



New Zealand

World

Opinion

In-Depth

Sp

(Hurihanganui,
T. A., 2023)

TE AO MĀORI 1NEWS

Anti co-governance tour organiser determined to press ahead

By Te Aniwa Hurihanganui, Māori Affairs Correspondent Tue, Mar 28

The tour making its way down the country is led by evangelist Julian Batchelor. (Source: 1News)

The man behind a controversial anti co-governance tour is determined to press ahead with his planned talks in Auckland, despite the council last night cancelling his venue booking at the Mt Eden War Memorial Hall.

It's the fourth North Island venue to pull the plug on event organiser Julian Batchelor in the last two months.

He told told 1News it was an example of "corruption" and the "quashing of free speech", but said he had been offered private venues by his supporters.

"We've got two facilities. Two people have rung up and said we can use their facilities full-time," he said.

ADVERTISEMENT

His public meetings have attracted droves of protesters over the last few weeks.

MORE ON THIS TOPIC



Poll: How well do people understand Three Waters co-governance?

Wed, Mar 15 2:25



Rotorua club withdraws venue hire for controversial anti-co-governance event

Sat, Mar 25 4:34



Explainer: What is co-governance?

Wed, Mar 15

Activist group Aotearoa Liberation League has been monitoring his public talks online, and describes them as "racist" and "hostile".

P "It's very clearly a violent, nasty and, I would say, a racist environment," spokesperson Pere Huriwai-Seger said.

"What I've taken away from his meetings is that there's been a real failing from the Government about how they communicate Te Tiriti o Waitangi. It states very clearly what Te Tiriti is about. There is nothing to be afraid of."

P Batchelor has rejected accusations of racism, saying the presentations weren't skewed a certain way and he "totally supported Māori".

However, when 1News challenged Batchelor on a number of his claims, including what he meant by "elitist Māori", he responded on numerous occasions with "it's on my website", "check my blog" or "read my book".

Hostile scenes aimed at Māori attendees at his meetings are beginning to emerge online.

ADVERTISEMENT

An older Māori man who attended an event in Ruakākā can be seen standing up to share his opinion in one video before being heckled by Batchelor.

"I asked you to ask a question, now you're lecturing. Take microphone off him please!" Batchelor yelled.

A man beside him then wrangles the microphone out of his hand.

Concerns over public safety prompted Auckland Council to cancel his event, which had been scheduled to go ahead tonight.

Auckland Council's director of customer and community services Claudia Wyss said it was just too risky to allow the event to go ahead.

"The council has notified the event organisers and the decision to cancel was made after careful consideration and in response to our latest risk assessments, where we have sought input and advice from the police and other site specialist advisors," she said.

"This includes the unsuitability of the site to host these events, and is based on the information available to us yesterday.

ADVERTISEMENT

"It is our view that there are insufficient mitigations in place to address the serious health and safety risks present to those in attendance and those nearby."

Batchelor said he believed it was a political move.

"They don't want to hear the truth about co-governance," he said.

But some of what he calls "the truth" is actually misinformation, including false claims a \$55 million public interest journalism fund would only be awarded to media who agreed to certain conditions.

"You have to promote the Māori agenda, you have to promote co-governance, and you have to promote anything that's Māori," he told a crowd in Warkworth.

Nowhere in the eligibility criteria does it say this.

ADVERTISEMENT

'He just didn't care'

P **Batchelor is no stranger to controversy.**

He tried to block an Auckland pride parade in 1988 and led a group called Stop Promoting Homosexuality International.

His Rāwhiti property has also been at the centre of a lengthy land dispute.

Local hapū Ngāti Kuta and Patukeha claim major renovations to his home have interfered with sacred land.

"He had no regard for our cultural concerns, or environmental concerns," said spokesperson Vanessa Wilson.

ADVERTISEMENT

A cultural impact assessment commissioned by the two hapū outlines their extensive grievances over his property.

It referenced a 2016 occurrence post the completion of the works when an "environmental catastrophe occurred".

"Large amounts of water and silt ran from the property directly into the sea. The extended driveway and carpark are of particular concern as water now races down its steep grade and into Hauai Bay," it read.

Batchelor believed the hapū had a different motive for complaining.

"Look, the truth is they just want the land, and so they are putting a spin on events at that property," Batchelor said.

The hapū categorically reject this claim.

"He just didn't care," Wilson said.

ADVERTISEMENT

NEW ZEALAND

TE AO MĀORI

POLITICS

SHARE ME



MORE STORIES