

Uni NEWS

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November 2020



NIKKI TURNER

Immunisation expert says we need to keep vigilant over other infectious diseases – not just Covid-19

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MĀORI ARCHITECT HOME

Professor Anthony Hoete has returned to New Zealand after three decades as an architect and educator overseas

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HELPING HIGH PERFORMERS

Toby Batchelor helps run a programme guiding students who are juggling study with elite performance

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SEEKING ROBIN HYDE

With overseas travel cancelled, Paula Morris followed in the local footsteps of the 1930s novelist, poet and journalist

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VACCINE VIDEO AND PODCAST

Vaccine experts from the University took part in a discussion about any future Covid-19 vaccine. The event was a collaboration with *Newsroom* and RNZ's *The Detail*. Presenter Emile Donovan talked to Associate Professor Helen Petousis-Harris, Professor John Fraser and Associate Professor Nikki Turner (feature page 6), about the process of developing a new vaccine. Professor Jim Metson, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) organised the discussion. Listen and watch at: tinyurl.com/YouTube-vaccine-panel



VELOCITY WINNERS

A software platform that can produce the perfect hospital staffing roster has won the 2020 Velocity \$100k Challenge. RosterLab, a healthcare-centric rostering service provider, uses artificial intelligence, nicknamed ROMEO (rostering machine and expert organiser) to build the ideal rosters for hospitals. Doctoral engineering science student Isaac Cleland, finance and economics student Daniel Ge and alumna Sunny Feng have been working on the system for three years. Full story: tinyurl.com/2020-Velocity-Winners



MOST EXCELLENT NEWS

In October, the University announced its awards for sustained excellence in teaching. They went to: Associate Professor Elizabeth Peterson (Psychology, Faculty of Science), Dr Kelsey Deane, (School of Counselling, Faculty of Education and Social Work) and Dr Brendon Dunphy (School of Biological Sciences, Faculty of Science). The early-career excellence in teaching awards went to Anna-Marie Fergusson (Department of Statistics, Faculty of Science) and Jayden Houghton (Faculty of Law, pictured).



SPRING 2020 INGENIO OUT NOW

The latest edition of the University's alumni publication *Ingenio* is out now, with an in-depth cover story on the cross-faculty research going on to address the challenges of climate change. We also look at the University's scientific response to Covid-19, meet some of the 40 alumni under 40 who are doing great things, and chat with Dr Hinemoa Elder about her book *Aroha*. If you are alumni not receiving *Ingenio* and you'd like to, update your details at: auckland.ac.nz/alumni-ingenio-update.



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 DESIGN: Stephen Wang
 PRODUCTION: The University of Auckland
 Volume 50/Issue 9/November 2020
 PUBLISHED BY: The University of Auckland
 Communications Office
 Alfred Nathan House, 24 Princes Street
 Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142
 Web: auckland.ac.nz/UniNews

When posted, *UniNews* is delivered in certified degradable EPI 'plastic'. It is printed on environmentally friendly stock in keeping with this University's sustainability goals.

TOBY BATCHELOR

Toby Batchelor is the University's high-performance support co-ordinator.

What does your job involve?

I'm a middleman between student athletes or performers and the University, and then also the students and their organising body, such as High Performance Sport New Zealand. I ensure that the necessary support structures and individual needs are met so these talented individuals can be the best athletes/performers and students possible. There is also a significant piece of work in developing the programme itself.

How do students get into the high-performance support programme?

There are certain eligibility criteria and an application process that involves verification of high-performance status from the students' sporting or performing arts national organisation. Then we meet with the students and run them through the support they'll get and tailor the programme to suit them.

How does the University help them?

The University is a member of the Athlete Friendly Tertiary Network and has a memorandum of understanding to support these athletes and performers with everything from flexibility over attendance and assessment to exam arrangements and well-being support. We've identified three pillars of support: the first is around enrolments, degree planning and day-to-day flexible study assistance. The second is supporting them performance-wise, be that in strength and conditioning or providing performance and rehearsal spaces. The third pillar is personal and career development.

So the programme isn't just for athletes?

No, a lot of people don't know it's for athletes and performers, so dancers and musicians and any performers can apply but at the moment only 14 out of the 197 come from the performing arts. There's no maximum number.

What kind of challenges do high-performance students face?

They need to balance two full-time commitments: their high-performance area and their university study, especially around the times of World Champs, Olympics etc. They might even have a job on top of that. Then there's training and potentially overseas travel. A lot of stresses can be put on them which can become overwhelming, so part of what we do is ensure



Toby Batchelor makes high performance easier for students juggling uni and sport or performing. Photo: Elise Manahan

they are looking after themselves. They're very driven usually, so they have goals in both areas.

What if a student has an exam/event clash?

We work closely with the examinations office to assist student athletes through the alternate exam application process so they can sit exams that clash with major competitions at different locations or at different times, or sometimes both.

Does this programme attract students to the University of Auckland?

Definitely. It makes being a high-performing student-athlete possible. With Covid, many have come back to study full-time or part-time, even from other unis. This year, many have made good starts on their degrees because Covid has interrupted their outside activities.

How are you developing the programme?

I am looking to form internal partnerships within the University to help students improve their performance and plan their long-term work future after their performing or sporting days end. One such partnership is with Career Development and Employability Services (CDES). Only around one percent will actually make professional sport their career, so we help them look at other related forms of employment.

Do athletes only study health and science?

No, it's varied. Our 2020 Sportsman of the Year Michael Brake (rowing) is studying engineering and 2020 Sportswoman of the year, Brianna Reynolds-Smith (sailing) is doing commerce. Ultimately students come to this University

because of the reputation of the degree, so they do expect things to be harder to balance, but also recognise having a University of Auckland degree will put them in good stead for the future.

What's the most unusual category for one of these high-performance students?

All up we represent 41 sports, including quite a few in minority sports, such as underwater hockey. But our most unusual is probably the magician. He performs internationally.

What sports do you take part in yourself?

These days it's just running. I'm competing in ultra-marathons just to see how far I can go. I find it really interesting to see what the body can do.

Where are you from?

The Catlins. I studied a Bachelor of Physical Education, Exercise and Sport Science, at Otago. I wanted to expand my horizons as I've spent a lot of time in the south so I ended up working in a clubs and support role at Unitec. When that contract ended, I took a job here as a sports co-ordinator, then my current role from the end of 2019.

What do you miss about the South?

I was on the West Coast recently and I think what I miss is the vastness and the sense you are quite a small person in a large world. Being in a large area near the mountains is kind of humbling.

Where should we visit this summer?

My hometown, The Catlins. It's a beautiful place. If you time it so the weather is right, which can be tough, it's magic.

GOOD TO KNOW

DECADE OF WOMEN SUPPORTING WOMEN

It would be reassuring to think that women no longer needed extra support in the workplace, and society generally, to achieve their goals.

However, statistics for the country's June quarter show that of the 11,000 New Zealanders who lost their jobs since the advent of the global pandemic, 90 percent were women. Clearly, there are still anomalies.

Which makes the ten-year anniversary of the Business School Women's Mentoring Programme just as relevant as when it was founded.

The programme was started in 2011 by Cecilia Tarrant, executive-in-residence at the Business School, and Susan Glasgow, then director of advancement at the Business School, with the support of Greg Whittred, the Dean at the time.



The 2020 group of mentees and mentors celebrate a decade of the Business School Women's Mentoring Programme. Photo: Richard Ng

The initiative began following requests from female business students for assistance to advance their careers.

Since then, up to 80 mentees each year have been matched with an appropriate and supportive female mentor. To date, 430 mentors

from more than 190 organisations have mentored 706 students.

The success of the programme has seen it extended to the Faculty of Law to assist female students successfully navigate their careers.

■ Read more: business.auckland.ac.nz/wmp

CAMPAIGN WINS SUPREME AWARD

The University of Auckland has taken out New Zealand's premier fundraising award for its Campaign for All Our Futures.

At the recent annual awards of the Fundraising Institute of NZ, the University won first place in the Best High Value category and then went on to be named supreme winner, receiving the 2020 Fundraising Excellence Award.

The judges described the fundraising effort as "an incredible campaign ... the amount achieved shows what is available in a small country when the right ask is made to the right people".

The judges also commented on the University's excellent levels of alumni engagement, which was critical to the campaign's success.

For All Our Futures was publicly launched in September 2016 with a goal of raising \$300 million to fund research, innovation and initiatives to support students. When it ended in October 2019, it had raised \$380 million. Funding came through more than 23,000 gifts from 7,000 donors.

"This success belongs to all of us – staff and former staff, alumni, individuals and organisations from New Zealand and around the world," says the director of Alumni Relations and Development (ARD), Mark Bentley. "Most importantly, we can be very proud that together, we've been able to make a significant impact on our communities, through supporting life-changing research and innovation, and by giving many deserving students opportunities they would otherwise not have had."

The judges spoke about the passion behind fundraising and the way successful campaigns engage with supporters' hearts as well as their minds. "For All Our Futures was always about putting the impact of giving at the centre, showing in tangible ways the meaningful and positive change that can be achieved with philanthropic support," says Mark.

A video from the 100-day countdown to the completion of the campaign (see tinyurl.com/CampaignImpacts) was shown at the awards, giving a few highlights of the achievements supported through the enormous fundraising effort including:

- 15 new cancer drugs developed to clinical trials
- 456 brains donated
- Trebling the number of donor-funded student scholarships
- Three satellites developed by Space Systems students
- 25 literary careers launched
- 100 teachers funded to end STEM-skill shortages
- 600 little blue penguins given a home

As well as taking out the top fundraising awards, the Alumni and Relations Development team came away with a third reason to celebrate.

Manager of Strategic Donor Relations, Ellie Gray, was honoured for her outstanding contribution to the fundraising sector over 24 years in the UK and New Zealand, and received a FINZ Fellowship.

"I was thrilled to receive a fellowship and to know that my contribution to FINZ was valued," says Ellie.

"It has motivated me to keep doing my best for our Fundraising Institute, with the University continuing to play its role."

The FINZ Awards took place at a hybrid live/virtual three-day conference in Auckland in October, which spanned Covid-19 Alert Levels 2.5 and One. One of the conference keynote speakers appeared on stage from the UK via hologram. The awards were presented on stage, in front of an in-person audience of 100 people and beamed out online as well.



From left: Associate Director of Development Mary Jane Boland, Alumni Relations and Development (ARD) communications manager Helen Borne, director of ARD, Mark Bentley and Strategic Donor Relations manager, Ellie Gray.

QUALITY MEASURES IN CANCER CARE

This time last year Professor John Windsor was feeling optimistic about the improvements in treatment for the aggressive disease that is pancreatic cancer.

He wrote a column to mark Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month in November highlighting the fact that effective new chemotherapy drug combinations, and a move away from a ‘surgery first’ thinking, are having a positive impact on pancreatic cancer outcomes.

Let’s not sugar-coat it. Pancreatic cancer is a notoriously hard-to-beat disease, largely because it can go undetected for so long. By the time a patient presents with symptoms, it’s often too late. But genomics research – showing different gene mutations related to pancreatic cancer – has detected sub-groups that have better outcomes when targeted with more effective chemotherapy drugs delivered as a first step in treatment.

John is Professor of Surgery in the Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences and director of the Surgical and Translational Research (STaR) Centre. A pancreatobiliary and gastro-oesophageal surgeon, he established the first HBP/Upper GI Unit in New Zealand. He is now national chair of the HBP/Upper GI tumour stream, and pancreatic cancer has been prioritised because of its low (five percent) overall survival rate.

“So while I spoke positively last year, there is room to improve the care of pancreatic cancer in New Zealand,” says John. “Te Aho o Te Kahu, the

Cancer Control Agency (CCA) was launched at the end of last year by the Government, and that’s one of the agency’s key focuses.”

John is leading the project with Te Aho focused on pancreatic cancer, to encourage improved and equitable outcomes. “This project is about defining Quality Performance Indicators (QPIs). We’re working out the key things to measure in terms of the patient experience and patient outcomes in the management of pancreatic cancer in New Zealand.”

The QPI measures have already been trialled to good effect with colorectal cancer. In a pilot study, the district health boards reported on the colorectal cancer QPIs revealing a number of issues needing investigation.

“What we learned with the QPIs for colorectal cancer is that there’s variation between the district health boards. One of the ways to improve cancer care is to ensure that no centres are lagging behind. There needs to be standardisation of care and treatment – that’s critically important. It’s as important as finding a new chemotherapy drug or developing a new operation.”

John says setting standards in cancer care, against which treatment providers are measured, is key to ensuring all patients receive the best treatment available. “No matter who or where they are in the country, patients need to have confidence that their care is being measured in a way that allows for continuous improvement. We



Professor John Windsor is an expert in pancreatic cancer.

also need to focus on Māori to ensure there’s equity in access and care. The QPIs will alert us to that.”

There will now be a wide consultation to feed into the pancreatic cancer QPI measures.

“That will include patients, relatives, non-government organisations, dietitians, palliative care staff, as well nurses and medical specialists.”

The QPI project has highlighted the incomplete and fragmented nature of our data collection systems and the need for significant investment in this area. “Clinicians have been telling the Ministry of Health this for some time. We need national data sets so we can see where we are deficient and to implement improvements for the future.”

■ Websites: starcentre.ac.nz; gutcancer.org.nz; tinyurl.com/health-te-aho-cancer

EAGLES SWOOP TO VICTORY

Paddlers in the Great Waka Ama Race on 17 October enjoyed near-perfect conditions for the event.

The annual race was this year described as the ‘Bay edition’ and held at the Hyundai Marine Sports Centre, heading off from Okahu Bay. Crews from six faculties and student associations paddled to St Heliers beach and back, with a pause at St Heliers to dig for a vital puzzle clue.

The Engineering Eagles came out the victors, followed by the FMHS Seabass and the Science Spartans in third. All participants were winners when it came to food though – there was hangi for everyone.

The event kicks off the start of the summer watersports season. The University offers sailing and stand-up paddleboard courses for staff and students.

■ See auckland.ac.nz/marine-sports for information about our watersports or auckland.ac.nz/waka-ama-UoA about the waka ama race.





Associate Professor Nikki Turner warns that while the vaccine emphasis is on Covid-19, it also needs to remain on other deadly diseases.

NIKKI TURNER: LET'S KEEP OUR EYES ON THE BALL

Immunisation expert Dr Nikki Turner says as we wait for a Covid-19 vaccine there are other diseases to keep in mind.

News that the Government has options to buy Covid-19 vaccines has raised hopes of a better 2021 than 2020.

The agreement is to purchase 1.5 million doses of one vaccine, once it has successfully completed clinical trials and been fully approved.

But is a Covid-19 vaccine the holy grail? Will life ever return to normal?

Dr Nikki Turner, director of the Immunisation Advisory Centre (IMAC) and Associate Professor in General Practice and Primary Healthcare at the University, says we need to keep our expectations of any return to normality in check.

"A vaccine is not the magic bullet people would love to have," she says. "Vaccines alone are not going to stop Covid-19 getting into the community.

"First, it depends how effective it is. No vaccine is 100 percent effective. A vaccine that is 60-80 percent effective would be fantastic but it still leaves a lot of people unprotected ... vaccines won't protect all people against the disease.

"Secondly, we won't know for a while whether the vaccine will actually stop the spread of the virus. Some vaccines have the ability to stop the transfer and some don't.

"Vaccines alone are not going to stop Covid-19 getting into the community."

– Associate Professor Nikki Turner, Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences

"The third problem is that even if we did have a vaccine that could stop the transfer, we're unlikely to get enough vaccine for the whole community when the first batch of vaccines arrive. It will likely be directed to high-risk populations and to frontline healthcare and border control personnel. So, it's personal protection in the first instance.

"When we do open the borders, the virus will still enter. A vaccine can mitigate spread, but not fully prevent the virus circulating."

Nikki says the key is to continue to actively monitor, through traditional public health measures and track and trace, just as we do with measles and other infectious diseases. "We've at least learned just how important it is to stay home when you're sick, and to wash your hands."

She says ultimately we'd hope to get degrees of herd immunity. "But if we think that we can instantly achieve herd immunity for all of the New Zealand population, well it's not going to happen.

"In the long term, the ideal is to have at least one effective vaccine, to have the disease not spreading and to have enough of the population immune. That would be great, but would still seem to be a way off."

She says what's likely next year is Covid-19 vaccines that have pretty good effectiveness as individual protection for high-risk groups, frontline healthcare professionals and other frontline staff.

While much attention has been on a Covid-19 vaccine, Nikki has been equally concerned about

a slip from the public mindset of the importance of other vaccines. Nikki, who is also a GP in Wellington, represents the RNZCGP (College of General Practitioners) in child health interests and is a health spokesperson for the Child Poverty Action Group. She was a member of the World Health Organisation (WHO) Strategic Advisory Group of Experts (SAGE) on immunisation and chair of the measles and rubella elimination sub-committee until the end of 2019. She is chair of the NZ measles verification committee and an adviser to the Ministry of Health and Pharmac on New Zealand's national schedule of vaccines.

"Let's not lose sight of the immunisation programme we have and the importance of that programme for infants, children and adults. There are really scary signs of immunisation programmes falling apart around the world with the stress over Covid. It's so important not to let our gains slip."

She says the Child Poverty Action Group is very worried about the rise in issues of inequity.

"My concerns are for young infants, kids not getting their vaccines on time, especially from communities of high deprivation, particularly Māori and Pacific whānau and also refugees and migrants. We need to recognise the importance of looking after those who are struggling the most in our world. We need to make sure they receive vaccines for preventable diseases.

"I'm particularly interested in hearing the stories of those who may be missing out."

Recently, the tragedy of under-immunisation took a deadly toll in Samoa. The 2019 outbreak began in September and by January 2020, 83 had died, mostly children. The cause of the outbreak was low vaccination rates, which went from 74 percent in 2017 to 34 percent in 2018. That was largely attributed to mistrust in health authorities after an error in the administration of a vaccine caused the death of two babies.

“What happened in Samoa was a tragedy, but internationally there have been other big measles outbreaks,” says Nikki. “The WHO has been warning about the situation since 2017. There’s a serious concern that we may end up having bigger problems with children dying from measles, and the damage from measles, than Covid.”

Nikki says she’s concerned not just for Samoa but for all of the Pacific, New Zealand included.

“We need to make sure the measles coverage rate is up and we sustain high coverage rates. You don’t need to take your eye off the ball much for childhood infectious diseases to return.”

But there have been other diseases that have dramatically reduced in New Zealand this year.

“We have had hardly any ‘flu and hardly any respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) that causes wheezy bronchitis in babies,” says Nikki.

“They are two big, nasty respiratory illnesses and we had a more than 95 percent reduction

of those this winter. If you talk to any of the paediatric registrars in the hospitals, they were really quiet, as were general

practices because of this reduction in childhood respiratory cases.”

She says colds from rhinovirus were still around because “they’re robust little buggers” but also much-reduced thanks to social distancing, washing hands and not taking bugs to work.

“That, alongside high ‘flu vaccination rates, resulted in a dramatic reduction in respiratory illnesses and overall deaths here. Accident rates were lower too, with the lockdown.

“It’s a matter of getting the balance right when returning to mixing and mingling. I think people got used to ‘flu and RSV in the community and they didn’t realise how much damage it actually causes each winter. It makes a huge difference if we stay at home when sick.”

Looking to the future and the expected arrival of a Covid-19 vaccine, she says we need to prepare ourselves emotionally, physically and strategically.

“It’s important for public health officials, and politicians for that matter, not to over-promise or under-promise; just to communicate clearly what the gains and limitations of a vaccine would be.”

She says people shouldn’t make statements without knowledge of how a vaccine is created and delivered effectively and safely. “You can’t

just say, ‘oh, we need a vaccine to solve all our problems. Let’s just bring it in’.

“If you don’t walk through community-appropriate concerns at all levels, such as with vaccine safety, the community will appropriately say, ‘I won’t have this vaccine’. I, personally, wouldn’t trust just any vaccine. It needs to have been peer-reviewed with published data to reassure me.”

The race to develop a Covid-19 vaccine has sparked some concerns over safety, but Nikki says what appears to be an expedited process is no less rigorous. “Science has come a huge long way in the past few years. We learned a lot, most recently with Ebola vaccines.

“There are several reasons we can potentially create this vaccine in less than the traditional 15-20 years it may normally take. The first reason is we have a basic understanding of coronaviruses and early vaccine research from SARS and MERS which are a similar sort of coronavirus, so we already had the platform.

“The next thing is this is a huge international emergency and there’s a lot of money going into it on many different levels. What the world is now trying to do is not speed up the steps, but to run the steps consecutively. So, for people worried we are speeding everything up, that’s not the case.

“You don’t need to take your eye off the ball much for childhood infectious diseases to return.” – Dr Nikki Turner

Things are just being done alongside each other.”

She says traditionally there are phases one, two and three studies and, after you release the vaccine into the community, phase four.

“Now, what they’re doing is running animal studies in phase one and two alongside each other and then as soon as early studies suggest the vaccine looks safe and has some effectiveness, you go straight into the large phase-three trials.”

She says the bottleneck is likely to come after phase-three trials. “That’s the manufacturing of the vaccine. But the other amazing thing the world is doing is taking a risk and saying ‘will this type of vaccine work? I think so, so we’ll need a large, extremely expensive manufacturing plant’. They are actually developing manufacturing plants before they know for sure if the vaccines will work.”

Some will lose money on that gamble, but the benefit is that you don’t have a delay at that end of the trial process.

“Once you know your phase-three trials are working, you apply for a licence and then you manufacture. That’s what I mean when I say all this is running in parallel. They’re not speeding up the regulatory authorities’ processes. They’re certainly not dropping any safety steps.”

There is of course the anti-vax brigade, and Nikki has thought about the possible psychology of its members. “The issue with conspiracy theories, and people’s anti-vaccination fears, is whether you trust the health authorities and the science behind how you offer public health in a country. New Zealand has done really well on that level, but what we’re seeing internationally, and dare I mention the disaster in the United States, is that if politics gets in the way, science doesn’t feel safe. It feels like it’s been interfered with.

“So, it’s no surprise that you get a rise in conspiracy theories and paranoia. Unfortunately, social media allows a very loud voice to what is still a minority and it creates a lot of dissonance.”

She says even though New Zealand is doing well with its public health communication, we are part of an international community. “There are dissonant voices out there, it makes us nervous and it certainly accentuates the anti-science voice. It’s a very challenging environment.”

She says the introduction of any Covid-19 vaccine would need to involve a transparent system, well-communicated to the public.

“The only reason we maintain high immunisation coverage is because the system works effectively and the community is confident in it. We don’t diminish people’s concerns, we address them.”

As New Zealand looks towards a future in which the borders might be open to certain parts of the world, Nikki says there’s much to think about and

assess as to how we keep as many people as we can safe, but also protect the economy.

“We can’t maintain really tightly locked-down borders and wait for vaccines forever. Hopefully there will also be medication available that mitigates the effects of Covid – that would help.

“We need an ongoing conversation about what the next type of protection would look like. What would track and tracing look like and how can we try and prevent Covid’s spread? These are really difficult decisions and there’s no simple answer.

“If we suddenly allowed it in the community, our hospitals would take a huge hit and people would die or get severely ill. Ethically we’re not prepared to do that or to try for herd immunity by just letting it rock through the community. I don’t believe New Zealand would tolerate or want that.

“Recently we’ve seen community transmission in Auckland, and we will probably see community transmission in the future. What we need to do is minimise it so it has as little effect as possible on New Zealanders’ health, while also recognising we are part of an international community and we will need to have our borders open to some extent.”

■ Denise Montgomery

See also: tinyurl.com/YouTube-vaccine-panel



Associate Professor Paula Morris, director of the Master of Creative Writing Programme, has a non-fiction book out on the work of Robin Hyde.

PAULA MORRIS: IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF ROBIN HYDE

Paula Morris has steeped herself in local places that were special to one of our finest writers, Robin Hyde.

Searching for silver linings is a reasonably common endeavour in 2020.

Associate Professor Paula Morris's silver lining has been having the operation on her leg she'd been putting off because of the travel she'd planned this year. So, not silver really, more of an essential element.

"I've had surgery to fix various problems with my foot and that's included breaking a few bones and also repairing my tendons," she says.

Paula, director of the University's Master of Creative Writing Programme in the Faculty of Arts, was in a cast for eight weeks, then a moonboot. She moved around with a foot scooter and a hauling technique for stairs, the indignity of which is familiar to those who've endured such injuries.

Much less painful has been the chance to dedicate serious writing time to work on a collaborative book, *Shining Land*, out this month. It's the second in the kōrero series of 'picture books for grown-ups', edited by Lloyd Jones and showcasing collaborations between leading New Zealand writers and artists. Paula was paired with landscape photographer Haru Sameshima to explore locations of significance in the problematic life of New Zealand journalist, poet, fiction writer and war correspondent Robin Hyde.

Paula (Ngāti Wai, Ngāti Manuhiri, Ngāti Whātua) is speaking from the one-bedroom Auckland apartment in which she's spent much of the year thanks to lockdowns. It's a surreal scenario far removed from the serenity and freedom of Menton in southern France, where she spent half of 2019 as the Arts Foundation's Katherine Mansfield Menton Fellow. She was supposed to go to Menton again this year for a 50th-anniversary celebration of the Fellowship. But, Covid.

"Originally I wasn't going to be able to have the leg operation before November, because I had so much travel planned, including six weeks in North America and Europe and a residency in China."

With that cancelled, Paula and husband Tom Moody travelled around New Zealand before the first lockdown, visiting regions and landmarks important to Robin Hyde. Locations included Whanganui, Rotorua and a place Paula hadn't visited before, Whangaroa Harbour.

Haru, a prominent landscape photographer who emigrated to New Zealand in 1973 and has a Master of Fine Arts from Elam, did not know Hyde's work but immersed himself in biographies. He embarked on his own trip, separate to Paula, to capture photos of the key places special to Hyde, including Hanmer Springs.

Once back in her apartment, Paula was forced to focus on getting the book written.

"If Covid-19 hadn't happened, I would have got the work done in Europe, but the whole process would have taken longer and been less intense. I would have interrupted it to take up an invitation to Banff in Canada, for example. Instead, I worked on it for hours and hours at a desk in the bedroom.

"So, I didn't get to do the work overseas as I thought I'd do, but I've done different work here at home, with access to my books. I have to look at the positives."

That's not to downplay the challenges of long lockdowns and then not being mobile because of

her leg. Travel and writing retreats have been a big part of Paula's life.

She takes a sip from a cup emblazoned with the word Latvia, the closest she's going to get to one of her favourite places for a while. "I absolutely love Latvia. Tom and I were supposed to be going there too, in June. I've had two residencies in Ventspils and it's a really productive place.

"I find travel enormously stimulating and it's often a way of escaping everything I have to do at home ... boards and committees and organisations and request to do things," she says.

"They're all an important part of my life but when I am away, I can be someone else, I can just be a writer. Which is, after all, my core identity."

It was also Robin Hyde's core identity. Hyde's best-known work is her novel *The Godwits Fly* but the book that recently made an impression on Paula was *Passport to Hell*, an encounter of life in the trenches in World War One.

"When I was asked to write this book by Lloyd, *The Godwits Fly* was the main work I knew. It was sort of reclaimed as a feminist classic in the eighties. I wasn't really aware of her other work and how significant *Passport to Hell* was."

In an all-too-common example of not many degrees of separation, Paula now lives in Greys Avenue in the city, where Hyde, a journalist by occupation, spent much of her time in the 1930s, conducting interviews for *Passport to Hell*.

It wasn't the only physical connection she felt with Hyde, who was born Iris Wilkinson in South Africa in 1906 but who moved with her parents to Wellington before she'd turned one.

"I had read her biography and also read and reviewed, for *Landfall*, *Your Unselfish Kindness*, a collection of Hyde's personal writing and memoir fragments. I'd always been interested in her because she spent so much time in the building she called Grey Lodge, part of the old Avondale Hospital complex, now the Unitec campus."

The Lodge in which Hyde lived on and off for four years was a ward in an Edwardian house on Gladstone Road that housed women residents all suffering from 'nervous disorders'.

"It's around the corner from my sister's house, so I'd passed it many times. I always thought, 'that's where Robin Hyde lived. She wrote most of the drafts of *The Godwits Fly* in that building'."

When Haru joined her on the project, "we read everything and became quite obsessive".

"It was a crash course for Haru, but one he embraced. He bought every book he could find and became really interested in her work and life."

Paula and Haru got permission to visit Grey Lodge and photograph the attic where Hyde worked on her books.

Hyde's life had been challenging. By the time she'd died, aged 33, she had delivered two babies in secret, one of whom was stillborn, worked at numerous newspapers, reported from the frontline in China, and spent time in psychiatric institutions. She had also written prolifically, challenging writing conventions of the time and the hypocrisies of the era in which she lived. She was scraping together a living to contribute to the care of her son, Derek Challis, who was in foster care. Derek, still alive today, is the co-author of a landmark biography of his mother, called *The Book of Iris: A Life of Robin Hyde* (Auckland University Press, 2002).

"I think Robin got really overtired," says Paula. "She would work and work, she was super industrious. She was writing books, she was researching, editing, trying to support herself, trying to get money for Derek. It was perhaps inevitable she would collapse in some way.

"When I was studying her life, including her fateful trip to China on her way to the UK, where she ended up getting drawn into war reporting, I realised how hard it must have been for her.

"This was a woman who walked with a severe limp and needed a walking stick. Yet she was climbing hills and reporting from the front line. She got viciously beaten, she injured herself, she got sick and she was captured by the Japanese."

After Hyde's escape from the mainland, she spent time in hospitals in Hong Kong and London.

"She was physically debilitated," says Paula. "What she actually witnessed in war gave her what we would now call post-traumatic stress disorder."

Travelling around New Zealand but not being able to see many of the physical structures that were significant to Hyde's life meant Paula drew on some of her own creative talents.

"I found it enormously stimulating and productive. We couldn't travel to faraway places this year, so we travelled imaginatively into the past. Often you go to a place and there are very few relics of buildings still standing that you're interested in. If you go to Whangaroa Harbour,

"When I am away ... I can just be a writer. Which is, after all, my core identity." – Associate Professor Paula Morris

you're not going to find the little shack she stayed in. You're piecing together clues, but you can never fully really recreate what's lost."

Another assignment Paula found stimulating emerged as a result of Level Four Lockdown. Paula hosted the first online-only series of the Auckland Writers' Festival. It ran for 13 weeks at 9am each Sunday and featured live interviews with 23 international and 17 local writers.

"That was massive. It consumed us for three months. Tom did the research and I couldn't have done it without his help. Luckily, I'm a quick reader, so I'd be reading the books and he'd be compiling the bios and other research materials.

"I've become fast at reading because of all the students' manuscripts I read and the book reviews I write – I have to be quick and very focused, but also thorough."

She also needs time to work on her own writing – she's an award-winning author of four novels, three books of non-fiction, four young adult books under her own name and the many she ghost-writes, as well as many essays and collections of short stories. In 2019 she was made a Member of the NZ Order of Merit for services to literature.

She's not full-time at the University and the ghost-writing is largely driven by being paid work.

"I'm not going to make a living from a speaking tour of New Zealand or appearing in festivals anytime soon. But I can make a reasonable amount for ghost-writing projects."

She won praise for her interviewing techniques for the Auckland Writers' Festival and wouldn't mind if her talents there led to similar work.

"We got good feedback and terrific viewer numbers, including lots of people overseas, which was great, but whether it leads to anything else, I'm not sure. I hope so."

Not that she has a lot of time. Paula sits on a number of literature-related boards, including the Māori Literature Trust, the NZ Book Awards Trust, the Mātātuhi Foundation and the Coalition for Books. In 2016 she set up the Academy of New Zealand Literature, Te Whare Mātātuhi o Aotearoa, an initiative to promote the work of 120 accomplished contemporary New Zealand writers. The website includes in-depth features, interviews, book reviews and extracts.

After decades living overseas, Paula returned to her alma mater in 2015 to become the director of the Master of Creative Writing (MCW) programme. In the past few years, the MCW has produced an extraordinary crop of new published writers. Among the authors she interviewed for the festival were two of her students, Amy McDaid and Caroline Barron, who both had

books published recently. Others to publish in the past two years include P.J. McKay, Rose Carlyle, Rosetta Allan and Ruby Porter, now doing her PhD and tutoring undergraduate creative writers. All have appeared on bestseller lists.

So what's her secret to getting writers ready to publish? "I give really to-the-point, blunt and thorough criticism," she says. "It's why some undergraduates don't like me. With masters students, I do warn them. We send a lot of information to anyone who applies and I tell them to talk to previous students who've done the programme so they know what they are getting into. It's not a touchy-feely feel-good class.

"We have a huge focus on art and craft in our seminars and workshops every week concentrating on aspects of technique."

She also offers professional development for MCW alumni, covering the editing and publishing process. One of her own current editing projects is an anthology, with poet and novelist Alison Wong, of 75 emerging Asian New Zealand Writers. It's the first-ever anthology of Asian writing in New Zealand and is due out next April through Auckland University Press.

"We've worked on it for a year and it's been massive. It wasn't supposed to be 75 writers, originally we thought maybe 30 or 40," says Paula. "But we had a lot of really great material to work with – poetry, fiction and creative non-fiction."

Looking to the future, Paula's collaboration with Haru has made her think she'd like to work with him again. Lloyd Jones selects all the pairings in the kōrero series – the first was Lloyd himself and artist Euan Macleod who produced *High Wire*, and others forthcoming will include writers Bill Manhire and alumna Courtney Sina Meredith.

"This has been really good for me. Haru and I have talked about working together again, on a book in China about Robin Hyde's experience during the war there. Hopefully one day we can do that, if things ever change."

■ Denise Montgomery



Shining Land, \$45, hardback, Massey University Press, released on 12 November.

Links:

paula-morris.com
anzliterature.com

Watch the interviews from the 2020 Auckland Writers Festival online at: tinyurl.com/AWW-Winter-2020

“I’m interested in Māori or Indigenous housing projects, in particular how we might unlock Māori land to create affordable housing.”

– Anthony Hoete, Professor of Architecture (Māori)

Professor Anthony Hoete says work needs to be done on the economic model for housing on Māori land. Photo: Elise Manahan

ANTHONY HOETE: TIME TO TALK ABOUT HOUSING

Not long after Professor Anthony Hoete returned home to New Zealand after more than three decades of overseas experience, he hit the road again.

For Anthony, now Professor of Architecture (Māori) in the Faculty of Creative Arts and Industries, a trip around the country was the perfect way to reconnect with his homeland.

Anthony was one of four judges in the Te Kāhui Whaihanga New Zealand Institute of Architecture (NZIA) Awards and the travel from Wanaka to Whangārei was a welcome taste of sight-seeing freedom after the two-week stint in isolation.

“It was a great ‘welcome mat’ to New Zealand,” says Anthony. “I was asked to be the international judge for the awards even though I’ve moved back.”

Given the circumstances at the border, it made sense for the NZIA.

Lynda Simmons from the School of Architecture and Planning was another of the judges, as well as alumni Fiona Short and Michael Thomson.

“We saw 45 projects around the country,” Anthony says. “It was ideal for me to get back in touch with architecture here. When I’ve been back home previously it was always for work or a fleeting time catching up with people and family, so this was a great opportunity.”

The judges travelled around 2,000km, taking in the architectural offerings in the likes of Whangārei, Auckland, Queenstown, Ashburton, Wellington, Whanganui, Napier and Gisborne – including universities, schools, a cultural centre, a fale, an airport terminal and a cricket pavilion,

as well as more than 20 residential projects. The winners were announced on 4 November.

Anthony has returned to the School of Architecture from where he’d graduated in 1990 with honours. He also studied at the School of Engineering (Civil), has a masters in architecture from University College London (UCL) and a PhD from RMIT. He has taught at UCL’s Bartlett Faculty of the Built Environment and the Architectural Association, both top architecture schools. Since 2013, he has been an honorary senior research scholar at UCL, specialising in ‘future heritage’.

The Kawerau College old boy is also an award-winning architect who set up WHAT_architecture in the UK in 2002 and a spin-off development company, Game of Architecture.

While in London, Anthony worked with the UK National Heritage Trust and Heritage New Zealand to secure the future of the Hinemihi meeting house in the UK. The whareniū’s original home was in Te Wairoa, where it sheltered survivors of the 1886 Mount Tarawera eruption but had been taken to Clandon, Surrey, in 1892. It will be returned to New Zealand and a new pan-iwi whare built in the UK.

Aside from the opportunity to research a subject close to his heart, Anthony says his Māori heritage called him home. He’s Ngāti Awa, Te Patuwai hapū, from Motiti Island near Tauranga.

“What drew me back was partly personal – to give my 16-year-old son, Māui Pehiamu O Patuwai Roger, a sense of Polynesia, of the South Pacific and his heritage. It’s quite different from his education in the London borough of Hackney!”

Maui isn’t so sure about it but will head here later in the year, hopefully with the family dog, although getting a flight to take the dog has been a challenge. Anthony is missing them both. He set up an Instagram account in his dog’s name @thebarkitect, documenting a number of the entries in the NZIA awards and “acting as a kind of

avatar for me actually not getting too involved in architectural comment”.

He says the other reason for returning home was academic. “It’s the opportunity to undertake some research into activities which are probably not viable while running a practice. I’m interested in Māori or Indigenous housing projects, in particular how we might unlock Māori land to create affordable housing.”

He is using his tūrangawaewae, Motiti Island, as a case study. “The land has been bequeathed through succession, but it’s all locked up and is doing nothing. It’s been lost in time.”

He says work needs to be done on the economic model for housing on Māori land.

“That’s not just about architecture; it could be about partnering with conveyancing groups and assessing anthropological aspects to the land too.”

He says a recent visit to an Auckland marae sparked an idea in him for affordable housing more generally.

“We often hear that as people get older, they want to scale down their living arrangements ... but actually, there’s a model, that’s basically like having all your mates around you.

“You could live in larger numbers ... not really have individual houses but have kind of clustered rooms in a big area. That kind of model might appeal. I reckon older people might quite like living like students.”

He says him becoming a Professor of Architecture (Māori) shows how far things have come ... far enough for him to coin a descriptor for part of his research, Ngārchitecture.

“When I last lived here the perception of Māori architecture was some grass huts and carvings. But in 30 years there’s been a big shift. It’s come at such a good time for me to contribute some ideas to the conversation.”

■ Denise Montgomery

FRESH WIN FOR YOUNG ARCHITECT

Abdallah Alayan, who recently won a Blues Award, has now been recognised nationally.

The 2019 masters graduate of the School of Architecture and Planning won the Student Award at the 2020 New Zealand Architecture Interior Awards in October. Abdallah received his award for *Faith in Fiordland*, a research project exploring the future of spiritual architecture in an increasingly agnostic society.

His creation was set on a trail in southern Fiordland and is, in part, a deeply personal response to the Christchurch terror attack that killed 51 Muslim worshippers, including Abdallah's brother. It has led to him exploring the potential of architecture to draw attention to and articulate what we have in common rather than what divides us. In an increasingly secular society, he says, the spirit is not often seen as deserving architectural importance. It should be.

"The loss of my brother that Friday made it clear to me that focusing on what unites us isn't just necessary, it's urgent. With that in

mind, I made it my task to generate spaces that articulate the many things our bodies and spirits share in common."

Abdallah has returned to live in Christchurch to take up a full-time role working for IKON Architects, whom he'd worked for part-time while studying at Auckland.

"I feel extremely fortunate to have started working early, as that real-world experience fed my studies at university and made for a smooth transition into work. It's a privilege to be in practice, especially after the industry closing many of its doors for young people during these uncertain times."

■ Read more: tinyurl.com/Architecture-Now-Alayan



WHAT'S ON

James Cameron: event for Arts

To mark the 20-year anniversary of Film and Screen Production, filmmaker James Cameron will be interviewed by distinguished alumna Roseanne Liang live online. For students and alumni of the Faculty of Arts. **Sunday 29 November, 11am**

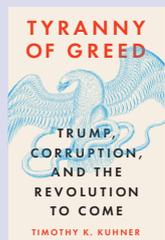
Spring Week: public lecture series

Spring Week runs 23-27 November. Speakers include Associate Professor Bruce Cohen (mental health), Associate Professor Jay Marlowe (refugees and social media) and Associate Professor Siouxsie Wiles. See publicprogrammes.ac.nz/events/spring-week/

Inaugural lecture: Professor Karen Waldie Genes, brains and neurodiversity

When: Tuesday 24 November, 6pm
Where: Lecture Theatre 401, Bldg 401
Register: karenwaldie.eventbrite.co.nz

BOOKS



Tyranny of Greed: Trump, Corruption, and the Revolution to Come

Associate Professor Tim Kuhner (Law) critiques Donald Trump's rise to US president from the perspective of the religious and revolutionary awakenings that

produced democracy. He reveals the US to be a government by and for the wealthy, with Trump, the spirit of infinite greed, at its helm.

Timothy Kuhner, Stanford University Press, \$30

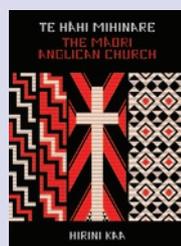


Addressed to Greta

Fiona Sussman graduated with a medical degree from Auckland in 1993 but the former GP has since won a number of writing awards, including the 2017 Ngaio Marsh Award for her

second novel *The Last Time We Spoke*. She was also shortlisted for the 2020 Commonwealth Short Story Prize. This, her third novel, is about socially anxious and reluctant adventurer Greta Jellings. Thanks to a bequest from a friend, Greta heads off to various places around the globe with each destination revealed in a series of letters.

Fiona Sussman, Bateman Books, \$35, released 6 November



Te Hahi Mihinare: The Maori Anglican Church

Historian and Anglican minister Dr Hirini Kaa (Faculty of Arts) explores the emergence of Te Hahi Mihinare – the Māori Anglican Church.

Anglicanism was brought to New Zealand by English missionaries in 1814.

Hirini Kaa, Bridget Williams Books, \$50, released 9 November

Horrible Happenings: Ghouls that Go Bump in the Night and Miss Hardbootham's Cure

Two former staff members, Claudia Pond-Eyley and Michael Neill, have collaborated to produce two children's books for the Christmas market.

Claudia taught drawing for many years at the School of Architecture and Michael was a member of the English Department, 1967-2012. Claudia began work as an illustrator of children's books in 1995 after doing a Summer School course. She now has five books to her name.

Michael, a prominent Shakespearean, says children's books are a relatively new enterprise for him. "I now find my brain awash with seemingly endless doggerels – which I fear could be a foretaste of dementia," he says.

Working with another former colleague, Kay Davenport (a medievalist scholar, who has also written and illustrated several children's books),



he published *Macdonald the Tiger* (the story of a burger-loving child-eater) in 2018, and its sequel *Kentucky Kate* (in which Macdonald's fried-chicken addicted sister becomes a vegan) in 2019.

Claudia's work as an illustrator is inspired partly by the pictures in the books she read as a child, including *Little Red Riding Hood*. But her fondness for this bloodthirsty tale is more than matched by Michael's love for *Cautionary Tales for Children* by Hilaire Belloc and *Struwwelpeter* by Heinrich Hoffman. "As a child, I relished the passing thrill of such stories – somehow knowing that nothing that rhymed could really be frightening."

The two new books are very much in this tradition: *Miss Hardbootham* is the tale of a sadistic schoolmistress who is taught better ways by the girls she bullies. *Horrible Happenings* draws on Michael's memories of the monsters that once lived under his, and his own children's, beds.

"These books may seem scary," says Michael, "but they will make your children brave!"

The books can be bought on Amazon for \$7.50.



“There are reasons we don’t want to eradicate all invasive predators or prioritise all native species equally.”

Dr Emily Parke says there are problems with terms such as ‘native’, ‘non-native’ and ‘invasive’. Photo: Elise Manahan

STOP WORRYING ABOUT INVASIVE PREDATORS

Now that I have your attention: this article is not about how invasive species are actually our friends.

Rather, it is an invitation to think harder about the terminology and guiding concepts we use in conservation. There is overwhelming support for conservation movements in Aotearoa, notably Predator Free New Zealand and local predator-free efforts. We often frame their mission in terms of eradicating invasive predators to protect native species. But there are problems with terms such as ‘native’, ‘non-native’ and ‘invasive’. Their meaning is variable and debated in conservation biology. Depending on who you ask, ‘native’ can refer to:

- a species local to some country or continent
- a species occupying its natural range (‘natural’, itself, being a controversial concept)
- a species that arrived in a location after some arbitrarily specified point in time, or
- a species that arrived in a location on its own, without human intervention, at any time.

Similarly, definitions of ‘invasive’ species vary. They are characterised as non-native, so any ambiguities in what counts as native carry through to the definition. They are also defined as species that spread in a given environment, or negatively affect that environment’s biodiversity, or both. But here, too, there are questions: How much does a species have to spread before it is considered invasive? What is the threshold for negative impact, and who decides?

Despite these debates and ambiguities, conservation discussions rely on the notions of ‘native species’ versus ‘invasive predators’ to

communicate what we value versus what we want to get rid of. But these categories are too blunt an instrument for this purpose. Framing our mission in terms of getting rid of invasive predators, full stop, is misleading. For example, some would consider our pet dogs and cats (or, contentiously, even humans) to count as invasive predators.

Similarly, we’re not interested in protecting all native species equally. The overwhelming bulk of national conservation effort focuses on birds such as kiwi and kākāpō; not so much on tadpole shrimp or caddisflies, some of which are also endangered.

There are reasons we don’t want to eradicate all invasive predators or prioritise all native species equally. These get buried when we frame our conservation aims in terms of ‘invasive versus native’. What happens when we put these terms aside and more carefully articulate the values underlying our reasons?

For example, instead of relying on the broad ‘invasive predator’ label, we could ask more finely grained questions: what role did humans play in this species’ arrival and establishment here? What responsibilities do we hold in light of that role? How much has the species spread? How much impact has it had, on what, and in what ways? Do we value this species? Why, and in what ways?

Equally, we could set aside the ‘native’ label and ask some other questions about the species we prioritise. Why, and in what ways, do we value these species – in themselves, and relative to other species? Do we have a sense of what things were like – accessible through collective memory and other records – when the species we now see declining flourished in this same place? What responsibilities do we hold regarding that decline?

By focusing on these sorts of questions, we can set aside the coarsely grained typological labels and address the objects of our conservation

efforts at a level we really care about: species or populations. This helps draw out important nuances. For example, domestic cats and possums are both predators which are here because of humans. Kākāpō and caddisflies are both endangered. But many people value domestic cats more highly than possums, and kākāpō more than caddisflies. The kiore (Polynesian rat) is a target of eradication efforts but it is valued by some Māori for cultural and historical reasons as a species that Polynesian ancestors brought with them to Aotearoa and as an indicator of ecosystem health.

These sorts of nuances get glossed over when we frame the agenda around eradicating invasive predators to save native species. This talk suggests we can lump species into two objective types and that our agenda is to protect all members of one type and get rid of another type. This is misleading. The truth is that conservation efforts in Aotearoa prioritise protecting a specific list of taonga species from harm inflicted by a specific list of mammalian species. There is plenty more to say about who is on which list, and why.

This is more than just a quibble about terminology. It is a call to more explicitly draw out and acknowledge the subtleties, points of consensus, as well as points of divergence in views about where to direct our conservation efforts, and why. Some mission statements and other portrayals of our ‘predator-free’ agendas already do this; others could do better. Doing so would be conducive to more honest communication about our values and priorities – not only among ourselves, but as participants in a global debate about conservation.

■ Dr Emily Parke is a senior lecturer in philosophy whose research includes the philosophy of biology. She acknowledges the BioHeritage Bioethics Panel whose work is the basis for parts of this article.