



Public Health Association
of New Zealand
Kāhui Hauora Tūmatanui
o Aotearoa

PHANZ MEDIA STATEMENT

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2024 Public Health Conference Ignites Transformative Discussions

After a seven-year hiatus, the Public Health Association of New Zealand (PHANZ) successfully convened its annual conference, marking a pivotal moment for the public health sector in New Zealand.

Since its inception in 1988, PHANZ advocates, innovates and collaborates across the public health landscape, promoting health equity, disease prevention, and overall well-being.

The April 2024 PHANZ Conference, held in Rotorua, brought together a diverse range of professionals, researchers, policymakers, and community advocates from across the country.

PHANZ CEO, Dr Cadence Kaumoana, said this year's theme, "From Vulnerable to Vibrant," reinforced a commitment to honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi and profiling the voices of Māori and Pacific voices in shaping public health strategies.

"The conference encouraged robust discussions on public health issues, focusing on health leadership representation, diversity and inclusivity, recognition of public health champions, and fostering community empowerment" says Dr Kaumoana.

Key themes emerged around honesty, accountability, and upholding Te Tiriti o Waitangi, calling for systemic changes to address underlying determinants of health, including mental wellness and social cohesion.

The conference provided a comprehensive review of New Zealand's health landscape, shedding light on persistent inequities, particularly affecting Māori and Pacific communities. Leaders emphasised the urgent need for increased investment in public health initiatives and a multidisciplinary approach to navigate complex health challenges effectively.

The celebration of the Public Health Awards into the conference agenda was a highlight; a celebration of outstanding individuals and groups driving progress in public health. Award winners included Te Aka Whai Ora, the Māori Advisory Group at Liggins Institute, Hawkes Bay Pacific Team of Te Whatu Ora, and the Centre for Asian and Ethnic Minority Health Research and Evaluation (CAHRE).

Keynote speakers, including Sir Collin Tukuitonga, Professor Leonie Pihama, Dr Gary Jackson, Dr Corina Grey, and compelling closing remarks from Riana Manuel, shared compelling perspectives on public health leadership, community wellbeing opportunities, and the future of the public health workforce.

"As we reflect on the conference, it's evident that these moments of collaboration and inspiration lay the groundwork for ongoing transformative change. The conference served as a powerful reminder of the importance of collective action and shared values to address public health challenges."

To view the full conference report, please click [here](#).

About PHANZ:

The Public Health Association of New Zealand (PHANZ) is a passionate community of professionals, researchers, policymakers and advocates, committed to creating a healthier, more equitable, and sustainable New Zealand. Since 1988, PHANZ has played a critical role in shaping public health policy and practice, advocating for health equity, disease prevention, and overall well-being.

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Note: Photos and additional materials from the conference are available through the membership portal on our website.