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UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND
Waipapa Taumata Rau

UniNews

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Dancing beyond the spotlight

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Carol Mutch's personal thanks to her teaching home of 12 years

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Stanley Jones is retiring to his own garden, leaving ours all the better

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Selina Tusitala Marsh has a new book and naturally it's been to see the Queen **Page 10**

IN THE **NEWS**

A selection of University staff and students who provided expert commentary in the media recently. Let us know! Email: uninews@auckland.ac.nz.


Nikki Chamberlain

INTRUSION INTO SECLUSION

Schools are putting themselves in a risky position by installing CCTV cameras in bathrooms, Nikki Chamberlain (Law) told 1 News. While she understands the reasoning in terms of issues around vaping and bullying, Nikki says spatial privacy and informational data privacy could be at risk, with the potential for data to be inadvertently disclosed to a third party that shouldn't have it.

Link: tinyurl.com/RNZ-Nikki-cctv


Nick Gant

PROBING BRAIN DRINK'S MARKETING

Dr Nick Gant (Science) talked to various media outlets including 1 News about the marketing claims made by the makers of the New Zealand 'brain-booster' drink, Ārepa. He said, "The public probably thinks the product has been scientifically proven to improve human performance, which it hasn't yet. They've got some way to go before they have that level of scientific evidence."

Link: tinyurl.com/TVNZ-nick-gant


Sir Collin Tukuitonga

NO CLUB FOR OLD MEN

Associate Professor Sir Collin Tukuitonga (Medical and Health Sciences) told RNZ that a new Pacific Science Academy won't be a club for old men. It aims to support young Pacific scientists investigating regional issues, such as climate change and non-communicable diseases.

Link: tinyurl.com/RNZ-Collin-Pacific


Shanon Lim

CAR JOURNEYS PUT KIDS AT RISK

Children being driven in cars are exposed to more air pollution than those biking, walking or busing, says Dr Shanon Lim (Engineering). He carried out his research while working in the UK and told RNZ he hopes to repeat the study in Aotearoa.

Link: tinyurl.com/Lim-RNZ


Eileen Joy

SOCIAL MEDIA ETHICS

Dr Eileen Joy (Education and Social Work) commented to *Stuff* and RNZ on the death of toddler 'Baby Ru' and related social media discussion. After a number of claims of 'truth' were made on social media, she said there are ethical issues to consider when trawling people's social media accounts.

Link: tinyurl.com/Stuff-Eileen-Joy


Andrew Jeffs

SINKHOLE DISASTER

Marine scientist Professor Andrew Jeffs (Science) described raw sewage pumping into Waitematā Harbour as Auckland's worst pollution event in nearly 50 years. He was a key commentator on the Parnell sinkhole talking to various media outlets about the pollution's effects and the need for the country to upgrade sewage infrastructure.

Link: tinyurl.com/RNZ-sinkhole-Jeffs

THIS ISSUE

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STANLEY JONES: HOW'S THE SERENITY?

Head gardener Stanley Jones is retiring. *Photo: Chris Loufte*

After 14 years of beautifying our campus environs, Stanley Jones retires this month. The man responsible for our garden vibe answers a few questions.

What is your proudest achievement?
I'm happy to have brought a more contemporary artistic approach to planting design. I like the idea of treating a bed of plants like a box of paints and arranging them according to the principles of abstract design. It includes unity, scale, balance, simplicity, variety, emphasis and sequence as they apply to line, form, texture and colour.

If you could take one plant from the University with you, which would you choose?
I love perennials. Perennial gardens evolve continuously through self-seeding and natural renewal without too much intervention.

Are there any new gardens under way on any of the campuses?
The revamped Building 201 on Symonds Street will now connect with Wynyard Street, so that area is being landscaped and will connect the two. The building itself also has rooftop gardens.

What is your favourite special garden?
The perennial garden along the pathway next to Alfred Nathan House, which runs from Princes Street. It's not that old but has grown beautifully and there's always something special to look at.

Which do you consider the most spectacular plant at the University?
The tree collection. There are more than 400 trees around the City Campus and most are mature and more than ten metres tall. As well as being beautiful, they're important in carbon offsetting.

During lockdowns, who looked after the University gardens?
Our gardeners were able to maintain all the campus gardens during lockdowns. It was quite a peaceful time for them!

Does the University have any problem plants?
No problems, but as construction takes place some gardens can be lost.

Many of the plants tie in with our cultural history … trees planted by royalty for example. If King Charles visited, could he plant a tree?
Yes, we still try to get trees planted by notable people. Three vice-chancellors have also planted trees since the University was established.

What have you learned in your time here?
I've become aware when walking through the gardens each day that they reflect a sense of simplicity, modesty, naturalness, everydayness and imperfection, as well as silence and balance. Our gardens are subtle and have unobtrusive beauty. Engaging with the gardens is effortless and pleasurable, and more people should try it.

I always consider the gardens as part of the framework of the University urban scape so they should be in harmony with the buildings and hardscape while also promoting an atmosphere of tranquillity and unity. I wish people would look up from their phones and enjoy the gardens more.

What do you grow in your garden at home?
We have an orchard, vegetables, a perennial garden, a medicinal garden and a herb garden.

What are your plans for retirement?
Creating new gardens, painting and woodwork, as well as growing fruit and vegetables.

How should people nurture nature?
I'm an advocate for sustainable horticulture so I look at the best ways to optimise the health of your plants by using the absolute minimum of fungicides and insecticides. Also to practise less cultivation and to make sure you apply compost and organic mulch whenever you can. The best goal is to establish a community of plants that are self-sustaining and need minimum intervention.

What message do you have for your staff as you depart?
I would like the grounds staff to engage with more people through the likes of garden tours, exhibitions and articles. They do already promote the gardens constantly by making the community aware of the biodiversity and the importance of plants and their connection to life. The gardeners will keep providing beautiful garden spaces to uplift the spirits of staff, students and visitors and connect them with plants and the role plants play in their lives. This is all good to improve people's overall mental well-being.

What message do you have for people on our campuses?
I would like staff and students to make time to walk through the gardens on the way to work and to experience the peace and harmony of the gardens. Try it!

Anything else you'd like to say?
Life is short; enjoy each day as much as you can. Oh, and mulch!

Read more about the University's gardens at auckland.ac.nz/university-gardens

Dr Rowan Light takes a look at the 1915 plaque. Inset: how it was found in Old Choral Hall.
Photos: William Chea and Margaret Waller

HISTORY IN A CUPBOARD

A historic plaque, likely to be among New Zealand's first World War One memorials, has been rediscovered during the major renovation of Old Choral Hall.

The stone plaque was found by a contractor working on the site, tucked away in a cupboard by persons unknown. What is known is that the plaque was removed from the Albert Barracks Wall at the City Campus in 1983. It had been vandalised by someone (or a group) who took exception to the use of the phrase 'friendly Maoris' in the inscription.

"That phrase was quite common around 1915 when the plaque was created," says Faculty of Arts history lecturer Dr Rowan Light.

"By its very nature, it suggests there is another group of Māori who were not friendly, or in fact antagonistic, to the Pākehā settler population."

The plaque was commissioned in 1915 by the Auckland Civic League, a women's organisation founded in 1914 by civic leader Ellen Melville, with the goal of improving social conditions in the city.

It reads (sic): "To commemorate the union and comradeship of Pakeha and Maori. During the Great European War, this tablet was fixed by the Auckland Civic League, September 1915 on the remnant of the barrack wall built by friendly Maoris in 1848, after the burning of Kororareka."

Rowan, who also works as a curator for the New Zealand Wars exhibit at Auckland Museum, says there's a lot to unpack in its message. "It refers to both the First World War, when Māori fought alongside Pākehā in Europe, but also to 'the burning of Kororāreka' (Russell) on 11 March, 1845. This was when Northern rangatira, Kawiti and Hōne Heke Pōkai, with several hundred fighters, moved in on the town and cut down the flagpole in protest and frustration at the perceived failure of the British Crown to uphold Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

"It led to a day of fighting and, eventually, burning and pillage that shook the settler population and led to many selling up and heading south to Auckland or fleeing the colony. The fortification was built to 'reassure' Aucklanders and was built by Pākehā and local Māori under the supervision of clerk of works George Graham."

The barracks, apart from the west side wall, were demolished over the 1870s. Rowan says the early 1980s was a fraught time for Māori/Pākehā relations on campus following on from a group of engineering students and their offensive 'mock haka', and the 1981 Springbok Tour. He says after the plaque was removed from the end of the wall in 1983, it was subsequently forgotten.

"I'd long assumed it had ended up in a tip or been destroyed. We were blown away to hear that it had been rediscovered at Old Choral Hall."

Kaiarataki Deputy Pro Vice-Chancellor Māori Michael Steedman, says the plaque is an important piece of history, but also a window into the mindset of those looking to commemorate relationships at a time when they were fraught.

"You tend not to hear much about who the Māori were who helped build the wall," he says. "They were needed, they were paid for the work and they were praised for its quality, but consigned to the status of 'friendly Māoris'. Some were likely my Ngāti Whātua ancestors who were still in the early years of a relationship with Governors Hobson, Fitzroy, Grey and Browne, dealing with increasing land acquisitions by settlers while trying to retain a foothold in a place where they were increasingly ignored. I suspect the intent was well-meaning when the plaque was erected but 'friendly Māori' wouldn't necessarily represent the nature of the relationship at the time."

Under University policy, the plaque, which is cracked and has deteriorated to such an extent that its inscription is hard to read, will be moved and gifted to the Auckland Museum.

"The museum will preserve this taonga for future generations wanting to understand how colonial conflict shaped our local landscape, as well as the ways these stories have been memorialised, interpreted, lost, and then reinterpreted anew."

■ Julianne Evans

Watch the video: youtu.be/TvCz1NS2wvA

THE **FAST** LANE

The University's Formula SAE team is gearing up to defend their title at the Australasian F:SAE EV-Class competition this month.

The Society of Automotive Engineers' (SAE) student engineering competition is held in Calder Park, Australia, and takes place from 14-17 December. It's judged on the design, construction and racing of an internal combustion or electric race car up to 610cc/80kW. Last year, the squad triumphed over 22 other universities to be crowned champions in the head-to-head battle.

Formula SAE team leader, Thais Wright, stressed the importance of staying focused in the lead-up to this year's competition."Our main goal is keeping the mindset that we still need to do well this year, even though we won last year, and not rest on our laurels," she says.

The 85-strong University of Auckland team is made up of many students from the Faculty of Engineering. Every year, the cohort undertakes the ambitious challenge of conceiving and constructing a brand-new race car over the course of the year.

■ Hussein Moses

Sir Richard Faull *Photo: Sav Schulman*

SIR RICHARD HONOURED

Sir Richard Faull (Ngāti Rāhiri, Te Ātiawa) has been presented a korowai and tokotoko to acknowledge his immense contributions to neuroscience, and efforts to bridge knowledge with Māori communities.

The director of the Centre for Brain Research (CBR) has been recognised for addressing the cultural sensitivities between Māori traditions and neurological research. In the 1980s, he discovered that the gap in Māori participation in brain science was due to tikanga Māori, the ethical understanding that the head, including the brain, is tapu (sacred) and not to be tampered with. In the early 1990s, Sir Richard collaborated with Tainui kaumātua Eru Thompson and Te Kaanga Skipper, and Professor Papaarangi Reid, to develop a whakanoa, a ritual to lift the tapu. His efforts showed profound respect for tīkanga Māori, leading to the practice now being standard at the University.

"The CBR was built on the ethos of community engagement," says Sir Richard. "This means collaboration with neurological scientists, clinicians, iwi, and hapū … it's my tīpuna who are telling me to do this. We are the reservoirs of knowledge for the community – we're here for the people."

Sir Richard was presented the taonga at a ceremony in October. The handwoven korowai is adorned with albatross feathers while the tokotoko, named Aumangea (strength, leadership and wisdom), was crafted by master carver Rangi Bailey of Te Ātiawa.

Sir Richard says the recognition surpasses any academic accolade, describing it as "the most wonderful, special day of my life which will live on in my heart and in my whānau forever."

Deputy Director Māori of the CBR, Dr Makarena Dudley, says Sir Richard has a passion for Māori health. "Under Richard's leadership, we've created initiatives to expand Māori involvement and inclusivity. We have a Māori Advisory Board, two Māori PhD scholarships awarded each year, and careers within the CBR. This would not be possible without Richard – he is a rangatira in every sense of the word."

Full story:
auckland.ac.nz/richard-faull-tokotoko

■ Te Rina Triponel

SEEKING **METH TREATMENTS** FOR MĀORI

A research project has been launched to find effective treatments for Māori meth users.

Northland and Auckland addiction service leaders attended a recent launch at the Epsom Campus for a project to explore the most effective treatments for Māori meth users. Researchers from the University are working with iwi and community addiction services, with a goal of recruiting 320 participants, of whom more than 50 percent will be Māori.

"We are working with Māori to change their current over-representation in statistics for meth-related harm," says Associate Professor David Newcombe, lead investigator and head of the Department of Social and Community Health.

"There is no magic drug, no methadone or stop-smoking product, so we have had to come up with a novel design for our study."

The study involves following two different groups of methamphetamine users for two years. One group consists of methamphetamine users who choose not to seek any treatment for their addiction. The second is methamphetamine users who do seek help for their drug use.

Rates of methamphetamine use are not known for certain, but it is believed to be the second most commonly used illegal substance after cannabis, with highest use concentrated in Northland, Auckland and the Bay of Plenty.

Māori representation on the study's leadership team includes whaea Pamela Armstrong (Ngāti Whātua, Ngātiwai, Ngāpuhi) who works with a number of NGOs in Northland and teaches postgraduate classes at the University.

"The researchers will make a point of talking to Māori providers who are familiar with each area and with alcohol and drug use in that community. Those providers can play a kaitiaki role guiding the researchers, as needed," she says.

Mamia Baker and Eliza Leuluai from Whāngarei NGO Ngā Manga Pūriri spoke at the November launch about the devastating impact of meth on Māori whānau and their desire to give back after their own lived experience of recovery. They are among many kaitiaki guiding the researchers on tikanga Māori and offering treatments in a culturally safe manner.

"We have seen so much research done that doesn't necessarily include that Māori perspective or equity," Pamela says. "It's hard to find a community that hasn't been touched by meth and that includes Māori.

"I think we'll get some really good information out of this, in terms of people who are significantly impacted by meth. We will want to have some insights that perhaps will help us in terms of the way that treatment or support is provided."

The trial has been funded with $1.2 million from the Health Research Council. All participants' confidentiality will be respected.

■ Jodi Yeats

Associate Professor David Newcombe and whaea Pamela Armstrong. *Photo: William Chea*

"Do you have a talent for what you're doing, a curiosity, an intense rigour and the ability to crack a gag in the studio? I gravitate towards people who have those traits."

– Sarah Foster-Sproull, choreographer and senior lecturer in Dance Studies, University of Auckland

Sarah Foster-Sproull started out as a dancer, but has become a highly respected choreographer.
Photo: Billy Wong

SARAH FOSTER-SPROULL: BEYOND THE SPOTLIGHT

Dance lecturer Sarah Foster-Sproull found a creative way to overcome stage fright – she became a leading choreographer, allowing other dance performers to take centre stage.

In the world of dance, where grace and poise often steal the spotlight, one would seldom expect a seasoned dancer to suffer from performance anxiety.

But for Sarah Foster-Sproull, stage jitters have always been part of her story.

Despite her magnetic connection to dancing, Sarah found herself ensnared by performance anxiety from a young age.

"I would coil myself up. I had anxiety about dancing in front of people because I wanted to do right by the dance and the music and represent my family," she says.

It's been a decade since Sarah last graced the stage, but in that time she has carved out a reputation as one of the country's top choreographers. On top of working as a senior lecturer in Dance Studies in the Faculty of Creative Arts and Industries, she is the choreographer in residence at the Royal New Zealand Ballet and the artistic director of her own company, Foster Group.

Her passion for the art form and her commitment to the people closest to her are two powerful driving forces in her life.

"I only ever really work with my friends. I don't choose to work with people I don't know. I don't hold auditions. I'm not interested in anything more than asking, 'Do you have a talent for what you're doing, a curiosity, an intense rigour and the ability to crack a gag in the studio?' I gravitate towards people who have those traits."

In August, she unveiled her latest stage production, *Double Goer*, which made its debut at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Joining her were two of her closest friends, doctoral candidate Rose Philpott, and Tamsyn Russell, who took the lead as the show's captivating performers.

The intense 50-minute dance work, which received excellent reviews, featured two women battling for supremacy through acts of competition, agility, strength and stamina in a terrain of haphazard sculptures.

Sarah's artistic path has been profoundly influenced by the community of creative women she works with. She has strived to represent the voices and experiences of women through her choreography for as long as she's been doing it.

Sarah's friends Rose Philpott and Tamsyn Russell were the captivating leads in Sarah's most recent show,* Double Goer, *at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. *Photo: Murdo McLeod*

Double Goer delves into women's relationships with each other and the complex dynamics of sisterly relationships, embracing the emotions that encompass these bonds, from competition to familiarity, and from tension to comedy.

"It runs the whole gamut of emotions in an hour. Rose, Tamsyn and I made this work over three years, so all of the things that are bound into the work are also bound into our lives."

Sarah's career in dance began in Dunedin at a young age after being inspired by a close friend's involvement in ballet. She fell in love with the art form's connection to music and, at 17, left for Wellington and trained at the New Zealand School of Dance.

"I went as a ballet major. That's what I thought I was going to do with my life. Then I met a bunch of lecturers who showed me different ways of moving, which really made sense to my body. So, in my third year, I made a natural shift away from ballet and into contemporary dance."

After completing her studies, she headed for the UK, where she spent four years "pulling a career together". She juggled a variety of roles, including working for dance companies, performing in BBC radio dramas and even playing a small part as a zombie in the 2007 horror film *28 Weeks Later*.

"The biggest thing for me was being away from New Zealand and soaking in everything that London has to offer. I always advocate for university graduates to travel because it changed me forever."

Upon her return to New Zealand, she had two children, now 13 and seven, and achieved her dream of working with Kiwi dance icons Douglas Wright and Michael Parmenter.

Her transition to academia was influenced by her close friends and her own desire to explore the ethics of choreographic practice. Her recently awarded PhD explores the mechanisms and ideas that drive creative practices.

> ***"I wasn't previously aware of the complexity of my performance anxiety."***
>
> ***— Sarah Foster-Sproull, senior lecturer in Dance Studies, Creative Arts and Industries***

Meanwhile, she continues to explore the endless possibilities of movement and creativity. In October, she spent time at the New York Choreographic Institute, where she crafted a work with dancers from the New York City Ballet.

She misses dancing "tremendously" and next year has plans to make her return to the stage.

However, there's still one hurdle to overcome: performance anxiety.

"I never actually dealt with it," she says. "I can feel the nerves already."

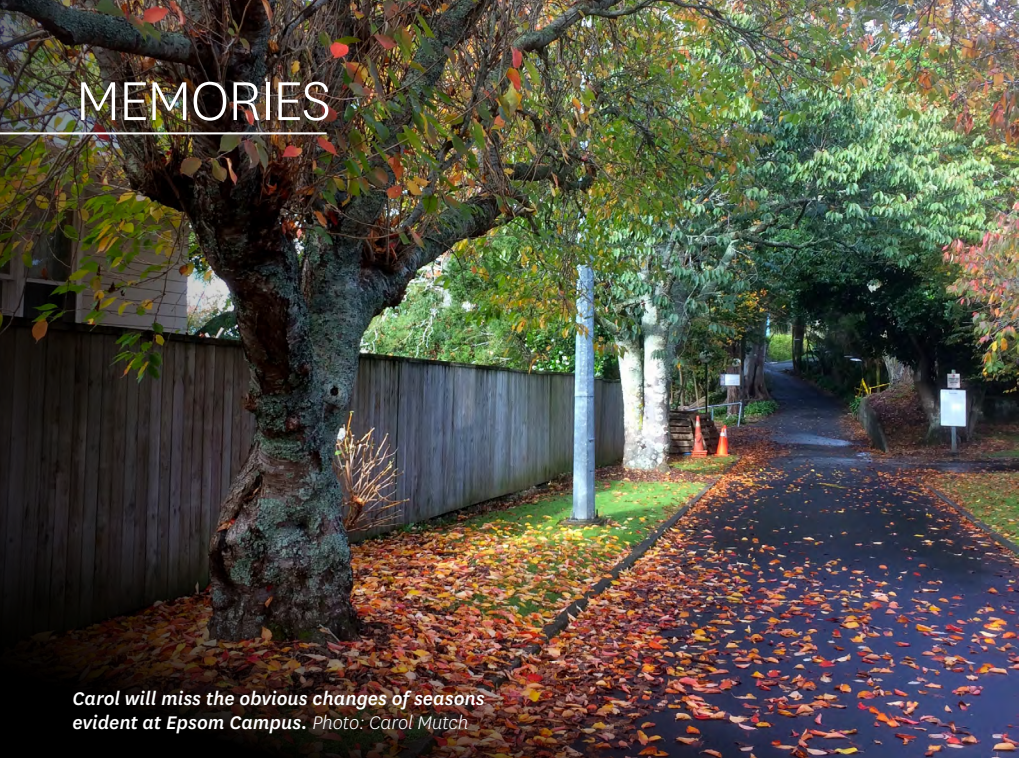
Yet, much has changed since her last performance, including her perspective on stage fright. "I'm a lot older now and wasn't previously aware of the complexity of my performance anxiety.

"I'm now more willing to address it in a way that demonstrates to my daughter that you can do whatever you want, in whatever way you want to. It doesn't matter.

"Just do things you really care about."

■ Hussein Moses

***Sarah, Rose and Tamsyn in rehearsal for* Double-Goer.** *Photo: Yin-Chi Lee*



Carol will miss the obvious changes of seasons evident at Epsom Campus. Photo: Carol Mutch

DISLOCATION AND RELOCATION

There is a flurry of activity on the University's Epsom Campus. From 2024, all our staff, students and programmes will operate from the City Campus, many in the new purpose-built B201, on Symonds Street.

I have often been asked how I feel about the move. The discussions I have had with my colleagues echo my feelings. We are leaving behind many memories; some warm, some sad, many mixed. Some of our staff were on the campus when it was the Auckland College of Education. Some have transferred from other parts of the University. Some were students who stayed on in academic or professional roles. Others, like myself, came from other institutions.

I am relatively new, moving from the University of Canterbury to Epsom in April 2011. I don't feel I can speak for all my colleagues, but I have been asked to share my story because it might connect with them, as they close their office doors for the last time, to reflect on their days at 74 Epsom Avenue and how the place has become part of their personal and professional histories.

I arrived for an interview for a position in the School of Critical Studies in Education in late 2010. I had come from two traumatic community events – the September 2010 Canterbury earthquake and the November 2010 Pike River Mine disaster. I felt completely dislocated. I stumbled through the interview and left the room convinced I would not be returning. To gather my thoughts, I went for walk around the campus, along the avenue of pōhutukawa towards Te Aka Matua ki Te Pou Hawaiki marae. I felt enveloped by the trees and comforted by the tūī. It reminded me that while nature may inflict unimaginable damage, she can also provide calm and healing.

I did return, of course, to take up that position and on my first day was greeted by Emeritus Professor Robin Small, a member of the interview panel who said, "I'm so pleased you are here."

I felt then, despite everything that had happened in the past year, that here was a place I was welcomed and could find solace.

People and place are my memories of Epsom. It was not all plain sailing, but the care and compassion of colleagues and the joy of teaching helped me navigate those first few years.

In 2014, I took up the role of Head of School for Critical Studies in Education, in part, because I could continue building a sense of community for the academics, professional staff and students who passed through our doors. People have come and gone – some through retirement, new positions or untimely deaths – but all have contributed to the woven fabric of the campus.

> ***"We are leaving behind many memories; some warm, some sad, many mixed."*** **–** ***Professor Carol Mutch, School of Critical Studies in Education***

It is with a little trepidation that I move to the City Campus – how long will it take to feel like I belong and not like the dislocated outsider I felt when I first arrived? But I am also excited to be part of the vibrancy of the City Campus, to work with colleagues from other faculties, to use the wider range of facilities and to move into new premises – our current buildings are more than a little sad and tired. I will miss the free parking and the proximity to Mt Eden village but hope that I will find other compensations in the new location.

What can't be replicated, however, is the sense of place. When you are so close to nature, you are keenly aware of the passing of the seasons. I will miss the pōhutakawa offering shade in the summer, the profusion of the spring blossom outside my office window, the autumn colours down the driveway to my carpark and the maunga on those misty winter mornings. I can't take those with me, but I'll have the memories and, if nothing else, the photos on my computer desktop for the times I feel nostalgic.

■ Professor Carol Mutch, Education and Social Work

MARAE FAREWELL

Tūtahi Tonu wharenui, the beating heart of Epsom Campus, marked its 40th birthday on 18 November. However, as staff bid farewell to the campus, Tūtahi Tonu will undergo a whakamoe, or deep slumber.

The wharenui, having served as a cherished gathering place, received a ceremonious send-off with a dawn ceremony led by past and present Huarahi Māori staff and students. They remembered the significant milestones of Tūtahi Tonu and its part in the unity and cultural richness of Epsom Campus.

Director of Māori medium education, Hēmi Dale, reflected on the non-traditional roots of the wharenui, which began with the building accidentally arriving on a truck. The late Tā Toby Curtis once explained what happened: "One day at the college, an empty prefab on the back of a truck meant for another site on the campus came down the driveway near our office by mistake. Taru said to me, 'That's our marae, e hoa'." (Ngāpuhi rangatira, the late Tarutaru Rankin.)

Despite the wharenui not having a whakapapa to tūpuna, as a meeting place it has woven together the mana of Māori, Pacific and tauiwi communities. Its intricately carved interior narrates the diverse relationships forged by those who learned, taught and served at Epsom Campus. With Education and Social Work moving to the City Campus, the dedicated kaimahi will delicately dismantle the carvings and taonga over several months to prepare them for their new home. The aim then is to unveil a revitalised Tūtahi Tonu in sync with Matariki festivities, symbolising a new beginning.

Te Aka Matua ki Te Pou Hawaiki marae with Tūtahi Tonu wharenui at its heart.

■ Te Rina Triponel

LINDA BRYDER'S **LABOUR** OF LOVE

Curiosity about what sparked the momentous change in New Zealand's maternity care from 1990, and its consequences for mothers and babies, is behind historian Linda Bryder's new book.

As a professor in the History Department in the Faculty of Arts, Linda's career has focused on the history of health and medicine.

"Since working on the history of Plunket some 20 years ago, I've developed an interest in the history of reproductive health, which is perhaps more contested than many other areas of history."

Linda's book, *The Best Country to Give Birth? Midwifery, Homebirth and the Politics of Maternity in Aotearoa New Zealand, 1970-2022* (AUP), is a major, meticulously detailed account spanning more than five decades.

"My original plan was simply to write an academic article on the 1990 Nurses Amendment Act, which 'emancipated' midwives. To me, this seemed an odd concept to apply to a health profession. The New Zealand College of Midwives, which had been set up just before the Act, also called their 30th anniversary celebration of the 1990 legislation 'Emancipating Midwifery'."

The 1990 Act, which followed intensive lobbying by home-birth midwives, allowed midwives to practise alone in the community without any medical involvement. Previously, from 1971, New Zealand had followed the Dutch model of home birth, requiring a doctor to assess as low risk any woman wanting a home birth, and to be available in the event of emergency.

Linda says the 1990 Act abolished that requirement and also allowed for experimental direct-entry midwifery training programmes – no prior nurse training required – to be set up, leading the College of Midwives to celebrate the Act as 'liberating' midwives from medical and nursing 'bondage'.

"The College persuaded the government that women wanted home birth but, as it turned out, most of them didn't. While home birth never exceeded about three percent, another 12 percent of births occurred in midwifery-run primary birthing units, which were set up from the 1990s with no on-site medical involvement.

"Also in the 1990s, the centrality of independent midwives in New Zealand's maternity services was cemented by funding changes (the Lead Maternity Carer system) which progressively excluded GPs from maternity care."

She says throughout the nineties, the College of Midwives developed what it called the 'New Zealand model of midwifery' which was opposed to the 'medical model'.

Professor Linda Bryder says midwives and other health professionals need to work as a team for the benefit of mothers and babies. *Photo: Chris Loufte*

> ***"The College of Midwives persuaded the government that women wanted home birth … most of them didn't."***
>
> — ***Professor Linda Bryder, historian, Faculty of Arts***

"It focused on the natural, allied to alternative or complementary medicines, and steadfastly rejected any suggestion of a hospital internship for graduating midwives, which it considered 'counter-productive' as it would undermine their role as guardians of natural birth."

The 1990s saw deep rifts appear between the College and some doctors, hospital midwives and consumers. This didn't improve once midwifery got its own Midwifery Council in 2004, which, as the College said at the time, "removed the final barrier to full professional autonomy for midwives" and allowed them to manage their own house.

"If anything, the rifts deepened," says Linda. "Disturbing results were reported by coroners, and health and disability commissioners who dealt with consumer complaints from 1996, and which were then quantified from 2007 in data collected by the Perinatal and Maternal Mortality Review Committee (PMMRC)."

This committee found that around one third of maternal deaths annually and 20 percent of perinatal deaths, within 28 days of birth, were, in their words, "preventable", and often a result of provider shortcomings. This included failure to refer to a specialist in a timely manner or to recognise emergency situations.

Linda also found mounting evidence that certain groups were disadvantaged, including Māori, Pacific and Indian mothers and babies, who were less likely to access interventions but showed the greatest need; this was reflected in poor outcomes charted by the PMMRC.

Apart from this committee, Linda says there was little academic research into the outcomes of the new services until the 2010s, when two academic studies, critical of the system, were published in international journals. Both were vehemently contested by the College of Midwives, who insisted that New Zealand's system was world-class and a model for other countries.

"What happened in 1990, cemented by a new funding system in 1996, has shaped maternity services to the present day, and my book is essentially telling that story as a political and social history; investigating policy changes and their impact on society," she says.

While the book is naturally of interest to health professionals, Linda believes it has a wider audience. "It's also for parents from that era, all of whom will have their own stories about this most important of life events."

As for the answer to whether New Zealand is, in fact, the best country to give birth, she says readers must decide that for themselves.

"But one thing I think this history shows is that midwives and other health professionals need to work as a team for the benefit of mothers and babies. I'm not the first to be saying it, but I'm the first to chart it historically in a book-length study."

■ Julianne Evans

***The Best Country to Give Birth? Midwifery, Homebirth and the Politics of Maternity in Aotearoa New Zealand, 1970-2022*, AUP, $60**

FROM **BIG HAIR** TO **BIG SUCCESS**

Selina Tusitala Marsh reflects on the genesis and evolution of her character Mophead.

It all started with big hair. Crazy curls that refused to lie unobtrusively low, a bit like their owner, Selina Tusitala Marsh.

The West Auckland schoolgirl who was constantly teased about her unruly mop by kids with more containable locks has had the last laugh. Her famous hair, and all the trouble it caused, has been the inspiration behind her two bestselling picture books for people 'aged eight to 80', and a third has just been released.

The University of Auckland professor of Pacific literature and creative writing, and author and illustrator of the *Mophead* books, which tell the story of her alter ego Mophead's progress from awkward, big-haired kid to New Zealand Poet Laureate, has more charm and advice to offer; this time in an interactive self-help form.

Wot Knot You Got? Mophead's Guide to Life (Auckland University Press) takes 11 'knotty problems', the distillation of a myriad questions Selina received from young *Mophead* admirers, and suggests creative ways of approaching them; with pictures, poems and stories.

She says the idea for the new book's format came after she started receiving notes, more than 2,500, "on scraps of paper and Post-its" addressed to 'Dear Dr Mophead' and asking things like, 'How do I know my poem is good?'

"Then I started getting questions like, 'How do I know I am good?' and 'What do you do if nothing is right, not at home, at school, anywhere?'

"So I had the idea to devise 'knotty' creative writing and drawing exercises to help kids loosen their knots," she says.

The book also reveals that Mophead herself has a 'big knot' which "the more she ignored it, the bigger it got".

"I felt that as the children were showing me their vulnerability, I would show them mine; so my 'knot' is in there as well."

She recently also offered to help with any royal knots. As a judge for the Commonwealth Short Story Prize in November, Selina received an invitation to attend the awards ceremony for the Queen's Commonwealth Essay Competition at Buckingham Palace, which received almost 35,000 entries and was hosted by Queen Camilla. In true Selina style, she managed to slip the Queen a copy of *Wot Knot You Got?* while explaining its knotty beginning.

Professor Selina Tusitala Marsh spends time in schools 'paying it forward' just as Sam Hunt did when she was at primary school. *Photo: Chris Loufte*

The exchange follows:
Queen Camilla: 'Oh, how charming.'
Selina: 'It will help untangle any knots you got!'
Queen Camilla: 'Yes. Very good.'

"I see myself as a kind of bridge between two worlds in these colonial spaces," says Selina, whose second book *Mophead Tu: The Queen's Poem* (2020) also involved royalty. It told the story of Selina's reign as Commonwealth Poet and her invitation to perform a specially written poem for the late Queen Elizabeth II and other dignitaries at Westminster Abbey.

"I call it 'colonialism 101 for kids', because the underlying theme of *Mophead* is really about bullying, and colonialism is a form of bullying.

Challenging themes like bullying are softened by the rhyming style of her latest book, which is filled with Selina's quirky, trademark drawings and some new characters such as the Gruffalo-type 'Yeti', (as in, you might not be able to do something 'yeti'). *What Knot You Got* owes some inspiration to both Spike Milligan and Dr Seuss, says Selina, but still retains its uniquely *Mophead* take on life; sparked not only from childhood bad-hair days but also a distinctive 'tokotoko' or talking stick gifted to each Poet Laureate.

"I became Poet Laureate in 2017 for a two-year term and it was a wonderful surprise. I didn't know much about the role, even as an academic in an English department. So I thought if I didn't know, the chances are others wouldn't know either. As it's the highest monetary award for being a poet in the country, the community needs to know it belongs to them; after all, they're funding it."

She says it's often expected that a book of poems is published after a laureate's tenure, but she particularly wanted to tell the story of how she was "the first Pasifika laureate, the second youngest and the fifth woman laureate".

And it was while thinking back to the investiture ceremony in 2017, where she received the special tokotoko, to which carver Jacob Scott had added a distinctively Samoan flywhisk made of coconut

fibres to honour that side of her heritage, that she had an epiphany about how she could mark her tenure and also serve the community.

"When I saw that tokotoko with its coconut fibre 'hair', I also saw a mop and that made me remember my eight-year-old self at Avondale Primary School, teased for being a 'mophead'.

"Here I was, afakasi, mixed blood – Samoan, Tuvaluan, French, Scottish – occupying the most prestigious role a poet can have. I wanted to explain how I got here and to honour how I was inspired by the possibilities poetry held for me; it gave me a voice when I felt I didn't have one."

Then she remembered the man she thinks of as 'our informal poet laureate', Sam Hunt, who was to feature in the first *Mophead* book, because he came to her school when she was ten and inspired her with his poems and distinctive way of reciting them.

"I needed to pay it forward to kids like me. You need to start planting those seeds early, as Sam did with me. I think the emphasis needs to be on primary and intermediate-aged children."

Hence, the lightbulb moment for her first book.

"I decided to tell the story about how I came to the laureateship, not through a book of poems but through a graphic memoir, aimed at children but accessible to all ages. I knew I needed to get the story arc down quickly so I started roughly sketching it out."

She had never illustrated anything before, but once she started, the images tumbled out.

"Suddenly I had about ten pages, starting with my mop of hair and ending with laureateship and the tokotoko. I got there faster with pictures than I would have with words."

Later she discovered a drawing app called Procreate, which meant she could go from paper to digital screen and keep adding layers.

Then came a trip to see AUP director Sam Elworthy about the idea of her writing a type of memoir. AUP had already published her three previous acclaimed collections of poetry, *Fast Talking PI* (2009), *Dark Sparring* (2013) and *Tightrope* (2017).

"I was just about to leave, when I said, 'Hey do you want to see this crazy thing I've been working on?'" Fortunately for future fans of *Mophead*, as well as the publishing fortunes of AUP, the idea intrigued him.

"Sam liked it, he felt it captured the zeitgeist of the nation at that moment, when Jacinda Ardern was just in her first term … just the whole 'moppy girl-power thing'."

That first book, *Mophead: How Your Difference Makes a Difference* (2019), won the Margaret Mahy Book of the Year in 2020, and was described by judges as "a taonga that should be placed in the hands of every child in Aotearoa", something Selina is especially proud of, being a Mahy fan.

So is another *Mophead* book in the pipeline? It does seem like the idea that could keep on giving. Selina says first she wants to finish her memoir of her time as Poet Laureate. And then, who knows?

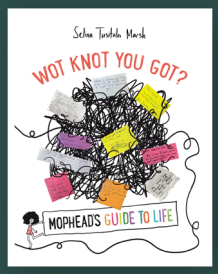
Meanwhile, Selina has a tip for anyone looking to buy her latest book for Christmas.

"Just make sure you add 'Selina' to the word 'Mophead' on Google or you'll end up at Plumbing World."

■ Julianne Evans

> ***"I see myself as a kind of bridge between two worlds in these colonial spaces."***
>
> — *Professor Selina Tusitala Marsh, Faculty of Arts and* Mophead *author*

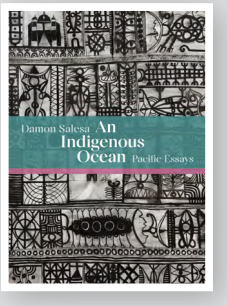
Selina Tusitala Marsh talks about *Mophead* on the Faculty of Arts' 'Research and Reason' podcast, on all regular podcast platforms. You can also watch a video of the interview at: youtu.be/BoYRDckpYP4



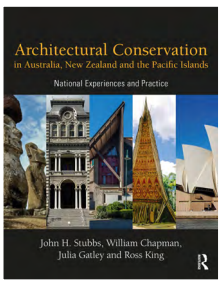
WIN! A copy of *Wot Knot You Got? Mophead's Guide to Life*, AUP, $30. Email: uninews@auckland.ac.nz by 13 December with Mophead in the subject line.

Selina in London in November, to judge the Commonwealth Short Story Prize.

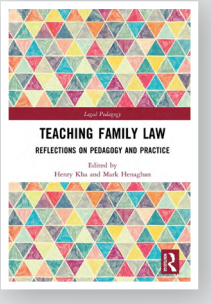
The Best Country to Give Birth? Midwifery, Homebirth and the Politics of Maternity in Aotearoa New Zealand, 1970-2022
Professor Linda Bryder (Faculty of Arts) relays the history of a momentous change in New Zealand's maternity care and its consequences for mothers and their babies. (See feature, page 9.)
Linda Bryder, Auckland University Press, $60



An Indigenous Ocean: Pacific Essays
Alumnus and former Pro Vice-Chancellor Pacific, Dr Damon Salesa, collates a selection of his essays on subjects from race and migration to Pacific studies and empire, bridging the gap between academic disciplines and cultural tradition.
Damon Salesa, Bridget Williams Books, $50



Architectural Conservation in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands
The fourth in a series documenting architectural conservation around the world. Associate Professor Julia Gatley (School of Architecture) is one of the authors, along with two from the US and one from Australia. It features essays from around 60 specialists and thought leaders on the whys and hows of cultural heritage conservation.
Eds Julia Gatley, William Chapman, Ross King and John Stubbs, $177, out 22 December



Teaching Family Law, Reflections on Pedagogy and Practice
Professor Mark Henaghan (Faculty of Law) co-edits this book written by legal scholars. It explores teaching the various topics under the heading of family law and is aimed at scholars, researchers and postgraduate students.
Eds Mark Henaghan and Henry Kha, Routledge, $229

FOREIGN LANGUAGES: A FADING ART

I was recently in Slovenia, a beautiful, small, central European country and truly a less-trodden gem. While English is widely spoken in Europe, I was struck by the excellent English spoken by every Slovenian we met. Language being my job, I investigated the country's government language policy.

Essentially, for the just over two million Slovenian citizens, Slovenian is enshrined as the national language. All Slovenian citizens must speak and study in Slovenian, all newcomers must learn it. Foreign media may be broadcast or displayed in their languages of origin but must be translated, dubbed or subtitled in Slovenian. The sizeable Hungarian and Italian enclaves in Slovenia have protected rights to use their heritage languages and both of these languages are taught in school. This did not explain the excellent English until I found that in Slovenian high schools, studying a foreign language is mandatory. English is one of around six on offer.

In New Zealand, media report more schools backing away from foreign language offerings and that careers advisers actively encourage students not to study languages at tertiary level. Arts degrees, in general, are increasingly denigrated as a waste of time. Languages are part of the arts. Parents facing financial challenges may well pressure offspring to study high school subjects that are 'useful' based on a perception that a university degree must ultimately 'pay its way'. There's a logical, consequential and short-sighted effect on Arts enrolments.

In the 1990s, the University offered language and literature programmes in German, French, Italian, Spanish, Chinese, Japanese, Indonesian, Korean, Russian and Māori. We also offered Scandinavian Studies, which encompassed Danish, Swedish and Norwegian, and classical languages including Hebrew. In many departments, students could study modern and historical forms of language and literature.

Departments also offered special courses in related languages such as Croatian, Polish and Ukrainian, which were all taught in the Russian department. There was talk of introducing Arabic. This accorded well with the Languages in Aotearoa New Zealand Statement on Language Policy (2008) under the section on international languages. It says, "New Zealanders should be encouraged and given opportunities and support to learn international languages, including those of New Zealand's key trading partners."

Now, all New Zealand university language departments are under threat. Like the students' parents, universities seem to model their academic offerings not on global value, but on the basis that programmes pay their way.

"There has been a general malaise with regard to opportunities for foreign language learning."
– Dr Keith Montgomery

Dr Keith Montgomery outside Ljubljana University in Slovenia, a country he says has a global perspective on language learning.

Logically, this University positions itself as a high-ranking South Pacific learning institution and offers Pacific and Asian languages to cater to our communities. But what about the rest of the world? At Auckland in 2023, Arabic never arrived, Indonesian and Scandinavian Studies no longer exist; Russian has been 'suspended'. The remaining language departments are, by and large, shadows of their former selves. Does this really matter in 2023? Perspective I guess. Should we focus inwards or look outwards?

In the most recent government language policy document I can find, 'Developing a National Languages Strategy' (2021), there was a ministerial briefing note to then Minister of Education Chris Hipkins. Hipkins had asked the Education Ministry to provide advice on how and when a national languages strategy for schools could be developed 'as a result of the Education (Strengthening Second Language Learning in Primary and Intermediate schools) Amendment Bill (the Second Languages Bill) not being progressed.

Its stated goal was to "provide an overarching framework for teaching and learning languages in Aotearoa New Zealand and set the direction for the refresh of learning languages in the New Zealand Curriculum in 2023".

Unlike the 2008 Statement of Policy, at no point in this document are languages other than New Zealand languages – English, te reo Māori and NZ Sign Language – referred to or even alluded to. Granted, the 2021 document is not policy, but it's clear that foreign languages aren't on the radar. The document states, "The development of a national languages strategy will set the direction for the refresh of the learning languages area of the New Zealand Curriculum in 2023."

Which brings me back to Slovenia. It is stated that its language policy is "to build a community of autonomous speakers with advanced language competence in Slovenian, with sufficient knowledge of other languages, and with a high degree of language self-confidence and motivation to accept language and cultural diversity".

Its education policy, reinforced by its national language policy, clearly preserves its national identity and culture and protects those of its minority cultures. In requiring foreign language study in its primary school system, neither is threatened, and Slovenia positions itself and its citizens to receive and to look out on the world.

While progress has been made in ensuring children have opportunities to learn te reo Māori, there has been a general malaise over the past 30 years with regard to opportunities for foreign language learning, despite our desire to produce global citizens and a need to strengthen relationships with global trading partners. From the lofty aspirations for language education expressed in the 1992 Ministry of Education Aotearoa through to the periodic reactivation of official interest in 2008 and 2021, foreign language study has steadily eroded.

Currently, what passes for New Zealand language policy positions its citizens to focus on New Zealand languages only. Surely our young people deserve and are capable of more?

Because, once any system for learning is dismantled, reinstating it is extremely difficult. Its place is filled, its resources lost and we're consigned to cramming a few unsatisfactory weeks of language learning via Duolingo, as a courtesy to locals in countries in which we may work or visit.

■ Dr Keith Montgomery, Linguistics, Faculty of Arts.

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