

## News

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# Statement in relation to complaints about a letter to the New Zealand Listener

**P** The Society received complaints against Fellows of the Society who were among seven authors of a letter to the *New Zealand Listener* 'In defence of science' in July 2021. The complaints particularly referred to the vulnerability of Māori and early career researchers.

The Society convened an Initial Investigation Panel (Panel) to consider the complaints as set out under the Society's **Complaints Procedures**. The Society is obliged to follow the Complaints Procedures it has adopted when it receives a complaint about a member of the Society.

The overall role of the Panel was to decide whether the complaints should proceed to a Complaints Determination Committee. The role of the Panel was not to consider the merits of the views expressed in the *New Zealand Listener* letter.

The Panel concluded that the complaints should not proceed to a Complaints Determination Committee. The Panel referred to clause 6.4(i) of the Complaints Procedures: "*the complaint is not amenable to resolution by a Complaint Determination Committee, including by reason of its demanding the open-ended evaluation of contentious expert opinion or of contested scientific evidence amongst researchers and scholars.*"

In coming to its conclusion, the Panel noted that during the process of their investigation both the complainants and the respondents referred to a considerable number of matters that were outside the Panel's scope, including the merits or otherwise of the broader issues raised in the letter or elsewhere. In the Panel's view, the matters raised are of substance and merit further constructive discussion and respectful dialogue.

The Complaints Procedures provide that such a decision by the Panel is final and cannot be appealed.

The Society notes that it has been inappropriate to publicly comment about the complaints while the matter was before the Initial Investigation Panel.

This summary is being published on the basis that it may be beneficial to other scientists, technologists, or humanities scholars, as set out in the Complaints Procedures.

### For more information

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**Source:** Royal Society Te Apārangi

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