

NZIER presents

2020 SUMMER READING LIST FOR THE PRIME MINISTER

About

This reading list was prepared as part of the NZIER Public Good Programme, which undertakes economic research and thinking aimed at promoting a better understanding of New Zealand's important economic challenges.

2020 has been an extraordinary year. The global pandemic is changing the social and economic fabric of New Zealand.

Purpose

The COVID-19 pandemic has influenced this year's list, with books on data science and uncertainty featuring alongside a strong showing of home-grown indigenous titles. We hope this list will be of interest to the Prime Minister, her new Cabinet, ministerial advisors and anyone interested in economics and public policy.

We support New Zealanders reading, taking time to reflect on our future. Summer is good for that.

Criteria

Nominations had to meet the following criteria:

- Be relevant to a contemporary issue
- Offer a different way of thinking or perspective
- Be relevant for New Zealand
- Be consistent with NZIER Public Good objectives.

Selections were invited from NZIER's members, board, staff and selected collaborators.

Selection panel

- Professor Les Oxley (Chair), NZIER Board and University of Waikato
- Professor Jacinta Ruru, University of Otago
- Professor Shaun Hendy, University of Auckland
- Sarah Hogan, Principal Economist, New Zealand Institute of Economic Research.

The books

Inclusion in the list does not imply that the selection panel (or NZIER) endorses the content of any entry.

Each of these books stimulates critical thinking, not in the sense of finding fault but in inviting reasoned responses to the plausibility of the asserted facts and the coherence of the argument. These processes are essential for drawing on economic theory for policy analysis.



Summer reading list for 2020

Presented in alphabetical order by lead author

- [Calling Bullshit](#): The art of scepticism in a data-driven world, [Carl T. Bergstrom and Jevin D. West, 2020](#)
- [Not in Narrow Seas](#): The economic history of Aotearoa New Zealand, [Brian Easton, 2020](#)
- [Precarity](#): Uncertain insecure and unequal Lives in Aotearoa New Zealand, [Shiloh Groot, Natasha Tassell-Matamua, Clifford Van Ommen, Bridgette Masters-Awatere, 2017](#)
- [Rebuilding the Kāinga](#): Lessons from Te Ao Hurihuri, [Jade Kake, 2019](#)
- [Radical Uncertainty](#): Decision-making for an unknowable future, [John Kay & Mervyn King, 2020](#)
- [Whāriki](#): The growth of Māori community entrepreneurship, [Mereata Kawharu and Paul Tapsell, 2019](#)
- [Doughnut Economics](#): Seven ways to think like a 21st-century economist, [Kate Raworth, 2017](#)
- [Superior](#): The return race science, [Angela Saini, 2019](#)

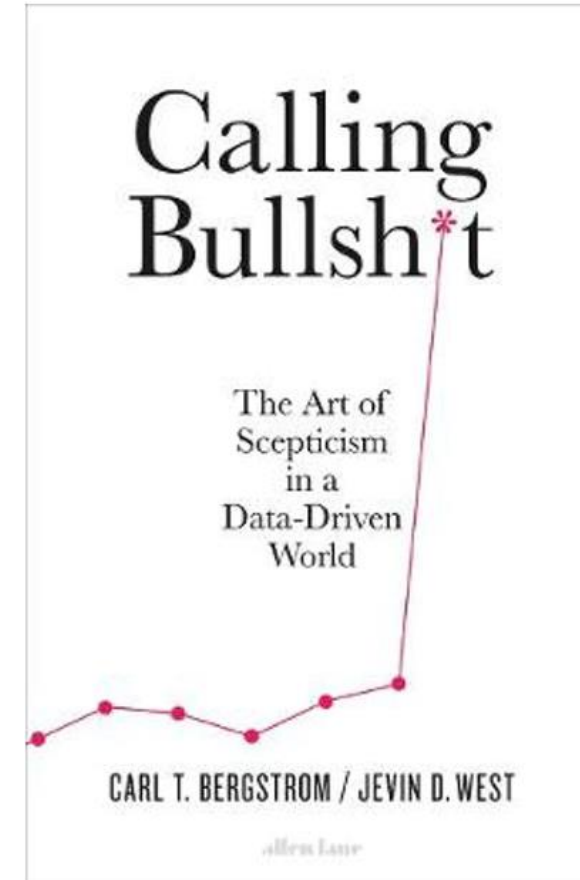


Calling bullshit

The art of scepticism in a data-driven world

Carl T. Bergstrom and Jevin D. West, 2020

Bergstrom and West offer up a suite of tools that non-experts can use to think critically about scientific studies, models, and statistical findings. It is recommended reading for anyone who has ever tried to distinguish between the competing claims about COVID-19 or to dig deeper into a piece of scientific clickbait. In a world awash with misinformation, soundbites that make use of cherry-picked data, and people who create and disseminate falsehoods cloaked in the language of science, calling bullshit is a skill set we all need.

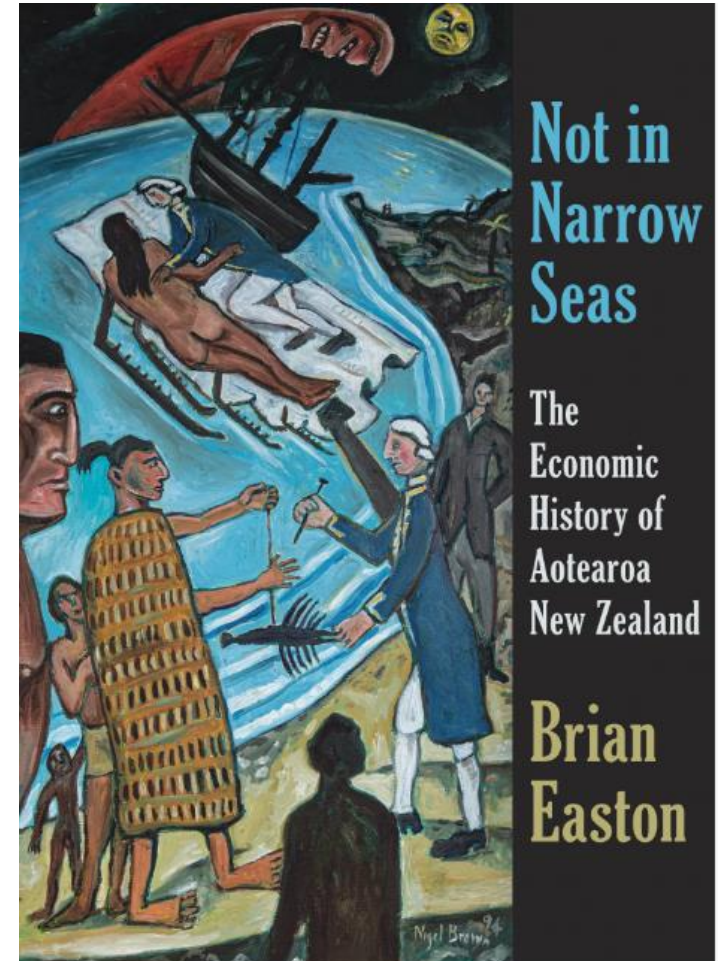


Not in narrow seas

The economic history of Aotearoa New Zealand

Brian Easton, 2020

The first economic history of Aotearoa New Zealand to cover everything from the geological formation of these islands to discussion of the traditional gift-based Māori economy and consideration of the government's attempts to grapple with issues like global warming. Easton throws new light on important issues including an extensive investigation of the Rogernomics Revolution of the 1980s and early-90s that has left a legacy none of us can ignore or are immune to its consequences. To plan for and influence our future we need to know and understand our past. Easton's book provides the necessary knowledge.

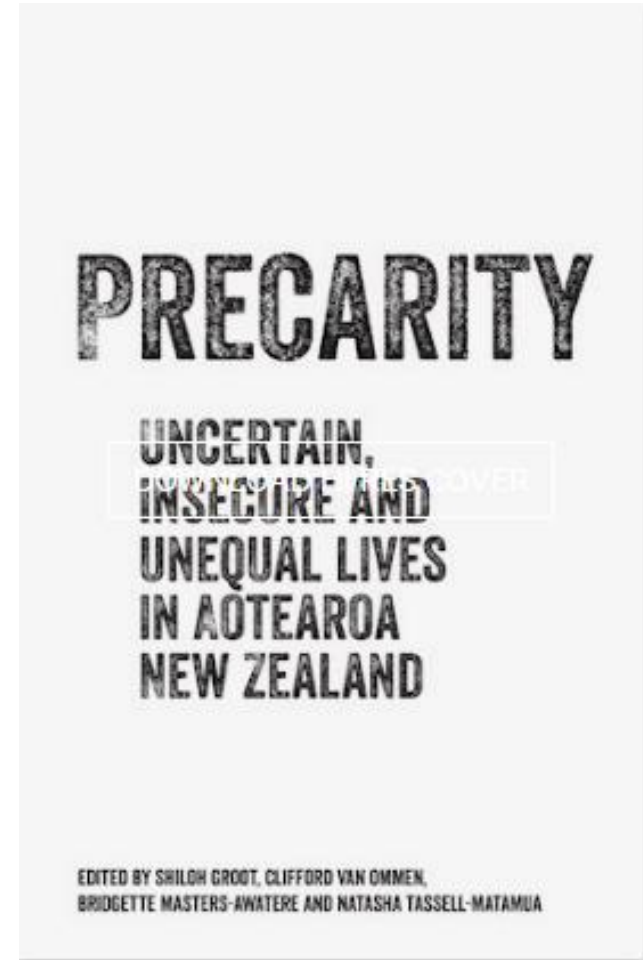


Precarity

Uncertain insecure and unequal lives in Aotearoa New Zealand

Shiloh Groot, Natasha Tassell-Matamua, Clifford Van Ommen, Bridgette Masters-Awatere, 2017

A confronting set of essays that shines light on how an alarming number of New Zealanders struggle to make ends meet and live dignified lives. A new class in the making – the precariat – is filling fast with our citizens who have insecure employment with few political, civil, cultural, social and economic rights. An important book to learn from as we seek to create wellbeing for all New Zealanders post COVID.



Rebuilding the Kāinga

Lessons from Te Ao Hurihuri

Jade Kake, 2019

A fresh and imaginative insight into why reframing Māori economic sovereignty matters and why we need to start with housing. Kake calls for law and policy reform to turn around Māori low home ownership statistics by supporting Māori to rebuild kāinga on their land as the primary social and economic unit. A vision for the future, with practical steps to get there.

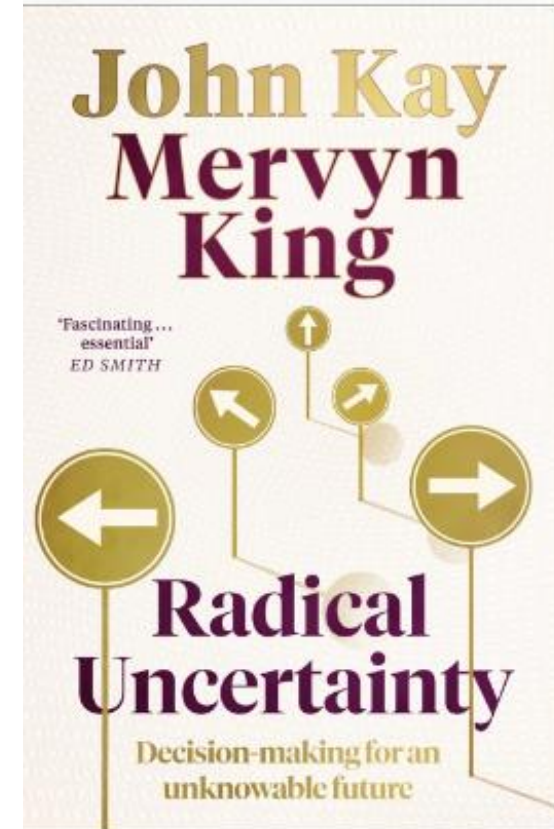


Radical uncertainty

Decision-making for an unknowable future

John Kay & Mervyn King, 2020

Written before COVID-19 upended any sense of certainty about the months and years ahead, well-travelled economists Kay and King offer a thoughtful take on uncertainty and how it limits the usefulness of policy and economic analyses. The book is a worthwhile read for anyone who digests quantitative evidence for decision-making or setting policy and a humbling read for the experts who create that evidence. Radical Uncertainty should spark a rethink of the way experts craft and communicate their forecasts and predictions.



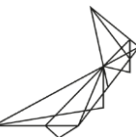
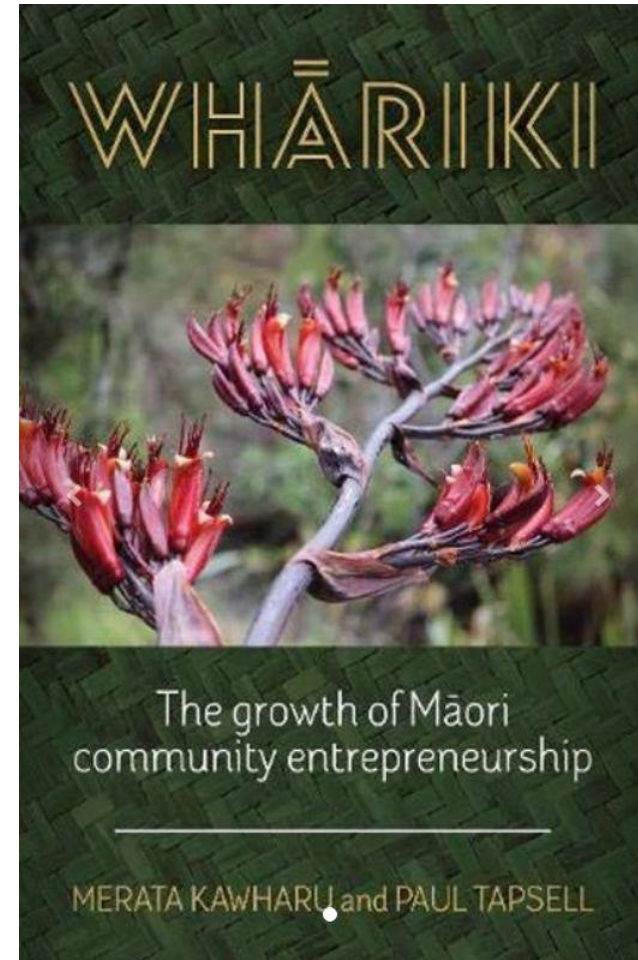
Whāriki

The growth of Māori community entrepreneurship

Mereata Kawharu and Paul Tapsell, 2019

Shaping future economy with indigenous influence –
whakamāuitanga, whaioranga

A rare glimpse into eight Māori kin-based businesses within a framework where Kawharu and Tapsell celebrate success as a response to histories of deliberate and systemic dispossession of whenua, kāinga and taonga. Compelling stories told with aroha, this book demonstrates how Aotearoa New Zealand's future economy can be positively shaped by Māori influence. A unique Māori values model for entrepreneurship is on show here.

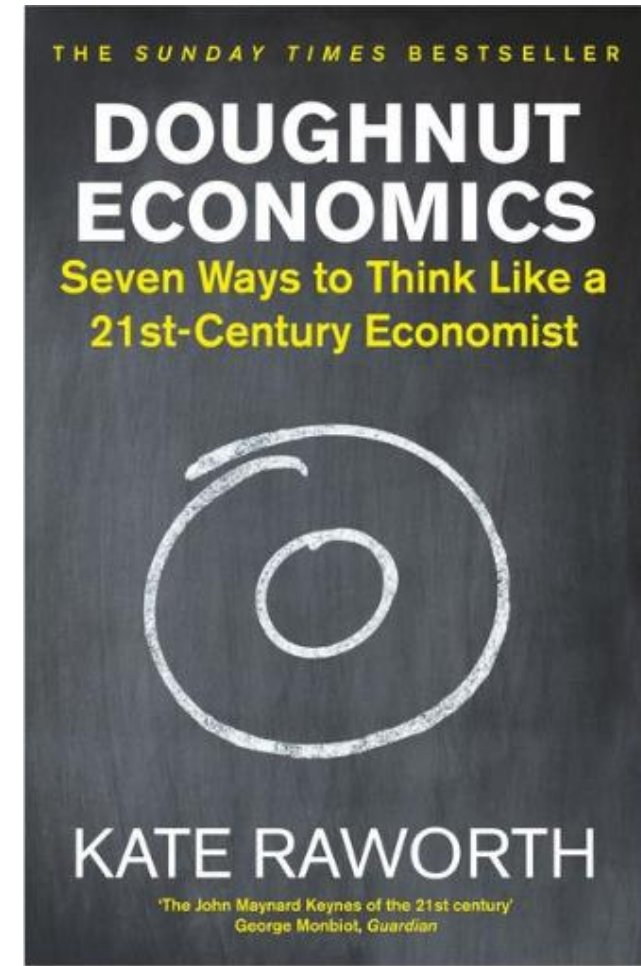


Doughnut economics

Seven ways to think like a 21st century economist

Kate Raworth, 2017

Is economic growth a necessary condition for healthy economies and individual wellbeing? This assumption has been ubiquitous in economic frameworks and decision-making, even included in the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. But despite 60+ years of almost consistent growth in the world's GDP, solutions to equity and environmental concerns remain elusive. Raworth proposes a new framework which is agnostic about growth and focuses instead on achieving balance between social and environmental wellbeing. The most compelling contribution is undoubtedly the high-level framework and its visual (doughnut) representation. But the book also offers an entertaining and fascinating account of the development of modern economic theory and crucially, insights into reasons why economic growth has persisted as the overarching objective.

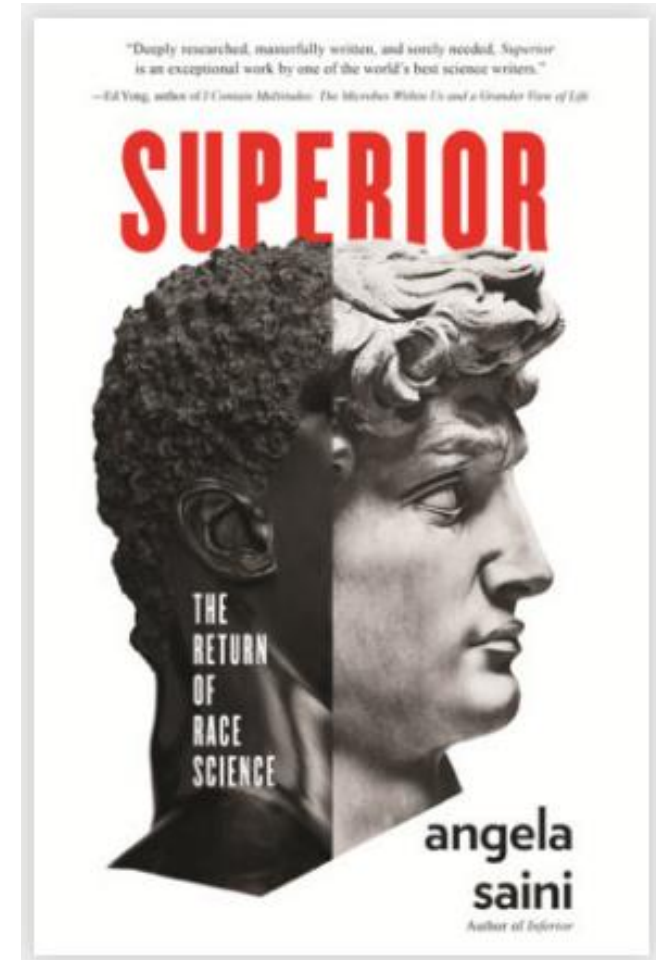


Superior

The return of race science

Angela Saini, 2019

Angela Saini's book is a comprehensive guide to how science's attempts to characterise people by race first enabled racism and then went on to perpetuate it. A must read for scientists and non-scientists alike, it shows that science is neither neutral nor an unequivocal force for good. Indeed, science can be used to bolster power, privilege, and prejudice just as easily as it can be used to improve the lot of humanity.



Thanks

A big thank you to:

- Our 2020 selection panel
- Professor Les Oxley for chairing the panel
- Authors of Aotearoa for supporting the kaupapa
- NZIER members and colleagues for nominating books.

