

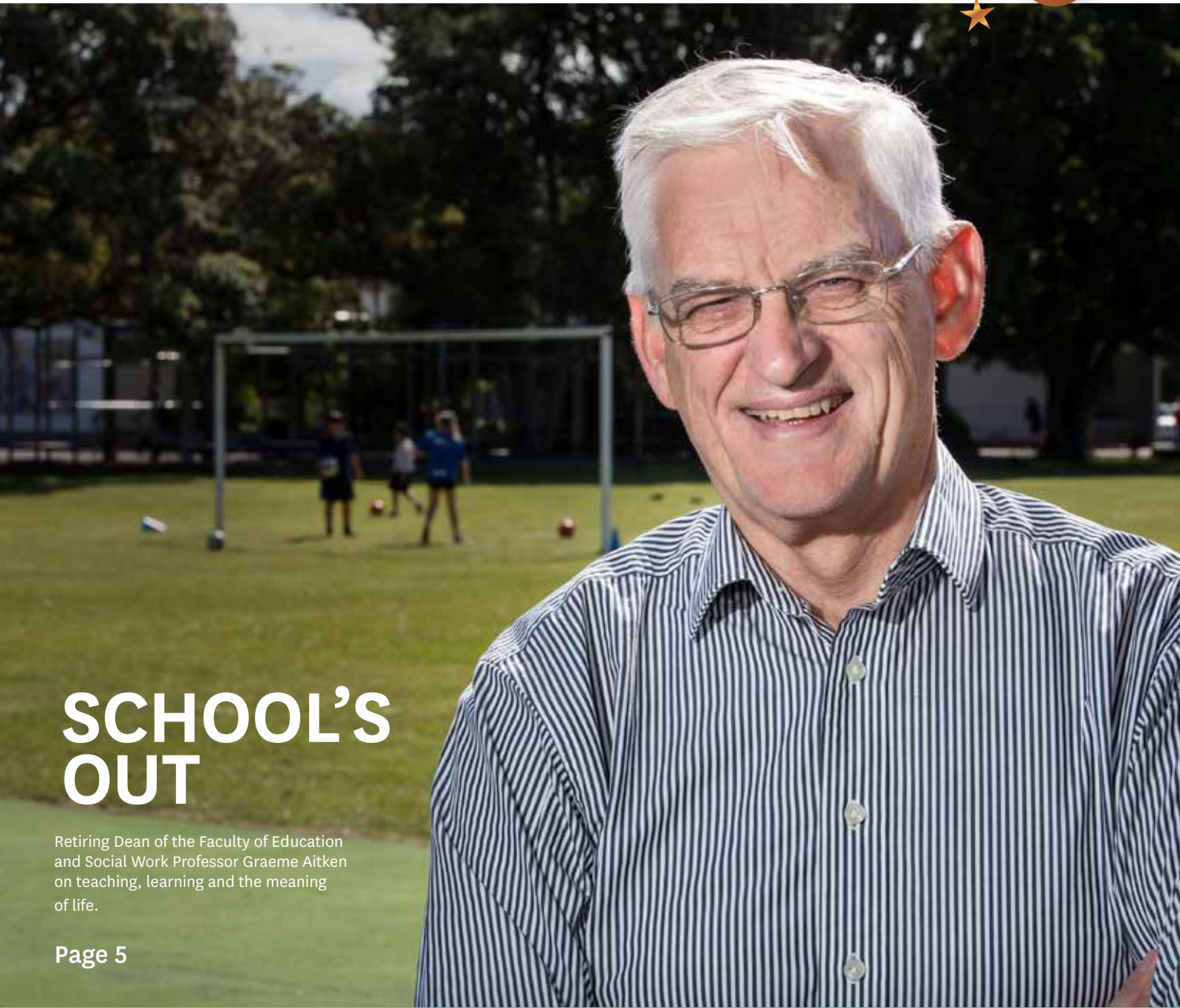


# UniNEWS

DECEMBER  
2017

The University of Auckland News for Staff

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## SCHOOL'S OUT

Retiring Dean of the Faculty of Education and Social Work Professor Graeme Aitken on teaching, learning and the meaning of life.

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### MUSICAL MICHELLE

This month's My Story, Michelle Wong, has been conducting the University staff choir for six years and will be working her magic again at two performances in December.

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### UNHEALTHY INFLUENCES

Marsden fund recipient Professor Peter Adams from the Centre for Addiction Research plans to look closely at the power of industries like tobacco and alcohol to influence policy makers.

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### TRIBUTE TO SUZANNE MITCHELL

The University sadly farewells longtime professional staff member Suzanne Mitchell from Tāmaki Campus.

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## NEW PROFESSOR WELCOMED

Welcome to Professor of Indigenous Studies Linda Waimarie Nikora (Te Aitianga a Hauiti, Ngāi Tūhoe) who is joining Auckland's Te Wānanga o Waipapa from the University of Waikato, where she lectured in psychology. The founding director of the influential Māori and Psychology Research Unit, Professor Nikora is the new co-director of Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga (NPM). Since 2016 she has also been co-theme leader of the Mauri Ora research theme for NPM - New Zealand's Māori Centre of Research Excellence (CoRE), hosted by the University.



## SIR JAMES WALLACE PRIZEWINNER

The winner of the \$5000 Sir James Wallace Master of Creative Writing prize for 2017 is Amy McDaid, pictured right with Sir James Wallace. Awarded to the student who has produced what judges feel is the best portfolio within the year-long Master of Creative Writing course, the prize will "buy time" for Amy to complete her first novel *The Long Peace*. The novel tackles themes of grief, anxiety and mental illness in a stylistically interesting way, telling the story of three intersecting lives over a nine-day period in Auckland.



## CHRISTA FOCHE APPOINTMENT

Congratulations to Professor Christa Fouche, who has been appointed Associate Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), as of 1 October 2017. Christa takes over from Professor Merryn Gott, who completed a three-year term at the end of 2016 and has returned to a full-time position as Professor of Health Sciences in the School of Nursing. Christa joined the University in 2008 and completed a term as academic head for the School of Counselling, Human Services and Social Work in 2016.



## CHAMBER MUSIC SCHOLARSHIP

Congratulations to the Korimako Trio, consisting of School of Music students Modi Deng (piano), Diane Huh (violin) and Tahee Kim (cello), who have won the 12th Pettman/ROSL (Royal Overseas League) Arts International Chamber Music Scholarship 2017. Worth \$50,000, the scholarship provides the winners with a five-week cultural experience in the United Kingdom, including master classes, summer schools, performing at the ROSL Clubhouse in London and the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, and attending concerts and operas.



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COVER PHOTO: Professor Graeme Aitken, outgoing Dean of the Faculty of Education and Social Work, on the Epsom Campus.

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# ZERO FEES FOR FIRST YEARS



The new Government has indicated that from 2018, domestic tertiary students will pay no tuition fees for their first year of study and will receive a \$50 per week increase in the student allowance.

The policy comes at an estimated cost of \$610 million per annum across the tertiary sector.

Given that the 2018 enrolment is happening now, there are a number of implementation issues that are currently being worked on, particularly relating to the zero fees element, says Vice-Chancellor Professor Stuart McCutcheon.

“One issue has to do with eligibility. Although the situation is clear for a student who enrolls in

2018 having just left school and taken no prior tertiary study, it becomes much less clear in other circumstances (e.g. a student who took a university course while still at school or one who has undertaken some previous study post-school but not “consumed” a whole EFTS). We understand that Government will confirm who will be eligible as soon as possible.”

A second issue, he says, is how the new policy will be funded. One option is that students could borrow the tuition fees, put them on their loan and then have that part of the loan refunded by the Government. An alternative would be for the institutions to be paid by the Government for the amount that would have been paid as tuition

fees.

“Whatever scheme is adopted, we will insist that it be simple, transparent and have low transaction costs,” he says.

The third issue is how the University should advise students at this time of uncertainty.

“The new Minister of Education, Hon. Chris Hipkins, has issued a statement to the effect that, ‘Prospective students and tertiary education organisations should continue to make arrangements for study and enrolments for next year as they normally would. This includes starting, or continuing, any applications for study and/or for student loans or allowances’. For now, that seems the best advice any of us can give.”

# BRINGING NEW VISION TO SAMOA



Distinguished alumna Erna Takagawa is putting out a call for old prescription glasses to give to people with vision problems in Samoa.

Becoming the first optometrist in Samoa, where she spent much of her childhood, she discovered firsthand that eyecare services on the island were far behind New Zealand.

Nowadays, the country has a full-time ophthalmologist and a dedicated team of eye nurses around both main islands, but access to glasses remains a problem, she says.

“Minimum wage workers in Samoa earn \$2.30 per hour (approx. \$1.30 NZD) and pensioners receive \$125 tala a month (approx. \$69 NZD).” These are the people who benefit from donated glasses, as well as children, for whom finding the right frames is difficult.

Donations are welcome either at Selwyn Homestead at 21 Young’s Road, Papakura 2110 (attn: Erna), or drop them into Alumni Relations and Development office at University House, 19A Princes Street, City Campus.

*University alumna Erna Takagawa conducting eye exams in her native Samoa.*



## SUCCESSFUL MARSDEN FUND RECIPIENTS

**Congratulations to the University's 31 researchers and research groups whose projects have won \$19.8 million in the latest Marsden Fund round, announced in November.**

Among the funded projects were: the origins of early life on earth; defending blood flow to the 'selfish' brain; a Māori archaeology of threatened rock art; building an 'atlas' of the human gut and the impact of marketing 'health' to children.

Thirteen research projects from the Faculty of Science received a total of \$8.8 million; among these, Professor Kathleen Campbell will carry out research to find early life in terrestrial hot springs.

Seven projects from the Faculty of Arts were awarded a total of \$4.6 million. These include Dr Alice Mills who will study the role of stable housing in reducing re-offending by ex-prisoners. Dr Avril Bell will pursue research titled: '*Tāngata Tiriti: Learning the trick of standing upright here*'.

Grants of \$3 million were awarded to four research projects from the Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences, including Dr Fiona McBryde who will investigate a pioneering technique measuring the dynamic relationship between blood pressure, sympathetic nerve activity and brain blood flow.

Grants worth a total of \$1.5 million were awarded to three projects from the Faculty of

Engineering, including to Dr Lihua Tang, for research into self-adaptive technologies to harvest electricity from environmental vibrations. Dr Xuyun Zhang will study versatile and efficient anomaly detection for fog computing applications.

The Auckland Bioengineering Institute was awarded two grants totalling \$1.25 million, including for research by Associate Professor Leo Cheng titled: '*An atlas of the gut: a framework for integrating structure to function*'.

The Faculty of Education and Social Work and the James Henare Research Centre each won a grant of \$300,000.

Applications to the Marsden Fund are highly competitive and this year the fund distributed \$84.6 million to 133 research projects around the country.



Dr Kristal Cain from the Faculty of Science was awarded a Marsden grant of \$300,000 to research the topic: *The heart of song; understanding the origins of vocal learning using New Zealand's missing link, the tipipounamu or rifleman.*

## LIFE LESSONS

**After nine years as Dean of the Faculty of Education and Social Work at the University, and 40 years in education, Professor Graeme Aitken will be retiring from the role next month leaving big shoes to fill.**

It's February, 1967. A 14-year-old boy is seriously ill with osteomyelitis and septicaemia in Middlemore Hospital; not even expected to last the night.

Also in hospital are his two brothers, Ross and Bruce, both gravely ill, their parents rushing from one bedside – and hospital – to the next ("bringing carrot juice") while still trying to hold down daytime teaching jobs.

The 14-year-old was Graeme Aitken, and fortunately for his wife Sandra, two daughters, seven grandchildren and the multitude of students and teachers he has taught so well over the past 40 years, he made it through, as did his brothers.

But why he survived in spite of seeing "the lighted tunnel" people describe in near-death experiences is a question he's been asking himself ever since.

"There had to be a reason, it can't have just been chance," he tells a packed theatre during his retrospective lecture *Ambition and its Enemies* at Epsom in October, "but you'll have to wait to the end to find out".

There's plenty of laughter and affection from the audience of family, friends and colleagues as he looks back with typical humility on a distinguished career in teaching and educational leadership which started at Waitakere College, West Auckland in 1977.

There's a black and white photo from that era featuring Graeme, long-haired and bearded, pointing out some natural wonder to a group of fresh-faced students while on a geography trip of the South Island.

"I'm first and foremost a geographer," he says. "That's what I did my first and second degrees in, that's what I was passionate about; I was on a mission to get my students to see the world spinning in their minds, to understand it through geography."

On that score he admits he probably failed, judging by some recently released results from a test that asked schoolchildren to place well-known geographical features on a map of New Zealand.

However, understanding the world through travel and experience has a much wider social benefit than simply passing a test, he believes.

"They've done studies in America that show

### IN BRIEF

#### NEW FELLOWS ANNOUNCED

Congratulations to six leading researchers from across the University who were among 16 New Zealanders announced as Fellows of the Royal Society Te Apārangi in November.

They were: Professor Michael Parekowhai (CAI); Professor Margaret Mutu and Professor Michele Leggott (Arts); Professor Margaret Wetherell and Professor Jadranka Travas-Sejdic (Science); and Professor Viviane Robinson (Education).

#### CAPE SERIES LAUNCHED

The North Asia Centre of Asia-Pacific Excellence (CAPE) launched its expert speaker series with a thought-provoking seminar on the future of trade between New Zealand and China in November. Rodney Jones, economist and principal of Asian macro-advisory firm Wigram Capital Advisors Limited, gave a personal analysis of the nearly 10-year-old New Zealand-

China Free Trade Agreement, highlighting the limitations New Zealand businesses looking to participate in China may face. To find out more about the series go to: [www.northasiacape.org.nz](http://www.northasiacape.org.nz)

#### SAVE THE DATE IN 2018

The 2018 ASPIRE Conference will take place on Thursday 12 April and the theme is ENGAGE! Registrations will open in early 2018. Stay tuned to find out more as speakers are confirmed by checking the conference website: [www.aspireconference.auckland.ac.nz](http://www.aspireconference.auckland.ac.nz) and social media platforms. Add it to your calendar and register your interest at: <http://uoaspire.org.nz/registration>



if someone can locate a country on a map, like say North Korea, they're far less likely to think military intervention in that country is a good idea."

Graeme was always going to be a teacher. "I was brought up in schools, my father was a school principal; it felt like the best way to influence the most people, and maybe, I thought then, that was the reason I'd survived."

And despite moving to teacher education at the former Auckland College of Education in 1992, he never lost his interest in being in a classroom, or out of it, enthusing students about the natural world.

"Even while I was focusing on the theories of teaching and learning and what makes an effective teacher (I came up with a list of 172 qualities!), I was still teaching part-time at Onehunga High School; I didn't want to give it up."

What makes a good teacher, what success looks like for students, what are the key things that underpin a good education; these are questions he's spent a lifetime considering.

"Education's main challenge is shifting the debates away from binary opposites; unhelpfully aligning ourselves with extremes rather than finding the middle ground that accesses the best of the extremes," he says.

Arguing about whether curriculum should be teacher or student-centred is a false debate, he believes.

"The most defensible position is that it should have elements of both, drawing on the experience of students but moving that experience into the world of new knowledge and ideas represented by school subjects."

So a better guiding concept, he thinks, is that curriculum should be "student-sensitive", led by knowledgeable teachers but respectful of the child's knowledge and experience.

Another false debate is whether teacher preparation should be "practice-based or research and theory-based".

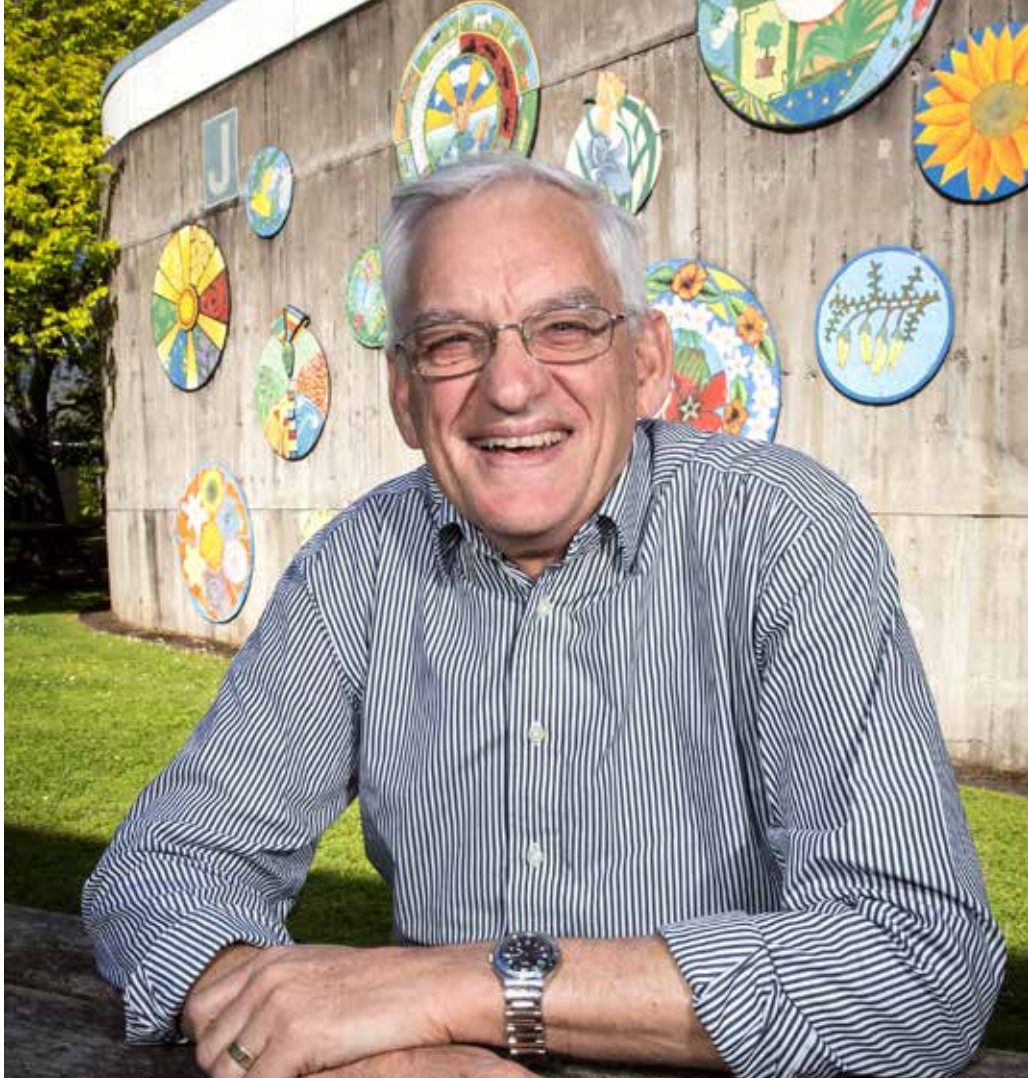
Despite educators lining up on opposing sides for years, he believes both are needed "through the integration of practice, research and theory".

Teachers in classrooms faced with difficult behaviour for example, need all the practical help they can get; 'tricks' to manage things at the coalface. But they also need to realise there's more than one trick in the bag.

"Teachers need to know what to do (practice), but also why what they do works or doesn't work (theory), and the other alternatives they might try (research)," he says.

Another ongoing debate is whether teacher effectiveness should be judged by the outcomes for students or the actions of teachers.

He says it's about the relationship between



Professor Graeme Aitken: "I'll miss the trees at Epsom, but not the buildings!"

those two things "and the extent to which teachers can adapt their practice to what students are experiencing to improve those experiences".

Cutting down wasted time is the crucial thing, he says.

"Increasing the time when students are interested and engaged in learning something new; not bored, not waiting. That is value."

He also feels strongly that judging success simply by exam pass rates and "continual assessment" doesn't give enough value to attributes like confidence, engagement and interest in learning.

The problem with putting all the outcome burden on teachers is it assumes students arrive on equal footing.

"Students aren't all the same, they don't learn in the same way or come from the same backgrounds. And context matters. Teachers are going to teach differently on Friday afternoon at 2pm for example, than they might on Tuesday morning."

Leading empathetically from alongside rather than dictating from the front; listening and being accessible; inspiring and supporting staff and students; these things have been the hallmarks of his leadership.

But despite the many who would disagree, the only A+ he gives himself is for his support of, and love for, his family and theirs for him.

"They're what matters; they're why I survived."

Fortunately, we won't be losing him completely. Next year, he'll be based at City Campus two days a week, progressing the Stem Online NZ project and carrying out subject department reviews. "A real chance to get to know the rest of the university."

He'll miss the trees of Epsom he says, but not the buildings; the people but not the crammed diary and endless events – and he's retiring the dinner suit.

■ Julianne Evans

*The Dean's role will be taken up from 2018 by Associate Professor Mark Barrow from the Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences.*



Graeme on a field trip in the South Island with Waitakere College students in 1980.

# MY STORY

## STAFF PROFILE



### Michelle Wong works in the University Strategic Programmes Office (USPO)

*Michelle Wong conducting the University staff choir at Maclaurin Chapel.*

#### Where were you born and where did you grow up?

I was born in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. I'm a first-generation Malaysian-born Chinese. The Chinese became established in what was then called Malaya during British colonial times as miners, merchants etc. My family moved there in the 1950s and has been calling it home ever since.

#### Tell us about your family

My grandfather was a well-known physician of Chinese medicine, specialising in the health of the heart. During World War Two he worked in Tung Wah Hospital in Hong Kong, having left his home in Guangdong province to flee the regime of Mao Zedong.

My grandmother was the daughter of a wealthy merchant. They met and married in Guangzhou and had my father there before escaping to Hong Kong. Later my grandfather got the opportunity of a job at Tung Shin hospital in Kuala Lumpur and took his family with him.

My grandfather suffered from coronary heart disease and had a heart attack when my mother was pregnant with me, but as a result of his own research into diet, exercise, and a particular herbal medicine he patented, he lived on until 89. I'm grateful he did because otherwise I would never have got to know him or formed the close relationship we had.

My father is an optometrist, my mother, who sadly died of breast cancer when I was 24, was a nurse and a published writer. My family still live in Malaysia, I'm the only one in New Zealand. I have two older brothers, both of whom went to the UK for their tertiary education, and three nieces.

#### What was your experience of school?

I did my schooling in Malaysia up to A-levels. I grew up speaking Mandarin, Cantonese, Malay and English.

I spent a lot of time singing, conducting and playing various instruments – mainly the piano but also the violin and the clarinet – for my church.

A huge turning point for me was being able to see the Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra perform. I knew I wanted to be a conductor of orchestral music.

For my tertiary study I was accepted into the University of Melbourne. I never thought about studying in New Zealand until I talked to a high school friend who had been to Auckland and said I should "go over and have a look". I checked out the University of Auckland prospectus and was delighted to discover there were courses in conducting.

#### First impressions of Auckland?

I have to say I wasn't very impressed with Auckland as a city when I first arrived 12 years ago. That whole area down by Britomart, for example, but now it's all been done up and looks great.

I boarded at Whitaker Hall where I met heaps of people with similar interests; four of us even formed a quartet and played chamber music together.

#### What did you study?

The history and literature of music for my undergraduate degree and musicology at Honours.

#### Was there a teacher who stood out?

I would have to say [Professor] Dean Sutcliffe – for his humility. He's a world-renowned musicologist, he taught me to have a critical opinion, to be bold and patient. Rather than regurgitating other people's ideas and responses to things, he was interested in my response, my ideas.

That hadn't been how I was taught in Malaysia so it was a bit scary at first. When I was looking for a supervisor for my honour's year research he said, 'Have you considered me?' before giving me three of his books to critique.

#### You've had a long association with the University, haven't you?

Yes, after my honours degree I was at a crossroads in my life; and then a friend just casually said one day, 'Do you fancy a job in the School of Music office?' I took it and that was the beginning of my ten-year career here. After working as school administrator for a few years, I went on to be an academic services coordinator at CAI and now I work in USPO as project coordinator supporting a number of strategic projects such as STEM Online NZ.

#### What do you enjoy about working here?

The sense of community.

#### How did you come to conduct the University staff choir?

About six years ago, someone from the choir rang the School of Music asking if anyone could conduct the upcoming carols in the ClockTower. I happened to be the one who answered the phone and I simply said, 'I can do it'. So she gave me a set of music and away I went.

#### Life highlights so far?

Attending a two-week conducting workshop at the Peabody Institute at Johns Hopkins University in the US. I've also performed with the Trust Waikato Symphony Orchestra as a conductor and attended a conducting workshop with the Auckland Philharmonia. My day to day work, I realise, has many transferable skills to conducting; you have to be organised and good at managing and encouraging people.

#### Favourite composer?

It's hard to name one, but Schubert and Brahms would have to be at the top of my list.

#### Future dream?

To do a master's degree in orchestral conducting in Europe.

# DANGERS OF AVOIDING CONFLICT

**Directly engaging in conflict, even when it involves anger and hostility, helps resolve problems and improves relationships, writes Associate Professor Nickola Overall from the School of Psychology**

How then can parents engage in conflict which does not harm their children? A new Royal Society of NZ Marsden-funded research collaboration between myself, Annette Henderson and Elizabeth Peterson in the School of Psychology tackles this question.

New Zealand ranks at the bottom of the EU/OECD in child wellbeing, including psychological health, peer bullying, and family conflict.

Improving child wellbeing hinges on creating healthy families and therefore it is crucial we identify how to manage family conflict.

Unmanaged, conflict within families harms parents' psychological and physical health, and the health, wellbeing and development of their children. Children develop poorer social skills, for example showing aggression and lower prosocial behaviour with their peers. But family conflict is inevitable; avoiding it often makes situations worse, and it can be an important training ground for managing conflict across all domains in life.

What we are showing with our research, which has been controversial, is that beneficial conflict includes not only positive behaviour, such as reasoning and problem solving, but also negative behaviour, such as anger and criticism, traditionally viewed as damaging. The reason is, both forms of conflict engagement show commitment to resolving serious problems, produce greater problem improvement, and thus sustain relationships across time.

By contrast, minimising conflict using affection and humour, or avoiding it by withdrawing and suppressing negative emotions, leaves problems unaddressed and thus relationships are undermined across time.

To date, the benefits of conflict engagement have targeted adult outcomes without taking into account the harm parental conflict engagement can have for children – for example, greater emotional insecurity, anxiety and depression. Yet, parents' conflict avoidance and disengagement are also detrimental to children and can bring greater behavioural problems such as poorer peer functioning, and lower health and wellbeing.

We propose the key to realising the benefits, but reducing the costs of conflict engagement for

both adults and children, is conflict recovery – that is, rebounding emotionally and re-establishing intimacy after conflict to achieve other important goals, such as parenting. The harmful effects of conflict between parents on children are most evident when it ends with continued negativity or avoidance rather than intimacy and resolution.

We're conducting a comprehensive longitudinal family study to test the pivotal role conflict recovery should play in determining whether inter-parental conflict has benefits for both adults and children.

For adults, conflict engagement and recovery are jointly necessary to sustain relationship quality. It's healthy to engage with, and address, the problem and then take things back to normal, alleviating any ongoing stress and restoring intimacy and security in the aftermath.

Our programme is testing whether conflict engagement combined with conflict recovery reveals family security in the face of inevitable conflict and fosters direct problem solving (vs. avoidance, helplessness) and adaptive emotion expression and regulation (vs. suppression, dysregulation) in children.

We believe this new research within the School of Psychology offers valuable new insight into cultivating family wellbeing by exposing the role of conflict recovery in sustaining inter-parental relationships and enriching children's development.



*Associate Professor Nickola Overall: leading a research collaboration on the benefits of engaging in direct conflict in family situations.*

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

## TPPA LITMUS TEST

Professor Jane Kelsey (Law) was all across the media commenting on the issues with the TPPA, saying it was the "litmus test" for whether Labour intends to keep its word.

## EXAM POWER

In an opinion piece published in the *NZ Herald*, Dr Mike Lee (Business) argued that exams are a powerful teaching tool, as well as a "sorting" tool.

## EARTHQUAKE-PROOF

In *The Spinoff*, Civil & Environmental Engineering lecturer Dima Dizhur explained how a new and cheap method could be used to make NZ buildings more earthquake-proof.

## COLLECTIVE ACTION

In Science, Psychology lecturer Danny Osborne chatted on Radio NZ's *Nine to Noon* about his work on collective action after being awarded the early career research award in social sciences from the Royal Society of New Zealand, Te Apārangi.

## SEXISM IN SCIENCE

Also on Radio NZ, Associate Professor Nicola Gaston from Physics talked about sexism in science, while senior lecturer Cate Macinnis-Ng from Biological Sciences wrote in *North & South* about the implications, particularly for women scientists, of new proposals to measure "impact" in science.

## AUSTRALIAN MARRIAGE

In an opinion piece in *Newsroom*, Dr Maxine Lewis (Classics and Ancient History) believes the Australian government's same-sex marriage survey has harmed the LGBTIQI community and wider society.

## MĀORI HEALTH

Also in *Newsroom*, Associate Professor Papaarangi Reid (Te Kupenga Hauora Māori) talked about medical school researchers' call to colleagues to give Māori health the consideration it needs.

Associate Professor Jennifer Curtin: inaugural director of the Public Policy Institute and leader of the Master of Public Policy programme. Photo: Fairfax Media NZ.

# TAKING ON THE BIG QUESTIONS

**Focused on fostering independent, critical research on key policy issues affecting New Zealand, the Asia-Pacific and further afield, the University's Public Policy Institute (PPI) was launched in November.**

Led by inaugural director Associate Professor Jennifer Curtin (Politics and International Relations), the new Institute is modelled on similar institutions overseas and has been developed at Auckland with input from the University's eight faculties.

"We can bring together research teams across faculties to produce evidence-informed knowledge that addresses policy agendas and has a real impact," says Jennifer, who also teaches the Master of Public Policy (MPP), which is now located at the new Institute.

She says there's a strong desire by governments to see academic research have a more direct effect for the public.

"The Institute's a great opportunity for policy makers, influencers and media to get information from sources other than those already closely connected to government and the bureaucracy."

She believes the University has a wide range of rich talent and sees the Institute acting as a conduit, to put researchers together with Government and other agencies.

Public policy postgraduate students, a third of whom are from overseas, will be based at the Institute's headquarters on Grafton Road, City Campus.

"Through the PPI they will continue to engage with researchers and professionals with policy expertise from the government, non-profit and private sectors, to address challenging policy

questions," says Jennifer.

This builds on the successful internship programme the University offers Masters of Public Policy students. The MPP since 2009 and now has 82 graduates around the world, a number of whom have expressed interest in this new initiative.

"Our graduates are working in a range of places from central Government and Auckland Council to corporates, non-government organisations and independent think tanks," says Jennifer.

She hopes the Institute, which is an exciting first for the University, will attract scholars who are interested in doing work "outside of their journal articles".

A key attraction, she says, is its secure data lab, which provides researchers with access to Statistics New Zealand's Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI). The IDI combines records from across many government agencies to create a powerful and unique source of data.

The Institute's research team of Dr Gerard Cotterell, research manager; Dr Suzanne Woodward, knowledge translation specialist; and research analyst Celestyna Galicki has already begun working on several research projects with government agencies and non-government organisations, and aims to expand its range of partnerships both within New Zealand and internationally.

It won't be afraid of taking on complex and often controversial issues like: liveability; ecology and infrastructure; wellbeing across generations; wealth, poverty and inequality; diversity and justice in a bicultural society; science for policy;

and global policy and foreign affairs.

Jennifer's own research has focused on the intersection of politics and policy, and how elections and coalitions influence policy outputs and party support in New Zealand and internationally. She is also an avid researcher of sport, politics and policy.

However, her primary research engages with the relationship between women's political leadership, gendered policy analysis and policy outcomes of relevance to gender equality.

Her current projects examine the ministerial careers of women across countries and what this means for policy, with a specific focus most recently on gender budgeting initiatives.

A regular media commentator on Australasian politics, Jennifer is a frequent guest on TVNZ's Sunday current affairs programme Q+A, and a range of other prominent media, especially leading up to elections.

The Institute's website, [www.ppi.auckland.ac.nz](http://www.ppi.auckland.ac.nz), is up and running, publishing a series of policy briefs across a range of topics; among them, measuring and managing health system performance, locating methamphetamine manufacture in New Zealand, managing migration in big cities, and climate change.

A database of affiliated policy scholars will also be housed on the website and a blog called 'Auckland Policy Commons' has been launched as a more informal forum for evidence-informed debate, and the sharing of ideas, critiques and strategies.

■ Julianne Evans



## A TRIBUTE TO SUZANNE MITCHELL

Suzanne Mitchell, communications and events manager at the Tāmaki Innovation Campus, died at Mercy Hospice, St Mary's Bay, Auckland on 17 November 2017, aged 55.

Suzanne was a highly valuable, respected and popular member of the campus management team at Tāmaki.

Appointed in 2002 as personal assistant to Professor Ralph Cooney, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Tāmaki, she took up the Communications role in 2007 and made it her own; connecting warmly with the whole Tāmaki community, co-locators, and the surrounding neighbourhood, including the Glen Innes Citizens Advice Bureau with whom she organised an annual Food Bank collection as part of the Tāmaki Campus Christmas function.

Clever, creative and artistic, Suzanne initiated and oversaw the development of the Tāmaki Campus intranet as well as crafting the quarterly Tāmaki Update newsletter featuring stories of student and staff successes and campus events; elevating the profile of the campus and its significant contributions to the University.

These stories were a key ingredient of maintaining business as usual during an extended period of change at Tāmaki.

In 2013, Suzanne was seconded to Property Services for a brief period to help them establish their own newsletter.

Persuasive and charming, Suzanne was also persistent, convincing speakers, including the US Ambassador Mark Gilbert, to contribute to the popular Head of Campus seminar and networking series.

Among her many efforts for the University, she served on the ASPIRE organising committee; initiated, organised and sponsored the "Film Evenings at Tāmaki" and hosted gatherings and events for the University executive assistants at Tāmaki as well as organising, advocating for, nourishing and enthusiastically getting involved in the establishment of the Tāmaki Campus vegetable garden.

In the words of Daniela Rovere, Tāmaki Campus manager; "You couldn't find a more ardent supporter of Tāmaki."

Suzanne will be sadly missed by her many University friends.

*Suzanne Mitchell: A highly valuable, respected and popular member of the campus management team at Tāmaki.*



## WHAT'S ON CAMPUS

### CHRISTMAS CAROLS

**What:** University staff 'ClockTower' choir: two performances of Christmas favourites

**When:** Thursday 7 December at 2pm

**Venue:** Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences Grafton Campus

**When:** Friday 15 December at midday

**Venue:** ClockTower, Princes Street, City Campus.

Come and hear your colleagues sing a range of traditional and contemporary Christmas music at Grafton Campus and in the pretty setting of the ClockTower.

### INTERNATIONAL ART

**What:** Carmo, Chiado e a Republica Litteraria

**When:** 21 December 2017 – 24 February 2018

**Venue:** Gus Fisher Gallery, 74 Shortland Street. A group show by artists from Portugal, Poland, France and New Zealand that serves as a 'republic of letters', or a shared discourse in literature and politics. The exhibition is accompanied by a book, symposia and performances in Paris, Lisboa, Granada and Auckland.

To find out more visit:

[www.gusfishergallery.auckland.ac.nz](http://www.gusfishergallery.auckland.ac.nz)

### NIN TOMAS LECTURE

**What:** Professor Mick Dodson: *Reflections on the 10th anniversary of the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*

**When:** Tuesday 5 December 2017, from 5.30pm to 7.30pm

**Venue:** Aotearoa New Zealand Centre for Indigenous Peoples and the Law at the Auckland Law School.

Hear prominent rights advocate Professor Mick Dodson, a member of the Yawuru peoples, the current Director of the National Centre for Indigenous Studies, and a Professor in the ANU College of Law, at the Australian National University.



## PRECIOUS HISTORY

**Outgoing curator Linda Tyler looks back on the remarkable life of the University's Art Collection.**

Inaugurated in 1965 with an annual acquisition budget of just £300, the University's Art Collection has grown into a major asset with a total value of just over \$20 million. Demonstrating "continuing commitment to the study, patronage and advancement of the visual arts", all of its 1150 artworks (including major works by Frances Hodgkins, Colin McCahon, Ralph Hotere, Pat Hanly, Robin White and John Pule) are on constant display around the campuses. It has recently been shortlisted, along with Boston University, for an international award for institutional art collections.

Back in the sixties, the University campus had various building projects underway, and the Vice-Chancellor, Sir Kenneth Maidment, had been successfully lobbied by Keith Sinclair and Bob Chapman – an historian and political scientist respectively – to include art in the new structures. Both Chapman and Sinclair were visual arts enthusiasts: Keith Sinclair was the first historian to write an illustrated history of New Zealand. Joined by Michael Joseph of the English

Department, they became the 'purchasing committee', buying ten art works in that first year. Bob Chapman wrote to poet and *Landfall* editor Charles Brasch that their aim was to buy art from "the real figures in the short history of New Zealand painting".

Two Titirangi drawings by Colin McCahon, bought from the newly opened Barry Lett Galleries for £25, were the first art works acquired. McCahon taught at the Elam School of Fine Arts from 1964 until 1970, and his paintings during this period were almost exclusively black and white, deploying white writing like chalk on a blackboard. The budget increased to \$1000 in 1968, and poet Wystan Curnow and art historian Michael Dunn joined the purchasing committee in the 1970s and immediately bought major koru paintings by Gordon Walters. Then Registrar, Warwick Nicholl, determined that one-half percent of the budget for capital works be spent on commissioning artists to create works for the new buildings for Arts, Medicine and Architecture.

In 1983, the first photograph, a Whanganui River image by Anne Noble was added to the collection. Michael Dunn was appointed the sole curator, receiving an honorarium of \$500 per annum as well as his academic salary. As the workload increased, his payment doubled. When the University expanded onto its Tāmaki campus

## WHAT'S COMING OUT

### Death of the Public University

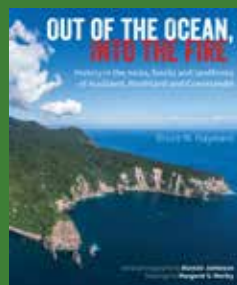
Universities have been subjected to continuous government reforms since the 1990s to make them 'entrepreneurial', 'efficient', and aligned to the predicted needs and challenges of a global knowledge economy. Under increasing pressure to pursue 'excellence' and 'innovation', many universities are struggling to maintain their traditional mission to be inclusive, improve social mobility and equality and act as the 'critic and conscience' of society. This collection, edited by Professor Cris Shore (Department of Anthropology) and Professor Susan Wright from Aarhus University in Denmark and published by Berghahn Books (New York and Oxford), analyses the new landscape of public universities emerging across Europe and the Asia-Pacific, and looks at the different ways academics are engaging



with them. Among staff who have contributed chapters are Associate Professor Barbara Grant (Critical Studies in Education), Associate Professor Bruce Curtis (Sociology), Professor John Morgan (Curriculum and Pedagogy), Dr Sean Sturm (Centre for Learning and Research in Higher Education), Dr Stephen Turner (Media and Communication) and Dr Nick Lewis (Environment).

### Out of the Ocean, Into the Fire

School of the Environment Research Associate Dr Bruce Hayward's 20th book is his largest and most comprehensive to date, containing 700 full-colour photographs, maps and diagrams, spread through 336 pages.



It tells of the full 260-million-year history of how northern New Zealand was formed, and how all the older rocks that form the spine and underbelly of Northland, Auckland and Coromandel Peninsula were erupted or deposited on the floor of the deep sea and subsequently pushed up out of the ocean to become our eroding land. The last 20 million years has been dominated by fire, with the eruption of hundreds of large and small volcanoes of almost every kind. All this and much more is told in *Out of the Ocean, Into the Fire*: Geoscience Society of NZ, \$50 RRP, in bookstores or from Potton and Burton on the web.

### Strangers Arrive

From the 1930s through the 1950s, refugees from Nazism and displaced people after World War II arrived in New Zealand from Europe. Among them were an extraordinary group whose European modernism radically reshaped the arts in this country. Using words and pictures Associate Professor of Art History,

in 1992, a budget to commission sculpture was included, and Associate Professor Peter Simpson from the English Department built a discrete collection of art works for Tāmaki from 1996 until 1999.

All seven collections – the Library art works, (acquired through revenue generated from Library fines), the Elam archive, (mostly gifted), the Epsom art, the Staff Common Room collection (bought from profit on liquor sales) the Tāmaki collection, the Marae collection and the Fale Pasifika collection - were amalgamated in 2004 under an Art Collection Committee when John Hood was Vice Chancellor, and the budget trebled.

When Michael Dunn retired as Professor of Fine Arts at Elam in 2005, Associate Professor Linda Tyler took over responsibility for the Collection, which has now passed to the University Library. The library which will continue to build and maintain it as a collection that reflects significant developments in New Zealand art. Its purpose remains to promote a broader understanding of visual culture with special reference to the University's educational and outreach priorities.

■ Linda Tyler

Picture top left: Outgoing curator Linda Tyler with a favourite painting from the University of Auckland Art Collection by Roy Good which she rescued from a skip.



Leonard Bell, tells their story in this book published by Auckland University Press. Ranging across the arts from photographers Frank Hofmann and Richard Sharell, to

artists Theo Schoon, Frederick Ost, Kees Hos and Tom Kreisler, Bell takes us inside bookstores, coffee houses, studios and galleries. He asks key questions: How were the migrants received by New Zealand? How did displacement and settlement in New Zealand transform their work? How did the arrival of modernists intersect with the burgeoning nationalist movement in the arts in New Zealand?

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## MISCELLANEOUS

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**ARE YOU GOING ON HOLIDAY OR SABBATICAL IN SEMESTER ONE 2018?** Who is looking after your house (and pets) while you're away? Mature doctoral student and partner available for housesits from February 2018. Two years housesitting experience, clean, responsible and with references. Please contact Kelly Scott on: kelly.scott@auckland.ac.nz

## UNHEALTHY INFLUENCE

**Professor Peter Adams from the Centre for Addiction Research is concerned at how unhealthy commodity industries manage to influence public policy.**

Why, over the last 50 years, have successive governments in New Zealand, like their counterparts overseas, consistently favoured less effective interventions for tobacco, alcohol, gambling and unhealthy food and beverages over what research indicates is going to have a stronger impact?

Counter to research evidence, recent reforms of alcohol legislation in countries such as the United Kingdom, New Zealand and Canada have been weak from a public health perspective.

These experiences, and many similar histories of missed opportunities for policy reform, speak loudly of vested interests.

How have these unhealthy commodity industries managed to influence public policy so effectively?

A key aspect to the commercialisation of addictive consumptions like tobacco, alcohol and gambling is their ability to generate profits over-and-above profits from ordinary purchases.

Addicted consumers, by the very nature of addictive behaviour, will consume to excess. They may be relatively small in number compared to the non-addicted, but they invest heavily and, accordingly, contribute far more to the profits.

This resulting profit surplus is not only the motivating force for these industries to look for increases in consumption, but also provides them with the financial clout to roll out pro-consumption initiatives; all aimed at policy makers to guard against any threats to the bottom line associated with changes in regulation.

An important strategy is the way these industries form relationships of mutual obligation

with powerful government policy makers, particularly those in a position to determine health policy.

Often under the guise of 'social occasions,' they set up a variety of connecting spaces for informal friendly person-to-person contact and favour exchange; party conference dinners, corporate boxes, shared committee meetings and appointments with ministers.

These regular personal contacts increase the likelihood that industry perspectives will prevail over other perspectives, particularly those concerned about health impacts.

Politicians are likely to see themselves as unaffected by relationships with these industry players.

However, the cultural practices of informal relationship building, of gifting and of providing favours, are deeply embedded as a means by which we form all our relationships.

The potency and subtlety of these processes often passes undetected. For example, while doctors claim gifting and favours from pharmaceutical companies (lunches, pads, conferences etc) has little influence on their practice, research into what they actually prescribe indicates a strong favouring of drugs from the gifting company.

Similarly, recent studies in the UK have exposed some of the pathways by which alcohol industry corporations penetrate government contexts; highlighting how building these relations typically involves long-term industry investment, including the targeting of opposition politicians.

Our knowledge of these processes is meagre because enquiry into this politically sensitive but important area is undeveloped.

I have been collaborating on this inquiry with researchers at universities in Newcastle (Australia), Edinburgh and York, and we were

recently awarded a three-year Marsden grant to build up a more detailed picture of these connecting spaces.

What's needed is a systematic study of the ways in which these unhealthy commodity industries are able to deploy their profits to subvert effective intervention.

Given the widespread negative impacts of industries like tobacco and alcohol on health, wellbeing and broader society, the lack of effective legislation, and the lack of in depth research into why this remains the case, is surprising.

Between 1950 and 2000, it's been estimated that smoking has led to 62 million deaths in developed countries, comprising 12.5% of all deaths, 20% of male deaths and 4% of female deaths.

Similarly, unhealthy eating is contributing to a broad range of health issues including cardiovascular health and escalating levels of type 2 diabetes. Hazardous drinking contributes to a multitude of deaths globally and is the leading contributor to years lived with disability from somatic disease and injury.

However, alcohol's main contributions to harm are in terms of mental disorder, violence, crime, marital breakups and child neglect.

And the proliferation of commercial gambling, particularly the global spread of over eight million gambling machines, is causing many similar negative impacts.

Despite the emergence of solid evidence on effective policy interventions, and the combined efforts of concerned citizens, researchers and community agencies, we are simply not doing a good enough job of protecting people from harm.

*Professor Peter Adams, Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences, won a 2017 Marsden-funded Royal Society of New Zealand grant of \$825,000 over three years.*