

Q3 2023—Issues and Programs Report—HPR News

Hawaiʻi Public Radio does daily reporting on issues important to its community of listeners. Coverage is guided in part by a list of issues put together with input from the station’s Community Advisory Board and HPR’s Broadcast Committee and approved by HPR’s Board of Directors. Issues include Education, Healthcare, Native Hawaiian Culture, Economic Issues, Neighbor Island News, Housing and Homelessness, Environment, Community Planning, Immigration and Assimilation, Local Food and Agriculture and Culture and Arts.

The station airs a locally produced and hosted public affairs talk program, “The Conversation,” airing from 11am to noon each weekday. That program features guests and listener call-in segments. Each Monday from 6:30pm to 7:00pm HPR airs a half-hour locally-produced program on medical developments and trends called “The Body Show,” and each Thursday from 6:30pm to 7:00pm HPR airs a half-hour locally-produced program on technology called “Bytemarks Café.”

In addition, local news reporters cover these topics of interest and importance to the state-wide listening community, typically filing reports of 2-3 minutes airing each day on Morning Edition from 5am to 9am and on All Things Considered from noon to 1pm and 4pm to 6pm.

For the purposes of this report, we will focus on stories and coverage in the areas of Healthcare, Education, Environment, Culture and the Arts, Native Hawaiian Culture, Local Food and Agriculture, and Neighbor Island News

HEALTHCARE

['And so we wait': Kauaʻi doctor underscores dialysis needs on island](#) Sabrina Bodon, July 6

The capacity of dialysis treatment on Kauaʻi is critical, according to a local doctor. For some, the trip for treatment is too great a barrier. Dr. Raymond Petrillo, Kauaʻi’s sole kidney doctor, operates his private practice, Island Kidney Care, in Līhuʻe and Waimea.

[A look at health care accessibility in Lāhainā after deadly wildfire](#)

[Catherine Cruz](#), August 14, 2023

The Maui wildfire is now the deadliest in the country in the last century. Hilton Raethel, head of Healthcare Association of Hawaiʻi, is doing everything he can to help those affected. He talked with The Conversation's Catherine Cruz about what access to care looks like in West Maui.

[**Mental health services available to Maui residents as wildfire survivors process tragedy**](#)

[Russell Subiono](#), August 15, 2023

Much of the focus on the Maui wildfires has been on the physical needs of the survivors and the property that they lost. But it's also important to address the psychological needs of those impacted. The Hawai'i Department of Health is offering crisis mental health services to those experiencing emotional or psychological stress as a result of the fires. Read and listen to the full story from The Conversation's Russell Subiono.

[**State epidemiologist warns of high COVID-19 rates, forecasts new vaccine in coming weeks**](#)

[Catherine Cruz](#), September 7, 2023

Last month the hospital census count put Hawai'i at the top of COVID-19 hotspots across the country. The Conversation spoke with Dr. Sarah Kemble, state epidemiologist, Wednesday afternoon about the snapshot of cases and when the public might see the first doses of the latest booster shot available.

EDUCATION

[**Kamehameha Schools trustees want a fresh review of existing selection process**](#)

[Ku'uwehi Hiraishi](#), July 10, 2023

The trustee selection process for Kamehameha Schools is under review by the state probate court. In May, the current KS Board of Trustees petitioned the court to perform a fresh review of the process, which has been in place for the last 22 years.

[**Funding remains unclear for necessary pedestrian pathway at Kūlanihāko'i high school**](#)

[Cassie Ordonio](#), July 14, 2023

The \$245 million Kūlanihāko'i High School is the first public school built in south Maui, but a decade of missteps between state and county agencies had delayed opening the state-of-the-art campus. It's still unclear when the Hawai'i Department of Education will build an overpass to Maui's busy highway.

[**Native Hawaiian educator teaches sex ed through an Indigenous lens**](#)

[Stephanie Han](#), July 19, 2023

Sex education is not just about one's health. For Dr. Sara Vogel, it's also about unlearning harmful messages surrounding bodies and sexuality. A Native Hawaiian sex educator from the Big Island, Vogel founded Ladybits and Leadership, an organization aimed at changing the landscape of sexual violence prevention.

[**How the community is stepping up to fill the school bus shortage on Kaua'i**](#)

[Sabrina Bodon](#), August 8, 2023

The state Department of Education has suspended bus services on Kaua'i's east and north sides due to a lack of workforce. But local nonprofit Hanalei Initiative is expanding its services to connect students to the Kaua'i Bus.

'It's completely gutted': Wildfires claim Lāhainā teacher's classroom and house

[Cassie Ordonio](#), August 14, 2023

Over 50 educators lost their homes or suffered damages from the fire. The Hawai'i State Teachers Association is still gathering data on how many public school teachers are displaced from their homes. The survey revealed at least 71 teachers on Maui offered to help their colleagues. HPR's Cassie Ordonio has more.

Opening day of Maui's distance learning hub gives over 250 students a chance to reconnect [Cassie Ordonio](#), September 21, 2023

The Hawai'i Department of Education has opened a distance learning hub to more than 250 Lāhainā students this week. The hub, located at Citizen Church in Kahana, offers students a self-paced schedule for learning lessons and assignments.

ENVIRONMENT

Federal grant awards Hawai'i \$4M to update climate action plan

[HPR News Staff](#), July 7, 2023

The State and the City and County of Honolulu have received \$4 million in federal funding to update their climate action plan. The grant plans to help the state plan against climate pollution according to Dawn Chang, Chair of the state Department of Land and Natural Resources and co-chair of the Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission.

EPA meets with Kunia residents affected by tainted water

[Catherine Cruz](#), July 10, 2023

Martha Guzman, the regional administrator for the Environmental Protection Agency, was in Honolulu last week for a news conference to announce funding for renewable energy initiatives. She also met with residents at Kunia Village whose drinking water wells tested positive for PFAS, per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances that have been linked to serious health effects.

As trash continues to pile, Oāhu and Kauaī officials discuss landfill siting options

[Sabrina Bodon](#), July 11, 2023

Landfill siting on Oāhu and Kauaī hit roadblocks with Act 73, which created buffer zones and limitations on potential new sites. More than seven months have passed since the City and County of Honolulu was supposed to have chosen a new landfill site.

Only 5 native ākikiki birds remain in the wild. Here's how biologists want to change that

[Taylor Nāhulukeyaokalani Cozloff](#), July 17, 2023

There are only five native ākikiki birds left in the wild. While some of the birds remain in protective captivity, they are likely to disappear from forests very soon. Scientists are doing everything they can to save them. HPR's Taylor Nāhulukeyaokalani Cozloff reports.

[Hawaii may see more wildfires when hurricanes bypass the islands](#)

[Savannah Harriman-Pote](#), August 9, 2023

You typically expect wind and rain from a hurricane — but should we be ready for more wildfires? Although Hurricane Dora missed the islands by hundreds of miles, experts say that's still close enough for a storm system to pose serious risks of wildfires. HPR's Savannah Harriman-Pote reports.

CULTURE AND THE ARTS

[New documentary tells the untold stories of Japanese Americans in Hawaii](#)

[Cassie Ordonio](#), July 6, 2023

“Removed By Force: The Eviction of Hawaii’s Japanese American During WWII” is a one-hour film that highlights personal accounts of those who were affected.

[Big Island native explores family and identity in moving debut novel](#)

[Russell Subiono](#), July 12, 2023

Jasmin Iolani Hakes’ new novel, "Hula," tells the coming-of-age story of a young woman aspiring to compete in the Merrie Monarch Festival's Miss Aloha Hula competition. It also grapples with the way one comes to understand their identity in the context of their family and its history.

[Art at Skyline stations tells the unique stories of each Oahu location](#)

[Catherine Cruz](#), July 13, 2023

Those who have ridden Skyline have had a chance to look at the artwork featured at each station. The designs on the concrete columns are meant to reflect stories that are connected to each of the 21 stations. However, the signs that are supposed to explain the artwork are missing.

[Hawaii-based film 'Growing Up Local' navigates family ties and individualism](#)

[Cassie Ordonio](#), August 1, 2023

"Growing Up Local" is a coming-of-age story following three generations of the Nagata family. Protagonist Stanley Nagata is a high school student living in Waimānalo on Oahu. He's at a crossroads between his dad's fists, his girlfriend's desires and his friends' aspirations. HPR's Cassie Ordonio reports.

NATIVE HAWAIIAN CULTURE

[Loss of cultural landmarks in Lāhainā deeply affects community, Hawaii historians](#)

[Kuwēhi Hiraishi](#), August 10, 2023

At least 53 people were killed and more than 2,100 sought shelter from the wildfires on the west side of Maui. The massive blaze has damaged or destroyed several Lāhainā landmarks rich in Native Hawaiian history. HPR's Kuwēhi Hiraishi has this story.

[Voyaging community mourns loss of Mo‘olele, Maui's double-hulled canoe](#)

[Ku‘uwehi Hiraishi](#), August 16, 2023

Hökūle‘a and her crew are sending their thoughts and prayers from Canada to the ‘ohana wa‘a on Maui. The Maui voyaging community lost their oldest double-hulled canoe, Mo‘olele, to the Lāhainā wildfires. The group's other voyaging canoe was evacuated safely to Moloka‘i, but the canoe house and some of the crew members' homes have also been lost to the flames.

LOCAL FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

[How ‘ōkolehao, an alcoholic spirit made of tī root, could change the liquor industry](#)

[Ku‘uwehi Hiraishi](#), July 6, 2023

If Mexico has tequila, America has bourbon, and Russia has vodka — then Hawai‘i has ‘ōkolehao, or Hawaiian moonshine. Hawai‘i’s first-ever alcoholic spirit made from the root of the tī plant may soon get a boost in popularity from a Big Island brewery.

[New law breaks down barriers for hemp farmers in Hawai‘i](#)

[Catherine Cruz](#), July 17, 2023

Act 263, formerly HB1359, repeals regulations on hemp production to reduce costs for the state and local hemp farmers. It also recognizes the unique constraints of farmers, permits the licensing of hemp producers to sell hemp biomass, and establishes the Hawai‘i Hemp Task Force.

[A Lāhainā food truck owner lost his livelihood to the fires. Now, all he can do is wait](#)

[Cassie Ordonio](#), August 18, 2023

Jesus Madrigal is the owner of Real Mexican Grindz. Despite losing his home and business, the 31-year-old is confident that the community will make a comeback.

[Kula farmer who lost her livelihood to the fires still has 'a lot of love'](#)

[Catherine Cluett Pactol](#), September 20, 2023

Maui farmers are seeing devastating impacts from the fires, some direct and others indirect. Over the next several weeks, HPR's Catherine Cluett Pactol will highlight affected farmers, starting with one in Kula who lost her business to the flames.

NEIGHBOR ISLAND NEWS

[The dispute over Waipi‘o Valley raises questions of belonging in Hawai‘i](#)

[Russell Subiono](#) July 14, 2023

The home of high chiefs, kalo farms, and a black sand beach — Waipi‘o Valley is one of the most sacred places on Hawai‘i Island. But when threats of rockfall restricted access to the only road in and out of the valley, a dispute grew between local residents. Which locals should enter, and who belonged?

[A look inside life on an island owned by Larry Ellison, the fourth richest person in the world](#) [Russell Subiono](#), July 28, 2023

Imagine trying to make ends meet while living on an island owned by one of the richest people in the world. That's the reality for some residents on Lānaʻi, who say the power dynamics of land control can get... complicated. In this episode, we talk to some of those residents who call Lānaʻi home — and have no plans of leaving.

[When crisis strikes, Molokaʻi residents find strength in unity and ʻāina](#) [Russell Subiono](#), August 4, 2023

Hop on a nine-seater plane to Molokaʻi and you'll find miles of farmland and a tight-knit community. Often known as the “Friendly Isle,” Molokaʻi has had its fair share of land and food struggles — especially when the pandemic isolated families from crucial access to basic resources.

[Lāhainā boat captain navigates loss and recovery after fire depletes family business](#) [Kuʻuwehi Hiraishi](#), August 11, 2023

Lāhaina residents are taking stock of what's been lost, as firefighters continue to assess the damage caused by the wildfires in west Maui. HPR reporter Kuʻuwehi Hiraishi shares one such story of a Lāhainā boat captain and his quest to help his workers rebuild.

[Molokaʻi boaters among first to deliver supplies to residents sheltering outside Lāhainā](#) [Catherine Cluett Pactol](#), August 16, 2023

Molokaʻi's Chris Mangca is one of the boat captains who rushed to aid the West Maui community. They've been able to bring supplies directly to those still sheltering on the beach just outside of Lāhainā. HPR's Catherine Cluett Pactol has the story.