

DEATH



When: Sat 7 Sep 2019, 9:30am–4:30pm

Where: Claris Sports Club, Whangaparapara Road, Great Barrier Island,
All Ages - Free

Death – it's a given yet a mystery; relevant to us all, yet not always easy to discuss.

How do we die? How do different societies deal with death? And most intriguing of all- what happens to us after we die?

Death is the topic of this year's No Barriers - small Island, big ideas symposium on Great Barrier Island – an annual event that brings together the unique community to discuss the big topics of our time.

With leading speakers from around New Zealand, and moderated by broadcaster Eric Young (who himself had a recent brush with mortality), No Barriers promises to be another high-quality Great Barrier Island festival for the brain.

Panelists and topics: What happens to us as we die?

Dr Sinead Donnelly is a palliative medicine specialist and a Fellow of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians. Dr Donnelly cares for between 400 and 500 people each year who have advanced disease and will die. She does not believe in euthanasia or doctor assisted suicide but she does believe in death with dignity and strongly supports the right of patients to decline treatment, or to request pain relief, and supports the right of access to appropriate palliative care.

Different cultures, different approaches

Associate Professor Ruth McManus is a sociologist who has studied how cultures deal with death. As part of her interest in sustainability issues she has also done research into bio-cremation and new technologically advanced forms of body dissolution. She has co-authored books and articles such as Death Down Under, "Why did you really do it?" A mixed-method analysis of the factors underpinning motivations to register as a body donor, and Death in a Global Age.

Death and dying, mortality and eternity

Professor John Bishop teaches the philosophy of religion at Auckland University. He's particularly interested in religious beliefs and the nature of faith and has written articles and books on the topic including Natural Agency and Believing by Faith. John will tell us about the ideas different philosophers have had on death and dying, mortality and eternity and how these relate to faith and religion.

The afterlife

The afterlife is much talked about but is it really possible to contact the dead? Craig Shearer, Chair of the Skeptics Society, will have quite a lot to say on the topic - he has been quoted as saying mediums are "colloquially known as 'grief vampires' and are usually just seeking attention, though I'm sure that there are some that believe they have genuine abilities and just want to help."

He says extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence – which mediums have not demonstrated they can provide. That should lead to lively debate!

Programme

Breakout 1 - 9.30am - 10.30am: Barrier Police and Aotea Health (what happens if you die on Barrier) and Ruth McManus

Breakout 2 - 11am - 12noon: Craig Shearer and John Bishop

Breakout 3 - 1pm - 2pm: Sinead Donnelly and Great Barrier Island St John

The Panel - 2.30pm - 4.30pm