

# Working Paper: The murmuration of information disorders

## Aotearoa New Zealand's mis- and disinformation ecologies and the Parliament Protest

**18 May 2022, Aotearoa New Zealand:** The Disinformation Project is pleased to release a new working paper discussing the occupation of Parliament grounds from February 2022 – March 2022. Download it from our website, <https://thedisinfoproject.org/resources>.

The Disinformation Project is an independent research group studying misinformation and disinformation in Aotearoa New Zealand. Since February 2020, we have used mixed methods approaches to analyse and review the seed and spread of information disorders – and their impact on the lives of New Zealanders.

Aotearoa New Zealand is experiencing an infodemic, where the Covid-19 pandemic furthered the spread of misinformation and disinformation, impacting social cohesion and over the longer term, the country's democratic fabric and electoral integrity. We help social media companies, journalists, academia, policymakers, and civil society to identify, understand, unpack and meaningfully respond to information disorders.

The Parliament Protest was a significant online and offline event in Aotearoa New Zealand. Offline, it's physical presence captured the attention of the nation and fuelled debates about ideas of legitimate protest in Aotearoa New Zealand. Online, its data signatures showed never-seen-before popularity with misinformation, disinformation, and extremist thought.

In this working paper, which builds on research released last year on the spread of misinformation and disinformation from August 2021 – November 2021, The Disinformation Project explores the role misinformation and disinformation played in the nurture and nature of the protest on Parliament grounds. The new working paper also explores how the protest was projected on social media, disinformation and misinformation ecologies associated with it, and lasting impacts on social cohesion, identity, and democracy in Aotearoa New Zealand.

“The Parliament Protest was a turning point in the way Aotearoa New Zealand perceives itself, and the role of misinformation and disinformation in that shift cannot be underestimated. From violative vocabulary to pace of content production, we are now studying information disorders at a scale and scope beyond what we studied at the start of 2022.” – Kate Hannah, Director of The Disinformation Project.

“Data signatures associated with the protest on social media, pegged to misinformation and disinformation, had no historical precedent. It is a tectonic shift in Aotearoa New Zealand's media landscapes, and information ecologies. What we studied will have a significant and lasting impact on the country's democratic institutions, including electoral integrity.” – Dr. Sanjana Hattotuwa, Research Fellow at The Disinformation Project.

**For media and other inquiries, please email [info@thedisinfoproject.org](mailto:info@thedisinfoproject.org).**