

Uni NEWS

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May 2022



BILLIE LYTHBERG'S CONNECTING WORLDS

From art to anthropology to business

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PACIFIC PLACES

Opportunity to have an impact on housing in Aotearoa, through Pacific creativity, brings architect Charmaine 'Ilaīū Talei home

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CYCLING DEATHS AVOIDABLE

Tim Welch says lack of infrastructure for cycling guarantees deaths will keep occurring, but there's a safer way

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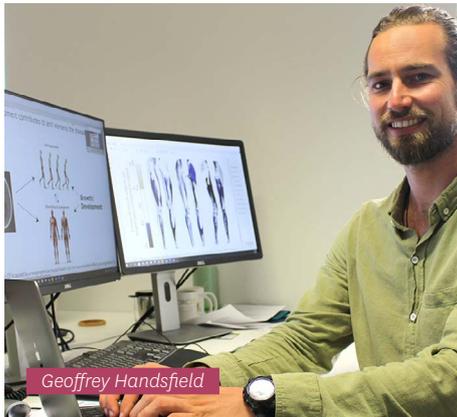


ALL THE CARE IN THE WORLD

The pandemic has highlighted a nursing shortage. Natalie Anderson wants more graduates, but they need support

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Just a few of the University of Auckland staff and student achievements in the media recently. Email: uninews@auckland.ac.nz



Geoffrey Handsfield

PERSONALISED TREATMENTS

Dr Geoffrey Handsfield (ABI) featured in the *Gisborne Herald* and on BfM's *Ready Steady Learn*, about his research into cerebral palsy. The condition is caused by a lesion in the central nervous system and no two people with the disorder are the same. Geoffrey, in collaboration with Mātai Medical Research Institute in Gisborne, is using advanced MRI technology to better understand muscle growth and degeneration at an individual level, which he hopes will ultimately lead to tailored physiotherapy and orthopaedic surgery for people with the disorder.

Links: tinyurl.com/Geoff-Gisborne-Herald and tinyurl.com/Geoff-BFM



Patrick Thomsen

LANDMARK RAINBOW PROJECT

Seuta'afili Dr Patrick Thomsen, senior lecturer in Cultures, Languages and Linguistics, talked to *Stuff* and other media about the Manalagi Project, the first Pacific Rainbow communities research project in New Zealand. The research interviews will also become a six-part series for *Tagata Pasifika*. Patrick says Pacific rainbow communities are "multiply marginalised", and poorly served when it comes to research.

Links: tinyurl.com/Rainbow-Pacific and tinyurl.com/YouTube-Patrick



Julie Spray

COVID RESEARCH IN COMICS

Dr Julie Spray (Population Health) talked to RNZ's *Afternoons* with Jesse Mulligan, about her study with Auckland children aged between 7 and 11, called *The Pandemic Generation*. She told Jesse she decided to use drawing, commonly used in child psychology. "I drew comics with them, either they drew or I drew them under their direction, or we drew them together."

Link: tinyurl.com/RNZ-Julie-Spray



Vickie Shim

RUGBY CONCUSSION STUDY

Dr Vickie Shim (ABI) talked to Lynn Freeman on RNZ's *Nine to Noon*, about the study she is doing with Mātai, Gisborne's Medical Research Institute, into the effects of concussion. The study involves the support of rugby players from Gisborne High School and gathered data, through advanced MRI technology, bespoke mouthguards, eye-testing and saliva testing.

Link: tinyurl.com/RNZ-Vickie-Shim

KOREA TYPE IMPASSE PREDICTED

Approaching the war in Ukraine from a geopolitical perspective, Associate Professor Stephen Hoadley (Arts) spoke to numerous media outlets including *1 News Tonight*, *RNZ Checkpoint*, *NewsHub* and the *Pacific Media Network*. He explored the issue of Russian propaganda and war crimes and how perpetrators including President Putin could be held accountable by national and international courts. He predicts a divided Ukraine and ongoing low-level conflict after the battle lines stabilise, much like North and South Korea.

Interview from 3:39 at: library.auckland.ac.nz/tv-radio/title/VA_28704_10

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STAY IN THE LOOP

Your staff email newsletter *Whaimōhio The Loop* comes out every fortnight. If you have content or achievements to share, email: ruchita.bharbhari@auckland.ac.nz. Details of deadlines are on the intranet under News, Events and Notices, *The Loop*.

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CHARMAINE 'ILAIŪ TALEI

You're new at the University. Where were you before and how long were you there?

My family and I have come from Brisbane, our home for the past 11 years. I'm a returning Kiwi, but for my family this is their first time living here. I did my undergraduate architectural degrees and my masters research degree here and my PhD at the University of Queensland, graduating in 2016.

Why did you do your PhD there?

I had a serendipitous meeting with my future PhD adviser and now mentor Professor Paul Memmott. I was presenting my masters research at a conference and heard about Paul's research to explore Australian Aboriginal uses of spinifex plants to create potential building materials. I had similar aspirations to do a PhD with a technical application and wanted to explore new building materials from coconut palm fibres to aid Pacific economies. I kept in touch with Paul while practising architecture in Aotearoa and Fiji. I did my PhD with Paul and Dr Tim O'Rourke at the Aboriginal Environments Research Centre.

At Auckland Girls Grammar, who sparked your interest in architecture?

I studied Latin from Form 3 with Ms Janet Newdick, and took her classical studies class from Form 6. Our classical studies class tour of ancient historic sites through Italy, Greece and parts of France was my realisation of architecture. Also, when architect Pete Bossley visited our school during careers week, that confirmed my interest. Pete showed the work of Dame Zaha Hadid which fascinated me.

What enticed you home?

Professor Deidre Brown, my masters research supervisor and a mentor has been my link to the School of Architecture and Planning and I thank her for creating opportunities at Creative Arts and Industries for Māori and Pacific lecturers. I'm excited about doing research about Pacific architecture with Pacific communities – research that could have transformative impact to improve housing in Aotearoa. With my colleagues, we plan to establish Māpihi: Māori and Pacific Housing Research Centre in 2022. I also wanted to give my children the opportunity to grow up in Aotearoa New Zealand and be close to my parents in Auckland.

What do your two sons think of Kiwi life?

They're enjoying their 'Kiwi' backyard with a feijoa tree. They love seeing their grandparents regularly and I love sharing my memories with them as we travel around Auckland and beyond. My parents

Falakika Lose and 'Ahoia 'Ilaīū live in our family home in Ōtara. My sister 'Ilaisaane (also an alumna of the University) lives in Torbay with her family. Two brothers live with my parents and the rest live with their families in Australia.

Tell us about your name and your heritage.

I trace my Pacific ancestry to the kainga of Tatakamōtonga, Houma, and Pukotala, Ha'apai in the Kingdom of Tonga, and further beyond Samoa to Uvea (Wallis and Futuna) on my mother's side, and Fulaga, Lau Islands, Fiji on my paternal grandmother's side. My namesake is Auckland Girls Grammar School (AGGS) headmistress and feminist Charmaine Pountney. This came about through Tongan custom. My father's oldest sister is our family fahu [type of matriarch]. Her daughter Helu attended AGGS in the 80s. When she heard of my birth, she rushed to the hospital to name me as is her birthright as the eldest daughter of my fahu. She gave me the name of her beloved principal at AGGS. My surname is a combination of my father's Tongan name and my Fijian husband's surname.

Are any of your family creative like you?

My father once won a national sketching competition as a youth in Tonga, so I know my drawing abilities come from him. My fahu Aunt Sepi creates beautiful Tongan koloa – textile mats and tapa cloth in Auckland and Tonga. My mother and maternal grandmother were seamstresses and also made plastic leis, blankets and pillows to sell at the Ōtara market in the 80s. Growing up around the sound of sewing machines and playing on bundles of fabric are fond childhood memories. Several siblings are musicians, and we all sing. One sister runs a baking business that shows her artistic skills. In a big family, discussing ideas and thinking of creative and entrepreneurial solutions to challenges were favourite pastimes.

What could Pacific architecture bring to the table with regard to housing shortages?

The basis of all Pacific architecture is vā, which is about the relational space between people. To help understand why certain housing types don't suit all Pacific communities, you need to understand the relationships between Pacific people and then how spaces can support those sociospatial behaviours. Architects who work in this space need to have a good listening ear coupled with customised co-design processes, participant-based research methods, and genuinely learn the cultural ideas of the communities they work with.

The real question is why housing in Aotearoa costs so much. I see the unfortunate contrast between my highly educated friends who are still renting in Auckland and myself who rents out two properties in Australia. A key barrier to housing Pacific communities in healthy thriving homes



Charmaine 'Ilaīū Talei

is a socioeconomic issue as much as it about understanding cultural values and aspirations.

Is apartment living an anathema to the Pacific way of life, Pākehā included?

Vā, the relational space between people, supersedes the tangible and physical space. Rather as my masters research 'Persistence of the Fale Tonga' demonstrated, this vā can generate and adapt domestic spaces to suit the occasion. For example, a living room can host a funeral service and a bedroom can store koloa, textile gifts. But I would say it depends on the vā of its occupants and whether the apartment's design aligns with that vā. A West End inner-city Brisbane apartment for my young Pacific family suited us well, as it meant I could lessen my commute home after work and spend more time with my family in the evenings to tauhi vā or nurture our vā. Being by the Brisbane River meant we maintained a strong connection to water, which is inherently important to our family's well-being. Our apartment's rooftop pool and barbeque area became a place to host extended family and friends in our Pacific way and remain connected to our community. When we hosted family functions, mats were laid on the floor of our balcony to enable us to host a lively gathering at our two-bedroom apartment.

How can you inspire Pacific students into architecture?

Telling one's own story is a great way to inspire people. Lama Tone and I are staff representatives of the School's Outreach for the School of Architecture and Planning. We hope to share our stories and the achievements of our Pacific architectural students at schools, churches, youth centres and through media. I didn't know the term 'architecture' until my late high-school years, so explaining what it is early on could help foster the awareness of the industry and help not only Pacific students but all students choose the right subjects and pathway into the university degree.

■ Full Q and A: auckland.ac.nz/Charmaine-QandA



Dr Guillermo Merelo is a fan of Pink Shirt Day. Photo: Billy Wong

THINK PINK

With Pink Shirt Day coming up on 20 May, staff and students are encouraged to think about being part of a community where everyone feels safe and valued regardless of their identity, sexual orientation, age or background.

Pink Shirt Day is an annual global event that began in Canada in 2007 when two high-school students took a stand against homophobic bullying, after a peer was bullied for wearing a pink shirt. They bought 50 pink shirts and handed them to students to demonstrate their support of the bullied student.

Dr Guillermo Merelo, the recently appointed associate director of staff diversity, equity and inclusion, is a big advocate of the initiative. He and his husband moved to Aotearoa New Zealand from Mexico ten years ago, for Guillermo to complete a PhD in Politics and International Relations at this university. “As a member of the Rainbow community, I know how important it is for diverse groups to be and feel supported.”

Guillermo says the day is a great reminder of how we all have a role to play in creating an inclusive campus culture. “Some people have the wrong perception that being part of the Rainbow

community is easy nowadays. The reality is that our members still face widespread discrimination, exclusion and harm as do many other diverse communities. This day is about taking a stand to say bullying should not be tolerated in our campuses.

“This university is made of fantastic allies, students and staff, so let’s stand together in pink as a gesture of support and a reminder we all want a more inclusive place to study and work.”

Guillermo’s role, which sits in HR reporting directly to HR director Andrew Phipps, is a first for the University. “The intention is to create a united and strategic position. Our goal is to demolish barriers,” Guillermo says.

One of his first ideas is to introduce a new Rainbow staff network. The first meeting is on 14 July and staff or students interested in joining the confidential database can contact equity@auckland.ac.nz.

In the meantime, scour the wardrobe for a pink shirt for 20 May and share an appropriately distanced, pink-themed morning tea. (Send your Pink Shirt Day photo to *The Loop*.)

- Equity Office: auckland.ac.nz/equity-at-UoA
- Pink Shirt info: pinkshirtday.org.nz
- History of Pink Shirt Day: pinkshirtday.ca/about



Loanne Togiataimai

STAFF GENEROSITY

The number of staff and former staff financially assisting students at the University of Auckland jumped in 2021.

Around 230 people became first-time donors, with the August lockdown the catalyst for most new donors to start giving. Of the gifts received from staff after the August lockdown, 63 percent were for student support or scholarships.

“Donors made a big difference, determining if students would be able to continue their studies or not,” says director of Alumni Relations and Development, Mark Bentley.

Second-year Social Work student Loanne Togiataimai says her hardship scholarship had a big impact. “It meant I could focus on study without having to worry about how to pay for textbooks and materials, as well as bills. It meant I could reduce the hours I was working, to focus on uni.”

■ To help support students and research at the University, see: auckland.ac.nz/support-students

JUMP IN IMPACT RANKINGS

The University has ranked sixth in the global Times Higher Education (THE) University Impact Rankings for 2022, up from ninth equal in 2021.

The Impact Rankings show how universities around the world are working towards the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Retaining a position in the top ten reaffirms the University’s strong commitment to the SDGs, many of which align with the strategic plan, *Taumata Teitei*.

This year, the University placed in the world’s top 10 percent in all 17 SDGs of the 1,406 participating universities, with three SDGs in the top 1 percent and a further 10 in the top 5 percent. Top 10 scores were achieved in SDG2 Zero Hunger (4th); SDG15 Life on Land (4th); SDG3 Good Health and Well-being (10th) and SDG5 Gender Equality (10th). Notably, there was also a significant improvement in SDG9, Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, a highly competitive SDG usually dominated by well-funded universities in the global north.

Vice-Chancellor Professor Dawn Freshwater says the result is outstanding. “These rankings measure achievement



and impact against targets that the world has collectively agreed are crucial for the future of our planet and societies, and demonstrate how very relevant universities can and should be.

“As our own strategy highlights, our contribution – at a local, national, and international level – should be about making the world a better place.”

The success in the THE University Impact Rankings comes on top of the news the University now has 12 subjects in the top 50 in the world, in the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) Subject Rankings announced in April. Psychology, linguistics, and accounting and finance all returned to the Top 50.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) Professor Jim Metson says that is particularly satisfying given the increasing competition and popularity of these subjects. “This excellent result highlights the international competitiveness of research across all of these disciplines. To have 12 subjects in the top 50 demonstrates the outstanding efforts of staff through one of the most challenging periods the University has faced.”

■ Read more at auckland.ac.nz/2022-THE-impacts and auckland.ac.nz/subject-rankings

LAW TEAM RISES AT 2AM FOR A WIN

A team of students from the University of Auckland Law School have come out on top for the 2022 Transatlantic Negotiation Competition, undefeated in every round.

The Transatlantic Negotiation Competition, in its second year, was conceived by New York's Syracuse University Advocacy Honour Society and Queen's University of Belfast Alternative Dispute Resolution Society to give students across the world an opportunity to hone their negotiation and communication skills.

This is the first year the University of Auckland has taken part in the event which saw teams from 16 countries compete via Zoom across 15 time zones. The win comes on the back of the University's recent success in winning the ICC International Commercial Mediation Competition for the fourth consecutive year.

Professor Penelope Mathew, Dean of Law says, "We are extremely proud of the team. They have done a superb job representing the University on the global stage."



Winning team, L-R: Heidi Bernard, David Lee, Libby Gane and Kelsey Haub.

Students Heidi Bernard, Libby Gane, Kelsey Haub and David Lee negotiated agreements relating to a range of matters including international diplomacy, cross-border commercial disputes, and hosting an international sporting event. Each of their five rounds took place in the early hours of the morning. For the final head-to-head, the team rose at 2am to represent one of two fictional governments seeking to resolve an issue between two nations regarding piracy at sea.

Many aspects of their performance earned commendation from the judges, with special mention of the team's 'Sherlock Holmes' negotiating style – asking the right questions, at the right time, to build a complete picture of the negotiation.

"Competing in TANC taught me the true

value of having a diverse team with varied life experiences and backgrounds to draw from," says Kelsey. "Every team member brought their own strengths to the table. Watching these different strengths grow and complement each other throughout the competition was an incredible experience."

Former ICC competitors and current students, Bronwyn Wilde and Andrew O'Malley Shand, coached the team to their impressive victory. The coaches thanked the Law Faculty for their administrative support; the ICC community for assisting with the team's training; and the Faculty Liaison, Ana Lenard, for her mentorship and support.

■ The Faculty of Law acknowledges the generosity of a Law alumnus who made it possible for the team to participate in this international competition.

A DOG'S LIFE

Ancient Polynesian societies had dogs as companions and hunters, one of only a handful of animals carried across the eastern Pacific from the Cook Islands to the Marquesas, and as far south as Aotearoa.

These now-extinct, smallish Māori dogs (kuri) looked similar to border collies. Faculty of Arts postgraduate archaeology student Patricia Pillay was fascinated by them and wanted to find out how they lived in the centuries leading up to the arrival of Pākehā in Aotearoa, when the loss of moa, followed by the Little Ice Age from the 16th century, made life challenging for many Māori communities.

Patricia consulted with iwi, the Auckland Museum and archaeologists to be able to study kuri teeth from archaeological sites between Northland and the Bay of Plenty. Her sample of more than 100 kuri represents key periods in Māori history prior to Western contact, after which kuri gradually became extinct with the introduction of European breeds. The teeth held clues to diet and general health. She looked for evidence of cavities (caries) and plaque (dental calculus) as well as tooth wear and fractures.

"Wear is often the result of scavenging in gritty or sandy soils, and broken teeth come from gnawing and cracking open bones for marrow."

She also looked for a condition known as

'linear enamel hypoplasia' which occurs when the formation of tooth enamel is interrupted; such as when a dog has a poor diet, disease or infection. Patricia found most Te Ika-a-Māui/ North Island kuri had no evidence of cavities and plaque, suggesting low-sugar diets, and few teeth were fractured or severely worn, suggesting relatively soft foods. There was little evidence of malnutrition or disease, with the most 'stressful' period coinciding with weaning.

Overall it seems kuri were well looked after, findings that fit well with Māori histories.

"Kuri were probably important in hunting, especially for moa, and their bones and teeth are often found in early coastal settlements," says Patricia. "They were also highly valued for their hides and fur which were made into cloaks for chiefs (kahu kuri) and, in the 18th century, many had their own names and whakapapa."

And while not pets in the contemporary sense, she says there is evidence to suggest they were important beyond their economic value or role as hunters. "In Aotearoa, dogs are mentioned in the traditional oral histories and also found in their own formal burials in some archaeological sites, which suggests a more complex relationship with humans."

Patricia's research was published as 'Canine companions or competitors? A multi-proxy analysis of dog-human competition' in the *Journal of Archaeological Science*, March 2022.

■ Read the full story: auckland.ac.nz/life-of-kuri



Crop of New Zealand War Canoe featuring a kuri. British Museum drawings by A. Buchan, S. Parkinson and J. F. Miller, 1769-1771.

THE BUSINESS OF BEING CURIOUS

Dr Billie Lythberg is an art historian and anthropological researcher, but she's right at home in the Business School. She says across all her disciplines, she works with ground-breaking thinkers.

Dr Billie Lythberg straddles research worlds and disciplines with apparent ease and energy.

She's a senior lecturer in the School of Business and Economics, director of business studies at the Tai Tonga campus, researcher, and editor of books and journals.

But how did someone whose PhD was awarded in art history end up in the Business School?

"About 2009, while finishing my thesis, I worked for UniServices on Waitangi Tribunal oral and traditional history reports, which are based on living histories and involve interviews with descendants," she explains.

"I was working with the late Mānuka Hēnare, whom I'd worked with at the James Henare Research Centre in 2002. When I finished my PhD, I was offered a postdoctoral position at Cambridge University in the UK. They wanted me to be based in Auckland because the project was Aotearoa and Pacific focused. Mānuka offered to make me an honorary fellow of the Mira Szászly Research Centre in the Business School for the duration."

Later, project after project fuelled a full-time research role. A fixed-term lecturing position followed, then a permanent role.

Mānuka Hēnare was a powerhouse in Māoridom and a mentor at the Auckland Business School, where he was an associate professor. He died in January 2021. It feels apt that Billie has helped edit his long laboured over PhD, now published as a book: *He Whenua Rangatira: A Mana Māori History of the Early-Mid Nineteenth Century*.

Billie was a co-editor with Dr Amber Nicholson, now at AUT, who also did her PhD at Auckland and worked with Mānuka for more than a decade, and Mānuka's friend and colleague, Professor Dame Anne Salmond. A soft launch held online in March was attended by around 85, including Mānuka's wife Diane and their children, but a physical launch will follow once Covid levels allow. Diane told the attendees the family had been able to present Mānuka with a soft copy of the book while he was in hospital, "so he knew it was on the way".

"Writing was the least favourite part of the project for him," said Diane. "He much preferred research. With an amazing ability to procrastinate, he made the whole PhD journey last ten years to 2003. The book took a further 19 years."

Billie is also among the authors of another book that could easily slot into the New Zealand history curriculum. *Hei Taonga Mā Ngā Uri Whakatipu: Treasures for the Rising Generation* (Te Papa Press) emerged from a four-year Marsden Fund

project about the Dominion Museum Ethnological Expeditions of 1919 to 1923.

The book is a 368-page hardback that covers the history of the expeditions accompanied by striking photographs of people encountered along the way. It took a group of contributors, including Billie and Professor Dame Anne Salmond, around five years to research and produce.

"I'm a relational researcher," says Billie. "I don't tend to do projects where you just move off and no longer work with those people. I build relationships with all the people I undertake projects with. So for me, it seems quite natural when a project extends beyond its initial scope.

"An example is my relationship with Dr Wayne Ngata, one of the book's authors and editors. I have been working with him since 2010."

For Anne, the relationships in this book go deep.

writing, but no pen-picture can convey a tithe of the vigour and perfect uniformity of the former, or the grace and beauty of the latter," wrote Āpirana. "For the perfect record, one must go to the picture film ... But no whole-hearted attempt has yet been made to record characteristic scenes from native life." (*Journal of the Polynesian Society*)

The group travelled to Gisborne in 1919, Rotorua in 1920, Whanganui in 1921 and Tairāwhiti in 1923.

"It was a visionary group of people who came together to produce the photographs, writings, journals, and various publications," says Billie. "The film and sound recordings are amazing."

Part of the book's research saw Billie and the project's PhD scholar, Dr Natalie Robertson (Ngāti Porou), a senior lecturer at AUT, given access to the Bishop Museum Library and Archives in Hawai'i, a renowned repository of Pacific history.

"We stumbled across fairly personal and unexpected writings, that had usually been kept by the recipient."

– Dr Billie Lythberg, Faculty of Business and Economics

Her great-grandfather, James McDonald, was the expedition's photographer and videographer.

The Dominion Museum Ethnological Expeditions were the brainchild of doctor, anthropologist and museum director Te Rangihīroa (Sir Peter Buck, Ngāti Mutunga) and Wayne Ngata's great-uncle Sir Āpirana Ngata (Ngāti Porou), who was minister for Māori Development. They were joined by museum staff, including ethnologist Elsdon Best, who was fluent in te reo Māori, cinematographer and acting director of the Dominion Museum, James McDonald, and Johannes Anderson, a student of waiata from the Turnbull Library.

At the end of World War One and the great 'flu epidemic of 1918, there were fears aspects of Māori culture could be lost. In just two months, more than 2,500 Māori had died of 'flu, including many experts in Indigenous arts and knowledge.

Āpirana first had the idea of recording this history by capturing sound and vision. He had been updating his Māori dictionary to record dialects and realised that more than words were needed to tell the story of a culture. In December 1918, he worked to secure government funding for the project to record and preserve waiata, karakia, weaving and fishing techniques, kapa haka and many other tikanga Māori practices.

"Māori dances and poi ... may be described in

"We had incredible access and arranged to digitise everything in their Sir Peter Buck archives relevant to this project. Natalie and I spent a week photographing, and we hope to make resources available to people doing similar research."

Accessing letters and professional diaries in Te Rangihīroa's private archive was invaluable.

"People held onto letters back then. We stumbled across fairly personal and unexpected writings that had usually been kept by the recipient. Te Rangihīroa and Āpirana Ngata are great examples; the published volumes of their correspondence are well known. Natalie and I found materials that had never been published, including part of Ngata's work towards a Doctor of Letters."

She picks out this manuscript: 'The Terminology of Whakapapa,' as a key taonga now published in *Hei Taonga Mā Ngā Uri Whakatipu*.

Billie is Pākehā but says many of her mentors have been Māori. "I'm interested in how we describe ourselves as researchers. I'm happy to be described as a Pākehā researcher because that immediately positions me in relation with Māori. I'm privileged to have strong Māori mentors in my career, beginning with the late Professor Ranginui Walker who invited me to teach Māori Studies after my MA. And, of course, Mānuka Hēnare.

"Wayne Ngata often guides me as to what's appropriate and what's not. We've had interesting



Dr Billie Lythberg says she enjoys researching through different disciplinary lenses. Photo: Elise Manahan

“I’m a lifelong learner and I’m curious about many things. So to have that as my job is pretty amazing.”

– Dr Billie Lythberg, senior lecturer, management and international business

conversations about how Pākehā researchers can continue to be valuable without filling space that ought to be left open for Māori researchers.

“Working and writing with Dr Dan Hikuroa and Dr Natalie Robertson these past few years has also been awesome. And Dr Kiri Dell in the Business School is a force. She says, ‘Pākehā need to support Māori to be Māori’. So a primary consideration for any research project is, ‘Will this work serve Māori first and foremost?’ That’s for Māori to determine.”

Far from considering a role in the Business School an odd choice for someone whose heart is in anthropology and history, she finds it invigorating. “We can’t separate the significance, importance and purpose of things ancestors did, from considerations of economy and business, people and environment, present and future.”

Billie works to reconnect artefacts from archives worldwide with communities where possible. She also works with the GLAM sector (galleries, libraries, archives and museums) on organisational approaches consistent with mātauranga and Pacific knowledge systems. She loves working with artists, “some of our most ground-breaking thinkers”.

She is also exploring how businesses could change to reflect societal needs in 2022.

“I’m working with Professor Susan Watson,

the dean of the Business School, and others, to consider what a company can be. “For example, the Whanganui River now has a legal personality. Susan’s work examines the same legal personality underpinning our incorporated companies. If we can activate the *persona ficta* to transform our relationship with rivers, what might be possible for companies that have this status too?”

To meet Billie is to be impressed by her energy and enthusiasm for her work.

“I’m curious and love the challenge of trying to bring something about. I get a huge amount of energy out of initial ideas and then working out how to make them happen and bringing teams together – that’s what energises me.”

But why did a Pākehā girl who grew up in Devonport become enthralled with Māori history?

“I crossed the harbour to attend Selwyn College, an incredibly progressive school,” says Billie. “The experience of being at school with such a diverse student body, whose parents were artists and academics, just made it seem like things were possible. Later, I did my MA in the short-lived interdisciplinary programme New Zealand Studies, majoring in Pacific and post-colonial literatures and Māori Studies.”

After a graduate certificate in anthropological theory and Pacific art history came that PhD, which explored Tongan women’s innovation in

barkcloth-making and its commodification using approaches from economic anthropology.

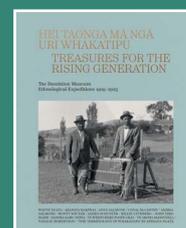
Billie was the first in her family to attend university. “I’d always wanted an academic career. I’m a lifelong learner and I’m curious about many things. So to have that as my job is pretty amazing.”

“My research interests have remained constant, but I explore them through different disciplinary lenses. My work is very much aligned with *Taumata Teitei* because it’s developed with people from multidisciplinary backgrounds as well as researchers from beyond the academy.”

Her other skills include writing articles for media and she devised the ten-part Māori TV series *Artefact*. Could she imagine the Dominion Expeditions becoming a documentary series? Her face lights up.

“Wouldn’t that be phenomenal?”

■ Denise Montgomery



WIN

UniNews has one copy of *Hei Taonga mā ngā Uri Whakatipu* (Te Papa Press, \$75) to give away. Email: uninews@auckland.ac.nz by 1 June.



Dr Natalie Anderson from the School of Nursing.
Photo: Elise Manahan

FLORENCE IS NOT A MACHINE

Dr Natalie Anderson says more nurses are needed so staff don't have to work like robots.

Nursing, research and teaching – they're all demanding careers, so who would have thought they would be a good mix?

"I've been teaching for a long time," says Dr Natalie Anderson, a registered emergency nurse at Auckland Hospital and senior lecturer in the School of Nursing. "I was a volunteer for St John Ambulance in my teens and they put me through a first aid instructors' course. It taught me a lot about adult learning principles. When I was about 19, I began teaching first aid to members of the public, then to volunteer ambulance staff."

Although now a nurse, Natalie initially thought she might become an organisational psychologist. She did an arts degree majoring in organisation studies and psychology.

"I was working part-time in a rest home and I enjoyed caring for people. It was something I could imagine doing for a job."

After her nursing degree, a masters in science followed, majoring in health psychology.

"As a nurse, understanding what motivates people and affects behaviour is important."

She completed her PhD in Nursing in 2020 and now, as well as being an ED nurse, is a course director in the School of Nursing, lecturer, researcher and supervisor of postgraduate students. "My love of learning also lent itself to a love of teaching. I don't consider myself to be this amazing academic, or even an amazing clinical nurse. I'm just good at a bunch of stuff. I like working in interdisciplinary teams with people who see the world differently."

In the past few years, the dearth of nursing staff has taken its toll on the profession.

"Things were challenging in nursing before Covid-19 came along. A few years back, I was

doing interviews outlining the dire situation in our emergency departments."

On TVNZ's *Sunday* programme in April, Health Minister Andrew Little admitted New Zealand hospitals were around 4,000 nurses short.

"But there's an argument that we weren't adequately staffed in the first place," says Natalie. "So even if we fill those vacancies, you're asking one nurse to do the job of one and a half or two nurses."

People are living longer and/or may have complex health problems they wouldn't have survived in days gone by.

"As wonderful as that is, it takes a lot of care to manage those conditions. I've been nursing 21 years and the patients are sicker and more complicated than I've ever seen before."

If Natalie held the purse strings, and money was no object, she knows what she would do.

"I would immediately invest in growing our workforce because so many nurses are nearing retirement age. By the time I become an old woman, I'm worried there won't be anywhere near enough nurses. Of course, I'd love to pay nurses more and create more nursing jobs, but we also need to generate new graduates."

Natalie's first job as a nurse was in an intensive care unit. "We were well-funded. I had weeks of orientation and education and amazing senior nurses guiding and developing me. Now I see new grads going into environments where their education is cancelled or delayed because of Covid-19. Some of them also had disrupted training. There's a serious deprioritisation of health professional development and it's also hard to feel nurtured in your job, especially for new nurses. We need time and enough experienced nurses to do that."

She says a lack of diversity also needs to be addressed. "We need more Māori and Pacific mentors. Students and new grads need to see themselves in their teachers and supervisors. Over the past two years, we've seen some Māori and Pacific students drop out of their health professional courses because they need to earn money for their families. It's heart-breaking because we need them in healthcare. More

pastoral support and scholarships are needed."

While low pay isn't the first thing Natalie mentions when asked about improvements to the profession, inequities are clear.

"We're often compared to police when speaking about careers, which is interesting."

A police officer trains for 16 weeks and earns a pro-rata package of around \$53,000 to do so. Upon graduation, they will earn \$68,000 as a new cadet. Compare that with a nurse who loses income for three years to complete a self-funded degree, starts with a student loan and goes into their first year of nursing on \$59,000.

"We have to make nursing in New Zealand more attractive, especially when Australia pays much better. Our hospitals would grind to a halt without international nurses but they often don't stay long, heading to Australia. They also come without knowledge of Māori and the Treaty, unlike a New Zealand trained nurse."

The overwork, exacerbated by the pandemic, hasn't been great for nursing. "Some of the best nurses I've worked with have left and the reason is because they care so much. We are 'care rationing', which means, 'there's a list of jobs I'd love to do, which includes holding people's hands, really listening to them and ensuring they're comfortable'. These aspects of nursing are being deprioritised because time-critical tasks take precedence. You don't feel good at the end of the day when you realise some of those jobs never got done. In ED we're caring for people on the worst day of their lives. Connection, compassion and reassurance is core to nursing but is being put aside. Nurses shouldn't have to work like robots."

The Nursing Safe Staffing Review released in February showed 83 percent of nursing staff said patients in understaffed shifts aren't receiving complete care. The DHBS use Care Capacity Demand Management (CCDM) software to try to match patients' care needs with resources. But after issues were raised about CCDM, a review was conducted between September and December 2021, led by the Nursing Advisory Group, focusing on inpatient wards. CCDM was intended to be the solution to safe staffing but it has highlighted that demand for care far exceeds the nurses available. The report says: "If the number of nurses in the workforce is not increased, it is impossible to achieve safe staffing and positive work environments ... Nurses will remain overworked and exhausted."

In the first iteration of the report, emergency departments were left out. Natalie was outraged. "We wrote and said, 'Emergency departments are in a crisis; we can't just turn people away and put out 'no vacancy' signs'. We're very proud that the College of Emergency Nurses then got a section in the report, acknowledging things are bad in EDs."

But there's been little traction.

"We're no closer to having more nurses."

“I’d love to pay nurses more and create more nursing jobs, but we also need to generate new graduates.”

– Dr Natalie Anderson, senior lecturer, School of Nursing

Natalie’s research is complementary to her work as an emergency nurse. Her PhD focused on the paramedic experience of dealing with cardiac arrest. The issue of whether to continue or even start cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) is complex.

“I’ve been involved in resuscitations where we’ve had to decide how long to keep trying to resuscitate. I’ve been to situations where an experienced paramedic just says, ‘No, this person’s died, and CPR won’t have any effect on them.’

“I looked after my grandmother in her last days after she had a massive stroke. I have an innate acceptance that death isn’t something to be afraid of. It comes to everyone. Care at the end of life can be rewarding if we can focus on comfort and family presence.”

She says New Zealand’s paramedics are highly qualified and capable of deciding when a death is expected and unavoidable, or if it’s been so long since the patient’s heart stopped that CPR won’t reverse the situation.

“Are you really saving someone’s life or are you just giving them another death?”

“I’ve done lots of CPR and felt the thrill of getting someone’s pulse back and having them talk to me. But I’ve worked in ED and intensive care and seen survivors of cardiac arrest who go on to die anyway – often with severe brain damage or severe heart failure.”

Natalie has been nursing for two decades and is still enthusiastic about nursing and teaching, but compassion fatigue is real.

“There have been times when I’ve realised my cup of caring is empty. It’s important to hold onto the good experiences you have and the amazing people you meet in the job.”

She tells the story of one exceptional patient as an example of courage and kindness. “She was literally dying, but thanked me for making her comfortable and asked, ‘Have you had your break yet, dear?’ She died 20 minutes later. At the end of her life, when she was feeling terrible, she was still thinking of others.”

Natalie refills her cup of caring as much as she can by getting out into nature.

“Bird photography is my hobby and part of the reason I love it is because where birds are, people and noise aren’t. I go hiking in quiet places. I stand still and absorb what’s going on. Birds don’t demand anything of me.” (See [instagram.com/beautytodeathratio](https://www.instagram.com/beautytodeathratio).)

“Beauty to death ratio is a concept an emergency physician on Twitter came up with –

the idea that you’re balancing out negative stuff, people who are aggressive and drunk or sad and dying – with beautiful things. For me, the beauty ratio is being in native bush with beautiful native birdsong around me.”

Natalie says well-being is difficult in nursing at the moment. “We know there are people dreading going to work, who feel exhausted all the time and who worry about what’s happened after they leave work. But feeling that you’re doing a good job is really important to health professionals.”

Natalie is unsure how Health New Zealand, replacing the DHBs, will improve things.

“What bothers me is nurses often haven’t had a seat at the table when health resourcing decisions are made. But we’re the largest cohort of health professionals in the system.

“It’s because we’re mostly women and seen as followers, not leaders. Historically, it’s been a bunch of predominantly white male doctors with similar worldviews sitting around the table making these decisions, all agreeing with each other. If you bring nurses and minority groups into that, we will speak truth and cause discomfort – and much-needed change.”

Whichever way the new model is structured, Natalie, who is on the national committee of the College of Emergency Nurses, says emergency departments need investment.

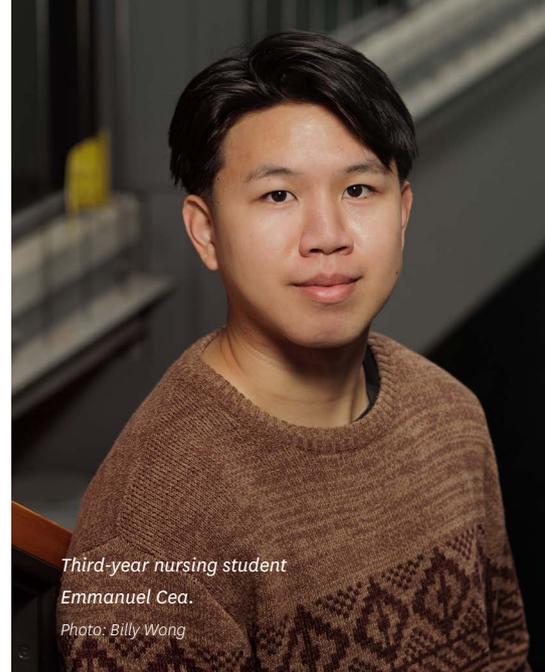
“I’ve heard my medical colleagues speak up and use words like ‘unsafe’ and ‘crisis’ recently. I know they don’t do it lightly.”

Last July, hospitals were swamped with children with respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). Natalie is worried about this winter, when hospitals will still be dealing with Covid-19 and also influenza. “Winter is going to be so challenging. I’m concerned for my colleagues who work with children. They’re trying to prepare for this onslaught of kids who have missed other vaccinations, and haven’t been exposed to many bugs for two years.”

But despite all the concerns and challenges, Natalie believes New Zealanders are lucky when it comes to healthcare.

“I’ve never been prouder of having a public health system and Covid-19 has made me appreciate the benefits of it. It has saved thousands of lives. But it is also really expensive. It requires massive investment at the community public health level, so we don’t have as many people coming to ED because they’ve just got nowhere else to go. There isn’t a cheap solution.”

■ Denise Montgomery



Third-year nursing student
Emmanuel Cea.

Photo: Billy Wong

BOOST FOR NURSING STUDENT

One person who understands the importance nurses have in New Zealand is Emmanuel Cea, who is in his third year of a Bachelor of Nursing degree in the Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences.

Originally from the Philippines, Emmanuel moved here with his family when he was eight. After growing up in a country where financial hardship makes access to education difficult for many, Emmanuel says he was brought up to appreciate the opportunities study can bring.

Having always had an interest in helping and caring for others, Emmanuel says it made sense when his mother suggested he take up nursing after graduating from high school. Now he’s gaining the skills necessary to play his role in keeping Kiwis healthy. “With Covid, you can see the importance of nurses and how they’re on the frontline fighting the pandemic and stopping the spread – they’re actually risking their lives to do that,” he says.

Last year, Emmanuel was given a helping hand towards his studies when he received the Robyn Dixon Nursing Award, established by Associate Professor Robyn Dixon in 2018.

The scholarship offers support to a student who attended college in west Auckland, who is enrolled full-time in a Bachelor of Nursing and is experiencing financial hardship. Emmanuel says receiving the award “felt like a blessing”.

Although he is aware he might not have chosen the easiest career option, he has no doubts about the path he is on and hopes to specialise in mental health nursing. “Most of the time I have spent studying in university has been challenging due to the pandemic.

“This has made me realise the importance in this career to push through by studying hard and face the challenges. Bigger things are waiting for me – and that is to help people and save lives.”



Emma Ormsby in front of the Takapuna mural.

COLOURFUL COLLABORATION WITH THE KIDS

Student Emma Ormsby is leaving her mark in public spaces.

Emma (Ngāti Maniapoto, Ngāti Porou) is in her third year of a Bachelor of Fine Arts and has led a project to brighten up the centre of Takapuna with a 60-metre mural.

The vinyl transfer mural displayed on Auburn Street, Takapuna, was created from drawings by more than 50 students from nine local primary, intermediate and secondary schools. Emma ran workshops with the students, in which she gave each of them a section of Te Ao Mārama, the natural world, such as coastal shores or birdlife.

“Then we had workshops about the different kowhaiwhai, tā moko, toi whakairo and Māori

patterns relevant to those kind of areas.”

The students’ drawings were completed just before lockdown in 2021. Then Emma coloured the drawings to create a digital transferable file. The mural was revealed just before Christmas.

Working with local tamariki was central to this project, says Emma, an opportunity to foster creativity and education in the younger generation, as well as an appreciation of toi Māori. “They were all very attentive and wanted to get stuck in and learn.”

The mural is a symbol of collaboration and ecology, she says, but also by drawing on Māori motifs, became a platform for learning and understanding.

“The work is larger than any individual, but the result of a collective creative community.”

Emma went to school at nearby Westlake Girls High where, in her final year, she was awarded the top grade in the country for sculpture and also won a scholarship for English. She also worked with students there to paint an award-winning mural on a wall vulnerable to graffiti.

She is doing a conjoint Bachelor of Fine Arts and Arts and her papers include Māori Studies and Screen Production. She is an emerging Māori freelance artist who is also studying woodcarving and cloak weaving.

■ Read Emma’s full story: auckland.ac.nz/Emma-Ormsby-mural

WRITING ALUMNA MAKES SHORTLIST

Master of Creative Writing (MCW) alumna Shelley Burne-Field (Ngāti Mutunga, Ngāti Rārua) is the only New Zealander to be shortlisted for the 2022 Commonwealth Short Story Prize, awarded annually for the best piece of unpublished short fiction from the Commonwealth.

Shelley’s story *Speaking in Tongues* is described as being about “loss of language, about community, and about being seen and heard”.

She is delighted to be selected and knows there will be people who can relate to the message in her story.

“He tino harikoa ahau! I’m happy that readers may have a chance to connect with

the characters in this story. I encourage them to think more about what language loss and language trauma means to them as individuals, as well as within their own culture.”

A fiction writer and graduate of both Auckland and Te Papa Tupu (a writing programme developed by the Māori Literature Trust and organised by Huia Publishers), she was a finalist in the 2021 Voyager Media Awards and is also a regular writer for *E-Tangata*.

Her short fiction has appeared on RNZ and in *Newsroom* and various anthologies.

Shelley is not the first University alumna to be successful in this competition. Harley Hern, a 2015 MCW alumna, was named the regional winner for the Pacific in 2019.

This year’s shortlist of 26 was chosen from more than 6,700 entries from 52 Commonwealth countries, with international judging panel chair, Guyanese writer Fred D’Aguiar, calling the shortlisted works “memorable and urgent stories that captured the concerns of their respective communities”.



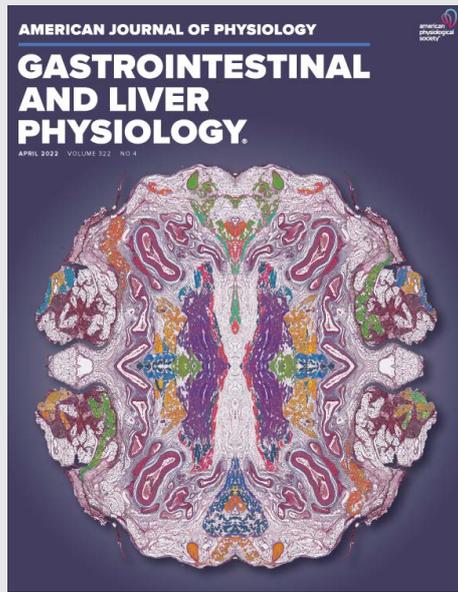
Shelley Burne-Field

It is the only prize in the world where entries can be submitted in Bengali, Chinese, English, Greek, Malay, Portuguese, Samoan, Swahili, Tamil, and Turkish; with the addition this year of stories from St Vincent and the Grenadines, Papua New Guinea, Gibraltar and Eswatini.

The regional winners will be announced on 23 May and the overall winner at an award ceremony on 21 June 2022.

■ See: commonwealthwriters.org
Read more from Shelley: authorly.com/ShelleyBurneField

ARTISTIC BEAUTY IN BIOLOGY



You'd think there was nothing pretty about the inside of your gut – you'd be wrong.

The cover story of the April issue of the *American Journal of Physiology – Gastrointestinal and Liver Physiology* featured fascinating research from the Auckland Bioengineering Institute (ABI).

Impressive, but so is the fact the cover was illustrated with the artwork of one of the lead authors of the paper. The research, led by PhD student Zahra Aghababaie and her supervisor

Dr Tim Angeli-Gordon, outlines a new technique for the potential treatment of disorders of gastric function – ablation therapy, which is usually used to correct an abnormally beating heart.

Zahra created the artwork from her histology (microscopic) images of the gastrointestinal system, and called it the “Enchanted forest of the gut-brain”. “Within the human stomach, a great wild and vivid ‘forest’ exists, working in harmony through sequences of organised contractions to extract the essential source of energy,” she writes. “The coordination of this wonderful machinery is only possible thanks to an assembly of dedicated cells orchestrating the ballet of digestion. However, sometimes the harmony of this delicate system is disturbed with abnormal dysrhythmic activity.”

Zahra’s artwork was initially created as a submission to the Art of BioEng, a competition ABI has held since 2015 to encourage the Institute’s bioengineers to capture, through art, the world that new technologies allow us to see.

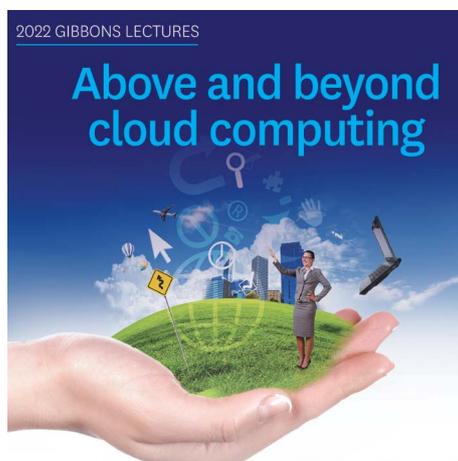
For her submission, she drew on the comic-book style she often created at school.

“Knowing there are many comic-book fans at the ABI, I thought that style of illustration would be a fun way to capture my research.

“Biology imaging is both beautiful and enchanting,” she says. “I think art can give us a moment of peace, a moment to stop, observe and appreciate and perhaps remind us to do this more often in our everyday life and work and, in our case, our research.”

■ Full story: auckland.ac.nz/gut-art

CLEVER HEADS IN THE CLOUDS



The annual Gibbons lecture series, named after Associate Professor Peter Gibbons, runs at 6pm on four Wednesdays from 18 May, with the theme ‘Above and Beyond Cloud Computing’.

18 May Cloud computing: everything as a service

Associate Professor David Eyers, Department of Computer Science, University of Otago

25 May Māori data sovereignty, Ka mua, ka muri

Panel facilitated by Dr Daniel Wilson, School of Computer Science, University of Auckland

1 June Hey! You! Get onto my cloud! Going from the bottom of the sea to outer space

Dr Ulrich Speidel, School of Computer Science, University of Auckland

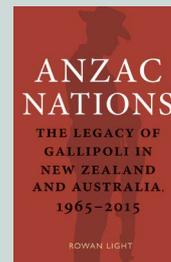
8 June What is the future of cloud computing in Aotearoa NZ?

Panel facilitated by Dr Danielle Lottridge, School of Computer Science, University of Auckland

All lectures are at 6pm in the General Library, LibB10/109-B10. Refreshments provided.

■ Register at Eventbrite: uoagibbonslectureseries2022.eventbrite.co.nz

BOOKS



Anzac Nations: The legacy of Gallipoli in New Zealand and Australia, 1965–2015

University of Auckland historian Dr Rowan Light (Faculty of Arts) examines the myth-making around Anzac Day and how the commemoration has evolved.

Read more: auckland.ac.nz/Anzac-book
Rowan Light, Otago University Press, \$50



Isobar Precinct

The debut novel of Angelique Kasmara (Master of Creative Writing) is about a woman with a tattoo studio on Karangahape Road who believes she has witnessed a murder in Symonds Street Cemetery.

She then uncovers information about a mysterious drug trial targeting vulnerable people.

Angelique Kasmara, The Cuba Press, \$37

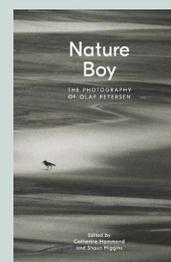


Raiment: A Memoir

Jan Kemp (MNZM) has a Master of Arts from the University and was a poet in Auckland in the 1970s, one of few female poets to be admitted into the all-male poet club. In 1979 she was in the ‘gang of four’

with Alistair Te Ariki Campbell, Sam Hunt and Hone Tūwhare. Jan now lives in Germany and her memoir is an insight into Auckland’s 1970s literary scene and her part in it as a young poet.

Jan Kemp, Massey University Press, \$35



Nature Boy: The Photography of Olaf Petersen

Olaf Petersen was a remarkable photographer of Auckland’s west coast and beyond, from the 1950s to the 1970s. This book complements a major exhibition at Auckland Museum.

Edited by Catherine Hammond and Shaun Higgins, Auckland University Press, \$60
See: aucklandmuseum.com/visit/exhibitions/nature-boy

MĀRAMATANGA

FOR WHOM THE CARS TOLL

It was an ordinary Monday morning on 4 April, the start of a new work week as Melissa Rays rode her e-bike to her job at the family-run curtain hardware business in Auckland where she had worked for 20 years.

As she rounded a corner, some 150 metres from her destination, her bike and a van collided, and Melissa was killed. She was 58 years old.

A month earlier, on 5 March, University of Auckland student Levi James was killed on his way to visit his grandmother after a driver opened a car door, causing Levi to swerve into traffic while he was biking on Manukau Rd in Royal Oak. Levi was 19 years old.

As we rack up the number of road fatalities each year, deaths are assigned an innocuous name – the road toll.

This name obscures the horrendous human costs associated with our car-dominated society. For the past seven years in New Zealand, more than 300 people have lost their lives to ‘vehicle violence’. Typically, a dozen or so are pedestrians or cyclists. These deaths are – as are nearly all vehicle-related deaths – entirely preventable. However, the way cities have been built, the design of transportation systems, and the lack of infrastructure, pretty much guarantee deaths will occur.

We’ve built our cities to prioritise cars but cars weren’t always the dominant mode of transport on the road. It started with horse and cart, then bikes. When cars arrived on the scene in the 1920s and began to dominate in the 1950s, all other modes of transport were pushed off the roads.

When cars took over, the focus became building more roads, widening existing facilities and stretching them far into undeveloped lands. The intense focus on road building meant that good-quality footpaths and protected cycleways were an afterthought, if they ever were a thought.

These choices are part of what led to the deaths of Levi, Melissa and countless others. The lack of safe cycling infrastructure leaves cyclists vulnerable to heavy, sometimes erratic and fast-moving vehicle traffic. Levi and Melissa were relatively new to cycling, the start of a movement of people away from a car-dominated life – they were the brave ones willing to cycle in places most would consider inhospitable.

The lack of infrastructure has a profound effect on our transportation system. Many people would be willing to bike to work, school, for shopping and recreation if they felt safe. Without the infrastructure to ensure safety, they



Dr Tim Welch says other cities have reduced cyclist and pedestrian deaths.

Photo: Billy Wong

“Other countries had the fortitude to implement plans that were initially unpopular but were for the greater good.”

are left to drive cars, unfairly becoming one of the many that may one day exact a toll on a pedestrian or cyclist. The only change they need is a bit of cement along some of the thousands of kilometres of road and have fewer cars on the street.

Of course, there is a better way. The good news is some cities are winning the battle against vehicle violence. Oslo and Helsinki have both achieved zero pedestrian or cyclist deaths. They did it under a programme called Vision Zero. While the programme has been derided as ineffective in some places, including Auckland, what sets Oslo and Helsinki apart is the number of approaches they used to implement it. Rather than just reducing speeds, which is where most cities stop, they also expanded public transportation, reduced car lanes, added cycleways and removed on-street parking. These policies effectively got more people out of their cars and saved lives.

Other cities like London, Stockholm, and Singapore have focused on reducing the number of cars entering the city and parking on the streets. Reducing the number of vehicles in cities is important as was evidenced by Levi swerving around the opening door of a parked car which landed him in fast-moving traffic.

Amsterdam and Copenhagen are often cited as the best biking cities in the world, but it wasn’t always that way. These cities were as full of cars as any New Zealand city in the 1970s, but around that time, their local governments

decided to reprioritise people over cars in their cities. As a result, it’s normal – and completely safe – for people to use bikes as their only mode of transportation.

None of these places is physically, topographically or culturally radically different from New Zealand. They all started where we are now, with a growing concern over the safety of people navigating their streets. They differ in that they had the fortitude to implement plans that were initially unpopular but were for the greater good.

The car can toll for anyone. It’s not just New Zealand that suffers the violence brought about by poor infrastructure and fast-moving machines. Across the globe, more than 1.35 million people are killed through vehicle violence every year, half of whom are outside the car. The toll is more than a million sons and daughters, parents and grandparents, and people of all backgrounds – though disproportionately lower-income – losing lives that could have easily been prevented with a few changes in policies and priorities.

We owe it to Melissa and Levi and the many other lost lives to begin the process of putting people before cars and ending the road toll.

■ Dr Timothy F Welch is a senior lecturer in the School of Architecture and Planning, specialising in transportation, infrastructure and urban modelling.

The views in this article reflect personal opinion and are not necessarily those of the University of Auckland.