

# Koi Tu News: September 2020



**KOI TŪ:  
THE CENTRE FOR  
INFORMED FUTURES**

As New Zealand grapples with COVID-19, Koi Tu has continued exploring the social, environmental and economic impacts of the pandemic, as its impact begins to hit home.

In this issue of Koi Tu news, we cover the need for an engaged and informed electorate as part of a vibrant democracy; we explore how New Zealand needs to refresh its broad economic strategy to focus on the weightless economy and the potential of the food sector; and we take a look at how New Zealand measures up with youth mental health and rangatahi education.

This week, we're hosting a virtual international meeting on the early lessons of the pandemic, which will provide fascinating insights into the different international responses.

For more information about our latest activities, visit our website [informedfutures.org](https://informedfutures.org)

Nga mihi nui,

Sir Peter Gluckman, Director, Koi Tu



## Sustaining a vibrant democracy in a challenging world

The complex balance of sustaining democracy while governing at a time of public health crisis surely must be one of the foremost issues for many countries during the pandemic. Even before the pandemic emerged, the fragility of democracy was a hot topic in many democracies, with issues ranging from mis- and dis-information and electoral interference to voter apathy and even cynicism.

Sir Peter raises the challenge of balancing representative and participatory democracy in a world awash with information and mis- and dis-information. He says in our fast-changing world, a well-informed and engaged electorate is critical.

[Read more](#)

INGSA Global Week of Dialogue – Science Advice & COVID-19

**Keynote Session**

**Dr Soumya Swaminathan**  
Chief Scientist of the  
World Health Organisation





In conversation with  
**Prof Rémi Quirion**  
Chief Scientist of Québec



Visit [www.ingsa.org](http://www.ingsa.org) for details and registration

## Lessons from the pandemic - a global week of dialogue

More than 30 global experts in science and policy are coming together this week at a global virtual meeting to discuss the early lessons from the pandemic.

Until 18 September, Koi Tu is hosting the [INGSA Global Week of Dialogue](http://www.ingsa.org) - a free event and open to anyone interested in the science and policy implications of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Kristiann Allen, Associate Director of Policy and International Engagement at Koi Tu**, says never before have the interfaces between evidence, policy, and society been more visible and more critical.

"We have seen dramatic and unprecedented shifts in the relationship of science in society, between politics and evidence, and between communities and governments. We have seen where pre-existing institutional structures for evidence and preparedness have failed, but also where there have been some unexpected surprises. Lessons can be learned as the world faces a wide range of economic, technological and environmental challenges far

beyond the coronavirus."

Sessions will feature:

- **Dr Soumya Swaminathan**, Chief Scientist of the World Health Organisation, (event [Keynote](#))
- **Prof Pearl Dykstra**, Deputy Chair of the Group of Chief Scientific Advisors to the European Commission
- **Sir David Skegg**, Epidemiologist from the University of Otago
- **Dr John Nkengasong**, Director of the African Centre for Disease Control and Prevention
- **Prof Devi Sridhar**, Chair of Global Public Health at the University of Edinburgh
- **Dr Mona Nemer**, the Chief Science Advisor to the Prime Minister of Canada

**Register now**



## Time to refresh NZ's long-term strategy

Refresh New Zealand's broad economic strategy to focus on the weightless economy and the potential of the food sector - that was a key recommendation from Sir Peter in his keynote address [COVID-19 and beyond: Contextualising our decision making](#) at the recent ANZ-KangaNews New Zealand Capital Markets Forum.

With New Zealand's highest income sectors - tourism, export education and agriculture - threatened by long-term challenges, it was unrealistic to return to a pre-Covid business as usual mindset. While much of the focus must remain on managing the pandemic, Sir Peter calls for a renewed discussion on New Zealand's longer-term strategy, with actions and policies that would support long-term economic growth and social development, in alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals.

**Read the speech**





## Mental health: silent pandemic among NZ's youth

Mental health conditions among Aotearoa New Zealand youth have doubled in the past decade with mental health experts describing it as ♦ a silent pandemic of psychological distress. ♦

In a Kōi Tu commentary, [Youth Mental Health in Aotearoa New Zealand: Greater Urgency Required](#), authors **Rochelle Menzies**, **Sir Peter** and **Professor Richie Poulton** say there is a largely silent and rapidly escalating pandemic of mental distress among the global youth population.

They are calling for urgent action to better understand the rapid rise in mental health issues, the factors that impact on youth mental health, and effective strategies for prevention and intervention.

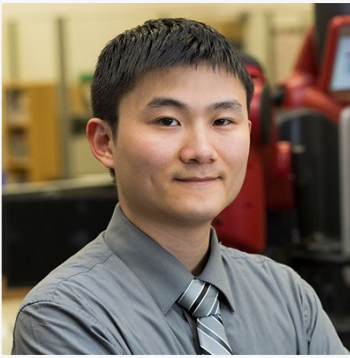
[Read more](#)

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## Contact tracing wake-up call

Cases of community transmission of COVID-19 are a timely reminder that we all need to be engaged with contact tracing processes. We don't need to panic, but we will need to continue to maintain and collect contact tracing records.

**Kōi Tu Research Fellow Andrew Chen** has provided



expert commentary on the contact tracing. You can read more of his work [here](#).

Andrew also edited a new book, [Shouting Zeros and Ones: Digital Technology, Ethics and Policy in New Zealand](#), which delves into the impacts of digital technology from the individual to the societal level. It spans the propagation of misinformation by social media, and also more hidden issues such as the use of AI in policy making. You can read an interview with Andrew discussing the book with Jamie Morton from the NZ Herald [here](#).

[Read more](#)



## Rangatahi education report highlights digital divide

Lockdown exacerbated young Maori students' life on the wrong side of the digital divide says a report produced by Ngati Whatua Orakei and Koi Tu, which examined how the COVID-19 lockdown impacted young Maori students' educational experiences.

**Ngati Whatua Orakei Whai Maia chief executive Rangimarie Hunia** says the iwi was alarmed by the high number of whanau struggling with remote education challenges, so it conducted surveys to understand the specific issues and level of support needed within the

iwi.

It found that of 668 rangatahi aged between 12 and 17 years, including 217 senior students studying NCEA, more than 50 percent only had, at best, an internet-enabled phone in the household to use for remote learning. The iwi used their own resources and organisational skills to support their rangatahi, providing 400 Chromebooks to whanau.

The report, [Addressing rangatahi education: Challenges after COVID-19](#), says a lack of access to suitable digital devices had flow-on effects for students - negatively impacting their mental health and resilience, and senior students being worried about their future prospects.

[Read more](#)

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## About Koi Tu: The Centre for Informed Futures

Koi Tu is as an independent, non-partisan think tank and research centre at the University of Auckland. We generate knowledge and tools to address long-term issues that challenge our future arising from rapid and far-reaching social, economic, technological and environmental change.

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### Help create an informed future

We work with individuals and organisations focused on the long-term development of New Zealand. We focus on issues where trustworthy and robust analysis can make a real difference.

To discuss how you can work with or support us, please contact:

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