

Towards a better world after COVID-19

Phil Bagshaw, Sue Bagshaw

Open letter to: The Council of Medical Colleges in New Zealand; all New Zealand medical colleges; all specialist medical associations; The New Zealand Medical Association; The Association of Sal-iaried Medical Specialists; The New Zealand Tertiary Education Union; The New Zealand Resident Doctors' Association.

Recorded human history has not followed a linear course. Nodal points of significant change have occurred, when the collective human consciousness has been focused by sudden positively progressive or devastatingly destructive events. It is abundantly clear that such a nodal point has been reached by the current world crisis precipitated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

We all appreciate the world has been getting into an increasing mess for years, with no plans for a more hopeful future.¹ Now, however, from many national and international sources come the strong feelings that the time is ripe for a sea-change.²⁻⁵ It is vital that this sentiment is harnessed for positive change; the window

of opportunity might be short lived. It should not be allowed to ebb away, like the Arab Spring, which failed because of no clear plan for a better way forward.

We propose that the New Zealand medical profession, through its representative bodies, should show leadership by using our collective efforts to promote obviously necessary social change, first by agreeing among ourselves, then engaging with doctors in other countries to do the same. Our purpose should not be politically driven but should be about a reawakening of the spirit of caring for our whole natural world, our communities and our patients. And our reasons for action should be based on our concerns for the inter-connected future of all of these. The world needs a new story of hope, cooperation and progress.⁶

If you agree with us, an urgent conference of all the listed New Zealand representative bodies is needed to define and sponsor an international action plan. Are you all going to act now?

Competing interests:

Nil.

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