

Episode Two of Five: Kei roto i te miru: Inside the bubble – ‘We Cared’ Podcast Series EP0 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 two ‘We Cared’, oral histories from lockdown 2020, Covid-19 pandemic Aotearoa New Zealand. Produced by Manatū Taonga, Ministry for Culture and Heritage.

INTRO:

MUSIC

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.

EMA alert (SFX)

AUDIO: PM 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 Angelique Tuaputa: my sister went crazy and bought so much cans...she became the panic shopper, and I became the wingman to the panic shopper.

HOST: We cared...

AUDIO Jacque: I'm working part-time nursing. 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...

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AUDIO: Aliyah Winter going on lots of government mandated walks

HOST: And We learned...

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 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 cared -- for ourselves, for those around us and for those we couldn't be around ....

AUDIO PM Jacinda Ardern: 48hrs before lockdown. If community transmission takes off in New Zealand, the number of cases will double every five days. If that happens unchecked, our health system will be inundated and 10s of 1000s of New Zealanders will die.

HOST: The stark words of the prime minister 2 days before we headed into full lockdown. A scary thought for all of us, that if things got really bad, we might be turned away from overflowing hospitals -- maybe even left to die...But what was that message like for those who'd really be in the frontline? Those whose bubbles were not just themselves, or a clutch of their nearest and dearest, but everyone they came into contact with, as they stepped out to work at a hospital, a clinic, or a testing station in a doctor's car park? How did they keep their own families and homes safe from the invisible threat?

AUDIO Liz: Well, at the beginning, that was definitely about social distancing. What do I do? Do I stay, in another room, etc. And I guess it's fears lots of health professionals feel when they come back into the bubble.

HOST: That's Liz, she's a nurse in the community, so her job involves going into other peoples' homes and rest homes too.

AUDIO Liz: I see probably, nine to 11 patients a day. They are mostly people over 60, And it's close contact work we're dealing with, with wounds with catheters with people who are dying which obviously is all close contact work. So, there's no way you can social distance for that work.

HOST: Liz had to go to some lengths to make sure her family bubble wasn't contaminated, when she came home from work.

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AUDIO Liz: really, it was a matter of coming home and getting, so I just, I just leave my shoes outside, I come up, I just get my uniform into a different place from the other washing, I get my shower. I wash all my uniforms separately from everything else. So I just kind of had this routine of just changing how I even looked at my clothes. And just making sure that I, you know, shower before getting back into my other life, I suppose.

HOST: And her work itself took a lot of re-configuring. While a lot of patient visits and clinics around the country were using phone or video calls, that wasn't really an option for most of Liz's patients.

AUDIO Liz: It's too hard. They're not a generation that will be able to send a photo of a wound or something like that. And, to be honest, it became so structured, it was just as easy to go through with the visit and deal with it from there.

HOST: And it wasn't just patients and her family at home she needed to look out for.

AUDIO LIZ: I have a dad in a retirement village with his partner. And they were very, very mindful of not going out, I've not really even going, you know, out of their apartments. And they were quite strict, and that was good they needed to be.

HOST: So from a distance, she kept an eye on him; made sure he was ok.

AUDIO LIZ: It's a bit weird. Every now and again, we'll go for a walk. And I'll stand on the corner and ring him up and say, come and wave to me. And so he waves to me from his balcony. And we have a chat. We have a chat on the phone, but at least I get to see him.

MUSIC

HOST: We can probably all think of someone we had to care for, in my case, my husband Jay and I were there for each other and like Liz, I had an elderly Dad to think of too, but when I listened to the recording our oral historian had captured with this woman I was blown away.

AUDIO TITIHUIA KEELAND: Kia Ora name is Titihuia Keelan. I am from Tuhoe and Ngati Porou. I am a lash and brow tech. And I live in Manurewa Auckland. And that's a little bit about myself.

HOST: Titihuia is a wife, a Mum to 5 kids and she runs her own beauty salon business.

HOST: You know that saying: "if you want something done ask a busy person to do it" -- well I reckon Titihuia is that person. Her bubble was huge -- complex -- and unrelenting -- but when it comes to caring for her whānau she's unrelenting too. Here's how her lockdown unfolded...So, first up her beauty business had to shut....

AUDIO Titihuia Keelan: Um, there was so many things going through my mind. Like, how will we cope?

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HOST: When it's business as usual she often works on 10 to 12 clients a day and sometimes doesn't finish at her salon until one o'clock in the morning....The government help she got was nowhere near what she can normally earn in a day -- so money got really tight.

AUDIO Titihuia Keelan: It was hard. You know, you're so used to getting everything that you need and you want. And then during the whole lockdown period, you gotta prioritize what's really important? Yes. You know, I mean, on your little budget that you had, yes, I think how much am I getting from the government? Because my rent alone is \$700 a week. And the amount I was getting from the government wasn't even that. Oh, what's wasn't even there. So you know, it was it was really difficult because we had to prioritize all what's important. The powers important. The waters, because up here, we've got to pay for the water. The water is important. Here, and the water is important. So you know, the food was covered because I did a bigger as shopping before the whole thing is happened. So I was like that's covered. And then the rest would go towards the rent..

HOST: And then -- her bubble unexpectedly expanded-- from just her family of 5 to... Technically against the rules, but needs must -- she had to look after her whānau.

AUDIO Titihuia Keelan: And so the truth is all the parents to those children were drinking throughout the whole lockdown. And I didn't like the state that the parents were in. So I was like, I'm just going to take your kids, like, I'm their auntie. I'm the one if I see the kids, you know, not in a good space, I'll take your kid.

HOST: She's got a bit of a rep in her family.

AUDIO Titihuia Keelan: Yes, I'm the auntie that saves everyone.

HOST: Because

AUDIO Titihuia Keelan: Someone has to be responsible.

HOST: But how do you manage physical distancing with 13 in the house?

AUDIO Titihuia Keelan: We definitely didn't keep our distance with the kids. I mean, it was really hard. And I'll tell you something, the police actually came over. While those kids were here. Like, I think one of the neighbors must have caught up and was like, hey, she's got heaps of kids over there. Because you know, um it was still a bit sunny around that time. So I always had the kids outside. And the police actually came over and, and they were like, Oh, you know, you got too much people here. And I was like, Yeah, I understand. But I told him the situation, you know. At first they were, are you know, you need to take the kids home. But then after I told them the situation, they were like, Oh, you know, it's good that you done what you done. And I was like, yeah, cuz Would you rather these kids look after themselves? And they are under the age of all under the age of eight, actually. All of these kids. So would you rather them look after themselves? Or would you rather someone come

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and take them in? You know, I mean, they can look after them? So they understood where I was coming from in that area.

HOST: Dealing with 12 children and the disruption to normal life was -- a struggle...

AUDIO Titihuia Keelan: specially with my autistic daughter because she loves routine? Yes. And if everything goes out of whack around her. That's when the rest of us fall.

HOST: And while she was taking on extra caring responsibilities, the help she usually relies on for her daughter -- disappeared.

AUDIO Titihuia Keelan: I had no services. Nothing at all available to me for my daughter? and my whanau? Because my family they live far away from me. So it was really hard. Like none of them could be here for me. Usually I have a lot of help. Like my sisters will travel from wherever they're from, and they'll come and help me but because of the restrictions, there was no help at all.

HOST: Did you ever get that feeling amid the chaos of lockdown of “Help! where are the adults?”, -- I can admit to maybe feeling a bit like that at times...but I seriously doubt that thought even crossed Titihuia's mind. 13 meals to make 3 times a day -- 13 sets of clothes to wash -- and 12 children to keep occupied - - how did she cope?

AUDIO Titihuia Keelan: I think it's because I'm used to it. You know what I mean? Like I'm growing up with my nan and like helping my nan out. Because my Nan is the type like she'll go look after the elders. So me and my sister will be with my nan. And you know, we're used to the whole making big kai and everything and taking it around. We were used to helping out the the elders with their washing and everything? That's just a normal thing.

MUSIC

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.

MUSIC

HOST: ‘Lockdown’: -- (here's a dictionary definition) -- a temporary condition imposed by governmental authorities in which people are required to stay in their homes and refrain from -- or limit activities outside the home. But what if you were one of the estimated 50-thousand New Zealanders -- who don't actually have a home?

AUDIO Elizabeth Cassidy Nelson: We work with people that are homeless, people that live in shelters, in cars, off the grid in the bush, are living in overcrowded situations. We were very concerned for their lack of housing stability. So... we knew there was hardly any supply, and so we saw it as our responsibility to get things up and running as quickly as possible to get those whānau into hotels or motels.

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HOST: That’s Elizabeth Cassidy Nelson, she’s the Chief Executive of one-double-five, it’s a community organisation in Northland that helps homeless people find somewhere to live - it also runs support services like, free cooked meals, legal help and a food bank.

AUDIO Elizabeth Cassidy Nelson: The request for food parcels increased three-fold. the organisation works with the most vulnerable and what we’re seeing at this time is vulnerability has risen considerably. People have lost 20% of their income. People have lost their jobs. People are struggling to survive. And so of course our community is that much larger now. So our ability to manage and support those additional families... so we were pretty thin on the ground, and working significant hours in order to meet those needs.

HOST: During lockdown, people across Aotearoa used to rough sleeping, living in their car, or couch-surfing were given somewhere to stay. For the first time in decades, only a handful of people were reported as being homeless. Some families pulled together to get a roof over their heads.

AUDIO Elizabeth Cassidy Nelson: I’ll start with a sad story... and... that is dropping off a food parcel to a whānau with 22 living in a 2-bedroom house. And I’m just really concerned for the conditions in which they’re living in, and that they have no other options. But when I dropped this food parcel off, I saw these beautiful smiley little faces, looking out the window, excited about the food that was about to arrive in their doorway, you know, so their experience and their picture for themselves... it still looked like a good one, but in terms of rights... I want to see those families having their own home... yeah. But there have been lots of... placed over 56 people into motels, we’ll be doing another 13 more and hopefully more in the next two weeks.

HOST: Elizabeth says the urgent action taken in lockdown showed that we actually can solve most of the problems of homelessness -- when we have to.

AUDIO Elizabeth Nelson Cassidy: I think all forms of communication have stepped up. So... you know with physical distancing we absolutely have been on the ground in communities doing that face to face stuff, because you kind of have to. But in terms of teams, and working alongside other organisations, absolutely digital tech is where it’s at, and the world that we’re learning now is the world that we need to maintain in terms of... instant communication and being able to work together. It’s been a highlight I guess of this time is that everybody’s getting on board and we’re connecting much more regularly and through that I’m seeing a real true collaboration, collective action across organisations, that we haven’t quite had before-

HOST: And while caring for the homeless during lockdown was at times difficult and heartbreaking -- for Elizabeth and her team, the upheaval did bring some unexpected positive change.

AUDIO Elizabeth Cassidy Nelson: There are a lot of blessings that come out of these situations. The biggest ones of course is people are getting homes. And after this they’re not going to get biffed out, they’re going to have somewhere to live. That is the biggest blessing of all.

MUSIC

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HOST: I’m Dr Emma Jean Kelly and that was ‘We Cared’ our second 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 Tuaratini Raa, Debbie Dunsford, Jacqui Keelan and Alex Mason. Our thanks to Manatū Taonga, The Ministry for Culture and Heritage -- Auckland Libraries, especially Sue Berman -- RNZ for the news archive and of course to those who shared their bubble with us Liz, Titihuia Keelan and Elizabeth Cassidy Nelson -- nga mihi nui ki a koutou.

If you want to listen to their full interviews, head to the oral history page on [kura.aucklandlibraries.govt.nz](http://kura.aucklandlibraries.govt.nz) - and search for Inside the Bubble

In the next episode...we’ll look back at how -- we learned.

SFX KEYBOARDS TAPPING AND KLUTZY MUSIC

AUDIO OF SFX of a Zoom calls

HOST: Remember this?...

AUDIO LEANNE TAYLOR: So you haven't no? Sorry. You go. No you go.

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

Join me again -- to remember that unwelcome crash course in technology -- Mā te wā.