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Covid-19 the situation with respect to Indigenous peoples

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From early in 2020, across our planet, Indigenous peoples followed the emerging COVID-19 pandemic with keen interest. We have vivid memories of the impact that infectious diseases can wreck on our communities, from the 1918 Influenza pandemic, to SARS, Ebola and measles. We understand how we have been made vulnerable by the intergenerational effects of colonisation and inaction in the face of need by successive governments and oppressive policies, but simultaneously we are strengthened by Indigenous vigilance, preparedness, resilience and determination. As a consequence, Indigenous Peoples have experienced COVID-19 uniquely. The Indigenous response has been informed, sovereign and powerful. We are bearing witness to differential outcomes of COVID-19 on Indigenous peoples in different jurisdictions, and in different communities. With few exceptions, these outcomes are largely mediated by policies, and processes imposed externally by regional or national bodies.

In this keynote address, Professor Linda Waimarie Nikora chairs a panel of Indigenous experts: Dr Jordan Cory (Australia), Professor Keawe'aimoku Kaholokula (Hawaii), Dr Marcia Anderson (Canada), and Professor Papaarangi Reid (Aotearoa) who have been involved in COVID-19 responsiveness in these nations.