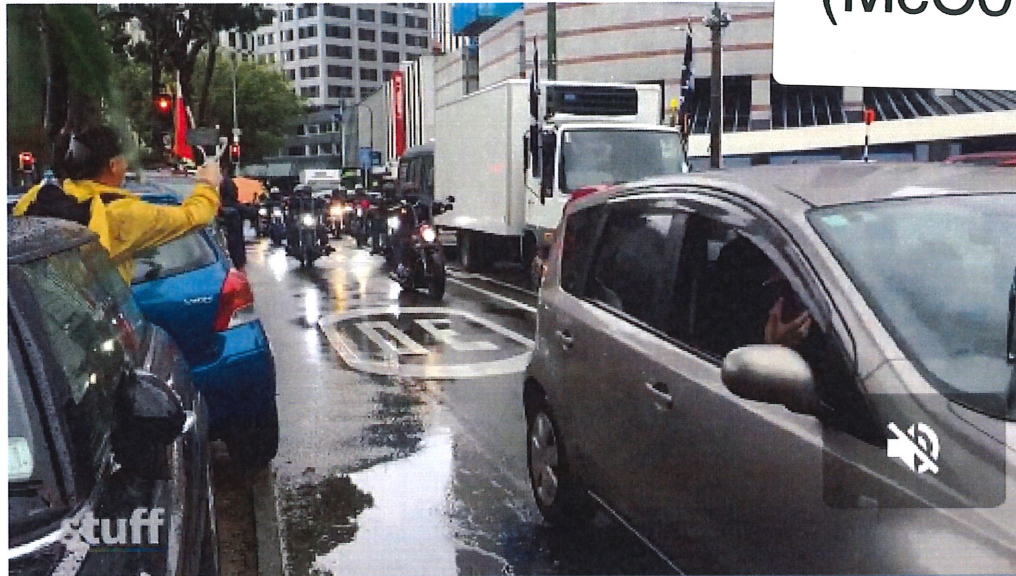


Who is who at the Convoy 2022 occupation of Parliament's grounds

Glenn McConnell • 08:40, Feb 16 2022

(McConnell, 2022)



Motorbikes arrive at Parliament protest

Ten motorbikes pull up outside Parliament to join anti-vaccine mandate protesters.

stuff

ANALYSIS: They have plenty of speakers, truckloads of tents, and a kitchen feeding hundreds of people each day. Yet the protest at Parliament is missing one main thing, any clear leadership.

Different groups, inspired by anything from religious faith, to Māori rights, to Far-Right conspiracy broadcasters, have found themselves living together for eight days on Parliament's grounds.



ROBERT KITCHIN/STUFF

Convoy 2022, which is occupying Parliament's grounds, is made up of a number of groups and has no clear leader.

Thousands of people have been coming in and out each day, under a general "freedom" banner, which is opposed to Covid-19 vaccine requirements.

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But the broad range of causes and groups present at the protest has meant identifying common ground, or negotiating with the protest, has been difficult for police. Many protesters have also vented frustrations at journalists, arguing reportage has not represented what they personally are protesting about. It has become clear many people are protesting about many different things.

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The flat leadership structure, which supporters say is evidence of their "grassroots movement", has made negotiation difficult and led to public infighting among the protesters.

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From listening to speeches, speaking to protesters, and reading through various social media platforms used to organise the protest, *Stuff* has identified various factions and notable supporters. They are:



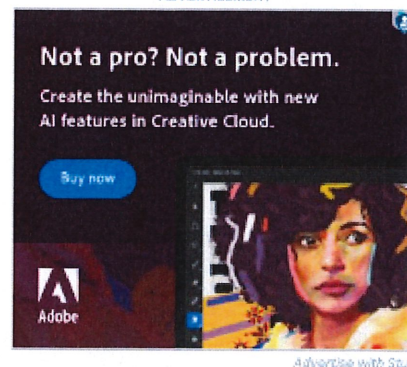
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Former New Conservative Party leader Leighton Baker has been a regular presence at the Convoy 2022 protest.

The Bakers

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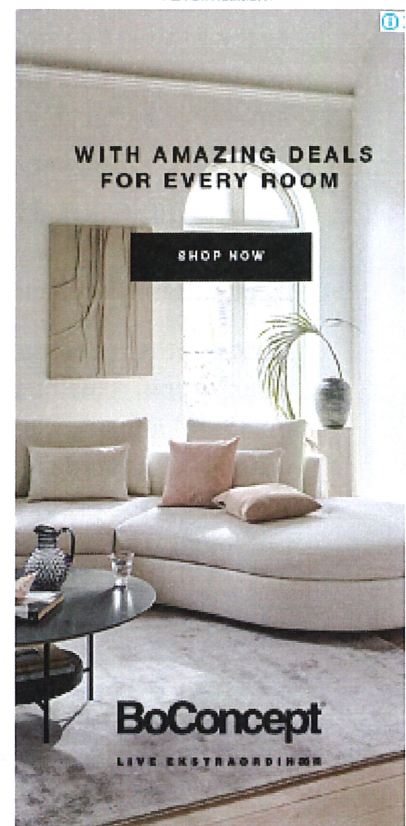
daughter **Chantelle Baker** have been at the protest each day. With about 100,000 followers on social media, Chantelle has a strong following across the country who tune in to watch her live-streams at the protest and interviews which promote debunked vaccine conspiracies and updates about court cases for protesters who were arrested.

One of those interviews was about someone turning “magnetic” due to vaccination, although every scientist spoken to about this has **insisted** that was a joke – **not a possible side-effect of vaccination**.

Officially, Leighton and Chantelle won’t say they speak on behalf of the protesters. However, they have both met with police to discuss the protest and the police’s desire to move on the vehicles that have been blocking roads for days.

Chantelle said her dad was “chatting with some senior officers” but then reworded her comment to say he had spoken “on his own” rather than on behalf of anyone.

Leighton said he was “only an intermediary”.



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KEVIN STENT/STUFF

Freedoms and Rights Coalition bikers are welcomed to the Convoy 2022 protest at Parliament on Saturday.

Destiny Church

Destiny Church is at the centre of **the Freedoms and Rights Coalition**, a group which has been leading anti-lockdown and anti-mandate protests for months.

However, the coalition has had a falling out with many of the protesters at Parliament and is just one of the many groups involved.

Destiny Church leaders Brian and Hannah Tamaki have not been seen at the Parliament protest but Wellington-based members of the church were present. Early in the protest, a Freedoms and Rights Coalition member was emceeing the event and told protesters to move their cars to stop blocking the streets.

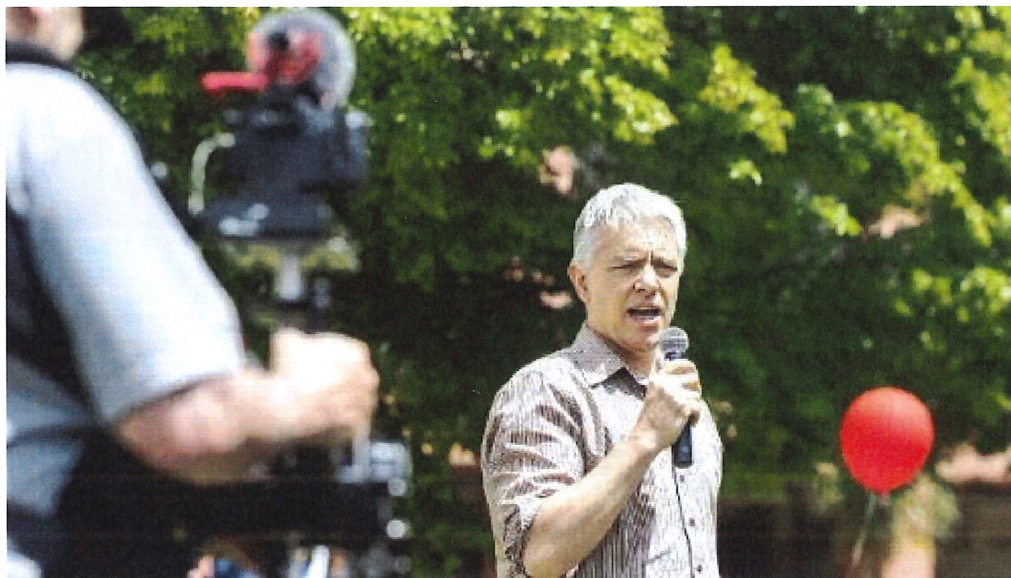
Their calls to limit obstruction led to pushback from many protesters, and a public spat between the group and conspiracy

Counterspin media

As the protest has worn on, Counterspin's live coverage of it has gained traction. Its live videos of the protest, hosted by **Hannah Spierer** or her partner, **Kelvyn Alp**, can get up to 50,000 viewers each day.

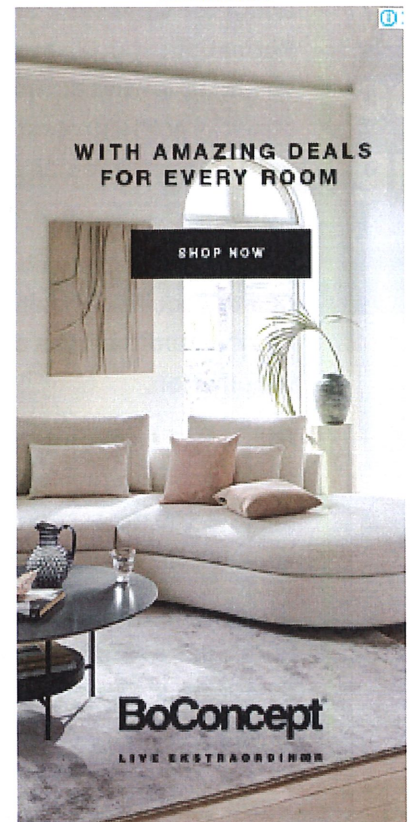
Counterspin has been pushed from most mainstream social media but maintains a strong following on its blog and on apps frequented by conspiracy theorists.

Various other "alternative media" YouTubers have emerged but Counterspin remains the most influential. Like other "anti-mandate" influencers, the hosts and interviews are strongly anti-vaccine and focus on disinformation about the Government controlling the press and hiding adverse reactions to the vaccines.



KEVIN STENT/STUFF

Dr Matthew Shelton has attended multiple anti-vaccine protests.



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NZDSOS

A group called NZ Doctors Speaking Out With Science, which has more than 15,000 followers on the Telegram, brands itself as a group of doctors opposed to vaccination.

Matthew Shelton, a leading member of NZDSOS who was [suspended as a doctor](#), has been at the protest and was named as one of its original leaders. The former Wellington-based doctor first surfaced as a public anti-vaccination figure when [he texted patients](#) to tell them he did not support vaccination.

Emanuel Garcia, a psychiatrist who has also been [suspended](#), was also named as one of Convoy 2022's main leaders in posts from the organisers on Telegram.

Other groups

Merchandise from **Voices of Freedom**, an anti-vaccine lobby group, is common across the protest site.

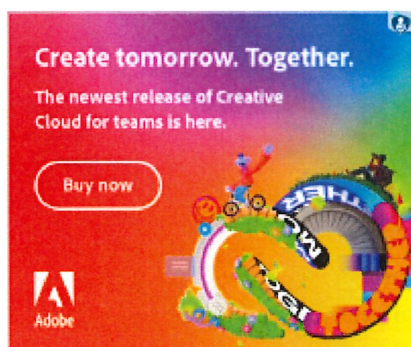
Groups claiming to represent concerned parents and midwives, with signs such as "hands off our children", are also present. (There is no vaccine mandate for children.)

Other causes

Some protesters also carry signage from the Groundswell NZ protest, which saw trucks and tractors converge on cities for a farmers' protest. At the time, the protest was allegedly hijacked by a range of causes – including some who claimed former United States president Donald Trump lost his bid for a second term due to a rigged election.

Protesters have also been walking around with signs against Three Waters, a Government initiative to change the funding and management of water infrastructure. One man had a sign about billionaire paedophile Jeffery Epstein.

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ROBERT KITCHIN/STUFF

Brett Power was arrested early during the Convoy 2022 protest.

Notable supporters

Brett Power, a regular on Counterspin Media, was arrested early in the protest. He had gained a following by standing for the Taranaki Regional Council and then trying to force the police to arrest Health Minister Andrew Little.

White nationalist group **Action Zealandia** has also been vocal in its support of the protest, posting photos from Parliament grounds and sparking an investigation after posting footage from atop Bowen House.

Another prominent white supremacist, **Philip Arps** was [arrested in Picton](#) – on his way to Wellington – hours after allegedly declaring he was off to a “public execution”.

Talk of public executions is common at the protest. It is unclear which group – if any – these protesters, calling for public executions, belong to. But they use the platforms of groups such as Convoy 2022 to congregate.

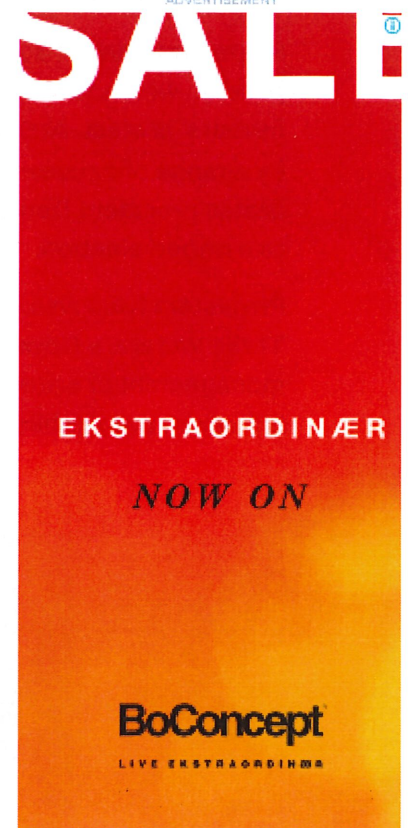
Their messages sit at odds with the festival vibe many protesters tried to establish since Friday, bringing in musicians and artists after days of anger.

When, on Monday, a joint statement was issued by groups such as NZDSOS and the Freedom and Rights Coalition, calling for an end to Covid-19 legislation and restrictions in New Zealand, many protesters posted to say that would not be enough.

“They must be held accountable,” one wrote. “There must be trials,” another said.

In contrast, Parliament’s grounds are also now home to groups of **Hare Krishnas** and a Māori protest group called the **Sovereign Hikoī**.

Hare Krishna leaders say the group at Parliament does not represent the larger movement but their music has become part of everyday life at Parliament. Likewise, speakers from the Sovereign Hikoī say they are there despite the wishes of many of their whānau, hapū and iwi leaders.



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Former National Party MP Matt King spoke at the protest over the weekend.

The former politicians

Former National MP **Matt King** has been the most vocal supporter of the protest, flying from Northland to speak at it.

