

# THE INGREDIENT LAB

*Know Exactly What's On Your Skin*

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## FOUNDER'S CHARTER

Values, Mission & Vision

Founded by Koni  
[theingredientlab.co.nz](http://theingredientlab.co.nz)  
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## WHY THIS EXISTS

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This document is the foundation of The Ingredient Lab. It is not a business plan. It is not a marketing strategy. It is a declaration of intent — a set of commitments that define what this platform stands for, why it was built, and the principles that will guide every decision as it grows.

It exists so that when pressure comes — to simplify where simplification distorts, to score where scoring misleads, to monetise where monetisation corrupts — there is a written record of what was promised and why.

This charter is a living document. It can evolve as the platform matures. But the core values stated here are non-negotiable. If a future decision contradicts them, the decision is wrong, not the charter.

## THE PROBLEM

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Billions of dollars and countless hours of rigorous scientific research sit locked behind paywalls, buried in jargon, and confined to academic silos. Peer-reviewed studies that could meaningfully improve daily decision-making — about the products we put on our skin, the ingredients we absorb, the cumulative exposure we accept — rarely reach the people whose lives they could change.

This is not a knowledge gap. It is a translation failure.

The research exists. The evidence is there. But the journey from a published paper to an informed consumer decision is blocked at every turn: by inaccessible language, by commercial interests that distort interpretation, by platforms that weaponise uncertainty into fear, and by the sheer volume of information that makes even trained scientists struggle to stay current.

As someone who has lived on both sides of this divide — as a researcher who knows the immense cost of producing a single paper, and as a consumer who has stood in a pharmacy aisle unable to decode an ingredient list — I find this failure unacceptable. Not because the information is secret, but because the systems meant to deliver it to the public are fundamentally broken.

*The research community invests enormous resources to produce knowledge that could improve millions of lives. That investment is wasted every time that knowledge fails to reach the people it was meant to serve.*

## THE FOUNDER'S INSIGHT

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The platforms that currently claim to bridge science and consumers — EWG, Think Dirty, Yuka, INCI Decoder — each fail in a specific and predictable way:

**Some distort through oversimplification.** Reducing complex toxicological evidence to a single score between 1 and 10 is not translation — it is erasure of nuance. A score cannot capture that an ingredient is safe at 0.5% but concerning at 5%, or that the evidence is strong for skin irritation but weak for endocrine disruption.

**Some distort through fear.** Presenting hazard without context of exposure, concentration, or formulation creates anxiety, not understanding. A study finding that a chemical is toxic to cells in a petri dish at concentrations 1,000 times higher than any consumer product is real science — but citing it without that context is misinformation.

**Some distort through commerce.** When a platform earns revenue from selling products it recommends, from charging brands for verification badges, or from affiliate commissions, the incentive structure is fundamentally compromised. The question shifts from “Is this ingredient safe?” to “Will flagging this ingredient drive a purchase?”

**And none of them cover New Zealand or Australia.** The products on shelves at Countdown, Chemist Warehouse, and Unichem are absent from every existing database. Consumers in this region have no credible, independent resource.

The Ingredient Lab exists to fill this gap — not by creating another scoring system, but by doing what should have been done from the beginning: translating peer-reviewed research into clear, honest, concentration-aware ingredient analysis, with full methodological transparency and zero commercial conflicts.

## MISSION

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*The Ingredient Lab translates peer-reviewed cosmetic science into clear, evidence-based ingredient analysis — so that everyday consumers can make informed choices without needing a chemistry degree or trusting platforms with commercial agendas.*

This mission has three operative commitments embedded in it:

**Translate, don't score.**

We take complex scientific evidence and make it understandable. We do not reduce it to numbers. We do not rank products. We provide the full picture — the evidence for concern, the evidence for safety, the limitations of the data, and the context of concentration and exposure — and we trust consumers to make their own decisions.

**Peer-reviewed, not opinion-based.**

Every claim on this platform traces back to published, peer-reviewed research. Where the evidence is conflicting, we present the conflict. Where data is insufficient, we say so. We do not fill gaps with assumptions or extrapolation.

**Accessible, not dumbed down.**

Translation is not simplification. We write in plain language, but we do not erase complexity. If an answer requires nuance, we provide the nuance. Our audience deserves to be treated as intelligent adults capable of understanding context.

## VISION

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*A world where the vast library of scientific research does not stay locked in journals and conference halls, but flows — accurately, accessibly, and without commercial distortion — into the daily decisions that shape people's health and wellbeing.*

This vision extends beyond cosmetic ingredients. The Ingredient Lab begins with personal care products because that is where the founder's expertise is deepest and the market gap is clearest. But the underlying thesis — that peer-reviewed science deserves to reach the public in a form they can use — is universal.

The long-term ambition is to prove that a subscription-funded, commercially independent, scientist-led platform can sustain itself by doing one thing well: giving people the truth about what the science actually says, without fearmongering, without selling them anything, and without pretending that complex evidence can be reduced to a number.

## CORE VALUES

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These five values are the decision-making framework for The Ingredient Lab. They are not aspirational statements. They are operational constraints. Every feature, every piece of content, every business decision must pass through them.

### **1. Scientific Integrity Over Simplicity**

We never distort research to make it more digestible. If the evidence is nuanced, we present the nuance. If a study has limitations, we disclose them. We would rather be honest and complex than wrong and simple. When existing evidence is insufficient to draw a conclusion, we state that plainly rather than filling the gap with speculation. We do not cherry-pick studies to support a narrative. We do not present preliminary findings as established fact. The standard is not “Is this interesting?” but “Is this accurate?”

### **2. Transparency of Method, Not Just of Ingredients**

We do not just tell consumers what is in their product. We show exactly how we arrived at our interpretation — what evidence we used, how we assessed its quality, what our confidence level is, and where we are uncertain. Our methodology is as public as our results. Every assumption in our analysis framework is documented and open to scrutiny. If our methodology changes, we explain why. This radical transparency is what separates interpretation from opinion.

### **3. Independence From Commercial Influence**

No brand partnerships. No affiliate commissions. No product sales. No advertising. No verification badges for brands. Revenue comes exclusively from user subscriptions. This structure exists specifically so that our only incentive is being useful and trustworthy to the people who use this platform. If a business opportunity requires compromising this independence, the answer is no. The moment a platform's revenue depends on selling products, its analysis is compromised — even if no one intends it to be.

### **4. Respect for the Research**

Every analysis we publish represents hundreds of hours of upstream scientific work by researchers around the world. We treat that work with the rigour and context it deserves — citing properly, acknowledging limitations, presenting findings within their original scope, and never extracting a headline from a study while ignoring its caveats. We exist to give value to all those researchers doing this work — by ensuring their findings actually reach the people whose lives they could improve.

### **5. Empowerment Over Fear**

We exist to give people information, not anxiety. We do not use alarming language to drive engagement. We do not present worst-case scenarios without context. We do not tell consumers what to buy or what to avoid. We give them the evidence — clearly, honestly, and completely — so they can make their own informed choice. An informed consumer is not a frightened consumer. If our content makes someone anxious rather than empowered, we have failed.

## WHAT WE ARE AND WHAT WE ARE NOT

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### **What The Ingredient Lab Is**

A science translation platform that curates, interprets, and communicates peer-reviewed research on cosmetic ingredients to help consumers make evidence-based decisions about personal care products.

A concentration-aware analysis resource that goes beyond simple hazard identification to consider how ingredients function at their likely use levels in specific product types — available when brands provide full INCI disclosure.

An independent, subscription-funded service with no commercial relationships that could compromise its analysis.

A platform built by a scientist with direct cosmetic ingredient manufacturing experience and PhD-level research training — not a formulation chemist, but someone who understands ingredient behaviour, extraction, purification, characterisation, and scientific literature interpretation at the highest level.

### **What The Ingredient Lab Is Not**

Not a product rating or scoring platform. We do not assign numbers to products or rank them against each other. Scoring systems necessarily erase the context that makes ingredient analysis meaningful.

Not a medical advice service. We provide information based on peer-reviewed literature. We are not a substitute for professional dermatological or medical advice.

Not a “clean beauty” advocate. We are evidence advocates. If the evidence shows that a synthetic ingredient is safe and effective, we say so. If the evidence shows that a “natural” ingredient carries risks, we say that too. We have no ideological commitment to any category of ingredient.

Not infallible. We disclose our limitations, our uncertainty, and our methodology openly. Where our analysis relies on estimates — such as inferring concentration from INCI list position — we state that clearly and rate our confidence accordingly.

## FOUNDER'S COMMITMENT

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I built The Ingredient Lab because I believe that the information science produces is gold — research conducted with enormous effort, significant public resources, and genuine dedication to understanding the world. Too much of that gold sits in a vast library that most people will never access, not because they lack intelligence, but because the systems for delivering it are inadequate.

I want to give value to the researchers doing this work by ensuring their findings do not end at a seminar, a conference poster, or a journal paywall. I want to translate and curate their work so that consumers can take this information and use it for better decision-making. Because information is power, and the people paying for this research — as taxpayers, as participants, as citizens — deserve to benefit from it.

My commitment is this:

I will not compromise scientific accuracy for engagement. I will not simplify where simplification misleads. I will not let commercial pressure corrupt what this platform says. I will be transparent about what I know, what I do not know, and what the evidence does and does not support. I will build this platform to serve consumers, not brands, and I will hold myself accountable to the values stated in this charter.

The Ingredient Lab is not a company that happens to care about science. It is a science translation mission that happens to be a company. That distinction matters, and it will continue to matter as the platform grows.

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**Koni**

*Founder, The Ingredient Lab*

28<sup>th</sup> of February 2026