



AUCKLAND MEDICAL HISTORY SOCIETY

MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

Thursday 7 November at 7pm 2024

Venue

Ernest and Marion Davis Library (EMDL)
Building 43, Auckland City Hospital

THE AMHS FOUNDERS' LECTURE

The Plan is the Plan. Failure is not an Option

To be presented by

Sir Ashley Bloomfield

(Biographical details and abstract attached)

Followed by a short

AGM

The EMDL will be open from **6pm**

All welcome

*See the AMHS website Latest News section for links to the
2024 Programme & updates*

Donations to the Society are invited & can be made on the night or preferably online.

Bank account: 02 0160 0237509 00



BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

Sir Ashley Bloomfield has 25 years' experience in public health, policy and health leadership, including at the WHO in Geneva. He was New Zealand's Director-General of Health from June 2018 to July 2022 and led the country's health response to the COVID-19 pandemic. He was appointed a Knights Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit (KNZM) in the 2023 New Year Honours for services to public health. Dr Bloomfield is now a Professor at the University of Auckland's School of Population Health and Interim Chief Executive at Environmental Science and Research (ESR).

ABSTRACT

What lessons from the 'Spanish' flu pandemic informed our response to COVID-19 - and what lessons can we learn for the next pandemic?

The emergence of the SARS-CoV-2 virus in early 2020 led the WHO Director-General to declare a Public Health Emergency of International Concern on 30 January. Over the next six weeks, all countries - including New Zealand - were faced with the huge challenge of making decisions to protect their population with limited understanding of the virus and its impact.

Among other inputs into decisions at that time, decision-makers and communities drew on the experience of the 1918 Spanish Flu pandemic and previous infectious disease outbreaks including polio. This historical perspective was an important factor in decision making. A key opportunity now is for Aotearoa New Zealand to learn and embed the lessons from its response to COVID-19, in the knowledge that the next pandemic is more likely in 10 rather than 100 years.