



**This page 1 headline in today's paper would have you believe that Wellington Children's Hospital may be sacrificed to accommodate Covid patients (as in "may go for Covid").**

Read the body of the text and it's a quite different story, with the Chief Medical Officer saying, "At the moment, with our modelling, we can manage with one of our wards".

Just another example of our news media substituting hype for real news:

As Professor Michael Baker asked this week, when, in this Delta outbreak, will genuine news reportage be stopped being sacrificed to sensationalism in our media.

Some outlets have done better than others. Statistics have generally been well presented and prominently explained. Some of the MIQ stories are genuinely heart-wrenching, like the people separated from their families. Some others are downright misleading. I am over the umpteenth young Kiwi adventurer stranded in some exotic foreign clime, raging into his or her laptop because they can't get an M.I.Q. spot. Some businesses are in trouble in Auckland and, once again, there are some tragic stories about individuals in real strife, but I do worry that some of our media seem to be on the hunt for people intent on blaming Officialdom for the Pandemic and its effects. People have got to be heard

of course, but the near hysteria of some of the business representatives in Auckland, can't be helping those reluctant to take the job. The two groups, the more voluble anti-vaxxers like Brian Tamaki, and the café and pub owners, are actually fostering mass panic. Some reportage is near hysterical in tone at a time when the country needs to maintain calm, measured control of itself in the face of a major world-wide health emergency which is potentially terrifying in its random and unpredictable behaviour.

We now have the spectacle of the expert epidemiologists and health depicted as in a fit all over pages 1-3, because some lockdown restrictions in the Queen City, are being eased, which will inevitably lead to more Delta infections. They're right to be concerned. This week, the Government has had to cave in to the reality, which is that small businesses are under the pump in Auckland and have to be placated, which will mean more people will die a lonely and painful death, or suffer permanent disability and some of the media can carry the can for that, for allowing an over-emphasis on misplaced fear and anger, simply to sell their stuff (see above).



**ON THAT NOTE**, the Government is pumping \$55M into Public Interest Journalism, which may be necessary at a time when responsible journalism is not always easy to find. There are two things which are a concern here. The first is that the Public are being called on to fund private businesses. How did that happen? The second is that, if the Government has to fund footage and column space for public Interest stories, does that mean then, that the rest of our media content consists in its entirety of prurient or facile material, of no value to the public at large whatever?

**Just asking!**

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