced almonds are also great to add into all types of meals. I love to toast seeds and nuts and finish meals with them."

#### **Get spicy**

Jackie says every pantry should be well equipped with a wide range of spices – both dried and long-life pastes. She loves Ayam and Valcom curry pastes, which can be found in most supermarkets. If you feel a little more adventurous, she recommends visiting your local Asian supermarket to scope out new spicy condiments.

"One of my favourite things is to go to Asian supermarkets and wander around discovering new products to try. One product I love is kecap manis – a thickened, sweetened soy sauce, common in Malaysia and Singapore."

"At the very least, you should go to the spice aisle at the supermarket and stock up on spices. I really like cajun spice, cayenne pepper, Maldon sea salt, garlic powder and dried mixed herbs. I use cajun spice on everything – steak, salmon, in Israeli couscous, added into ragu and chilli. It's just delicious but quite salty, so be careful about adding extra salt." ♥

**I use cajun spice on everything – steak, salmon, in Israeli couscous, added into ragu and chilli.** Jackie Lee Morrison

## ***Must-have pantry items***

We asked Kiwi cooks what they always have in their cupboards or fridges to spice up any meal.



*Alex Davies*

GATHERINGS Christchurch

Laoganma spicy sauce, which is basically crispy chilli flakes and peanuts in oil. It is a Chinese condiment and works with everything. It is utterly delicious and an amazing thing to have in the fridge.

Good soy sauce isn't just for seasoning Japanese or Chinese-inspired dishes. It is an amazing seasoning agent full stop. Use it to season stews, broths or soups for an extra hit of umami with your dinner.

Kaitia Fire is New Zealand's best hot sauce. It livens up anything and brings the fire. An essential.



## Dane McGregor

BAKER GATHERER  
Hamilton

My big three are top-quality vanilla, cream cheese and frozen pre-made pastry. I swear by quality vanilla – extract, paste and powder from a quality provider such as Heilala Vanilla. Depending on what I'm baking, I alternate between the three products, but if I had to just use one, I'd go with the pods. No one can deny how much more delicious vanilla frosting looks full of those vanilla seeds from the pods.

Not only is cream cheese perfect as a snack or spread, it's also very versatile in baking. I love using it for cheesecakes, frostings for cakes, fillings in scones and also in biscuits.

And finally a freezer stocked with great pastry. There's nothing more satisfying than making your own pastry, but if you don't have to, then why would you? I make a lot of my own pastry, but I always believe in having some on hand in the freezer, either ready to roll or in pre-made sheets.

## Cindy Gonzalez

TWO GREY  
Wellington

Lewis Road unsalted butter, made with pure fresh cream, is rich, smooth and ultra-creamy. It's the perfect match for fresh-baked rosemary and potato loaf, scones or melted in a delicious sauce.

Pine nuts are a healthy and nutritious natural wholefood. They contain a high protein percentage and have a delicate texture and distinctive taste. I like Pinoli pine nuts, they are based in Marlborough. I use them in recipes such as pesto sauce or as topping in a salad.



# In review

Book reviews by Sarah Chandler

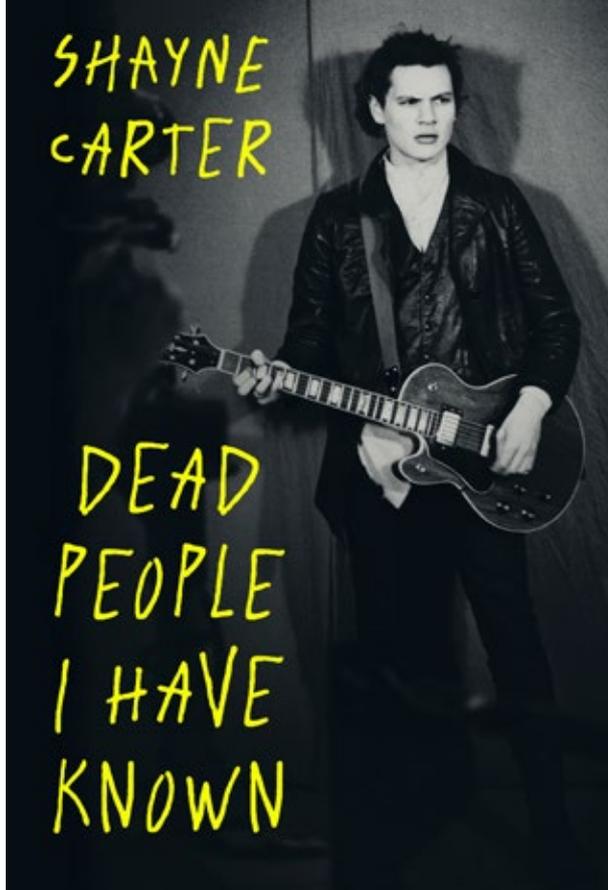


## BOOKS — DEAD PEOPLE I HAVE KNOWN

By Shayne Carter

Victoria University Press / RRP \$40.00

Winner of the best non-fiction book at this year's Ockham Awards, *Dead People I Have Known* is a lively and moving memoir by one of Aotearoa's best-known pop/rock musicians, Shayne Carter. From his Dunedin high school band Bored Games and The DoubleHappys to later successful groups Straitjacket Fits and Dimmer, Carter reflects on the ups and downs of his full but often unhappy rock 'n' roll life: the romances and the break-ups; substance abuse and long periods of sobriety; music hits and misses; tours of America and Europe; the close friendships he formed; and, as the title of his autobiography suggests, the loss of many friends and acquaintances on the way through suicide, accident or illness. The death of Wayne Elsey, Carter's school friend and long-time bandmate, is especially poignant and troubling. Elsey was killed in a train accident in 1985 when, larking about with Carter on tour, he climbed out of a carriage as the train passed under a bridge. While Carter's book will resonate most with those familiar with the unique Dunedin music scene of the 80s and 90s, his story is engaging enough to hold the attention of most.



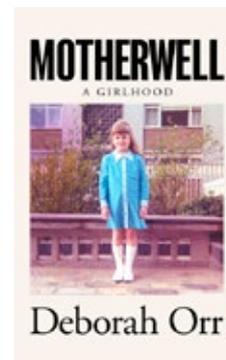
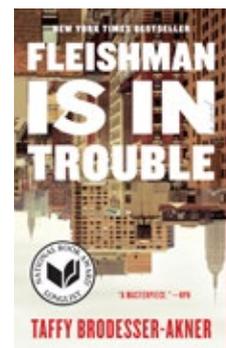
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## FLEISHMAN IS IN TROUBLE

By Taffy Brodesser-Akner  
Headline Group / RRP \$35.00

*Fleishman is in Trouble* looks at the dissolving marriage between Toby and Rachel Fleishman. He's a hepatologist, and she's a successful Manhattan talent scout. As their divorce looms, Toby is starting to look on the bright side: weekend-only parental duties and the joys of internet dating beckon. But then Rachel disappears, leaving Toby to juggle work and the care of their two children on his own. There are two sides to every divorce story, but in this clever often very funny novel, there's three. Toby's and Rachel's perspectives are filtered through Libby, an old university friend of Toby's, whose proximity to their drama has her questioning her own choices. Recommended.



## MOTHERWELL: A GIRLHOOD

By Deborah Orr  
Weidenfeld & Nicolson /  
RRP \$45.00

For those who haven't come across Deborah Orr – or know her mostly in relation to former husband, the writer Will Self – she was an intrepid, award-winning journalist, the first woman editor of the *Guardian Weekend* and a long-time legend on London's media scene. In *Motherwell*, Orr narrates with candour and dark humour her escape from post-industrial small-town Scotland and the fraught emotions she wrestled with after leaving behind Motherwell and her small-minded mother to realise her potential as a journalist. Orr completed *Motherwell* just before she died in 2019 from breast cancer, aged 57.



## THE KINGMAKER

Directed by Lauren Greenfield / [nziff.co.nz](http://nziff.co.nz)

We all know about the 1,220 pairs of shoes Imelda Marcos abandoned when she fled Manila in 1986 but in *The Kingmaker*, director Lauren Greenfield combines extraordinary access and the boastful, unrepentant nature of her subject in a wonderful chronicle of ill-gotten wealth and political corruption. This eye-opening documentary paints a damning picture of Marcos's ego in private and her vanity in public as she flexes her political ambitions once more through son Bongbong, a vice-presidential candidate, and other insidious networks of corruption.

## FILM — NEW ZEALAND INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL IN YOUR LIVING ROOM

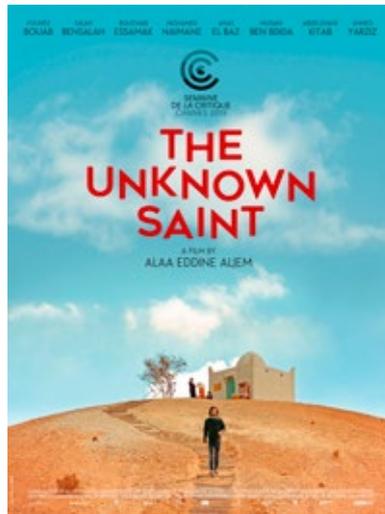
Movie buffs can make their own popcorn when this month's New Zealand International Film Festival moves from the cinema into your own home.

In response to the restrictions on social gatherings caused by COVID-19, the 52-year-old festival is moving online rather than sticking with its usual format of touring 13 cities and towns across the country.

NZIFF At Home – Online will run from 24 July until 2 August, with many of the experiences people would expect of a true film festival, including world and New Zealand premieres of films each night, a virtual red carpet and film maker Q&As.

Browse the full programme and find out how you can watch NZIFF At Home – Online at [nziff.co.nz](http://nziff.co.nz)

### Here are our picks of the festival:



## THE UNKNOWN SAINT

Directed by Alaa Eddine Aljem / [nziff.co.nz](http://nziff.co.nz)

A delightful, deadpan tale of spirituality and greed in rural Morocco. In *The Unknown Saint*, a thief – running low on time as the cops close in – buries a bag of stolen cash on a hill in the desert, fashioning a makeshift grave with rocks to better identify the spot later. When he's finally released from prison, he returns to the desert only to discover that locals have mistaken his assembly of random rubble as a miracle grave for a non-existent saint. Not only have they erected a lavish shrine above the hiding place, but an entire village has been built below.

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