

# Uni NEWS

April 2018



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
AUCKLAND  
Te Whare Wānanga o Tāmaki Makaurau  
NEW ZEALAND



## ROBOT CARE

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### SHINING STAR

Staff member Amber McWilliams, who died earlier this year, is paid tribute by two of her closest University colleagues.

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### MARRIAGE OF CULTURES

Faculty of Education and Social work content writer Martin Moore married his Indian partner in a joyful mingling of cultures and traditions.

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### LIBRARY QUEEN

Theatre and library reviewer Janet McAllister, the NZ Herald's 'woman who read Auckland', is our April staff profile.

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## SNAPSHOTS

### GENEROUS GIFT TO LIGGINS AND ABI

The Hugo Charitable Trust has given \$2 million to support University research into Parkinson's disease and growth restriction in babies. The Trust, founded by Maryanne Green, the eldest daughter of Irish philanthropist and businessman the late Hugo Green, has committed \$1 million each to the Liggins Institute and the Auckland Bioengineering Institute (ABI).  
*Right - Associate Professor Katie Groom, a maternal and foetal health researcher at the Liggins Institute.*



### NEW VISION FOR SAMOA

A total of 230 pairs of secondhand glasses have been donated to people with eyesight problems in Samoa.

Alumni Relations and Development is delighted with the response to its request on behalf of distinguished alumna Erna Takazawa, Samoa's first fully qualified optometrist.

Erna works with her team to improve the eye health and vision of Samoan communities.

Donations of glasses can still be sent to: Project – Erna in Samoa, Selwyn Homestead, 21 Youngs Road, Papakura 2110.



### HONOURS FOR CYCLISTS

University cyclists came out in numbers to win the large organisation category (2,000+) of the Auckland Bike Challenge. In total, 280 riders, including 51 new riders, cycled nearly 40,000km during the challenge month of February. Well done to Dr Charlotte Blythe, from the University's Sustainability Office, for championing the challenge. As well as running a number of events, Charlotte profiled some of our cyclist commuters whose bike journey stories appeared on the staff intranet throughout February. She has donated the winning prize, a food voucher, to charity.



### WRITERS FESTIVAL LAUNCHED

The 2018 Auckland Writers Festival (15-20 May) was launched in March, offering an impressive array of international and New Zealand writers. Among the line up is Norwegian literary star Karl Ove Knausgard, veteran Australian novelist Alex Miller and University of Auckland authors; CK Stead, Dame Anne Salmond, Selina Tusitala Marsh, Damon Salesa and Paula Morris. For the full calendar of events and to book, go to: [www.writersfestival.co.nz](http://www.writersfestival.co.nz)



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COVER PHOTO: Associate Professor Elizabeth Broadbent (School of Medicine) and Professor Bruce MacDonald (Faculty of Engineering) with robots iRobiQ and Paro.

Photo: Godfrey Boehnke

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# RARE MĀORI ART HEADING HOME

**A rare piece of Māori rock art, a tiki, has arrived at the University's Roger Green Archaeological Laboratory.**

The tiki (anthropomorph figure) was part of the first ever attempt at direct dating of this type of art.

Led by University of Auckland archaeologists, with colleagues at the Waikato University and Australian National University radiocarbon dating laboratories, the study showed the tiki had been retouched with modern grease crayons, almost certainly by the famous New Zealand artist Theo Schoon.

Gerard O'Regan, a post-doctoral fellow at the James Henare Māori Research Centre, says although the results are not helpful for dating when Māori originally drew the particular tiki, they're informative for future dating analysis.

"They also link these fragments to others from the Waitaki Gorge which, through Schoon's artistic reproductions and leading archaeologist Wal Ambrose's archaeological recording, have since gone on to be reused in all manner of New Zealand art and design," says Gerard.

The material had originally been collected from the Waitaki Gorge, which was part of the traditional trail inland for North Otago and South Canterbury Ngāi Tahu.

During the construction of the Benmore Dam, several rock shelters adorned with rock art were recorded and excavated before the gorge was flooded by the hydro-electricity lake.

Attempts at salvaging the pictographs from the wall weren't very successful, with most of the rock fragmenting during removal.

The better preserved pieces were transferred to the Otago Museum and a small collection of fragments were salvaged by Ambrose, who took the samples and excavated archaeological material with him when he took up a position at the Australian National University.

He later produced a comprehensive archaeological report for the records of the Canterbury Museum.

Following the recent tiki study, and concerned to see the whole collection returned to New Zealand, Ambrose has forwarded the taonga (treasures) to the University where they will be sorted and examined in preparation for return to Ngāi Tahu in the South Island.

Gerard says this is an opportunity to evaluate the scope for further research on the now - flooded rock shelters.

However, Michael Steedman (Ngāti Whātua,



*Ngāi Tahu ki Tāmaki Makarau kaumatua, Bones Rissetto and Erena Nicoll share a moment looking at a tiki (human) rock art whakairo with Mike Steedman (Ngāti Whātua and UoA Science Kaiarahi), and Tia Dawes (Nga Puhi, at back) and Gerard O'Regan (Ngāi Tahu, seated) from the James Henare Māori Research Centre.*

*Photo: Tim Mackrell, School of Social Sciences*

*Inset above- Rock art tiki (human) salvaged from Junction Point, Waitaki Gorge. Original photo supplied by Wal Ambrose, enhanced by Tim Mackrell, University of Auckland.*

Kaiārahi) from the Faculty of Science, says for that to happen it was important to first acknowledge "the significance of these taonga, the tupuna they depict and their arrival here at this stage of their journey home".

Michael and his fellow Kaiārahi, Hirini Kaa (Ngāti Porou, Faculty of Arts) and Jeremy Hema (Te Rarawa, Ngāti Paoa, Tainui; Office of Pro-VC Māori) led the karakia and whakataua (welcome) for the treasures' stopover at the University.

They were joined by whānau from Ngāi Tahu ki Tāmaki Makaurau and colleagues from Anthropology and Māori Studies in the small but moving occasion, says Ashleigh Fox, who manages the laboratories and facilitated the event.

"It was very different from the normal routine for a laboratory, but it's a great reminder of how people really treasure the material that we work with and just how privileged we are to do so."

## OCKHAM NZ BOOK AWARD FINALISTS

**University authors are strongly represented on the 2018 Ockham New Zealand Book Awards short list.**

Distinguished Professor Dame Anne Salmond's book *Tears of Rangi: Experiments Across Worlds* is a finalist in the Royal Society Te Apārangi General Non-Fiction category and *Tuui: a Traveller in Two Worlds* by Professor Alison Jones (Education and Social Work) and Kuni Kaa Jenkins is a finalist in the Illustrated Non-Fiction category. The winners will be announced at a special evening to celebrate the national book awards' 50th year, on Tuesday 15 May at the ASB Theatre, Aotea Square from 7pm to 8.30pm. Go to [www.writersfestival.co.nz](http://www.writersfestival.co.nz) to book.



*Distinguished Professor Dame Anne Salmond*

*Photo: Jane Ussher*

## ELAM PORTRAIT WINS TOP AWARD

**A striking portrait of two students in an art studio has won Elam School of Fine Arts (Hons) student Logan Moffat the Adam Portraiture Award, worth \$20,000.**

Logan's work, entitled 'Elam', features two of

his fellow students in their art school studio and took him more than 100 hours to complete. In 2016, he was the runner up with a painting called 'Stitch' and at just 21, is the youngest winner in the award's 20-year history.



## ONE BUTTON STUDIO READY TO GO

University teaching staff have asked for access to a space and specialised equipment to help them record simple, high quality videos, and now they have it.

The One Button Studio is a self-service facility designed to allow staff to produce video recordings without the need for detailed knowledge about lighting, cameras and audio.

The process is as simple as selecting which feature they want: camera, lightboard or Powerpoint (inserting external content) and after entering in a few details into a lecturn computer and pushing record, it's ready to go. Once the lecture's finished, the One Button System will simply email the recording to the users' email address.

This specialised equipment has been installed in the Barry Spicer Media Studio on Level 0 of the Business School, in room 260-006A. It is now a bookable space in the Room Booking System. For more information, contact Anton de Bruyn or Odette Murdoch in the Business School at: [ilt@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:ilt@auckland.ac.nz)

*Above - Peter Bier, a Professional Teaching Fellow in the Faculty of Engineering.*



## 50 MEMORABLE YEARS

**The University's Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences (FMHS) is celebrating its milestone 50th anniversary with a series of events throughout 2018.**

These include a successful open day in March,



*The first intake of students at the University of Auckland Medical School in 1968.*

a public lecture series starting in April, (see [www.fmhs.auckland.ac.nz/50-years-of-training](http://www.fmhs.auckland.ac.nz/50-years-of-training)) and an alumni reunion over the weekend of 5 to 7 October. To find out more, go to: [fmhs-50years-events.blogs.auckland.ac.nz/](http://fmhs-50years-events.blogs.auckland.ac.nz/)

## NEED TO KNOW

### FREE FLU VACCINATIONS

The University is offering free flu vaccinations to all permanent staff employed for 0.5 FTE or greater, and fixed-term staff employed for 0.5 FTE or greater with an employment agreement longer than 11 months. Staff who meet the criteria for government-funded influenza vaccines are recommended to see their own GP. Vaccination clinics will be held across the City, Grafton, Epsom, Newmarket and Tamaki campuses from 16 April to 2 May. Staff will need to present their ID card and completed consent form to receive their vaccination.

# CUTE AND CARING ROBOT COMPANIONS

Robots are not part of some science fiction future, they're here now and being used in ever more interesting and adventurous ways.

Associate Professor Elizabeth Broadbent (School of Medicine) and Professor Bruce MacDonald (School of Engineering) have been collaborating in the field of leading edge robotics for more than a decade.

Originally meeting at a seminar, they realised they shared a consuming interest in how robots and humans can work together to make people's lives better.

Both have degrees in electrical and electronic engineering from Canterbury University; Elizabeth later moving into the area of health psychology, while Bruce continued in engineering, although he always remained interested in artificial intelligence and machine learning.

Elizabeth leads the methodology; designing the research and carrying out studies of how robots and people can most fruitfully interact, particularly in the areas of health and education. Bruce designs the robotic software in partnership with his team at CARES, an interdisciplinary group of 30 staff across the faculties of health, engineering, and science, based at Newmarket Campus.

Their most recent study involved a trial using robots at home to support patients with chronic, obstructive, pulmonary disease (COPD). It found that the iRobiQ robots, who have expressive faces and look a bit like *Star Wars* character R2-D2, helped patients to regularly take their medication and do exercises as well as offering them companionship.

The study randomly allocated COPD patients to one of two groups, with 25 people receiving an iRobiQ robot in their homes for four months as well as standard care, while 29 received standard care alone.

The robots were programmed to measure heart rate, breathlessness and quality of life weekly; remind patients to take medication and do pulmonary rehabilitation exercises; provide education about COPD and data to respiratory clinicians. The study was funded by a Health Research Council partnership innovation grant and was in collaboration with the respiratory team at Counties Manukau DHB.

It found the group with robots were significantly more consistent in taking their long-acting inhalers than the control group, and



Associate Professor Elizabeth Broadbent (School of Medicine) and Professor Bruce MacDonald (Faculty of Engineering) with robots iRobiQ and Paro the seal.

also significantly increased their rehabilitation exercises compared to the control group, though there were no significant differences in quality of life.

Of the 25 patients who had a robot, 19 liked having it; saying their friends and family were interested in it, they felt the robot had a "personality" and was good company. Many gave it a name.

However, six people didn't like them, three of whom returned theirs early, saying they were good at managing their medication and exercises on their own. The other three said they were unnerved by having a robot in their home.

"The research is helpful as it suggests that a homecare robot can improve adherence to medication and increase exercise," says Elizabeth. However, she says more research is needed with a larger sample size to further investigate effects on hospitalisations after improvements are made to the robots.

"Robots can never be substitutes for people", says Bruce. "They are assistants to help out in the absence of a person. They're about empowering people. They will only help you if you need help. Robots can help dementia patients, for example, whose memory problems mean they can't remember when to do things or if they've already done them."

Another of Elizabeth and Bruce's recent studies involved robots in schools, collaboration with Tufts University in Boston, from where student Danielle Feerst travelled to help collect data. Elizabeth visited Boston on a Fulbright scholarship in 2017 to study companion robots.

"To date, schools have mainly used robotic kits to teach children how to build and program robots," says Elizabeth. "We were interested in how students and teachers would respond to a companion robot. Would it be seen as useful? Would it make students more interested in learning about science and maths?"

In all, 207 students and 22 teachers from pre-school to high school participated in 30-minute

sessions with two popular companion robots; Paro, a fluffy, white soft toy created to resemble a baby harp seal and iRobiQ, a more traditional robot used in early childhood education in Korea.

Elizabeth chose schools in the Central Plateau and Buller regions because rural schools typically have fewer resources. The sessions started with a brief demonstration of the robots and then children and teachers could spend 10 minutes engaging with them.

Overall the students enjoyed them, with 84 percent saying they would like to have Paro at school and 80 percent said they would like to have iRobiQ. Girls were more enthusiastic about the robots in general than boys.

"As we need to motivate more students to go into science and technology careers, especially girls, these results are promising," says Elizabeth.

Elizabeth says both teachers and children saw Paro, who can open and close its eyes, move its tail and make a baby seal noise, as a pet and a comfort.

"Given the prevalence of anxiety and depression in school-age children, robots may be a useful tool in school-based approaches to promote mental health. However, further research is needed to test this," she says.

Robotics is multi-disciplinary, connecting experts from different subject areas and bringing a high level of expertise to all parts of the research being done at CARES.

"We've focused on putting robots in real world conditions, unlike many researchers who mainly study robots in the laboratory, which gives us a much richer source of new knowledge," says Bruce.

■ Julianne Evans

*'Using Robots at Home to Support Patients with COPD: A pilot randomised controlled trial' was recently published in the Journal of Medical Internet Research. [www.jmir.org/2018/2/e45](http://www.jmir.org/2018/2/e45)*  
*'How Could Companion Robots Be Useful in Rural Schools?' has recently been published in the International Journal of Social Robotics.*

# MY STORY

## STAFF PROFILE



Janet McAllister is a senior policy analyst at the Office of Research Strategy

### What do you do at the University?

I've been hanging around the City Campus like the proverbial bad smell, either studying or working, since I came back from my Edinburgh OE in 2008.

Things are changing: in my current permanent half-time role as senior policy analyst, I join the new Office of Research Strategy and Integrity (ORSI) this month, and am excited to be gaining several new colleagues.

I have also just started a fixed-term position: writing about research for the Faculty of Arts website. I am very keen on helping to make research more accessible to the general public. These two roles add up to 1 FTE. So I will no longer be able to brag that I'm "semi-retired without any assets."

### What are your favourite activities in your policy analysis role?

I enjoy assisting in consultations across the University, finding out what people in different roles think about various research-related activities such as encouraging open access or giving out research excellence prizes.

We usually get a wide array of opinions (to put it mildly) and it's an absorbing process feeding these into options for University policies and guidelines, or into submissions to government. I also like drafting the presentation speeches for the annual Celebrating Research Excellence event – this keeps me up-to-date with some of the University's best research. It's always fascinating.

### Tell us about your life outside University

I'm a journalist, using my postgraduate history and sociology training to work as a freelance social and cultural commentator, and copy-editor.

I have reviewed theatre for the *New Zealand Herald* for nine years, and theatre in Auckland is currently in fine fettle – it's diverse, innovative and interesting, from cheap shows at The Basement to the largest extravaganzas. If you're interested in theatre but not sure where to go, email me!

I'm also just finishing an 18-month project for the *Herald*, visiting all of Auckland's 55 public libraries; I spent Easter on Great Barrier Island, visiting my last one. My favourite is Devonport Library, well worth the visit (and very close to the ferry terminal).

In publishing, my most satisfying assignment was co-editing the debut collection *Brown Girls in Bright Red Lipstick* by talented Auckland poet (and 2017 *UniNews* cover subject!) Courtney Sina Meredith, in 2012.

### What about life outside of paid work?

Philosophically, I'm a cheerful nihilist. If I could click my fingers and the universe would disappear, I'd do it because why not?

As that's not possible, I try and make the world a little more pleasant, for others and myself.

In my free time, I ride my bike (very slowly!); visit my in-laws in Waihi and my nieblings (niece and nephew) in Tauranga; have the occasional massage; and rack up library fines for coffee-table books about maps and infographics.

In the past I've helped to write submissions about social welfare legislation for Auckland Action Against Poverty, and have written opinion pieces gratis about things like Australia's reprehensible off-shore detention centres for

asylum seekers.

I think New Zealand could still be doing more to close them down in a way that benefits inmates.

### As a reviewer, who are some of your own favourite reviewers?

One of my favourite types of review turns ephemeral experiences into words. For example, knowledgeable perfume reviewers Luca Turin and Tania Sanchez compared the immensely popular fragrance Angel to "the ten-storey-high demonic Stay Puft Marshmallow Man from *Ghostbusters*".

The fabulous Bug Lab exhibition at Auckland Zoo recently reminded me of entomologist Justin O Schmidt's amusing sting pain index.

Schmidt describes the sting of the sweat bee (rated an almost-painless 1 out of 4) as "light, ephemeral, almost fruity. A tiny spark has singed a single hair on your arm."

### What books do you most often recommend?

The delightful *Ex Libris* by Anne Fadiman (1998), a slim book about books, is an easy win as a birthday present.

If people like historic fiction or are visiting Istanbul, I insist they read *The Bearkeeper's Daughter* by Gillian Bradshaw (1987), a great introduction to the Byzantine Empire, an era sadly overlooked by Hollywood.

And for an amusing office politics satire, I recommend Wellingtonian author Heather Marshall's *Secret Diary of a Telephonist* (1985).

I tend to read books for comfort, light relief and diversion – a flatmate once questioned my fondness for Dames Ngaio Marsh and Agatha Christie, but I wouldn't swap them for his favourite *Survivor* viewing! I get my dose of experimentation and gritty reality from festival documentaries such as *We Don't Need a Map*, *The Look of Silence* and *The Ambassador*.

*Janet sharing a nice moment with her mother Heather.*



## THE RISE OF NETFLIX

**How did Netflix go from a tiny, obscure DVD rental start-up in the late 1990s to the world's biggest internet TV network?**

Management experts at the University's Business School have identified some of the secrets of its success, and predict its rise will continue, eventually erasing most of its smaller competitors in New Zealand and abroad.

Recent Business School graduate Paul Rataul had wanted to find a model for "disrupting" academic publishing, and turned to Netflix.

"How did Netflix outmanoeuvre the titan that was Blockbuster Video? It was a real case of David versus Goliath," he says.

He teamed up with lecturer Dr Dan Tisch and senior lecturer Dr Peter Zámorský, both in the department of Management and International Business. They analysed company and media reports, applying insights developed by New Zealand-born strategy theorist, David Teece, and have now published their conclusions in SAGE Business Cases.

The key features of the Netflix business model were a trusting and experimental culture; capturing the value of other people's creativity (movies and TV shows) and the value of customer data (subscribers' viewing habits), which helped generate not only personalised recommendations, but also hit Netflix Originals series and films.

"What Netflix did was to do little experiments, little bets, with certain demographics and once they saw what happened they'd scale it up," says Paul, who now runs millennial career coaching firm, Millennial Mindset.

"It's hard to over-estimate the significance of how Netflix has leveraged customer data", says Peter Zámorský. "The world's most valuable resource is no longer oil, its customer data."

He points to a Gallup finding that companies that leverage customer behaviour outperform peers by 85 percent in sales growth and 25 percent in gross margins.

Theorist David Teece has written extensively about why some firms are better at renewing their skills and developing new ones. These boil down to sensing and seizing opportunities, and reconfiguring capabilities.

"That's what Netflix has done as it reinvented itself again and again, from online DVD rental, to internet TV service, to TV and film concept developer, producer and distributor in one," says Peter.

It was also a case of being in the right place at the right time, as video streaming speed and reliability increased and viewing devices became cheaper and ubiquitous.

Not all bets paid off. Netflix's decision to rebrand its separate DVD delivery business as Qwikster in 2011, shifting its focus to streaming-only plans, met with a customer backlash.

And Netflix now faces serious competition from Amazon Prime, Hulu (now backed by Disney), HBO Now, and emerging players such as Malaysian firm iFlix.

"Netflix now has more original content than HBO, the former content king, although I don't think that will necessarily remain the capability that Netflix can always do better than anybody else," says Paul.

"Could others emulate that unique package of customer data, the relationships Netflix has formed with movie studios and TV networks and the stars, and its creative, decentralised culture, which gives a lot of creative freedom to the actors and directors? In theory yes, but it's not easy to change your culture and others will find it difficult to replicate it," he says

Dan Tisch predicts the small players in New Zealand – Neon, Lightbox – are not going to make it. "You need a Disney to take on Netflix. Competitive offerings like Sky TV and Lightbox will go slowly, milking existing rights as long as possible." By January 2016, Netflix was in more than 130 other countries, and it now has 60 million internationally and 55 in the US.

The Business School team predict the industry will become an oligopoly that includes Netflix, as David truly becomes Goliath.

■ Nicola Shephard

UNINews highlights some of the University's people and stories that have made the headlines in the past month.

### CHANGE AT Q + A

Professor Jennifer Curtin (Politics and International Relations) has replaced Professor Raymond Miller, who has retired as the University's official representative on TVNZ's Sunday current affairs programme Q + A.

### WOMEN IN PRISON

Professor Tracey McIntosh (Indigenous Studies) commented on the increase in the women's prison population on *Newstalk ZB*, saying it's a global trend, particularly in the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

### CARBON FOOTPRINT

On TV One *Breakfast*, Professor Shaun Hendy (TPM, Physics) praised Air New Zealand for helping highlight climate change in its latest flight safety video, saying he has vowed to forgo air travel for a year in order to reduce his carbon footprint.

### HEART ATTACK RISK

Professor Rod Jackson (Population Health) is featured in a story in *NZ Doctor* as part of the team behind Predict, an algorithm for calculating heart attack risk, after gathering information from more than half a million New Zealanders in GP care.

### LAW SUSPENDS TIES

After a series of allegations reported widely across the media, all six of New Zealand's law schools, including the Auckland Law School, suspended ties with law firm Russell McVeagh in the wake of a series of accusations that suggest a culture of sexual harassment within the firm. Auckland Law School Dean, Andrew Stockley, called on all law firms to address cultural issues and "systemic failures" as an independent review into sexual misconduct at Russell McVeagh gets underway.



# DID YOU KNOW



## Marriage of cultures

... that Faculty of Education and Social Work content writer Martin Moore married his partner Dharani Sontam in March, near his home town of Whakatane?

Being in a relationship with a person from another culture is a fascinating experience, because not only do you learn about that culture, you often get to see your own through fresh eyes. It's something I've always loved about my relationship with my now-wife Dharani Sontam.

I'll always remember how confused she was when I tried to explain tall-poppy syndrome, and I know she got a laugh out of how utterly out of

my depth I was in the markets of Hyderabad, India. All this gets dialled up to 11 when you're planning a wedding.

While there are traditional ways to do these things, the reasons for most of them are often "because that's just the way things are done". Knowing that was freeing, but also kind of terrifying in how wide-open it left our options

But we knew what we wanted in the broad strokes, which was a day that reflected both of us. So I found myself in a charcoal suit next to Dharani, who was in a traditional South Indian sari, walking down an aisle of driftwood through a copse of pine trees which had been decorated

with Indian flower garlands, while friends and family showered us with turmeric-stained rice.

For the canapes, we had contracted a local Indian restaurant who arrived with easily as much food as the actual dinner caterer: huge piles of fist-sized samosas, heaps of tandoori chicken and mountains of onion bhaji.

And in a very New Zealand touch, my dad ended up having to tow the catering van back up the hill with a tractor.

The dancing was where the real fun started, with a mix of Western and Indian music. I'd been worried the Pakeha attendees might not get the Indian tunes, but Dharani's cousins were soon leading everyone in the moves. Bollywood films might not actually be too far off the mark about Indian people's ability to start a spontaneous choreographed dance from a crowd of strangers.

As the night wore on, the whole thing turned into a group karaoke of golden oldies, and the fact that all the guests from my side of the family knew the lyrics to Queen's *Bohemian Rhapsody* left Dharani looking somewhat stunned. The day had something new for everyone. It was a total mish-mash of elements. And it was perfect.

■ Martin Moore



## Amber McWilliams - a shining star (1975 - 2018)

Dr Nina Nola, Senior Tutor, English and Drama and Amy Malcolm, Manager of Strategic Relations, Vice-Chancellor's Office, reflect on the life of the remarkable Dr Amber McWilliams.

You may first have seen Amber McWilliams as the luminous child star in the 1990 TV series *The*

*New Adventures of Black Beauty*, or alongside Martin Henderson in the 1988 television series *Strangers*. She might have sold you a ticket at the Maidment Theatre in 1997 where she met her husband, Andrew Malmo.

Maybe you came across her as a stellar student in English as she worked towards her Bachelors, Masters and then, having turned down a Rhodes scholarship to stay close to her family, her PhD. Students will remember her as an exuberant, loving and totally committed teacher who had a driving passion, among many passions, for education.

When first diagnosed with a brain tumour in 2013, Amber continued to conduct lectures and tutorials until the illness made it impossible. Her distraught students in the Tertiary Foundation Certificate planned a sit-in on Symonds Street to raise money for the best medical intervention possible. Associate Professor Murray Edmond speaks of Amber as "a rare and valuable ... someone with a wide knowledge of dramatic literature and with an understanding and insight into drama and theatre practice."

Amber didn't just teach and supervise, care for and mentor students in the English Department. She also did so in the Medical Humanities programme for the Faculty of Medical and Health

Sciences, in Film, TV and Media Studies, (now Media and Communication) and in the Tertiary Foundation Certificate, an equity programme with a perfect fit for Amber's many talents, and which provided her dream job.

She also worked in both the Vice-Chancellor's and Advancement offices, and in Student Recruitment and Marketing, where her outstanding communication skills made a lasting impact. Most recently, up until the last week of her life, she was working on the Creative Thinking Project, combining her love for the arts and understanding of research and teaching to engage audiences about the importance and value of creativity.

The University shared this shining star with the Auckland Theatre Company who have acknowledged Amber's tremendous contributions to the world of theatre by dedicating to her their 2018 production *Under the Mountain*.

It is extremely difficult to have such a bright, impressive and consistently cheerful staff member, life-long learner, dedicated mother and friend leave our community so young.

Her family, friends and colleagues are welcome to share memories and stories together in an informal gathering at Old Government House on Monday 30 April from 2pm to 4pm.

## TAKING ON THE BIG QUESTIONS

“We’re trying to ask the big questions behind the news,” says Dr Maria Armoudian, the founding director of Project for Public Interest Media (PPIM).

“We want to elevate critical thinking, raise the level of public debate, and counter the trend towards soft news. At the same time we aim to increase the coverage of arts, science and humanities in the media.”

At the heart of the project, which is based within the Faculty of Arts, is the Big Q ([www.thebigq.org](http://www.thebigq.org)), a current affairs website which publishes up-to-date stories, videos and podcasts on topics ranging from American politics and the science behind sleep to the effects of war on society and the ethics of modern medicine.

“The idea was to create platforms for dialogue and exchange about important research and issues, and put out peer-reviewed information to the public,” says Maria.

“We want to get general audiences engaged in these big questions; students, citizens, and the rest of us who just want to understand the world a little better.” She would also like more scholars to engage by contributing extracts from their books, articles or blog pieces based on peer-reviewed work, editorials and reviews.

The whole idea started from her own PhD study.

“I was looking at all the models of mass media and thinking they each have pros and cons, but that the need to always make a profit was hindering deeper, broader, more complex content.”

Maria believes that because of the current models of media, we’re accustomed to getting

news that is episodic without understanding the bigger picture, the trends, and the cause and effect.

“At the time, I thought well, that’s what scholarship is about; the bigger picture, the puzzles, understanding cause and effect so we can solve big problems. So why not start a media at a university?”

As well as Maria, a senior lecturer in Politics and International Relations, who oversees the site and contributes a weekly programme, the Big Q team consists of: Tim Page and Mike Hurst (Faculty of Arts) who provide technical support and ideas; co-director, Associate Professor Luke Goode, who contributes ideas for symposia and produces a podcast for the site; research assistants Sam Smith, Edward Elder and James Robins and three student contributors, Ben Gaskin, Lucy Austin, and Reuben MacLaren. The students have also started a public interest media club that will be integrated into the project. No one works full time on it, however, since its start up, a lot of quality content has

been produced, says Maria. “We’ve done a series of mini-symposia and other types of programmes. Radio New Zealand has broadcast two or three of them, as well as ETV. We’ve just partnered with BFM to content-share, put on events and share interns with more content-sharing arrangements coming up.”

Current stories on The Big Q include an interview with renowned climate scientist Michael E. Mann; a look at to extent Donald Trump is using his presidency to promote his own companies; an investigation into the ‘charitable industrial complex’ and an interview with Middle East experts Laurie A. Brand, Fred H. Lawson, Hamoud Salhi, and William Harris on the ongoing crisis in Syria, its causes and likely outcomes.

Originally established by a Vice-Chancellor’s Strategic Development Fund grant, funding is due to run out for the project in November and more is required if it’s to continue.

Content submissions are welcome and can be submitted to: [m.armoudian@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:m.armoudian@auckland.ac.nz).



Dr Maria Armoudian with the editorial team of The Big Q at their weekly meeting in Mona on Symonds Street.

## WHAT'S ON CAMPUS

### PARENTAL LEAVE SEMINAR

**What:** Combining Parenting and a Career seminar: Making the Most of Parental Leave

**When:** Monday 9 April, 12 midday to 1pm

**Venue:** Building 206 (Arts 1) Room 220, City Campus

This seminar will include information on: who is eligible for the University’s parental leave; how to apply for it; combining the University’s and government’s parental leave, as well as annual leave; staff entitlements and responsibilities involving this leave, and other support and resources available for staff.

### GLOBAL AFFAIRS LECTURE

**What:** The Planetary Boundaries: Implications for Global Governance in the 21st Century.

**Who:** Professor Johan Rockström, director, Stockholm Resilience Centre.

**When:** Saturday 7 April from 3 to 6pm.

**Where:** Fisher & Paykel Auditorium, Owen G. Glenn Building, 12 Grafton Road  
The New Zealand Centre for Global Studies (NZCGS), the Hilary Institute, and the NZ Centre for Environmental Law present the NZCGS 5th Annual Global Affairs Lecture by world-renowned environmental scientist Johan Rockström.

RSVP to [secretary@nzcgs.org.nz](mailto:secretary@nzcgs.org.nz)

### FMHS LOOKS BACK

**What:** 50 Years of Training the Health Workforce in Auckland - public lecture

**When:** 19 April from 7 to 8.30pm

**Venue:** AMRF Lecture Theatre 505-011, 85 Park Road, Grafton Campus. See [www.fmhs.auckland.ac.nz/50-years-of-training](http://www.fmhs.auckland.ac.nz/50-years-of-training).

As part of its 50th anniversary celebrations, the Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences will be hosting a series of public lectures. The first will look back at the faculty’s eventful history and forward to its future. Speakers will be professors Linda Bryder, John Shaw, Papaarangi Reid and Warwick Bagg, and Associate Professor Judy Kilpatrick.

## REFLECTING A CHANGING WORLD



Untitled (with Fiona Amundsen) by Luke Willis Thompson, 2015, c-type print on dibond/1090x1340mm

Artist Luke Willis Thompson, recipient of the University's 2018 Young Alumnus of the Year award, recently participated in the Museums and Cultural Heritage seminar series in the Faculty of Arts.

### How do you sustain your artistic practice?

"When I left art school it was with the realisation that you can do anything as an artist, and that was frustrating to me. I never knew how my work would continue. All I knew was that I didn't want to make the works larger, I wanted to make them smaller, and more intimate."

### When did your direction crystallise for you?

"A pivotal moment for me was going to New York [as the youngest-ever winner of the Walters Prize in 2014]. When I first got there, Michael Brown was still alive and when I left he wasn't. Black Lives Matter was not yet a hashtag. So there was this sense of social change that cities are going through which I felt strongly had to be part of the work."

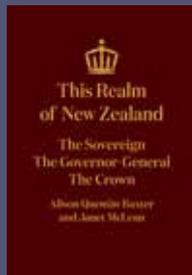
### Your work in New York's New Museum

**Generational Triennial in 2015 was called 'Eventually they introduced me to the people I immediately recognised as those who would take me out anyway.' Its inspiration was a 'stop and frisk' by police of a young medical student, David Floyd, who successfully sued the City of New York after being pursued for 12 minutes for merely "walking while black" through the South Bronx. This work was a twice-daily performance piece where visitors pursued one of your three collaborators through New York on one of 20 choreographed routes for**

## WHAT'S COMING OUT

### THIS REALM OF NEW ZEALAND:

The Sovereign, The Governor-General, The Crown

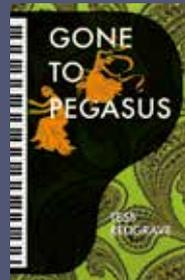


A ground-breaking analysis of New Zealand's constitution by Dame Alison Quentin-Baxter, distinguished public and international lawyer and former Law Commission president, and Professor Janet McLean, University of Auckland professor of law.

This book enhances our understanding of our unwritten constitution and its history, and also examine key issues to be considered should New Zealand become a republic. Auckland University Press, December, 2017.

### GONE TO PEGASUS

Emancipation is the key theme of *Gone to Pegasus*, the first novel of Tess Redgrave, currently a media adviser at the University in Communications, and formerly the editor of *Ingenio*, the University's alumni magazine. Tess completed her Master of Creative Writing at the University of Auckland in 2013.



Set in 1892, the novel tells the story of 23-year-old Eva McAlester, who is left to fend for herself in Dunedin society when her husband William is committed to Seacliff Lunatic Asylum under the care of Dr Truby King. A promising young pianist and upright Christian woman, Eva has a major change in her life when she meets the spirited Mrs Grace Coles, who has grown up in India and is fresh to the colony from London and Paris. These two very different two women become involved together at the forefront of

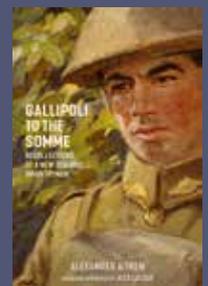
the Dunedin suffragists' movement during a pivotal time in New Zealand's social history; and a journey they take leads to a turning point for both.

*Gone to Pegasus* was published by Mākaro Press and had its launch at Old Government House on 20 March, 2018.

### GALLIPOLI TO THE SOMME: Recollections of a New Zealand Infantryman

Alexander Aitken was an ordinary soldier with an extraordinary mind.

The student who enlisted in 1915 was a mathematical genius who could multiply nine-digit numbers in his head. His powers of memory were dazzling, everything he saw he could remember. When a vital roll-book was lost he



## two hours. What was your aim?

“Simply for participants to imagine what it would feel like to be someone else. It was a work that has been described as dreamlike, with the audience being pulled through the city in a real-life, durational, rear-view figure shot. The audience never really knew what narrative they were going to be immersed in. Some of the walks led to David Floyd’s grandmother’s place, an idea of home, while others were designed to disorientate the audience.

**‘Autopportrait’ your 35mm film features Diamond Reynolds who broadcast the death of her partner Philando Castile from police gunshots in July 2016 on Facebook. It has been shortlisted for 2018 Deutsche Börse Photography Foundation Prize. Why did you want to work with Diamond?**

“Her video was unforgettable, and it has probably been seen about nine million times. I wanted to respond in some way and I thought about what might be useful for her. All the work constructing the image went into limiting the emotion so that she doesn’t have to relive her trauma onscreen. The film is silent but she breathes, she sings, she gets to perform, but it is not based on the worst moment of her life. I think there is an insufficiency of platforming around her, of recognition of her dignity. I wanted to translate her brilliance to another field.”

was able to dictate the full name, regimental number, next of kin and address for every member of his former platoon — a total of 56 men.

In 1917 as wounded out-patient in Dunedin Hospital Aitken began to write about his experiences. Every few years, when the war trauma caught up with him, he revisited the manuscript, which was eventually published as *Gallipoli to the Somme* in 1963.

Long out of print, this book is described as being “by some distance the most perceptive memoir of the First World War by a New Zealand soldier”. For this edition, Associate Professor Alex Calder (Head of English, Drama and Writing Studies) has written a new introduction, annotated the text, compiled a selection of images, and added a commemorative index identifying the soldiers with whom Aitken served.

The book is coming out in April, 2018 republished by Auckland University Press.

## ACCOMMODATION AVAILABLE

**HOUSE SWAP, BIRMINGHAM UK:** 12-13 months from November 2018. Large 4/5 bed family home in Kings Heath, friendly Birmingham suburb within easy commute of University of Birmingham, Queen Elizabeth hospital and city centre. Kings Heath has a great community feel, ideal for young families. Great schools in the vicinity as well as nurseries and play groups. Well set up for young children and all mod cons. We’re looking for a home in Auckland for our family of five, commutable to Middlemore Hospital. Email: ruthdonnelly151@gmail.com

## COMING TO AUCKLAND FOR LONG STAY OR TO LIVE?

Need an exceptional living environment for a few weeks or months? Self-contained 1-bed furnished apartment annexed to main house in Waitakere Ranges with bush and beach views. Short drive to Swanson train station, 45 mins to CBD and easy walk to Uni, or 45 minutes by car. Email Lyn: www.bushsandandsea@gmail.com or call +64 98109584.

## SUNNY FULLY-FURNISHED HOME IN KINGSLAND:

3-bedroom, 2-bathroom, renovated villa. Great location, 15 minutes from University and City; on bus, train and cycleway routes. Suit visiting academics or professional families. Available 1 October to 25 Jan. Rent dependent on length of stay. Use of car negotiable. Email: rachelfanshawe@yahoo.co.nz

**PARIS APARTMENT TO RENT:** Located on the Left Bank, near the Latin Quarter, the apartment is light, quiet, on the fifth floor with a lift and an open view over Paris. It is fully equipped with TV with over 100 channels, Wi-Fi, kitchen with fridge/freezer, oven, microwave, bathroom with bath and shower. The apartment sleeps 3, is near a Metro station and several buses, providing easy access to the main tourist attractions. It is rented by the week. November to March, \$900, April to October, \$1200. Email: kotlar@ihug.co.nz

## FULLY-FURNISHED CHARACTER BUNGALOW:

2 bedrooms, open plan kitchen/lounge/dining. Central heating, quiet, private north-facing deck. Sub-tropical gardens, 10 min. bus to University, one min walk to shopping mall. \$850 p.w. incl. water, internet, excl. electricity/gas. Available for 7-10 months. Contact: anita@levering.co.nz

## BRAND NEW APARTMENT IN AMSTERDAM:

Fully furnished, 1 bedroom, level 5 with elevator in Oostpoort. Near train/tram/shops, \$975 per week incl. utilities. Summer \$1200. Contact Anita for info and pics: anita@levering.co.nz or phone 021 677178

**WAIHEKE ISLAND:** Characterful, sunny and compact cottage. Perfect for sabbatical, writing retreat or holiday. Coastal views and walks to beaches. Bus stop right outside property. Fully-equipped kitchen. WiFi provided. Maximum four guests. Minimum one week. Shorter stays by arrangement. For information, rates and photos: pat.neuwelt@gmail.com

**APARTMENT TO LET:** Spacious, sunny, fully furnished and quiet, one bedroom apartment in character Brooklyn Apartments. Emily Pl. 5 minute walk to University of Auckland library. Long term tenancy preferred. Suit couple or single. No carpark. Resident parking available on street upon application). \$520 p.w. Contact: Shirley on 021 674946.

## FAMILY HOME, CENTRAL AUCKLAND:

Short-term rental 1 April - 30 June 2018. Fully-furnished 4/5 bedroom, 2 bathroom home with swimming pool in Grey Lynn. Secure off-street parking for 2 cars. \$1500 per week covers all utilities including gardener and swimming pool maintenance. Suit visiting academic, family relocating or renovators looking for short-term rental. Contact: roseyw@extra.co.nz or 027 4718719

## BRIGHTON ROAD, PARNELL, LARGE 2 BEDROOM APARTMENT:

in elegant heritage building. Recently redecorated including new kitchen. Secure garage, sea views, all day sun, and deck. Ultra fast broadband and Sky connection available by arrangement. Suit visiting academics close to University and Medical school. Contact by text: 021 415 770.

## PARNELL - FULLY FURNISHED TWO BEDROOM HOUSE.

Available 15 May to 25 October. Short, easy walk to University and city. \$285 per week. Contact: jmgee1@gmail.com, phone or text: 021 0409 499.

## SERVICES

**CITY LEGAL SERVICES:** Rainey Collins Wright is a small law firm centrally located at L1 Princes Court, 2 Princes Street. We are near the University, with good parking. We can assist with property transactions, trusts, wills, administration of estates, enduring powers of attorney and relationship property matters. Please call our senior solicitor Nichola Christie on 600 0256 to discuss your needs, or email: nchristie@rainey.co.nz . Visit www.rainey.co.nz

**NOTARIAL SERVICES:** I am a Notary Public with many years experience and can notarise documents to be sent overseas and provide my Notarial Certificate. I am situated on the ground floor, Princes Court, 2 Princes Street, Auckland, next to the Pullman Hotel. Phone Stewart Germann on (09) 308 9925 to make an appointment or email: secretary@germann.co.nz

**DIGITAL PRINTING:** Course books, presentation and display prints, conference printing, pull up banners, posters and flyers. Barry Hards is our specialist university print adviser. Contact him at barry@newcomb.co.nz. Newcomb Digital, 2A Augustus Terrace, Parnell. Phone 303 2878. Approved ‘preferred supplier’ to the University of Auckland.

## EDITORIAL AND PROOFREADING SERVICES:

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## ENGINEERING CHANGE

*Current engineering students, from left, Deeksha Vijayakumar, Lucy Chen and Natasha Mudaliar, with Professor Rosalind Archer.*

**Professor Rosalind Archer, head of department for the Faculty of Engineering Science, looks forward to a time when women in the engineering profession are no longer setting ‘firsts’.**

The Faculty of Engineering has set ourselves a bold goal; we want to see our new enrolment become at least 33% female by the year 2020. It is important to me that the cohort of engineering students we graduate looks like broader New Zealand society as much as possible. The gender diversity initiative is part of wider and ongoing work in the faculty to recruit and support students from diverse backgrounds as our overall enrolment numbers grow.

Engineers address problems of significant importance in modern society; developing solutions to address the provision of food, renewable energy, communication, health care, transport, among many. The world needs the best possible ideas to tackle these issues, so I believe the engineering workforce needs access to cognitive diversity.

In groups where each individual comes equipped with a unique mental toolbox based on their own background and experience, research has shown that the group will outperform a group of like-minded experts. The business and societal case for diversity in engineering is clear, so I’m happy to lead the faculty’s gender diversity initiative.

Our faculty has had a longstanding commitment to recruiting and retaining female students.

We have had a full-time member of our professional staff dedicated to supporting this since the late 1980s. Dr Naomi Fleming (who

holds a PhD in physics) is our current ‘Women in Engineering adviser’. She says she hopes to one day to be out of a job, because her role will no longer be necessary. “A day when approximately half of our student population is female, half of our academic staff are female, half of our HoDs are female, half of our technicians are female, and half of our administrative staff are male.”

Personally, I will be excited to see a time when women in the engineering profession are no longer setting ‘firsts’, such as my appointment as the faculty’s first female head of department.

I have tried to understand why my own career has taken a road ‘less travelled’ by women. Some of the research I’ve read on the stereotypes and pressures young women grow up with is eye opening.

An example is a recent study published in *Science* (Bian et al., 2017) which implies gendered notions of brilliance emerge by age six.

Are women deterred from studying engineering because they see engineering as an activity that values solo brilliance as opposed to high performing inclusive teams? Do young women relate the maths and physics study required to enter the degree to the societal impact engineering has? We’ve teamed up with Girlboss, a social enterprise led by Alexia Hilbertidou, an inspirational 18-year-old, to help share the message that engineering is a career pathway where one can truly help to create change in the world.

In my work (as a Professorial Chair currently sponsored by Mercury), the mathematical tools I build help understand geothermal reservoirs and support renewable energy production. New Zealand’s major geothermal generation

companies work in partnership with Māori groups, providing financial returns and business opportunities that enrich and empower those communities; so I can readily link mathematics and social change.

The Faculty of Engineering is also signing on to work with Engineering New Zealand (the professional body for the engineering profession). In collaboration with the NZ Institute of Architects, they are launching the ‘Diversity Agenda’, a campaign that sets an industry target – 20 percent more women in engineering and architecture roles by 2021. Women joining the profession in 2021 will typically have been among the over 250 women in the first year class I lectured a section of last year.

I want their road through an engineering career to be one where they are fully welcomed and included. I want them to have a range of role models of what an engineering career could look like for them. I’m proud to be one of those role models – having just been named as a Fellow of Engineering New Zealand.

If, like me, you want to see female engineering enrolment grow, I challenge you to think about the biases you may unconsciously hold and project. Do you see the innate knowledge of sound and frequency that a young woman with musical talent has as a foundation for study in signal processing? With an engineering degree that young woman could bring technology to life creating avatars, as one of our recent graduates does. Achieving 33% female enrolment in our faculty will be a challenge but I’m excited about the partnerships we’ve built so far, and about the change women can create in the world as engineers.