Uni NEWS

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August 2022

UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND
Waipapa Taumata Rau
NEW ZEALAND

DYLAN ASAFO

Young Pacific law lecturer vocal about injustice

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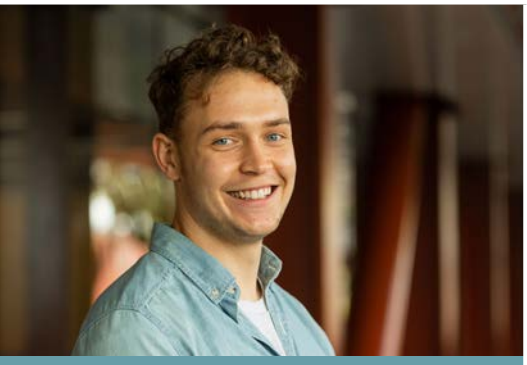

TESTING TIMES

Doctoral student Mackay Price is plunging into wastewater surveillance research and loving it

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FIELD CLUBBERS REUNITE!

The University's Field Club is holding a celebration and meeting of minds, 100 years since the club was formed

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POWERFUL MESSAGE

As powerhouse legal academic Jane Kelsey heads into retirement, she has strong words for the academy

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IN THE **NEWS**

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


Ben Albert

CAUTION OVER FISH OIL

Liggins researchers warn fish oil could be toxic in pregnancy. Fish oil goes off or oxidises easily. In an animal study, a human-relevant dose of fish oil, oxidised to a level that could be found in a store, was linked to six percent of offspring dying shortly after birth. Dr Ben Albert told RNZ he would like to see fish oil supplements tested by an independent agency and shown to be within recommended levels before they are sold.
Link: tinyurl.com/RNZ-fish-oil


Makarena Dudley

DEMENTIA STUDY

Neuropsychologist Dr Makarena Dudley (Science) told *Waatea News* that a $1.1m study would seek a more precise fix on the prevalence of mate wareware (dementia) among Māori. Researchers will interview 550 Māori in a three-year project funded by the Health Research Council, assessing kaumatua and gathering evidence of the caregiving burden on whānau. Mate wareware combines words for being unwell and being forgetful.
Link: tinyurl.com/waatea-mate-wareware

BAD BREATH

Dr Joel Rindelaub (Science) talked about inhaling other people's breath and the risks it still poses for Covid-19. He also discussed the need to monitor carbon dioxide levels as a proxy for the risk of spreading Covid-19 indoors.
Links: tinyurl.com/RNZ-rindelaub-breath and **tinyurl.com/RNZ-rindelaub-hazardous-air**


Warwick Bagg

FUNDING TO EASE SHORTAGE

Professor Warwick Bagg, Deputy Dean of FMHS, says the government needs to fund the training of more medical professionals to ease staff shortages. He told *Stuff* that place numbers are determined by government and the Tertiary Education Commission, but "this has not been prioritised by any government in recent years". He says more Māori and Pacific doctors are also vital.
Link: tinyurl.com/warwick-bagg-Stuff


Bernard Sama

DANGER IN DETENTION

Doctoral candidate Bernard Sama (Education and Social Work) talked to *1 News* about his team's asylum seeker report, *Safe Start, Fair Future: Refugee Equality.* He said the unfair treatment of asylum seekers in Aotearoa must change.
Link: tinyurl.com/1News-bernard-sama


Gavin Brown

UNNECESSARY ASSESSMENT?

Professor Gavin Brown (EDSW) discussed the drop in New Zealand students' engagement in international assessments and whether it really matters, on RNZ's *Morning Report*.
Link: tinyurl.com/RNZ-Gavin-Brown

THIS ISSUE

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. Deadlines are on the intranet under News, Events and Notices, *The Loop*.

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DESIGN: Mariyam Poonawala
PRODUCTION: University of Auckland
Volume 52 – Issue 6 – August 2022
PUBLISHED BY: Waipapa Taumata Rau
University of Auckland Communications Office
Alfred Nathan House, 24 Princes Street
Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142
Web: **auckland.ac.nz/UniNews**

Something to share? Email: UniNews@auckland.ac.nz. Copy deadline is the 14th of the month prior to publication.

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SOMETHING IN THE WATER

Wastewater can reveal a lot about a community – from its health to its drug use. PhD student Mackay Price explains.

PhD student Mackay Price. Photo: Billy Wong

The importance of wastewater testing has come into its own with Covid-19. At first, it was an early warning system to show where cases were located. These days, it's proving there's under-reporting of Covid cases.

Scientists at Waipapa Taumata Rau, University of Auckland, are involved in the powerful science of wastewater surveillance. The monitoring is best known for revealing the prevalence of the Covid-19 (SARS CoV-2) virus, but can also detect norovirus and even Ebola.

Doctoral candidate Mackay Price, supervised by Dr Sam Trowsdale, an urban hydrologist and senior lecturer in the School of Environment, is working on an aspect of this wastewater analysis.

"Luckily none of my work is particularly smelly," says Mackay, promptly putting to bed the question of what it's like to trawl through sewage.

"I'm helping us to better understand the wastewater treatment plant catchments. So if we have detection in the wastewater, what that means in terms of the exact area it covers."

Mackay says ethical questions sometimes arose about announcing where Covid-19 had been found in wastewater. "The challenge faced by hydrologists and environmental scientists is how to communicate the information to the public and to decision makers to avoid issues of stigma."

As far as Covid-19 measurements go, stigma is not such a concern these days, when the virus is being expelled into waste catchments all over the country. No one's poo is sacred.

However, wastewater monitoring is used to assess other substances. Mackay's masters research involved identifying drugs in wastewater.

"There's perhaps more stigma attached to drugs, especially meth. If we detect meth in a certain community, how do we report this data so it doesn't end up that a whole town becomes known as 'the meth capital' of New Zealand?"

Mackay and Sam have published a series of papers on wastewater-based epidemiology, including one looking at the ethics of wastewater surveillance for public health. It discusses the implementation of national-scale wastewater surveillance and the data being used for decision making by government departments.

It says: "Consent is not typically required for wastewater surveillance, which can exacerbate perceptions of risk and undermine public trust. Seemingly innocuous communication of surveillance data can stigmatise communities and perpetuate inequities."

> *"The challenge faced by hydrologists and environmental scientists is how to communicate the information to the public and to decision makers to avoid issues of stigma."*
>
> *– Mackay Price, doctoral student, Faculty of Science*

"Traditional media outlets love a catchy headline," says Mackay. "The nuances and uncertainties of wastewater surveillance, a relatively new science, can be lost. If meth or Covid is found, what does that actually mean? And what are the appropriate actions?"

Mackay says while wastewater scientists will understand the finer details around results, people in public office may not, which means a lot of work needs to be done to communicate the information effectively. He observed this first-hand when he published a paper on drug use that was based on wastewater surveillance.

"On social media this got picked up in ways that aren't possible to control, and twisted into a narrative such as 'poor communities are like this, rich communities are like that'."

He says while scientists generally have a social licence to do the testing, the absence of consultation may mean some people feel their rights are being infringed. In the US, some local governments have barred wastewater surveillance over fears of communities being labelled 'drug towns'.

Mackay's research involves analysing maps of all the wastewater treatment plants across New Zealand and ascertaining which suburbs are in each catchment.

"There are about 330 wastewater treatment plants and ESR monitors more than 100. So they cover a lot of the population, at least 85 percent, I would estimate. I'm helping refine some of the catchment maps, which involves going through the country's treatment plants and checking 'is this suburb in the catchment or not?'"

Mackay's research also looks at the methods used in wastewater surveillance. "I'm looking at methodological improvements that apply to drugs or Covid-19, or whatever you're testing for."

Mackay's undergraduate degree was in environmental science and geography but he is enjoying the transdisciplinary nature of his PhD – epidemiology, science, geography and health.

Covid-19 has supercharged interest and skills in wastewater-based epidemiology and surveillance – primarily because of the pandemic.

"Wastewater surveillance has almost become a bit of a household name. Before, if I mentioned what we're doing to my parents and my grandparents they'd say, 'that sounds a bit weird and a bit smelly'. But later it was, 'oh yes, I heard Ashley Bloomfield talking about that'."

Mackay still has a few more years to go on the PhD but is looking to expand on his research in collaboration with ESR and New Zealand Police by combining data. "That's when we'll get meaningful insights about long-term trends, accounting for population size, which could lead to improved resources and decision making."

■ Denise Montgomery

Dr Sam Trowsdale and Mackay Price co-led a special issue of the Journal of Hydrology (NZ) *which documents work done in response to the pandemic.*

DYLAN ASAFO: A QUIET VOICE FOR JUSTICE

Law lecturer Dylan Asafo doesn't shy from sharing his opinion on health inequity, as well as institutional racism in the criminal justice system.

Read Dylan Asafo's opinion pieces and you may get the impression he's an angry man.

Well, yes, he is rightly riled by racial injustice, but talk to him in person and the thoughtful, softly spoken law lecturer sees being forthright as a means to an end.

Dylan believes speaking out is his duty, even if it goes against his cultural grain.

"When we call out injustice, as angry as we might sound, it's out of love. Even though it can be quite risky and scary to call out powerful people and institutions – to speak truth to power – it is something we do out of love for our communities because we want to see them flourish."

In 2019, Dylan, now 28, won a Fulbright General Graduate Award. He went to Harvard in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 2020 where he earned his Masters of Law in Critical Race Studies.

"It was a huge privilege, and one I'd never imagined for myself. It was the first time I'd been away from my family for longer than a month, so it was hard. Being close to my family and my communities is what inspires me and gives me strength to do this work."

The benefits were great. "Many scholars of colour go to schools like Harvard with a very specific purpose – to represent our communities and to take the privilege and skills that our degrees give us back to our communities.

"The experience opened my eyes to thinking radically about the law. First and foremost, solutions always lie within our communities. That means thinking about how you can use your training, and your role as an academic, practitioner or policymaker, to amplify the voices and aspirations of your communities.

"I was exposed to critical race theory at Auckland Law School during my undergraduate LLB, but it was quite a small part of the curriculum. When I learnt about critical race theory more deeply, and other similar racial justice theories in my final two years of my LLB degree, that's when I felt law was something I should pursue in my postgraduate studies."

Dylan's undergraduate degree was actually a conjoint in health science and law.

"I was interested in both and wanted to pursue a career in health policy at the Ministry of Health. I'm grateful I went with that combination because it's a pretty rare conjoint degree. Something I love about health sciences is that it's geared towards social justice."

> *"What health science teaches you is that law and policy have an important role in driving health inequities."*
>
> *– Dylan Asafo, law lecturer, Waipapa Taumata Rau*

He says a core focus in a health science degree is to address health inequities. Learning about the social determinants of health has been foundational to his views. "We look at how inequities are driven by political and economic forces, globally and domestically. I wonder if my politics would be different today if I hadn't done a health science degree."

Dylan doesn't shy from sharing his opinion on health inequity, as well as institutional racism in the criminal justice system. "What health science teaches you, is that law and policy have an important role in driving health inequities."

Dylan's passion for research grew stronger after studying in the US.

"It was transformative to learn how they have used movements within academia to serve their communities. I've never turned back from that.

"There are still opportunities to contribute to policy and practice. In academia, I can act as a consultant, and also work with lawyers to help them with their practice. I'm still able to influence law and policy in those ways."

He acknowledges the US legal system is hardly an exemplar for how our legal system should deal with racism, but says standing in solidarity with marginalised communities in the US is critical.

"From the outside, the US legal system might look like a complete mess. But something I learned from legal scholars of colour over there is that we have to always hope and reimagine a better world.

"Even though there have been, and will continue to be, setbacks in racial justice, accepting the status quo is not an option. You can grieve over the losses but you have to keep going."

Dylan says while there are contextual distinctions between racial tensions in the US and what's happening in Aotearoa, he does believe there is sustained racialised police violence here.

"Saying racism is not as 'big' an issue here is unhelpful, and is rhetoric often used to dismiss or minimise racist violence."

But has racism in the justice system improved since the Dawn Raids era, from 1974 to 1976?

"Well, it might be unlikely for the police today to carry out large-scale deportation raids driven by racist scapegoating as we saw with the Dawn Raids. But the police still continue to subject Māori, Pacific, Black and Muslim minorities to racial profiling, surveillance and violence every day, and still exploit every opportunity to arm themselves to the detriment of our people."

When Dylan first began studying law, there were no Pacific lecturers.

"It is so important for Pacific students to see a brown face at the front of the lecture theatre, so that they see themselves in the Law School and know that they are needed here.

"When I entered as a first-year student in 2012, I didn't see that. It finally happened when Helenā Kaho became the first Pacific academic to join the faculty in 2015; she broke that barrier for us."

Now he shyly wears the mantle of role model for Pacific students, with fellow Samoan academic, Associate Professor Guy Fiti Sinclair. There are around 1,300 students in first-year law and Dylan estimates around 200 would be Pacific students.

"It makes a huge difference being able to see 'yourself' in front of you and to hear similar perspectives coming through. It makes you feel as though you belong, and that it's okay to be yourself, and that you're able to achieve to the best of your ability."

Dylan and his younger brother went to Avondale College. His brother is working as a Pacific health researcher while completing his Master of Public Health at the University of Auckland. His older sister went to Auckland Girls Grammar and is training to become an orthopaedic surgeon.

"My parents believe education is important. I was privileged to have a mum with a university degree, who helped us in a very hands-on way with our homework and encouraged us to read every day.

"That was on top of having a gruelling job as a night-shift nurse. She made a big difference to my ability to pay attention and to achieve. But our parents also gave us the space to choose whatever we wanted for a career."

He acknowledges that many Pacific families try

Law lecturer Dylan Asafo says the attribute of humility often stops Pacific peoples discussing better wages with their employers. Photo: Billy Wong

to steer their children towards medicine or law.

"I'm grateful my parents were gentle with their encouragement, and open and flexible with whatever we wanted to do."

Dylan is also working to address socioeconomic inequality, which includes serious pay disparities experienced by Pacific peoples. The first report by the Human Rights Commission as part of the Pacific Pay Gap Inquiry, released on 19 July, provided disturbing data about the pay gaps for Māori, Pacific and Asian people, relative to Pākehā.

For example, the research showed that with all other relevant factors eliminated (education, job characteristics, geographic location), 73 percent of the pay gap for Pacific men and 61 percent of the pay gap for Pacific women, couldn't be explained. It showed the gap was likely due to barriers such as racism, unconscious bias and discriminatory practices in the workplace.

Dylan says the attribute of humility often stops Pacific peoples from discussing better wages with their employers.

"A lot of us won't demand what we deserve not only because of the racial power imbalances at play, but because being humble, gracious and generous to others is fundamentally important to us. Within Pacific and other Indigenous spaces, those traits and tendencies are usually reciprocated or returned with generosity.

"Unfortunately, in Eurocentric Western workplaces, that reciprocity is missing. As a result, many Pacific peoples are not being paid what they deserve based on their contributions – not only in terms of their official duties, but additional unwritten expectations around cultural advising and support that they're not properly compensated for."

> ***"Even though there will continue to be setbacks in racial justice, accepting the status quo is not an option. You can grieve over the losses, but you have to keep going."***
>
> ***– Dylan Asafo, Auckland Law School***

While Dylan feels free to speak out about this and many other issues affecting minority groups, he is concerned with how the right to free speech is constantly invoked to deny marginalised groups stronger protections against hate speech.

"In New Zealand, we have an absolutist commitment to free speech which distorts what many people think is ok when it comes to discrimination. Within universities, mainstream media and social media platforms, there's a bizarre preoccupation with protecting individual human rights, like the right to freedom of expression, at almost any cost, rather than protecting the lives and upholding the mana of everyone within our communities.

He says we need to shift away from that individualistic thinking. "Being able to express yourself freely is important, but hate speech isn't free speech. Hate speech is connected to hate crime and acts of white supremacist terrorism around the world."

Dylan believes New Zealand's hate speech laws are inadequate.

"Entrenched colonial racism plays a huge role in preventing effective regulation of hate speech. Pākehā continue to centre themselves and their rights to be racist whenever we talk about hate speech law reform, and that mindset needs to change for marginalised people to be safe and protected from violence."

Isn't it all a bit depressing?

"Definitely!" he laughs. "In my classes I say 'yep this Act [of law] is racist and will be extremely difficult to change'. And my students say, 'how am I supposed to go on with the rest of my day?'."

But Dylan reminds them to always be hopeful and encourages them to use their privileges as future law and policymakers to speak up, in the same way he was encouraged.

"I always felt out of place in law lectures and I wasn't a star student. But I was lucky I had tuakana like Helenā, Khylee Quince, Julia Tolmie and Treasa Dunworth who created spaces for students to be bold and challenge traditional ways of thinking about the law.

"I wouldn't be here without Treasa and a lot of other Pacific law graduates would tell you the same thing. She has worked tirelessly to build the Pacific programme at the Law School to what it is today.

"She is always telling our students that nothing is impossible, and told me to apply for Fulbright and Harvard even though it seemed like the most ridiculous idea at the time.

"When I started as a teaching fellow and doubted my critical ideas, Treasa encouraged me and reminded me that it's my duty and privilege to be critical and to call out racism in the law. I've never looked back."

Truth to power. It's what he does, just quietly.

■ Denise Montgomery

There's a consistent way of singing to babies.

BABY TALK

When singing and speaking to infants, people alter their voices in a way that is consistent across cultures, says a study published in the journal *Nature Human Behaviour*.

The findings suggest that the way in which humans speak and sing to soothe infants may have a common, evolved function. More than 40 scientists collected 1,615 recordings from 21 societies and used computers to study the acoustic features that differentiate adult- and infant-directed vocalisations.

Acoustic features consistently differed between infant- and adult-directed recordings. For example, infant-directed recordings had purer timbres, songs were more subdued, and speech had a higher pitch. When the recordings were played to 51,065 people from 187 countries via The Music Lab (**themusiclab.org**), a research site that taps citizen scientists, listeners could guess when vocalisations were directed at infants more accurately than by chance.

The senior author of the research was Dr Samuel Mehr (below), a Harvard psychologist who is joining the University of Auckland in September, bringing The Music Lab with him. (Another arm of the lab will be at Yale University's Haskins Laboratories, an institute for auditory research.) "Human vocalising for infants seems to be strongly stereotyped across cultures, but these effects differ in magnitude across societies," says Samuel. "For example, across all sites, people use a higher voice when speaking to infants than they do when speaking to adults, but the difference in pitch is much larger in some societies than others – some of the biggest differences were in New Zealand English, whereas other languages, like Hadza in Tanzania, had smaller effects," he says.

■ Full story: auckland.ac.nz/baby-songs

TOP TOOL TO STAMP OUT **BULLYING**

A team that collaborated with students and health leaders to reduce bullying on clinical placements has won an award.

Academics in the Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences were recently recognised for developing a tool to reduce bullying on clinical placements.

Dr Fiona Moir, Associate Professor Andy Wearn and Dr Bradley Patten led the project, dubbed Hotspots, which won the Collaboration category of the Safeguard New Zealand Workplace Health and Safety Award at a ceremony in June.

The group had developed a system for senior medical students to anonymously report bullying, harassment and discrimination on clinical placements – as well as excellence, inclusion and respect.

"A few students had raised concerns about unprofessional behaviour, but weren't confident about how to report it," Fiona says.

Around five years ago, she started discussing the idea of an anonymous reporting system that was safe and respectful to staff and students.

From left: Associate Professor Andy Wearn, Dr Fiona Moir, Dr Jonathan Christiansen from the DHB, and Dr Bradley Patten.

Students have clinical placements in eight North Island district health boards, in hospitals and general practices. "The purpose of the initiative was to identify outliers, so that leaders could take action as required, and students could know that issues were being tackled," Fiona says.

What followed was two-and-a-half years of consultation with academic and student leaders, the national forum for chief medical officers, and a Ministry of Health taskforce on professional behaviour which included representatives from other health professions, unions and the University of Otago. In that time, Fiona, Andy and Bradley led development of a platform for twice-yearly anonymous surveys, where students' personal details are removed, data aggregated and access to data strictly limited.

The surveys started in late 2019 and the leadership team was pleased to see improvements in areas originally identified as 'hotspots', as well as the ability to highlight emerging problems and nip them in the bud. Getting buy-in from student and DHB leaders was critical to the success of Hotspots. Now the team is looking to share the platform with other professions.

■ Full story: auckland.ac.nz/bullying-award and listen to an interview on bFM tinyurl.com/bfm-interview-award

STAFF CONTRIBUTIONS CELEBRATED

From left: Russell Baillie, Simon Neale, Anne-Marie Moore, Virginia Waters, Maria Baldoni, from the two groups recognised for B201 projects.

Brendan Mosely with Alison Berry, Vice-Chancellor Dawn Freshwater, Janice Brown, Nazhat Saleem, Emily Knight and Jovett Lopez, from the UHCS team.

From left: Peter Rachor, Vanessa Ronan-Pearce, Matt Broughton, Kirsten Beckman, Hayden Moore, Jessica Schneider, Judith Marecek and Sean Kelly.

Katerina Taskova, Jörg Wicker, Suzanne Purdy and the Vice-Chancellor.

The University's Recognition Dinner was held on Wednesday 13 July in the Fale.

The event, held annually, recognises staff who have achieved excellence in their work, teaching and research the previous year. It acknowledged professional and academic staff in the categories of: New Zealand Honour (two); international award or appointment (nine); national award (five); Royal Society honour or appointment (four); National Tertiary Teaching Excellence Award (two); valued contribution to the University (17).

Vice-Chancellor Professor Dawn Freshwater acknowledged the challenges of another difficult year. She focused on the achievements of all staff, and reminded the award winners and whānau that it was an extraordinary occurrence for everyone to celebrate the achievements of colleagues, together, in the same room.

"Remarkable" was also how she described the contributions made by all the of the nominees and award winners, representing their ambition, aspirations and commitment to the betterment not only of the University, but to our communities and Aotearoa New Zealand.

Individuals who received recognition for contributions to the University were Toby Batchelor (Sport and Recreation); Paul Boakes (Connect); Stanley Jones (Property Service); Jeff Kennedy and Jason Mangan (Digital Services); Jodi Salinsky and Faith Welch (Research Strategy and Integrity).

The other ten awards for contributions to the University went to projects, teams and programmes, including the Building 201 project led by Simon Neale, recognised for its bid for 'shovel-ready' funding, as well as to the design team led by Tristram Collett, for sustainability.

Other projects to be recognised included the new Bachelor of Communication Programme, Te Taumata Ngaio (Revitalisation of Te Reo Māori), and the University Health and Counselling Service project team for the Māori and Pacific Youth Health project.

See the full list of those recognised on the staff intranet under Pitopito Kōrero News.

WHICH WAY DO MĀORI ROLL?

An online survey to find out why eligible voters choose either the Māori Electoral Roll or the General Electoral Roll is hoping to attract at least 2,000 respondents.

Led by senior politics lecturer and researcher Dr Lara Greaves (Faculty of Arts), the survey is the first of its kind to focus on this aspect of the voting system.

"That core question of why Māori voters choose to register the way they do in the first place is something no one really knows and we'd like to find out," Lara says.

Only New Zealand Māori and their descendants can register for the Māori roll, and if a voter changes their mind once enrolled, they can only change rolls during the 'Māori Electoral Option', which is usually held every five years.

The main survey, which people can complete online in English or te reo Māori, takes about four minutes, with an option to answer supplementary questions. It's aimed at everyone eligible over 16.

"We're not too worried about getting a representative sample in this survey at this stage, we just want diversity," says Lara. "We'd also like to think this is a fun way to learn a bit more about voting, and helpful to find out where there are gaps in people's knowledge about roll choice."

The survey is open until October and can be found at **whichroll.co.nz**.

■ Julianne Evans

Full story: auckland.ac.nz/which-roll

FUNDING FOR **VITAL** RESEARCH

Numerous University of Auckland projects will be funded by the Health Research Council, including nearly $5m for a five-year study of perinatal brain injury.

This type of injury is the single greatest cause of disability over the whole of life and Professor Alistair Gunn (FMHS) and a research team will build on their work on brain cooling, to evaluate promising anti-inflammatory and trophic interventions to treat brain lesions.

Other funding recipients include Associate Professor Jane Alsweiler (FMHS), researching the use of caffeine drops for oxygen saturation in babies born four to six weeks early ($1.4m); Professor Stuart Dalziel (FMHS) for childhood asthma medications ($1.4m); Professor Rod Dunbar (Science) for immune therapy in lung cancer ($1.2m) and Professor John Fraser for a vaccine for *Staphylococcus aureus* ($1.19m).

Dr Hakkan Lai (FMHS) has also received funding to investigate the impacts of climate change, including heat exposure, on child health. Exposure to hot temperatures can lead to significant adverse health outcomes.

■ **Full list at auckland.ac.nz/recent-HRC-grants**

FIELD CLUB MEMBERS TO MEET AGAIN

This October, past members of the popular Auckland University Field Club will celebrate 100 years since the club's formation.

The 50th reunion committee, who all plan to return for the centenary celebrations. Top from left: Ralph Woods, Dave Court, Alan Bollard, Bruce Hayward. Bottom from left: Chris Patterson, Sue Woods, Bill Rae.

The 1971 field trip to Kawerua. Back from left: Howard Jack, Ken Bennett, Dave Gash, Chris Patterson, Malcolm Patterson. Seated from left: Adriana van Hees, Liz Dickson, Glenys Puch, Jean Ferguson. Front: Bruce Hayward

Few University of Auckland student clubs have endured as long or engendered the degree of friendship (or, perhaps, number of marriages) as the Auckland University Field Club (AUFC).

Now 'Field Clubbers' have the chance to reconnect, by celebrating the centenary of the club's 1922 formation. Although the AUFC closed in 1992, members were keen to have a centenary celebration of what was a special group for many.

Leading the way is 81-year-old David English (MSc Hons, botany, 1966). David spent several years on the Field Club committee and co-editing *Tane*, the Field Club scientific journal. Nearly 60 years later, like many other members, he remains in touch with Field Club colleagues.

"It all began with a botany trip to National Park," says David. "This wasn't a Field Club trip, but friendships developed, an interest in the great outdoors was unleashed, my fascination with native plants began, and I was encouraged to join the Field Club."

His first trip – to Anawhata – was followed by many more, ending with an exploratory trip to Kawerua in Northland in search of a Field Club hut, just prior to completion of his MSc.

At the end of 2021, an email from the University asking for a donation to help the fight against kauri dieback set David thinking about "doing something to give back to our taonga which had gifted me the subject of my MSc thesis".

He contacted Field Club colleagues to encourage them to donate. Among those David contacted was AUFC life-member Dr Bruce Hayward MNZM FRSNZ (PhD, geology, 1976). Supporting the cause, he commented that 2022 would mark 100 years since the Field Club was founded. The rest, David says, is history.

David and Bruce have spear-headed the organisation of a celebratory centenary reunion for Field Club members, to be held over the weekend of 1-2 October this year. It includes cohort reunions by decades – Sixties, Seventies and Eighties – and a chance to revisit Kawerua.

Another on the centenary reunion organising committee is Carol Gunn (MSc Hons, cell biology, 1984). When she encountered the Field Club in the 1980s, she first thought it was a camping club.

"I soon learned that scientific research was the real driver," says Carol. "Every term break there was a trip to somewhere exciting. I vividly remember trips to Kauaeranga Valley, Port Jackson, Whangamumu, Tapotupotu Beach, Lake Tarawera, Mayor Island, Great Barrier Island, Little Barrier Island, and many trips to the old hotel at Kawerua.

"We hired vans, packed old A-frame canvas army tents, and loaded up piles of food to satisfy hungry students for a week or a weekend."

Carol says the trips were filled with walks, adventures and lots of laughter.

"There were a number of people who met at the club, and who married later.

"I feel privileged to have witnessed some of the sights on these trips, including a giant wētā in the middle of the track to the summit of Hauturu-o-Toi (Little Barrier); sand packed with thousands of ancient Placostylus (land snail) shells paving the dunes of Cape Maria van Diemen; and giant chunks of obsidian on Mayor Island.

"But most of all, it is the people who have had the most enduring impact on me. Those shared experiences still bind many of us deeply and I'm really looking forward to the reunion to celebrate those formative years."

■ Christine Young

AUFC archives are held in Special Collections: ***auckland.ac.nz/field-club-archives***

For more information about the reunion, visit the AUFC web page: **auckland.ac.nz/field-club-event** 'Early bird' registration closes Friday 12 August but registration will continue until Friday 16 September.
To donate to the AUFC Centennial Fund, visit: **auckland.ac.nz/donate-aufc-fund**

Photo: AUP

MERVYN MCLEAN
1930-2022

Mervyn McLean, longtime teacher at the University of Auckland, pioneer ethnomusicologist and founder of the Archive of Māori and Pacific Sound, died on 8 July.

In 1958, Mervyn began a 21-year period of recording traditional Māori music around Aotearoa New Zealand, amassing some 1,300 items at a time when few non-Māori knew or cared about the existence of the many genres of sung and recited compositions. He was an ethnomusicologist before the word was in common use and before any such university courses were taught at Auckland. After a year teaching at the University of Hawaii, he accepted first a research position then a lectureship in anthropology at the University of Auckland, remaining there for the rest of his academic career. In 1970, he established the Archive (now the Archive of Māori and Pacific Sound), directing it in addition to his teaching duties to become the world's largest collection of recorded music from the Pacific.

In 1983, Mervyn co-ordinated a UNESCO-funded Territorial Survey of Oceanic Music to survey the music of parts of the Pacific experiencing rapid culture change. Ten surveys were undertaken in what was the first such project within Pacific ethnomusicology to incorporate the training of local co-workers in recording and documentation, as well as repatriation of copies of the recordings.

In 2007 a festschrift for Mervyn was published: *Oceanic Music Encounters: the Print Resource and the Human Resource*. By then, his eyesight had deteriorated but, at the surprise presentation of the volume to him at a local restaurant, he listened to pre-recorded tributes from the contributors.

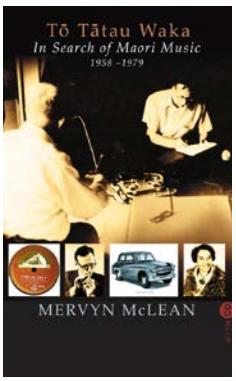
Throughout his career, Mervyn was keen that his knowledge and recordings be used for the future benefit of Māori. The titles of the first two of his ten articles in the journal *Te Ao Hou* reflect this concern: 'Can Māori chant survive?', 'The future of Māori chant'. Subsequent journal articles contained transcriptions of waiata he had recorded. Mervyn saw transcriptions as a useful aid to the learning of waiata and, in 1975, together with Margaret Orbell, published a notated and translated anthology of 50 waiata and chants in a book format large enough to be laid flat so groups of students could read it as they sang, aided by original recordings. Forty-seven years later, the volume, described by Auckland University Press as "the classic collection of waiata", is still available as an e-book.

For his tireless recording of Māori music and wide dissemination of the subsequent research results, Mervyn will be remembered with gratitude within Māoridom. For the meticulous documentation underpinning his publications, he will be admired by the academy.

His foresight and sheer doggedness setting up a pre-eminent repository of Pacific performing arts constitute an enduring legacy.

Moe mai, moe mai rā e te rangatira.

■ Richard Moyle, ethnomusicologist



Extended obituary: auckland.ac.nz/mervyn-mclean-obit

LECTURES LIVE ON

The University of Auckland Winter Lecture Series has run on campus since 1959.

Initiated by historian Sir Keith Sinclair, the series aimed to broaden students' outlook by bringing together speakers from a range of disciplines to address a particular topic over six to eight weeks; or, unofficially, to give students a warm, dry place to sit over lunch as the University wrestled with a lack of space and facilities during this time.

The series rapidly expanded to include a public audience and became a vehicle for expressing a university point of view on topical subjects.

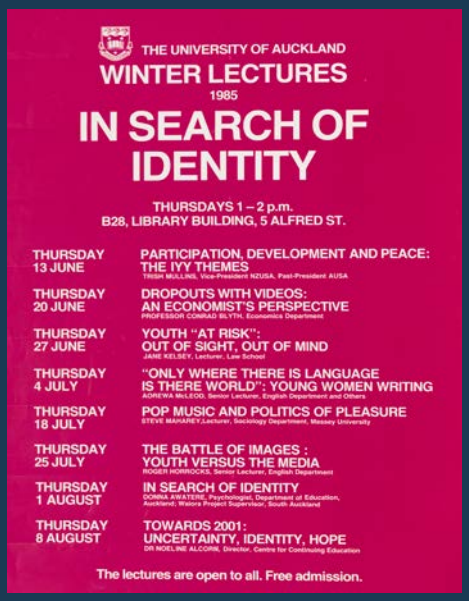
From the mid-1980s, the lectures were recorded on audio cassettes and duly handed over to the General Library for cataloguing into the collection. Technology changed over the years to digital formats and from audio to video, but the recordings still found their way to the library. Library holdings of these recordings begin with the Orwellian 1984 series 'Manufacturing minds: strategies for control in 1984' which includes lectures from Sidney Moko Mead, Graham Liggins and Margaret Wilson.

Each year a different theme was explored. Topics ranged from introspective and reflective – such as 1998's 'The University in the 21st Century' with the likes of Ruth Butterworth, Jane Kelsey and Roger Kerr, to covering broader themes such as 'Charms and harms of natural medicine' in 2013.

The cassettes have held up well over the years, having been kept in the Special Collections' Glass Case, but now all the analogue recordings have been digitised and the whole collection brought together into a single archive resource comprising more than 175 hours of lectures. William Hamill, who digitised the collection, says it was a pleasure working on the project and discovering all the great content. "Hopefully this will raise the visibility of these unique recordings."

Keeping with the spirit of a public lecture, the Winter Lecture recordings 1984-2020 are accessible for all to enjoy the wisdom of some of the country's pre-eminent academics and leaders. **See auckland.ac.nz/winter-lectures-archive**


Recording equipment back in the day. Right: A 1985 poster features some well-known names.



Emeritus Professor Roger Horrocks will give the University of Auckland free lecture on 23 August at the Auckland Writers Festival.

TOGETHER AGAIN FOR THE **ART**

The Auckland Writers Festival, postponed due to Covid, will take place 23-28 August, with a number of University creatives taking part.

How did an isolated, sports-mad country come to achieve such high-flying success in the arts? Emeritus Professor Roger Horrocks believes the answers are more surprising and dramatic than we think.

Roger, who will be giving the University of Auckland free public lecture at Waituhi o Tāmaki, the Auckland Writers Festival, is one of a number of University staff and alumni taking part in this year's festival, based at Aotea Centre from 23 to 28 August.

In his latest book *Culture in a Small Country: The Arts in New Zealand* (Atuanui Press, 2022), he draws on a lifetime of experience as a writer, filmmaker, opera librettist and assistant to artist Len Lye.

"The growth of the arts in this country is a remarkable story because it has involved so many obstacles," he says. "In a relatively small country like ours, it is hard for audiences to reach critical mass. Surveys show that almost all writers and artists continue to need a 'day job' or 'side hustle'."

Roger notes that while the pandemic has had a devastating effect on live performance, the arts became a rich source of entertainment and connection for communities locked away from each other.

"The arts were very valuable in supplying us with interesting material for reading, viewing and listening and also for helping us reflect on what was important in our lives."

Culture in a Small Country includes the experiences of 19 artists – writers, painters, filmmakers and composers – whom Roger interviewed for the book.

"My motive for writing the book was that the growth of the arts locally is a story of struggle much more dramatic than most commentaries have acknowledged. Also, because the computer age represents a new start, much of that history is now being forgotten or assumed to be merely 'a chronicle of old dead guys'. In contrast, I see it as a crucial origin story, a whakapapa relevant to all of us."

Roger has been a leading academic in the field of media studies in Aotearoa since 1967. He was formerly head of what is now the Department of Media and Communication at the University and has published widely on film, TV and media. A number of his students have gone on to become notable filmmakers or academics in media studies.

Always a prominent festival figure, Associate Professor Paula Morris will chair four sessions this year, including all three salons with the international writers. These include American screenwriter Delia Ephron, 2021 Booker prize winner Damon Galgut, English children's author and poet Michael Rosen and Somali-British poet Warsan Shire.

Also wearing the Waipapa Taumata Rau hat is Professor Selina Tusitala Marsh (Arts). The former Poet Laureate will feature at a Pacific poetry panel event alongside spoken word artists Aigagalefili Fepulea'i Tapua'i and arts alumnus Zech Soakai.

Masters of Creative Writing (MCW) Rosetta Allan, Angelique Kasmara and Sonya Wilson will be part of the festival too. Sonya's book *Spark Hunter*, written during her MCW year, is a finalist in the New Zealand Book Awards for Children and Young Adults (winner to be announced on 11 August). Other University contributors include Associate Professor Melani Anae, music lecturer Dr Gregory Camp, and the University hosts a forum about inequality on 26 August that includes alumna Dr Hinemoa Elder.

Nearly a third of events are free at the festival, including Roger's talk. He will speak on 23 August at the Aotea Centre from 5.45pm to 6.30pm. His lecture will be followed by the launch of the book, as well as the launch of a second new book, *A Book of Seeing* (Atuanui Press).

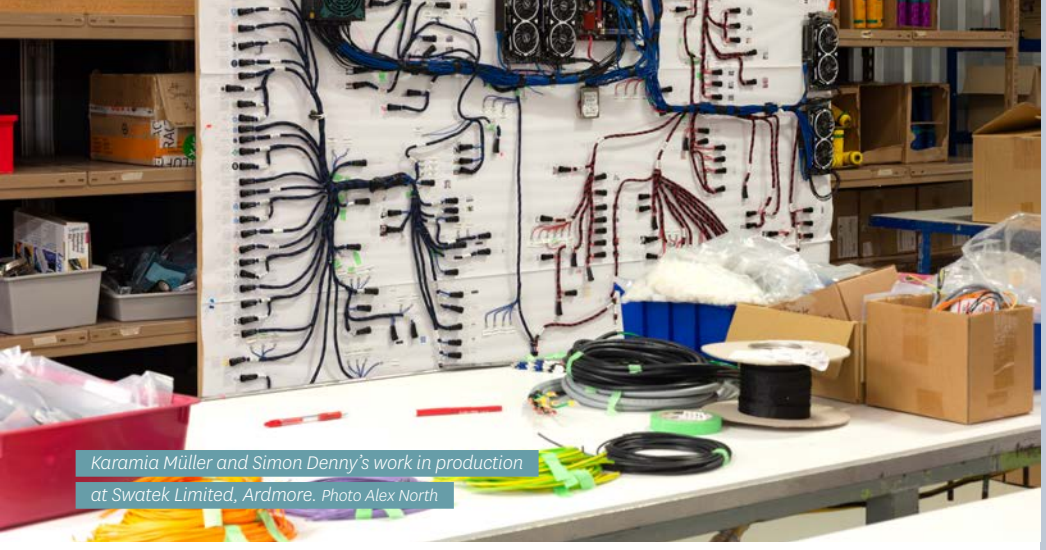
■ Julianne Evans

See tinyurl.com/AWF-2022

Alumna Rosetta Allan

Associate Professor Paula Morris
Photo: Colleen Maria Lenihan

Professor Selina Tusitala Marsh



Karamia Müller and Simon Denny's work in production at Swatek Limited, Ardmore. Photo Alex North

CONNECTED WORLDS

The *Creation Stories* exhibition, conceived by Dr Karamia Müller from the School of Architecture and Planning with artist Simon Denny, an alumnus of the University, opens on 6 August across two galleries.

It is the first collaborative project by Karamia with Berlin-based Simon and will exhibit across the Gus Fisher and Michael Lett galleries.

The exhibition includes new artworks by Karamia and Simon, as well as commissions that bring together work by a diverse group of international artists to Aotearoa.

The artworks created by Simon and Karamia themselves visualise creation stories by showing how commerce, sovereignty, technology and polity connect the Pacific to German-speaking Europe. Their art interconnects elements such as the artists' family trees, Samoa's political history, and colonial products made from Indigenous plants.

Dr Karamia Müller

Simon Denny

Overseas artists taking part include Daniel Boyd (Kudjila/Gangalu peoples, Australia), Sarah Friend (Germany), D Harding (Bidjara/Ghungalu/Garingbal peoples, Australia), Leah Jaynes Karp (US) and Ryan Kuo (US) along with many artists in Aotearoa. See the full list and more details at: **tinyurl.com/creation-stories**

■ Gus Fisher Gallery and Michael Lett Gallery (312 Karangahape Road), from 6 August.

Sabreen Islam

PUTTING IT OUT THERE

Law student Sabreen Islam has found a creative outlet for tough times.

She has self published a book of poems called *Spring Clean* in which she explores mental health, relationships, the psychology of abuse and healing. In it, the 19-year old second-year law and sociology student reflects on the bullying she experienced as a 15 to 16-year-old.

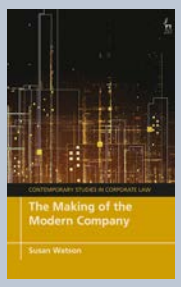
Sabreen first finished her collection in 2019.

"I didn't intend to share them when I was writing, but I started showing the collection to people over the years ... and a lot of people encouraged me to put it out there. It's always scary being vulnerable, but a year or so after I wrote it I thought 'Yes, it would be great if I could help others by sharing'."

The Muslim poet's advice for other teenagers experiencing bullying or in an abusive relationship is to seek help and support and not to be harsh on themselves. "Try not to be your own worst enemy when you're going through a tough time. Don't judge yourself. Treat yourself with compassion."

Full story: **auckland.ac.nz/spring-clean**
Sabreen's website: **sabreenislam.squarespace.com/spring-clean**

BOOKS



The Making of the Modern Company: Contemporary Studies in Corporate Law
Business School Dean Professor Susan Watson's book will be of interest to corporate law and governance academics, theorists and practitioners. It adopts an historical perspective to highlight the key features of the modern company. Read more at: **auckland.ac.nz/modern-company-research**
Susan Watson, Bloomsbury, ebook, $122

Language Teachers Studying Abroad
Professor Gary Barkhuizen (Applied Language Studies and Linguistics) presents a diverse range of experts and student voices in the field of language learning and teaching, who bring different perspectives to the experience of studying abroad in disruptive times. The book is part of a series at **multilingual-matters.com** Full story at: **auckland.ac.nz/language-teachers-book**
Edited by Gary Barkhuizen, Channel View Publications, around $70 (paperback)

The Last Fallen Moon
The sequel to alumna author Graci Kim's best-selling *The Last Fallen Star,* aimed at eight to 12 year olds. Protagonist Riley Oh returns in book two of the Korean mythology-inspired trilogy, now optioned by Disney for a TV series. Graci has a Bachelor of Optometry and is a former diplomat who lives in Auckland.
Graci Kim, Disney Press, available online and by order through bookstores now, officially on NZ shelves next January, $27.99

The Monkey and the Moonbeam
Architect and alumnus Jonathan Smith has written and illustrated this children's book, his debut foray into children's literature. It's about a monkey called NicNic and his adventures around the world in search of something just out of reach.
Jonathan Smith, Little Love, $30

PROTECTION NEEDED FOR TRUTH TO OUT

After four decades of service as a top critical legal intellectual, Emeritus Professor Jane Kelsey delivered her valedictory lecture on 28 July. Here are some of her key messages.

Jane Kelsey believes bullying has become endemic in the hierarchy of universities, with even senior academics feeling vulnerable when speaking up.

I want to focus on the roles and responsibilities of legal academics as active members of our societies. We have a hugely privileged job. Despite the creeping privatisation of tertiary education, we are still predominantly funded by taxpayers to research, teach and advance the wider public good within universities that historically have a quasi-constitutional function, equivalent to the fourth estate. Those responsibilities include to be repositories of knowledge, hold power to account as critics and conscience of society, and to act as catalysts for informed change.

I shudder at the daunting array of challenges that face today's scholars and public intellectuals in Aotearoa: from the existential climate crisis, structural inequality and poverty, and denial of women's rights to control their own bodies, to establishing an authentic system of constitutional authority and law sourced in te Tiriti o Waitangi.

At the same time, we face challenges to simply be public intellectuals. A recent inquiry into job security in Australia found casuals and staff on fixed-term contracts made up two-thirds of the university sector in 2021 and almost half (47 percent) of the University of Melbourne's 11,000 staff were casuals. In July a report, *The Elephant in the Room: precarious work in New Zealand's universities*, showed we are heading the same way. Precarious employment creates a climate of fear, bullying, self-censorship and de-unionisation, where universities' HR departments wield more power than participatory forums for academic governance.

In July, UK universities, including most of the 24 research universities that make up the Russell Group, rejected government pressure to withdraw from the race equality charter run by a charity that aims to identify barriers to success for Black, Asian and minority ethnic students. A so-called "higher education freedom of speech" bill debated in the House of Lords seeks to impose a new free speech regulator with fresh powers to fine universities and student unions for failing to comply with free speech provisions – code that redefines support for occupied Palestine as antisemitism, and justifies lazy attacks on "wokeness" and "cancel culture".

Not all academics embrace the role of the public intellectual, let alone the critical academic. But universities have an obligation to ensure that academics know this is an integral and valued part of our work and to create conditions that empower those who choose to fulfil that role. And they must ensure our well-being as we do so. It is also our responsibility as academics to defend this space by speaking truth to power within the University. Statutory references to academic freedom and the critic and conscience role of universities were hard-won protections in the later 1980s, thanks to Auckland academics Ruth Butterworth, Margaret Wilson and Nic Tarling, when Education Minister Phil Goff sought to take the universities to market.

> ***"Because talking truth to power is a risky and unequal encounter, those who undertake it need to be protected."***
> *– Emeritus Professor of Law, Jane Kelsey*

I've been a member of the University Senate since 1984, for most of my career, often in lonely battles with vice-chancellors in the chair; as a sub-professorial member of Council alongside academic icons including Dr Ruth Butterworth, professors Philippa Black and Jack Woodward; as national President of the then Association of University Staff in the late 1990s, where we temporarily held back the worst excesses of tertiary reforms, and established an Academic Freedom Award presented by Noam Chomsky.

Protecting that space has become increasingly difficult over three decades of managerialism, the downgrading of vice-chancellors from academic leaders to chief executives and employers, the privatisation of university financing, and the deunionisation of campuses. Collective governance on academic matters through faculty, Senate and Council is still embedded in the Education Act, but has been systematically marginalised by management hierarchies.

The union, once considered an integral part of university governance, is treated by management as the enemy in an institution that increasingly relies on precarious employment and where academic decisions rest with HR. Academics feel vulnerable when speaking truth to internal power under these conditions. Bullying has become endemic in the hierarchy of universities.

Restoring and upholding the public good function of universities requires leadership at all levels. Academics need to rediscover a collective spine. Protection rests in numbers, including through the union, and we need to perform our public responsibilities despite any gagging and loyalty clauses inserted in our contracts or imposed unilaterally as university policies.

As I leave after 42 years, I hope vice-chancellors, deans and others will treasure the taonga that is this university, the knowledge it holds and will create, and the academic and professional staff who hold the key to its future. Precisely because talking truth to power is a risky and unequal encounter, those who undertake it need to be protected. Too often, critical scholars who survive and succeed in academia do so in spite, rather than because, of our intellectual home. That needs to change. We require support for academic activism from the top down to create an environment that is free from fear and that fosters and celebrates the full diversity of our public good roles. I look forward to one day attending a vice-chancellor's public lecture entitled 'University leaders as licensed subversives in Aotearoa New Zealand'.

■ **Emeritus Professor Jane Kelsey, Faculty of Law**

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