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"A Different Light"

A Different Light - 20 November 2021 – “Cancel culture”

It's not Boy-George from the Culture Club. It's the Cancellation Culture of COVID that's topped the charts.

Auckland Baby Show -Cancelled, Rotorua's New Year's Eve Glo Festival cancelled, Burt Munro Challenge event cancelled, Southern Field Days cancelled- the list goes on and on. Postponements are as equally rampant, with some organisations who are attempting to hold events, hedging their bets by bravely announcing a firm date in the New Year. Behind the bravado however, they are contorting in angst at the thought of continued COVID restrictions buggering up there best laid plans at the last minute. We, at Tiaho, fall into the latter group of event holders- choosing to suffer the slings and arrows of potentially outrageous misfortune. We have decided to again postpone our “Getting Out There” Expo from the 2nd of December 2021 to the 25th of March 2022. We are hoping and praying that we aren't thwarted at the last minute as we were in August with a sudden change in alert levels or the green turning to red, on the new traffic light regime (I dare say we won't be able to run an orange light!).

Cancellations are a part of life now, -we have been told we have to accept it. But what else will be cancelled, -holiday trips? Possibly, overseas trips? I can't really remember what they are! Christmas do's down the gurgler? Will Christmas itself be cancelled? Will Christmas Day celebrations be that much more tenser? Christmas days can be volatile like weddings, with extended whanau The sister-in-law who has inhaled back too many champagne cocktails and sits down on the glass coffee table or the father-in-law who insists on making borderline offensive Dad jokes. Christmas Day this year will have that question hanging in the air like a big elephant dangling from the Mistletoe. Have you been

vaccinated or not? It's a question and an issue that is becoming so divisive that people are starting to avoid the posing of it. In the future the question is going to become more and more prominent, the have's and have nots. People are losing their jobs over the issue, people who you would never think of are presenting as virulent anti vacc's, family members are quietly getting vaccinated in order to keep their jobs whilst remaining in the family circle. Will everyone be welcome to your Christmas Day?

This week vaccine certificates have become available. Will you be looking at vaccine certificates this Christmas day?

When the term 'Cancel culture' was coined it meant something quite different –the pressure applied to those present and past who don't meet the politically correct mindset of today, and are thus expunged from history. The delicate balance of retaining the past – as an important reality check of how we once thought , along with the need to challenge the sexist, racist, ableist and xenophobic untruths these were based on is a healthy and challenging tension in today's world.

Whether the tension we feel as optimistic postponers, or doomsday cancellers is healthily challenging is a moot point.

Jonny Wilkinson is the CEO of Tiaho Trust - Disability A Matter of Perception, a Whangarei based disability advocacy organisation.