

DENY, DOWNPLAY & COVER-UP

How the New Zealand government buried legitimate scientific concerns and research into the impacts of aerial spraying people with a biological pesticide.

In a narrative and commentary that alternatively shocks and sobers, Hana Blackmore has laid out the story of the biosecurity campaigns using aerial pesticide spraying over cities in New Zealand.

Significant evidence is uncovered and detailed of a deliberate and systematic denial, downplay and cover up by the New Zealand government of the adverse impacts on people of the pesticide used.

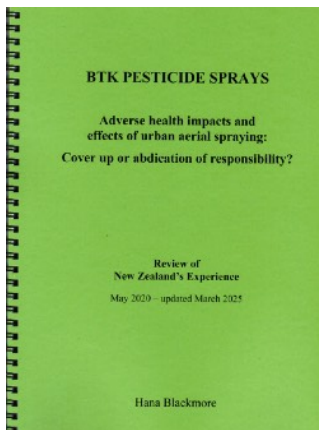
During three government biosecurity programmes spanning the turn of the century, thousands of people experienced adverse health effects, from severe skin and respiratory aggravations through to neurological and acute allergic reactions.

Scientists reporting legitimate scientific concerns about the potential risk to exposed populations of the biological insecticide, found themselves targeted in 'shoot the messenger' attempts by the government to cover up their findings.

Most New Zealanders are totally unaware of this story and the grievous health, social and economic impacts experienced by so many people. It would appear the cover-up worked.

But in a non-technical readable report, eight years in the making, Hana Blackmore brings this cover-up into the open. Because of the threat posed today by industry and government to re-gain a "social licence" to aerial spray people once again, the story is hugely relevant and timely.

20 April 2026



Read the report:

[BTK PESTICIDE SPRAYS. Adverse health impacts and effects of urban aerial spraying: Cover up or abdication of responsibility? Review of New Zealand's experience. Hana Blackmore.](#)

About Hana Blackmore:

- Hana was a founder member of The Society Targeting Overuse of Pesticides NZ (STOP) formed in 1997 in response to the government's Tussock Moth aerial spraying campaign in Auckland's Eastern suburbs.
- Following this she was involved in the Painted Apple Moth (PAM) eradication campaign in West Auckland from 1999 to 2006. Hana was a member of several organisations during the PAM aerial spraying. This included the government-convened Community Advisory Group (CAG).
- The nine independent groups that eventually formed the PAM Community Network, set up, funded and ran a People's Inquiry into the impacts and effects of that aerial pesticide spraying on the people of west Auckland. This was held in Waitakere Town hall in March 2006 with the invaluable support of the Waitakere Council. Hana was Convener of the Inquiry.

See the Reports & Studies page for previous publications by Hana and other members of the community during the PAM campaign