

# pūkorokoro- Airways

Newsletter of the College of Respiratory Nurses (NZNO)



Kia ora koutou,

The year has whizzed by and it is hard to believe where it has gone. It has been a productive and fun year for our committee.

At our AGM on the 1st May we were a team of three, now at the end of 2025 we have doubled in size with Sharon, Raquel and Sascha joining Katherine, Mikayla and myself.

To our committee, thank you for your dedication, time and effort in representing Aotearoa's respiratory nurses and working to raise awareness of the challenges in respiratory health.

Thank you also to Annette Bradley-Ingle and Suzanne Rolls, Professional Nursing Advisors and Elisabeth Auchinvole, National Administrator for your amazing support.

## National Strategy Steering Group

Last week Sharon and Sascha attended the first NSSG meeting in Auckland. Representing our College and a voice for respiratory nurses, they joined a team of respiratory doctors and representatives of the respiratory community.

The steering group has been established following TSANZ and Asthma NZ representatives and Dr Jones, as Chair of the respiratory Clinical Leads meeting with Minister Brown and Health NZ, resulting in three key projects. These are the Commissioning and Standardisation of Respiratory Services, The BREATHE Strategy-A Collaborative National Respiratory Strategy and National Respiratory Clinical Network (NRN). We will update you on progress in 2026.

## New Zealand Respiratory Conference

In October, our committee attended the Asthma and Respiratory Foundation NZ conference and had a promotional stand at the 2-day event.

The interest in the mahi we do was incredible, we were fortunate to meet many passionate people working in respiratory health.

It was a fun time and we were fortunate to have Sascha Noble join our committee as a result of meeting at the conference.

If you are interested in joining our committee please get in touch.

At the conference it was officially announced the College endorsed the NZ Asthma and Respiratory Foundation Train the Trainer course aimed at training people working with rangitahi to educate them on the risks of vaping.

## Meeting with Minister Brown

A recent focus for the committee is the upcoming meeting with the Health Minister Simeon Brown. We were due to meet on 11th December however this has been postponed. Key issues for discussion will be on workforce, equity in health, access to primary healthcare, funding of vaccines, housing and smoking/vaping.

## Letter to Government

This month we signed an open letter to the Government supporting improved regulation and vigilance at the border to prevent building materials with asbestos being imported and used in our homes, schools and workplaces.

## Key events and projects for 2026

Biennial symposium and AGM in Wellington on the 1st May (put in in your diary)

Work on the Adult Respiratory Knowledge and Skills framework review

Meeting with Minister Brown rescheduled for 17th March

Ongoing involvement in the National Strategy Steering Group.

Meri Kirihimete. Best wishes for 2026, may the year and many ahead be filled with joyful and special times together for you and your whanau.

Ngā mihi nui,

Jacquie Westenra - Chairperson

Kia ora koutou

Malo e lelei

Talofa Lava

Ni sa bula Vinaka

Fakaalofa lahi atu

Malo ni

## WELCOME TO DECEMBER 2025 AIRWAYS NEWSLETTER

Welcome to our first edition of the last edition of Airways for 2025. The year has flown by. The committee has been busy the last few months. We attended and promote the College at the NZRC and have met with Minister Brown to discuss the importance of Respiratory Nurses. We appreciate your support & wish you a Merry Christmas.

Our College is small but growing! Encourage your nursing colleagues, student nurses and enrolled nurses to join!

## 2026 College of Respiratory Nurses Symposium

Save the Date Coming Soon!

The next Symposium will be held in 2026 and we look forward to welcoming attendees in person. If you are interested in joining the committee please contact us via the website - [respiratorycollege@gmail.com](mailto:respiratorycollege@gmail.com)

### Conferences & Events

**Asthma & COPD Fundamentals Course** – Asthma & Respiratory Foundation online course.

<https://www.asthmafoundation.org.nz/health-professionals/copd-asthma-fundamentals>

**TSANZ / ANZSRS NZ Branch Meeting Christchurch 2026** – 23 – 25<sup>th</sup> September Christchurch Town Hall

**Sleep in Aotearoa Wellington** – 18 – 19<sup>th</sup> June 2026

**Sleep DownUnder Brisbane 2026** - 11 – 14<sup>th</sup> November Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre

Note: Respiratory Education Fund can be accessed by College of Respiratory Nurses members. See this [Link](#) for further details.

### Useful Resources

National Asthma Council Australia [How-to Videos](#): Using your inhaler

Good Fellow [Webinars](#)

Lung Foundation Australia Patient Inhaler [Resources](#)



## LungFlareCare

LungFlare Care was brought to my attention at the TSANZ Conference held in Christchurch in March 2023.

Lung Flare Care was an initiative of the [ResPTlab](#) team, led by Associate Professor Christian Osadnik, Alethea Kavanagh and Ruben Hopmans from Monash University, Department of Physiotherapy.

The website is an educational and self-management resource for patients with COPD. They are in the process of rolling this out for those with Asthma and Bronchiectasis.

Visit their website [here](#)

### The Concern of Youth Vaping

NZ Health Survey 2021/2022 found that 10.3% of New Zealanders over 15 were vaping at least once a month, increasing from 3.9% in 2017/2018. The ASH Year 10 Snapshot Survey for 2022 found that daily vaping rates amongst 14- to 15-year-olds was 10.1%. However, for Māori teens, the rate was 21.7%. The Secondary Principals' Association of NZ/ ARFNZ 2021 survey of Year 9 to 13 students, found that 27% of young people reported vaping in the last week.

#### Why should we care?

The long-term health risks of vaping are not yet known. But research so far has found that vaping and second-hand vaping can irritate the lungs, increase coughing and worsen symptoms of respiratory conditions like asthma.

#### Resources for our teens

Don't Get Sucked In - [Vaping education for teens - Don't Get Sucked In \(dontgetsucked.in.co.nz\)](#)

Protect Your Breath - [Protect Your Breath](#)

**Smoking, Steroids, and Salbutamol – Key Focus Areas in Respiratory Care**

The Asthma and Respiratory Foundation recently hosted the New Zealand Respiratory Conference in Wellington in October 2025. It was a valuable opportunity to reconnect with the core goals of respiratory care and to introduce the 2025 New Zealand COPD Guidelines, which emphasise practical, evidence-based management tailored to the local context.

Electronic cigarette use in New Zealand has risen sharply since 2016, especially among youth and young adults. Daily vaping among adults increased from 0.9% to 9.7% between 2016 and 2023, while daily smoking declined from 14.5% to 6.8% between 2016 and 2023. This suggests vaping may contribute to the reduced smoking prevalence, particularly in disadvantaged and Indigenous populations, though causality is unclear. Notably, youth vaping rates hover around 10%, with many using nicotine products and a significant number having never smoked cigarettes. Vape retailers are disproportionately located near schools and in deprived areas, raising concerns about targeted exposure. New Zealand's regulatory framework allows consumer access to nicotine vaping products, unlike Australia's prescription-only model. Both the Thoracic Society of Australia and New Zealand and the American Heart Association warn of vaping-related respiratory and cardiovascular risks and advocate preventing uptake among youth and non-smokers while supporting vaping cessation efforts. Public health strategies balance harm reduction for smokers with protecting vulnerable groups, with initiatives like the Asthma and Respiratory Foundation's "Train the Trainer" vaping cessation course designed to empower professionals in addressing youth vaping.

Oral corticosteroids (OCS) for asthma should be reserved for clear indications like acute exacerbations, with use minimised due to serious risks including weight gain, mood changes, insomnia, diabetes, osteoporosis, cataracts, and cardiovascular disease, even at cumulative doses over 1000 mg prednisolone-equivalent or with just 4–5 lifetime courses.

The Thoracic Society of Australia and New Zealand (TSANZ) promotes OCS stewardship by optimising inhaled therapies, such as ICS and ICS-formoterol as anti-inflammatory relievers, promoting correct inhaler technique, and conducting adherence checks. Key steps include asthma education, written action plans, regular control reviews, and referral to respiratory specialists for assessments of frequent OCS users (considering biologics or macrolides), adverse effect monitoring (e.g., bone density, blood sugar, cardiovascular disease), and shared decision-making on risks/benefits.

New Zealand guidelines align, recommending short OCS courses (e.g., 40–60 mg prednisolone for 3–5 days, no taper needed) only for acute attacks, with long-term use restricted to severe uncontrolled cases under specialist oversight after exhausting ICS/LABA options. Most patients achieve control without frequent OCS via these strategies, reducing the overuse prevalent in primary care.

The New Zealand study "Patterns of asthma medication use and hospital discharges in New Zealand" analysed national dispensing and hospitalisation data for individuals aged 12 and older from 2010 to 2022, focusing on the relationship between rising budesonide/formoterol (ICS-formoterol) use and asthma hospital discharge trends.

Budesonide/formoterol dispensing more than doubled (108% increase) from July–December 2019 to July–December 2022, aligning with 2020 guideline endorsements for anti-inflammatory reliever and maintenance-and-reliever therapy. Use of traditional ICS monotherapy, other ICS/LABA combinations, and SABA relievers declined modestly (18%, 3%, and 5%, respectively), though SABA co-prescribing persisted amid a gradual shift from historical over-reliance. Guidelines now discourage SABA-only therapy, as it masks inflammation, heightens exacerbation risks, and correlates with higher hospitalisations, favouring ICS-formoterol instead. Earlier national prescribing reviews and guideline documents described widespread SABA over-reliance, with many patients using multiple salbutamol inhalers per year and under-using preventers, which was associated with higher exacerbation and hospitalisation risk. Since around 2019–2020, New Zealand asthma guidance has recommended ICS-formoterol "anti-inflammatory reliever" strategies over SABA-only treatment in adolescents and adults. Dispensing data indicate a rising use of budesonide/formoterol, with a modest decline in SABA dispensing over this period, rather than an abrupt drop. Patient-facing education materials from New Zealand organisations now explicitly flag high salbutamol use (for example, needing it more than twice a week or using three or more canisters a year) as a marker of poor control and a trigger to step up preventer therapy rather than continue to escalate SABA, reinforcing the trend away from SABA-centred care.

Asthma discharge rates for individuals aged 12 and above decreased by 17%, from 63.6 to 52.7 per 100,000 population, over the same period, reversing prior increases up to 2018. While early COVID-19 measures reduced respiratory infections and admissions for COPD and pneumonia, sustained lower asthma rates into 2022—post-restrictions—suggest ICS-formoterol adoption contributed, consistent with trial evidence on reduced exacerbations. The study highlights ongoing needs, such as lowering SABA co-use, to further guideline-driven improvements in asthma care in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Over-reliance on salbutamol monotherapy worsens asthma control by masking inflammation without addressing it, increasing exacerbation risk, hospitalisations, and reducing treatment effectiveness over time. New Zealand guidelines advise against SABA-only use in favour of ICS-formoterol combinations to mitigate these negatives.

The 2025 New Zealand Respiratory Conference highlighted advances in respiratory care, including the launch of the updated guidelines for COPD. Rising youth vaping prevalence alongside declining smoking rates presents complex public health challenges, requiring balanced approaches to harm reduction and prevention. OCS stewardship needs to be focused on our prescribing habits, keeping in mind the side effects of cumulative 1000mg prednisolone (only 4-5 courses!) by optimising inhalers. The increasing use of ICS-formoterol inhalers and reduced reliance on SABA relievers have contributed to improved asthma control and lower hospitalisations, reflecting alignment with national guidelines and sustained efforts in respiratory health.

References

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Te Oranga  
Pūkahu

Health New Zealand  
Te Whatu Ora

Survey on the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in lung cancer screening

We are looking for nurses working in primary health care, respiratory, or oncology in Aotearoa New Zealand to take part in a short (15 min) survey of their views on the use of AI in lung cancer screening.

AI will inevitably be part of a national lung cancer screening programme, however for implementation to be successful, its use has to be acceptable to both recipients and those delivering the screening. Please visit <https://redcap.otago.ac.nz/surveys/?s=TDCLMDACMEC7H9KH> or scan the QR code provided to give your views and help us plan for lung cancer screening in Aotearoa New Zealand.



This research is funded by the Health Research Council of New Zealand (HRC), with research team members based at the University of Otago/Ōtakou Whakaihu Waka and Health NZ/Te Whatu Ora.

*This study has been approved by the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee (Health) - Te Pae Matatika Tangata (Hauora), Ōtakou Whakaihu Waka (Ref H25/0473).*

## Te Reo Māori Korero

Learn common respiratory words in Te Reo Māori to incorporate into your mahi

English:

**MERRY CHRISTMAS**

Te Reo Māori

**MERE KIRIHIMETE**



**You can find us on FACEBOOK!**

Search for us **NZNO College of Respiratory Nurses**

Better connect with Respiratory nurses across the motu, share resources and keep up to date.

### Mindful Colouring

We thank you nurses for your service.

### Feedback

We would love to hear your feedback on topics you would like to see or articles you may have in *pūkorokoro- Airways*. Please email [respiratory@nzno.org.nz](mailto:respiratory@nzno.org.nz)

**Ka Pai!**

We would like to extend our thanks to all nurses all over the motu for everyone's hard Mahi.

