

Episode Four of Five: Kei roto i te miru: Inside the bubble – ‘We Moved’ Podcast Series EP04 Covid-19 pandemic lockdown 2020. Produced by Ministry for Culture and Heritage Manatū Taonga, Auckland Libraries.

Kei roto i te miru: inside the bubble

Podcast series, oral histories from lockdown 2020, Covid-19 pandemic Aotearoa New Zealand. Produced by Manatū Taonga, Ministry for Culture and Heritage.

INTRO:

AUDIO PM Jacinda Ardern: 48hrs before lockdown - Non-essential businesses in New Zealand must now close. All bars, restaurants, cafes, cinemas, pools, museums, libraries, playgrounds, any other place where the public congregate must close their face to face function. All indoor and outdoor events cannot proceed. In short, we are all now preparing as a nation to go into self-isolation.

AUDIO: SFX (Sound Effects) Emergency Management Alert

AUDIO Jacinda Ardern: 48hrs before lockdown - These decisions will place the most significant restrictions on New Zealanders movements in modern history.

HOST: Tēnā koutou katoa, Ko Emma Jean taku ingoa. I'm Dr Emma-Jean Kelly -- an audio-visual historian with Manatū Taonga: The Ministry for Culture and Heritage -- and this is Kei roto i te miru: Inside the Bubble.

Theme Music upswell

HOST: As lockdown loomed and you gathered your whanau, your supplies, your nerves, we corralled a team of oral historians, grappled with technology, and (digitally) found our way into twenty five unique New Zealand bubbles to capture your Aotearoa, as you made history.

Theme Music upswell

HOST: It was a journey all 5 million of us made collectively as we prepared...

AUDIO Natalie Healy: That last day before we went in, I went to Bunnings and I went to Baby City to panic buy some more toys.

AUDIO Angelique Tuaputa: She became the panic shopper, and I became the wingman to the panic shopper.

HOST: We cared...

AUDIO Jacque: The first two weeks were very scary, because we didn't know what was going to happen within the hospital.

HOST: And we moved...particularly...

AUDIO Aliyah Winter: going on lots of government mandated walks

HOST: And ...

AUDIO Caren Wilton: I see a lot of older people, people who like to be in the 70s and 80s, who I don't think you would normally see out on bikes.

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HOST: And we learned...

AUDIO Sebastian Nobile: I tried to learn guitar. Three songs... and we have four guitars in the hostel. So, lock down was the perfect opportunity.

AUDIO Zemara Waru-Keelan: We kept the home school thing happening. We made marshmallow putty and we did painting, and we exploded volcanoes...

HOST: And even though we couldn't be together -- we connected...

AUDIO Carol Peters: I am encouraged by the goodness of humans. I think there are the silver linings of connection, and us seeing how the best that we can be in caring for ourselves and our neighbours.

HOST: And now we remember -- In this episode, we'll look back at how we moved -- even though we had to stay put.

SFX (Sound effects) Outdoor walking

HOST: The ‘walk of freedom’, ‘the sanity stroll’ or the ‘Hikoi of hope’ that would get you through another hour of working from home, home-schooling or the endless hours of loneliness. Some days our ‘government sanctioned walks’ were the highlight of the day. Other days they felt like nothing more than a forced march. But while it was sometimes hard to get around to it, rug up and face the Autumn chill it was always worth it in the end. We discovered new places in our parks, neighbourhoods and paddocks. But despite needing it -- for everyone's sanity -- if you had kids in your bubble, you'll know they were not always keen to hear these words.

SFX: A Mum's voice ‘alright, get your shoes on, time for a walk!’ Kid's voice ‘Do we have to?’

HOST: If you ever ventured to look up ways to make one of your few freedoms a little more interesting, this handy online list probably best sums up how to get the kids out for a walk when they've forgotten the joys of the outside world.

SFX: 7 ways to make Lockdown walks fun for kids (Tip 1 – don't call it a walk!)

HOST: The first rule of kids and lockdown walks is DON'T TALK ABOUT LOCKDOWN WALKS! And -- spoiler alert -- the rest of that list involved a lot more worthy parenting than many of us were capable of in the thick of lockdown. Thankfully, early on one particular phenomenon made those lockdown forced marches a delight for the tamariki of Aotearoa.

SFX: Walking, teddy bears in the windows. Parent's voice ‘Oh look there's one over there!’

HOST: When we weren't encased in the lazy mental fug of lockdown though, walks could be the great escape. Some people couldn't get enough of their walk, especially it seems, dog owners. The internet delivered endless memes joking about overwalked dogs trying to evade their masters or hide their leads. There were even strict rules about how or how far we could exercise.

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SFX: Ministry of Health advice on walking during level four

HOST: Maybe the least preferred option for the Ministry of Health was taking a drink with you on your outing, a ‘walktail’, or a ‘quarantini’ if you will. But some people were out in search of a calm that didn’t come in liquid form.

AUDIO Jacque: When you went out for your daily walks, you know, I had to get out. I would be claustrophobic. I was confined indoors. Fortunately, we’ve had stunning weather. And so getting out for a daily walk was both mentally and physically, very important for me anyway. And just reflecting on other people, the calmness that you everyone walked Well, 90% of people anyway gave you that to meet a distance as you walk past and smile and say, Good morning, and I didn’t hear any aggression or aggro, or there just seemed a calmness out in the community.

HOST: Remember Jacque, the nurse we heard in episode one? She was working all through lockdown? She was both an essential worker and an essential walker.

AUDIO Jacque: I deliberately walked to and from work, because I needed that time to sort of get it out of my head. And when you first walked out of work, you were still...and your head was going in 100 different directions. But by the time you got home, you’re a lot calmer in that whole, feeling and vibe you got on the street as you’re walking home was healthy.

HOST: I did love my lockdown walks, sometimes they seemed like they were one of the few freedoms we still had from our pre-Covid lives -- but also, some days I just preferred the ‘idea’ of them and the day might sneakily slip away without me bothering to venture outside at all.

SFX: Walking

HOST: While I was less grateful for the walks at times, for Selina Patia in Auckland a walk became a cherished freedom. Her lockdown was a month spent encircled by a high chain-link fence. Here’s how it unfolded...

AUDIO Selina Patia: I think my situation is a little bit different in the sense that I was actually in Hawaii 48 hours before lockdown happened. And so I landed here on the 23rd, the evening of March the 23rd, 2020 along with 40 others. And this was a group of mamas, papas, and three children in this group who had gone to Hawaii for a netball tournament, our Golden Oldies tournament. So I was part of that group, because mum was also in there. So I went as kind of her chaperone and looked after her.

HOST: Remember how before lockdown people returning from overseas just had to self-isolate at home after they’d returned? That was the situation Selina and the team were in, the only problem was accommodation in Auckland was all booked out and the group, mostly from Rarotonga, was stuck enroute with nowhere to stay. Then the local community stepped in to help and found them somewhere to isolate.

AUDIO Selina Patia: So we went straight from the plane to the Atiu Hall in Māngere, and that was our accommodation, a massive hall there Atiu in Māngere. We got there, gates locked in, we got

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unloaded off the bus with our luggage. We had no ... linen, no nothing, at the time. We just arrived and once we got in, sorted ourselves out, the bus left and the gate was closed.

HOST: Selina lives in Auckland and she could've gone home, but she decided to stay at the hall with the group for a month to help look after everyone. She was glad to be there to make sure the others were ok, but she did find she was given the unwelcome role of having to restrict everybody's movement.

AUDIO Selina Patia: It was quite tough actually. Because one, I had to become ... I became the warden, which meant I was the gatekeeper. And that also meant that, you know, I had to be tough on them. I had to ... yeah, I couldn't let them go out. And I couldn't let anyone come in. And so I became kind of the bad guy. I was the bad guy, but somebody had to do it. And that was my role.

HOST: With her own daily walks confined to the hall's concrete car park, she found a new appreciation for getting out and enjoying a stroll.

AUDIO Selina Patia: Yeah, no, I think that's the best thing for me. And probably also, health wise. Really got to get out there now and really do, and really enjoy. Because, you know, one of the things I saw was, when we had the freedom to move around, we didn't, you know, we really didn't. And then when that freedom was kind of taken away from us, in some sense. We're like, I need to go out for a walk. I need to do this, I need to exercise, I need to keep myself healthy, you know. So it took the freedom being taken away from us, for us to think about our life and our health and our way of eating and things like that. So that's another lesson. I'm really not going to complain anymore when someone says come on, let's go for a walk, or when someone says let's go for a workout. I'll just go yeah, man, let's do it. Let's do it. Yeah.

Music

HOST: I'm Dr Emma-Jean Kelly and you're listening to Kei roto i te miru: Inside the Bubble, a collection of oral histories recorded during the 2020 nation-wide Covid-19 lockdown. When the then health minister hit the international headlines for breaching his own lockdown rules by hitting the hills of Otago for a spot of mountain biking, he wasn't the only one who found the idea of two-wheeled freedom irresistible. Maybe you came across something like this on your walks...

AUDIO CAREN WILTON: I see a lot of older people, people who look to be in the 70s and 80s, who I don't think you would normally see out on bikes. It's kind of maybe they had a bike sitting in the garage for the last year. They haven't been on for a while and now they're using it again.

RNZ CHECKPOINT LISA OWEN: Cycling has been the clear winner of the lockdown.

HOST: An outdoor adventure park in Christchurch surveyed people on their favourite new ways to get active in lockdown and found cycling beat walking, in-home workouts and running to the top spot. More than three quarters of those surveyed said cycling was their favourite new form of exercise...And it wasn't just for exercise... it was handy for the supermarket shop, an alternative to those forced marches with the kids and a safe way for essential workers to commute if they didn't

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have a car. Jacque, who’s a big fan of walking home after a day of nursing, also knows the joys of cycling -- and for her it was a welcome sight to see more people jumping on bikes and taking advantage of the empty, car-free streets.

AUDIO Jacque: The really good positive, which we were I was hoping for, but it's looking probable. Was the recreation out there with the cycling? I was talking to somebody from the cycling industry. And they have never been as busy as they've just gone nuts. And they're running out of everything. people are bringing their old bikes out of the shed and fixing them up. So some of it's just part wanting parts to fix up their old bikes, or they've pulled out the bike and it can't be fixed. So no we've enjoyed that want to get into it wanting to buy a new one. Another one? Or for someone else in the family, then yeah, the cycling industry apparently has gone

HOST: Jacque’s source was on to something because news reports later confirmed that bicycle shops were overwhelmed with customers buying bikes or booking their old ones in for repairs. Dancing didn’t make it on to that list of popular ways to be active in lockdown -- but maybe it should’ve. With dance classes cancelled and music venues closed it was -- unfortunately -- easy to dance like no one was watching. At the Wellington clinic where primary care practice assistant Jack Hitchcox works -- he managed to find an audience -- albeit a rather small one.

AUDIO JACK HITCHCOX: We've kind of developed a rule where we're not allowed to enter the practice until we've done a nice dance outside the practice door.

HOST: Jack’s audience was usually the receptionist on duty and his music? the waiting room playlist muffled by secure glass doors.

AUDIO Jack Hitchcox: So since the practice door's locked, any time if one of us needs to, if we want to leave the practice during a lunch break, or we need to go to the bathrooms, which are down the hallway, outside of the practice, or even just arriving at work in the morning, we can't get into the practice until someone else opens the door for us. So amongst a few of us, it's just kind of a little thing to pick you up and make each other smile, you do a little dance at the door, you earn your entrance into the practice.

HOST: While the official line was that health workers were the heroes of the pandemic, Jack says patients were not always kind and some took their frustrations out on the staff. At times, it was hard to keep smiling.

AUDIO Jack Hitchcox: On reception and stuff, they're dealing with very difficult phone calls from a lot of scared and stressed out patients dealing with both COVID and the flu season. And so it's been a lot of pressure for everyone, a very stressful time.

HOST: And so when things got quiet at the surgery...Yup, more dancing was prescribed.

AUDIO Jack Hitchcox: Sometimes we have little dances in the waiting room as well, if there's no patients around, especially over the lunch hour tends to be very quiet because the doctors are on the lunch breaks, the nurses are on the lunch breaks, there's not generally anyone coming into the Kei Roto I Te Miru Inside the Bubble – Podcast Series EP04 ‘Moved’, Covid-19 pandemic lockdown 2020 Ministry for Culture and Heritage Manatū Taonga, Auckland Libraries.

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clinic around that time. So we might have a little dance in the waiting room. There's been a lot of a lot of chocolate biscuits, a lot of baking coming in from the doctors and nurses and other staff members just to kind of keep a smile on each other's faces. And a lot of just general joking around, I think and just trying to make sure we're being really keeping each other's spirits up. And because it has definitely been really stressful. The doctors and nurses have kind of found a whole new way of doing consultations over phone and video chat. It's not easy, it's and they're constantly trying to screen people making decisions about who can come into the practice who can't try to make decisions about who needs Covid testing, that kind of thing.

AUDIO Jack Hitchcox: And so yeah, it's just been little things like that, to kind of Yeah, making the most of, of how empty, it's been to do a lot of dancing, singing, joking. That kind of thing, which has been really nice.

SFX: Albert Traill teaching online dance classes

HOST: Dance was also the preferred medium of movement for airline worker Albert Traill and his family.

AUDIO Albert Traill: despite the lockdown clauses my children's dance classes carried on.

HOST: Albert's bubble was his wife Te Kura and their three kids, Melanie, Jacob and Tumaia

AUDIO Albert Traill: So my two oldest kids are involved with a Tahitian dance class which they continued on throughout the lockdown period Mondays and Fridays. Our Fijian classes carried on on the Wednesdays. So despite that, life at home for us was still quite busy, in the sense that we wanted to keep the kids busy, but our goal was to ... keep a calm focused atmosphere within the home, not just focused too much on news. It was getting quite depressing watching the news every day, and just looking at things crumbling, and industries shutting down and the numbers rising and so forth.

HOST: Albert was determined to keep the family's spirits up. Not easy when your own industry is one of those constantly in the news and your job's on the line.

SFX: Albert Traill online dance classes

HOST: Albert is a multi-talented man. Those Fijian dance classes he mentioned? - he's actually the teacher. So he had to figure how to keep them going -- and it wasn't all that straightforward.

AUDIO Albert Traill: So on the first week we tried to ... we created a separate Facebook page where ... because not all of our students or kids have access to a phone or a device for Zoom to teach, because some of their parents still work as essential workers during the lockdown, so it was just getting too challenging to get everybody to meet at a certain time to have these Zoom meetings. So I thought ok, let's just do a page where I'll upload the video, film myself walking through the motions and the actions, and we'll do it together with the music or the accompaniment, upload it there, you

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guys write a comment and say that you’ve seen it, and then in turn when you get a chance get your parents to film you, record it and upload it there, and then I will look and give feedback in regards to actions and so forth. While many parents thought ok, let’s just do Zoom because it’s live, and so forth, and I would say yes but then you can’t rewind and go back. So that’s why I thought Facebook videos in a closed group would be a lot better, because then you can rewind back and comment and say look how you’re doing this certain action, or make sure your posture or smile more, and then that with the comments and the feedback would be there permanently online ... So I think we’ve done a little bit of both, but for ... in regards to my kids in the Tahitian group, I think their dance ... format it’s a lot better to use the Zoom because it’s live, and they’re looking at technique, and actually dancing all together at the same time. Whereas the Fijian dancing, we don’t really need to have live. I prefer that video posted up, and I can give you feedback through the comments.

HOST: Albert teamed up with a local arts organisation near his home in West Auckland and his dancing ended up being shared all over the world.

AUDIO Albert Traill: it's been awesome to go hand in hand with the Pacifica Art Centre as well, to create another safe online space to share Fijian language and dance, and the audiences are coming in from all over, from the States, from the UK, from the islands, from Fiji itself. These kids live in Fiji, but they don't even have the opportunity to do the meke, and I thought how funny is that, you know, this culture is from their land but they don't have opportunities to partake in that, so it's coming all the way back from New Zealand, beamed to the satellites in space, and back down there. Technology is so amazing, yeah!

HOST: During lockdown Albert’s job situation was uncertain and incredibly stressful -- but dance kept him in touch with his community and that helped him to stay focused on the positive.

AUDIO Albert Traill: Yeah I think having my strong cultural background, being connected to my culture ... and being so crucial in helping to deal and get through this situation ... because I mean obviously there’s a lot of things that are out of our control, a lot of questions we have, concerns of an uncertain future, of what’s going to happen in regard to employment moving forward, and so forth, so many things to think about, but I’ve noticed there’s one thing that teaches me is my culture, and my foundation in faith teaches me to always have hope for the better.

Music

Outro:

I’m Dr Emma Jean Kelly and that was ‘We moved’ our fourth episode for Kei Roto I Te Miru: Inside the Bubble.

The series was written and executive produced by Teresa Cowie -- sound was designed and woven by Anaru Dalziel -- our production co-ordinator was Georgie Keyse -- and the music was by Stefan Patton. The lockdown oral histories you heard in this episode were recorded by Debbie Dunsford, Tuaratini and Will Hansen.

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Our thanks to The Ministry for Culture and Heritage -- Auckland Libraries, especially Sue Berman -- RNZ, for additional audio and of course to those who shared their bubble with us Jacque, Selina Patia, Albert Traill and Jack Hitchcox -- ngā mihi nui ki a koutou.

And you can hear more from Jack, look for the Pride Week bonus episode about the big life step he took during lockdown coming out as trans. You'll find the link on the RNZ 'Inside the Bubble' page. If you want to check out the full interviews from the series, head to the Auckland Libraries website.

In the next episode...we'll look back at how we connected.

AUDIO Leon: Staying home with my family is my dream. Yes. It was actually heaven sent

HOST: Join me again to remember how we connected even when we had to stay apart -- Mā te wā.