



Our next community kōrero
star: Dr Emma Espiner

Delta lockdown: Worse than the first for
women and families in Tāmaki Makaurau

Good News for Mums

Our next community kōrero star: Dr Emma Espiner

"I wanted to have a practical skill for when the zombie apocalypse happens" That's how the remarkable Dr Emma Espiner (Ngāti Tukorehe, Ngāti Porou) - award-winning columnist, podcast presenter, reviewer, and junior doctor - explains how she ended up at med school, aged 30.

We're excited and delighted that Emma will be sharing her candid wit and warmth with us, in kōrero with Stacey Morrison from 7pm - 9pm Wednesday 24 November online and (alert levels willing) at Western Springs.

Having grown up almost literally in Lower Hutt Women's Centre, the multi-talented, insightful Emma always leads public discussion with challenging and entertaining offerings.

Now a junior doctor at Middlemore Hospital, Emma also presented this year's Voyager Narrative Podcast of the Year: "[Getting Better - A Year in the Life of a Māori Medical Student](#)" - which the judges described as a "must-listen". And the year before, the Voyager award judges praised Emma as 2020

Opinion Writer of the Year for being "deeply informed and beautifully skilled" and for her "storyteller's ability".

Emma's kōrero will be free online via our Facebook page, no matter the alert level. If alert levels permit, there will also be a live audience, donations between zero and \$30. If you would like to be on the hope list to attend live register [here](#).



Emma writes Emma – a selection of quotes to pique your interest:

- "A colleague told me recently that my superpower was "translating Māori stuff for Pākehā..."
- "I'm not a natural mother. The only thing I found easy was loving my daughter. Everything else has been an exercise in bewilderment coupled with a deep fear of screwing up."
- "I received lots of advice before starting on night [shift]. ... I found that an UberEATS delivery from an unnamed multinational fast food retailer at 2am can induce unprecedented levels of joy and camaraderie." ■

Delta lockdown: Worse than the first for women and families in Tāmaki Makaurau

This time around, in spite of huge community efforts, need is greater, stress is higher and support is harder to find. For many, it will take a long time to recover.

It didn't have to be this way.

Tania Kingi has worked in the disability sector for almost 40 years yet she told [The Spinoff](#) late last month: “Right now, the community is suffering at levels that I’ve never seen before.” While lockdown became a memory for the rest of the country on 7 September, news reports have painted a grim picture of ongoing lockdown in Tāmaki Makaurau in the weeks since – particularly for women of marginalised communities.

Disabled people are isolated and fearful, and food delivery is an issue – and the murder of Lena Zhang Harrap in Mt Albert may be causing more fear. (Recent research confirmed a higher proportion of disabled women are subject to non-partner sexual violence than non-disabled women or disabled men.)

Pacific women and their communities – already dealing with [pay inequity](#) and related poverty – are facing the toxic stress of more food insecurity than usual: not enough food, or mostly low-quality food (only 25% of food banks can regularly source fruit and vegetables).



The same goes for low-income families led by sole parents (usually women) of all ethnicities: loneliness, as well as food need, spiked for sole parents in the initial lockdown. Then it never went back to pre-Covid levels, and is likely to

have spiked again. Meanwhile, anecdotal reports suggest that in alert level 3, fathers are more likely than mothers to have to leave the house to work – which leaves many women, whether low-income or not, with the impossible task of supervising kids’ education and performing paid work at the same time.



The partial opening of early childhood education centres will provide some caregiving relief for a small number of families with young children – but at the expense of worry and concern of potential exposure to Covid, as children are unvaccinated.

Family violence also seemed to spike in the initial lockdown and since then “there’s never been a slow down, and then it’s just escalated again in this latest lockdown,” Shine’s Holly Carrington told [Newshub last month](#). Not all women experiencing violence have a phone or online access, so getting help is more difficult in lockdown. Concerningly, Women’s Refuge saw a spike in cases at the end of lockdown last year – and in September was worried it could happen again this year.

Other issues which affect women include [period poverty](#) – particularly for students who usually use free sanitary products distributed via schools – and concerns about vaccines.

People were hearing vaccines could hurt their unborn children, whereas in fact, vaccine benefits outweigh the risks: those who are pregnant are at higher risk of becoming severely ill and dying after contracting Covid, than those who aren’t pregnant.

Clearly these are all complex issues, but it seems they have been exacerbated by a change in Government



Much gratitude to the fabulous Michèle A'Court who supports our fundraiser, Donate-a-Kate

Your Kate can help!

Our [Women's Support](#) advice and referral service at Te Wāhi Wāhine o Tāmaki Makaurau is more vital than ever in lockdown: offering support and information via phone and email to women stuck at home and work, facing dilemmas, difficulties, trauma (past and present) and even crisis. Yet, at the same time as the Centre reaches women in need during the pandemic, this lockdown has reduced the Centre's income: for example, we aren't receiving payments for our planned community education classes.

So, on Suffrage Day 19 September we launched our second ever "Donate-a-Kate" campaign, inviting supporters to give us one (or three or ten!) \$10 banknotes featuring the great suffrage leader Kate Sheppard. We're extremely grateful to everyone who has donated thus far and – with a few days to go – meeting our \$10,000 goal by mid-October is still possible if we have all hands to the pump. As comedian Michèle A'Court puts it: "We might be a team of five million but we're not on a level playing field: some women face bigger struggles than others ... and that's where your Kate can help!"

We can't receive cash in the mail but you can give online via givealittle.co.nz/cause/donate-a-kate-2021, or via internet banking (put your name and "DAK" in the details):

Account number: 12-3012-0782605-00

Account name: The Auckland Women's Centre Incorporated

approach to meet need: instead of the high-trust model of the initial lockdown, when people could more easily access the hardship grants they needed to pay rent, power and internet access as well as groceries, the Government is instead relying on foodbanks: an emergency stop-gap low-trust model which takes away dignity and decision-making power.

Last year, te Wāhi Wāhine o Tāmaki Makaurau recommended that the Government's Covid response prioritise "caring, community and all contributions to collective well-being." We repeat that recommendation here. It must include ensuring all women have income to participate and contribute to their communities, and funding genuine community development – not just expecting volunteers to try and fill the desperate need for income in the community with food parcels. ■

Need Support?



Contact Women's Support for free support, information, advice or referral:

Ring: (09) 376 3227 - Mon-Fri - 9am - 4pm

Or email: info@womens.org.nz

- Non - judgemental
- No criteria - open to all
- Staffed by experts in women's needs



Kōrero with Dr Emma Espiner

Ngāti Tukorehe and Ngāti Porou

Award-winning writer and political commentator

RNZ podcast host "Getting Better" about Māori health equity



Wednesday 24 November, 7pm - 9pm



WITH STACEY MORRISON

Ngāi Tahu, Te Arawa award-winning broadcaster, author, Te Reo advocate

Western Springs Community Hall, 956 Great North Road. Bookings essential to awc.org.nz/emma
Donations between zero and \$30. All genders welcome, NZSL interpreters. Tea & coffee provided

Good News for Mums

The Government is bringing in multiple measures to support the rights of parents (particularly mothers) and children.

The Government is not yet acknowledging the importance of caregiving by ensuring all families have enough income (for example, the cost of the two commitments below only adds up to ~\$30 million, equivalent to around 1-2 percent of what's required for income adequacy for all). But these developments – all shepherded by Carmel Sepuloni as Minister for both Social Development and ACC – are steps in the right direction:

- **ACC is to cover more parental childbirth injuries**, not just those caused by treatment; people assisted will include 17,000-18,000 women per year. We're pleased Minister Sepuloni was explicit the aim is "to improve gender balance, fairness and equity" for ACC, and we're impressed that an article by RNZ's Anusha Bradley was instrumental in bringing the issue to the Minister's attention (women's advocacy works!). But as Greens' ACC spokesperson Jan Logie points out, all birth injuries – including those suffered by babies – and birth trauma/ mental health injuries should also be included. The law is expected to pass mid-2022.



Personal trainer Kirsty Watt started the "Better postnatal care" petition during Contenance Awareness Week in June last year

- **From next month, parents who have another child while receiving a benefit will no longer be forced to look for work when that child turns one, thanks to a new law.** More than 11,000 benefit recipients – disproportionately Māori and women, due to discrimination – were affected by the previous 2012 policy, which was a misogynistic, racist "vice-signalling" attempt to coercively influence parenting choices and deny women their reproductive rights. Repealing such injustice, says Minister Sepuloni, "reflects the value this Government places on the importance of caring and parenting." But the 2018/19 Welfare Expert Advisory Group recommended repealing eight benefit sanctions and obligations in total; this is only the second one the Government has repealed so far (the first being the sanction against parents – mostly women – who don't name the other parent).
- **Meanwhile, miserly Child Support rules continue, although Minister Sepuloni says she agrees they are discriminatory and need an overhaul.** A recent Michelle Duff investigation shows the Government denies some of the country's poorest families (mostly headed by sole mothers) more than \$150 million collected from co-parents (mostly fathers). Experts, advocates and government agencies – including the Children's Commissioner, MSD, Oranga Tamariki, and family law academics – are urging the Government to pass on the fathers' contributions to their children as happens in other countries, as this would likely reduce child abuse and neglect, and improve children's wellbeing.

At the same time, the Government should stop forcing sole parents on benefits to request child support from their exes: current law places domestic violence victims in greater danger and represents a human rights violation. Sepuloni says it's a complex area and will change in due course – but in the meantime, perhaps as many as 100,000 children suffer under current law. ■

Contact

09 376 3227 x 0
info@womens.org.nz
www.awc.org.nz

Centre Hours

Monday to Friday 9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Library Hours

Monday to Friday 9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Services

- Women's Support: free support, info, advice and referral
- Community Education
- Community Events
- Counselling
- LGBTQ support
- Low Cost Massage
- Self Defence Classes
- Opportunities to talk and support feminism
- Diversity Forums
- Support Groups
- Support for High School Feminism

Designed by Toni Chase