

Episode Three of Five: Kei roto i te miru: Inside the bubble – ‘We Learned’ Podcast Series EP03 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, episode three ‘We Learned’, 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) EMA 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 was 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 try 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 learned

SFX - record HOST in an echoey bathroom singing happy birthday and washing hands for 20 secs

HOST: Washing our hands. We should've really had that nailed by now, but before the Covid-19 lockdown a cursory swish under the tap would do for most of us -- even though we knew it wasn't really up to standard. Science Communicator, Dr Michelle Dickinson, aka Nanogirl, made this video to educate us about the science behind that so often missed step -- soap...

AUDIO Dr Michelle Dickinson: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iFKB1HQgdl8>

HOST: There was even some unexpected official merchandise to remind us of how important it was.

MUSIC

PLAY AUDIO WOMAN SPEAKING: Let the soothing image of our 'man of the moment', Dr Ashley Bloomfield, guide you through safe hand washing and drying practice. With this embroidery on 100% cotton -- premium grade hand towel.

HOST: Rubbing our pristine palms on the embroidered face of our most senior public health official was surely, to overuse our most overused word of lockdown -- 'unprecedented'. But if only all we had to do to succeed in our new bubble-encased lives ↑ was learn to wash our hands properly.

SFX of a tapping keyboard and clicking mouse

HOST: Remember this?...

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MUSIC

SFX Zoom confusion

AUDIO Leanne Taylor: So you haven't no? Sorry. You go. No you go.

HOST: Or maybe something like this?

AUDIO Kaylene Wakefield: Oh, can you hear me... did it...? The baby just muted me. She's playing  
with the cable.

HOST: Unless you're a public servant like me or someone who has a fancy job that requires a lot of  
conference calling, the words Zoom, Hangout and Teams, probably had quite a different meaning for  
you before March the 25th 2020.

But oh my did we learn. Pretty soon those video calls ‘The Jetsons’ had promised us would be part of  
our daily lives by now, became: ↑ our school -- our workplace -- and our social life. The technology'd  
been around for a while, it was just we'd never really been forced to use it before. I was kinda ok  
with the tech side of things, but I remember seriously overthinking trying to get my apartment  
background looking vaguely professional for my work meetings -- It was nearly like I was dressing a  
set for a play. Why did I care? I don't know! Backgrounds did prove a useful icebreaker when we  
were all still feeling pretty weirded out about the whole thing - in fact it was great when I was talking  
to a Professor I'd never met before and he saw my husband's collection of guitars hanging up behind  
me - we laughed about the deal we have that he can't buy a new instrument unless he sells an old  
one - a survival tactic we have for living in a small apartment like ours.-- It also took me a while to  
figure out it was fine for me to not use the video if I was just feeling a bit exhausted by it all. Zoom  
fatigue was real for me quite quickly, I think because it feels intimate to have strangers talking to you  
and seeing inside your home. For Zemara Waru-Keelan, who spoke to us via Zoom from her home in

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the Waikato, the learning was a little more sophisticated than just hand washing and figuring out how to unmute herself on a video call.

Audio Zemara Waru-Keelan: Well, I am currently a PhD student, I just got accepted in the first week of lockdown. So, in all the craziness that was I got some positive news. And it was really hopeful because ing it, we didn't actually know when it was going to end or if it was coming in. So, it was something to keep me occupied. And so I've started my research. My subject area is to do with Māori women, my focus group, I want to talk about healing, and holistic well-being through the arts. Because it's a powerful tool

HOST: But she didn't totally escape having to get to grips with those dreaded conference calls.

AUDIO Zemara Waru-Keelan: Before lockdown, I was invited to speak at the New Zealand musical theatre conference in Napier, of what would have been my first conference presentation. So, it was really huge for me, I put a lot of effort into planning for that, and writing the material and practicing at the presentation. But the first weekend of lockdown coincided with when that would have been so it was canceled. And we were all asked to do our presentations via video. And so I used that as an opportunity to, to really make it the best I could make it and I edited it and I put some music on it that my nephew. So, I got to show off some of my family's talents as well. So it took me about a month to put that together in. I posted it on social media, because if nobody saw it, it would have been a waste of time. So, I shared it and I got a huge response.

HOST: What was at first a huge disappointment, gave her a new set of skills, and a way to share her research with a wider audience.

AUDIO Zemara Waru-Keelan: And um and because of that response, I've decided to create a series here. It's called healing through art. And I will be talking about mental mental health and wellness and the arts as a tool for healing which is in line with my PhD thesis as well.

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HOST: Zemara wasn't just learning though -- she was also teaching her children Kauri and Te Ataakura.

AUDIO Zemara Waru-Keelan: So, my children also have disabilities; they have both on the ASD spectrum they've been diagnosed by officials. My son gets a support worker every day at school. So, he has his own teacher. And my daughter, she goes to a special school once a week, and they have all the specialists there to help us with whatever we need, as well as a cute little library full of information. And they connect us to all the extra assistance that we are entitled to to give them their best lives.

HOST: But of course with school closed that support was all gone. In Zemara's bubble of six were her own two children, her niece Mila, and her parents. As an extra precaution she took her kids out of school early, a couple of weeks before lockdown -- so for her -- home-schooling was a really long haul.

AUDIO Zemara Waru-Keelan: So, it's 11 weeks of being locked inside. But we're lucky because we live in rural Waikato. So, we can run around outside. So that's been really nice having space because I know a lot of families don't have space, they're locked in apartments and flats. That's enough to cause some social issues.

HOST: Being thrust into home-schooling was *pretty* daunting, but like thousands of parents Zemara... just made it work.

AUDIO Zemara Waru-Keelan: They seemed to flourish really enjoying their own space and getting to decide what they were going to do with the day. Kauri's room is his safe haven. He gets to control everything inside that's happening, he's started calling his toys, his friends. I'm lucky to have two children because they weren't alone. They still got to socialize with each other, and their relationship

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developed beautifully. They still argue like typical siblings, but it's been really beautiful watching them bond and watching them really appreciate each other. And the first month, we had my niece, Mila because her parents had been on holiday in Hawaii, but also after that when they got home. They had to be in isolation for two weeks. So, she was missing her parents so much. She was absolutely beside herself that she had to wait. But um, we kept her busy. I did homeschooling every day. I made sure that she was doing some kind of learning. So, we kept the home school thing happening and did fun activities. We made marshmallow putty and we did painting and we exploded volcanoes.

HOST: Zemara is also a harakeke weaver -- so, she took the opportunity to pass on some of her skills.

AUDIO Zemara Waru-Keelan: I did do a little bit of something with Mila, my niece. We did some harvesting and we made some flowers for her school for her home-schooling. And she really loved it. She's a kura girl so she's getting into all that good Maori cultural practice.

HOST: Mila's home-schooling *also* involved building a new chicken pen.

AUDIO Zemara Waru-Keelan: And she got to hold chickens, the new baby chickens running around outside in the backyard. We built forts. Kids love the tents. Her Mila and Te Ataakura. They did lots of play, like acting like doctors and like natural/normal kind of stuff. And we got to be a family without any pressure of having a routine or anything. And that was really good for the kids. They love just being in without any stress. Um, so it was really nice. It's like a holiday.

HOST: And as many parents can attest, home-schooling didn't always have that 'holiday vibe'.

AUDIO Zemara Waru-Keelan: There were moments when I just wanted to be alone. And I couldn't, and that was hard. I think at first that the first week was really hard because I had three children.

And there was no escape. It was me and I had some moments when I just locked myself in the

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shower and cried as a means of relief. But um, I just keep reminding myself that there's so many other parents out there going through the same thing. And that we are actually really blessed to, to have everything.

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 nationwide Covid-19 lockdown.* Much of the learning and teaching we had to do was thrust upon us and just what we had to do to keep work or school going -- but some of it was a bit of a luxury made possible by the unexpected windfall of time. The time we were gifted in lockdown by ditching our commutes, halting our social lives -- and frankly not having to get dressed-up or deal with our basic hygiene routine before work -- meant we could lift some projects off the backburner or finally attempt mastering that new skill we'd been saying we'd get around to for ages. In March 2020, Sebastian Nobile had just finished three months backpacking around New Zealand. He'd decided to settle in Wellington for a bit -- get a job -- and get some cash together, before he set off on the next leg of his trip.

AUDIO Sebastian Nobile: Ah, that time I have a job, I was working in a restaurant

HOST: And then...

AUDIO Sebastian Nobile: Yes, it closed

HOST: No income, no backpacking adventures and no way home -- so what now then?

SFX guitar tuning

HOST: From the unexpected confines of a New Zealand hostel, this stranded backpacker from Uruguay -- picked-up a guitar and picked up a new skill as well.

AUDIO Sebastian Nobile: I tried to learn guitar. I learned three songs in the quarantine.

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HOST: He’d never tried before, so he was basically learning from scratch. And in the absence of lessons, or a proper teacher he turned to...

AUDIO Sebastian Nobile: YouTube

HOST: And he didn’t do too badly either.

AUDIO Sebastian Nobile: I think I can learn the whole song between one and three days. And then you have to practice to get faster. Like to perform better.

HOST: Learning the guitar was something he’s always wanted to do, but - life usually got in the way. So, he spent his days in the hostel common room -- figuring it out.

AUDIO Sebastian Nobile: And we have four guitars in the hostel. So that was lockdown, four guitars was the perfect opportunity.

HOST: Like Zemara, Sebastian also found himself filling the role of both student and teacher. He was one of two-hundred thousand visitors stuck in New Zealand when lockdown began and the borders closed. It must have been so strange being confined to a hostel, with so little privacy and hardly any of your own home comforts or possessions to keep you occupied. I remember my own desire to keep learning and occupied which resulted in a weird little sewing project. We had a bunch of stuffed toy animals my husband Jay had brought back from the kindy he was working at. They were being thrown out, so we washed them and then I started to pull them apart and sew them together in all sorts of crazy ways. We had an elephant with no ears after I cut them off and put them on a teddy bear which also ended up with a unicorn horn. It was a good talking point for family Zoom calls and I found it therapeutic somehow. Some of the 50 or so others at Sebastian’s hostel were also looking for something to take their minds off lockdown. Sebastian says a lot of them were feeling quite down, and worried about their families back home.

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He’s a native speaker of Spanish, and lots of the other backpackers were asking him to give them some lessons. So, he thought, why not? He found ‘playing teacher’ all a bit much though.

AUDIO Sebastian Nobile: I was so nervous. I was sweating and shaking the whole class. Yes, I don’t know if I’m made for being a teacher.

HOST: So, he won’t be planning a future in education.

AUDIO Sebastian Nobile: I don't want to, I need too much time for preparing the class and yes, I didn't have a good experience as a teacher. I was so nervous and was so afraid of failing or making pauses too long or something so yes, I was scared.

HOST: Despite his worries, word at the hostel was that his classes were actually quite good. From home-schooling to sourdough-making and promising ourselves we’d master a new skill while we waited out the lockdown, we learned a lot. But something I have heard so many people say over and over is what they learned about this...

AUDIO Albert Traill: You know what, this lockdown has actually taught me a lot about being frugal with your funds.

HOST: Albert Traill watched his hours as an airline steward dwindle during lockdown and he was forced to keep a close eye on the family finances.

AUDIO Albert Traill: So yes we have reduced pay from reduced hours and so forth, and now we’re receiving the wage subsidy, provided by the government, but guess what, when your cars parked at home 24 hours pretty much every day, and you go to the supermarket only once a week, your fuel ... I only fuelled up the first week of lock down and I never filled it for the next two and a half weeks, and the only time we spend money was going to the supermarket to top up on little things, which

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was probably only about \$100 to 150 ... max, because we had a full stockpile at home already prior to the lockdown.

HOST: Taking a bit of a step back -- he learned something about the family spending habits -- and it gave him more confidence to face an uncertain future.

AUDIO Albert Traill: we've managed to get by fine, and I'm thinking you know what, this whole stay at home in lockdown has been a wakeup call for us to highlight how much money we were wasting and just throwing away prior to lockdown by going to unnecessary places and just spending recklessly on fast food, at the mall, so forth. You have everything you need at home, what on earth do we need to accumulate more of, you know in this day and age of get, get, get. I think this has been such a huge wakeup call and a teaching experience for everybody in dealing with finances to manage them and to make do with what little you have.

HOST: It really was awful seeing businesses suffering, but like Albert I really enjoyed not being tempted to spend my money on stuff I don't really need-- hey remember West Auckland librarian Angelique Tuaputa from episode one? Her sister was a bit of a panic shopper -- remember she was the *self-described* 'wingman to the panic shopper'? *She* got a bit of a kick out of saving too.

AUDIO Angelique Tuaputa: I think we can take a lot of lessons from the way we live our lives, like our lifestyle changes. A lot of people are baking at home now, cooking at home, saving your money, like I've got to say this pandemic was a blessing for my bills, because my money wasn't going anywhere besides paying my bills. I didn't online shop because I refuse to...

*HOST: Hang on a minute!*

AUDIO Angelique Tuaputa: ...oh I did once, well, that was just to buy hoodies, but beside the point, like that ... saving money, for me, that was such a really good lesson for me because I'm a big

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spender, like, I will spend, spend, spend, on things because I can. I don't have to look after, you know ... besides my sister and my dad, but yes, saving money, being more financially responsible. Being responsible in the home, like learning life skills in the home that you wouldn't necessarily learn. How to keep a home, how to clean a home. Even just self-reflection time as well. Being able to implement that into your every day is really important, it's something that I kind of encourage a lot of people to do. But no, this ... the financial thing was a biggie for me, because I don't know how I saved so much money in that time. But yeah, it was really enjoyable being able to kind of ... reset your life in this time.

#### MUSIC

I'm Dr Emma Jean Kelly and that was ‘We learned’ our third 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 Jacqui Keelan, Pia Maria Kahn and Tuaratini. Our thanks to The Ministry for Culture and Heritage -- Auckland Libraries, especially Sue Berman -- RNZ, Nanogirl Labs and Jay Hollows for additional audio and of course to those who shared their bubble with us Zemara Waru-Keelan,

Sebastian Nobile, Albert Traill and Angeliqe Tuaputa -- nga mihi nui ki a koutou.

If you want to listen to their full interviews, head to the Auckland Libraries website and search for *Inside the Bubble*. In the next episode...we'll look back at how we moved.

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, because it's all glass there. We can hear the waiting room music from outside. And it's just kind of a little thing to pick you up and make each other smile.

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HOST: Join me again to remember how we kept ourselves moving, when we had to stay put -- Mā te  
wā.

\*\*\*\*\*ENDS\*\*\*\*\*