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UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND
Waipapa Taumata Rau

UniNews

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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.


Treasa Dunworth

CLUSTER CRUELTY

Cluster bombs have been banned by more than 100 countries, but the US has sent them to Ukraine. Associate professors Treasa Dunworth (Faculty of Law) and Stephen Hoadley (Arts) talked about that decision on RNZ's *The Detail*. "Because they fail to detonate, they essentially lie in wait, so they become a landmine," said Treasa, who specialises in disarmament law.

Link: tinyurl.com/detail-cluster


Erin Powell

CHARMING CREEPY-CRAWLIES

Dr Erin Powell, a School of Biological Sciences graduate, told *Newsweek* about her research into a species of long-legged arachnid with three types of male. New Zealand harvestmen "are charming and puzzling," she said. "We have much to learn about their fascinating biology and they have much to teach us about the evolution of mating systems across animal taxa."

Link: tinyurl.com/newsweek-powell


David Krofcheck

RADIOACTIVE WASTE FEARS

Dr David Krofcheck (Physics) told media including the BBC, Al Jazeera and RNZ that treated radioactive wastewater from Japan's Fukushima nuclear plant can be safely released into the ocean and that potentially dangerous isotopes were too minuscule to pose a threat. He said nuclear tests in the Pacific in the past explained people's fears. (Also, see opinion: page 12)

Link: tinyurl.com/rnz-krofcheck


Dylan Asafo

SHALLOW APOLOGY

Fuimaono Dylan Asafo (Faculty of Law) told RNZ's *The Panel* that even after the government's Dawn Raids apology for its actions in the 1970s, there is no legislation to prohibit such raids from occurring again. "The impetus for the apology was simply political, there wasn't a genuine concern," he said.

Link: (From 3:25) tinyurl.com/rnz-dylan-dawn


Wayne Cutfield

DIABETES STATS NOT SWEET

Changing our lifestyles will help slow skyrocketing rates of type 1 and type 2 diabetes, professor of paediatric endocrinology Wayne Cutfield told Newshub. Research suggests children's rates of both types of diabetes have increased by 40 percent in 30 years globally and New Zealand has one of the fastest climbing rates in the world, Wayne said. Type 2 diabetes can be moderated by lifestyle and weight loss, while type 1 is an autoimmune disease.

Link: tinyurl.com/newshub-cutfield


Paula Lorgelly

BURDEN OF LONG-COVID

A new long-Covid registry offers researchers a picture of the burden of the debilitating condition in New Zealand. Professor Paula Lorgelly (Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences) told Stuff that people, who may or may not have a formal diagnosis, will fill in surveys relating to their use of health services, symptoms and how long Covid has affected their personal, social and work life.

Link: tinyurl.com/stuff-long-covid

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Red Mole founder Alan Brunton was a radical poet.

INSIGHTS INTO RADICAL THEATRE GROUP RED MOLE

The story of a ground-breaking theatre troupe that emerged out of New Zealand's counterculture in the early 1970s is the subject of *Red Mole: A Romance*, a new film by Professor Annie Goldson.

A social and political history, through which a poignant personal story is entwined, *Red Mole: A Romance* premieres at the 2023 Whānau Mārama International Film Festival running in Auckland until 6 August.

Directed, edited and produced by Professor Annie Goldson (Faculty of Arts), the documentary was filmed in Mexico, New York City and in Auckland, Wellington and Wanaka; locations meaningful to the story, says Annie.

"Red Mole's theatre blended poetry, performance, rock music, fire-eating, puppetry, mask and political satire, defying genre and New Zealand's conservative theatre tradition," she says.

The troupe merged from the University of Auckland in the 1970s, the height of the counterculture. It reached peak fame with their cabaret *Capital Strut*, performed on Sunday nights at Carmen's Balcony, a famous strip club in Wellington. This was followed by the troupe's first big written show, *Ghost Rite*, which opened at the Opera House nearby.

"The difference in these two locations was vast, but shows the versatility and energy of Red Mole, who performed everywhere from camping grounds and local halls to department stores and prestigious theatres."

Soon after *Ghost Rite*, Red Mole took off to New York, eschewing London, the usual destination for Kiwis heading on an OE.

"The city had hit hard times, with the crack and AIDs epidemics looming, but Red Mole thrived for a time until the pressures of the city caused fractures," Annie says.

The University of Auckland is a primary funder of the film. "I didn't approach industry funders, feeling they would be unlikely to support a long documentary about a pre-internet radical theatre troupe that not many people now remember," says Annie. "But the links go beyond funding."

Alan Brunton and Sally Rodwell, the two Red Mole founders, met at the University as students and later down the track became partners.

"Alan was a radical poet who emerged from the English Department while Sally studied theatre and was affiliated with the Auckland University Students' Association."

Alan and Sally were soon joined by Deborah Hunt and John Davies, and a number of others came and went.

Annie first saw Red Mole when she was a teenager. She was living in Wellington during their heyday, working as a junior journalist. When they headed to New York, she quit her job to tag along for the ride for a while, so has personal insight into that time.

Alan died suddenly in the early 2000s and Sally a few years later, leaving a daughter, Ruby Brunton, herself a talented writer and poet.

A friend of the couple, Michele Leggott, a professor of English in the Faculty of Arts and notable poet, organised for Red Mole's huge archive to be given to Special Collections at the University library.

"This was an extraordinary resource," says Annie. "Everything from poetry, scripts, films, videos, posters, music tracks, ephemera – that was invaluable to the film and the librarians were wonderful to work with, and very patient."

Annie included the music of composer Ewan Collins, a recent graduate from the University's School of Music, and the work of Heather Wallace and Harry Ashley, two Arts summer scholars.

The 90-minute film will have two screenings during the Auckland leg of the International Film Festival, showing on 4 and 5 August.

Film critic Graeme Tuckett calls the film "a blast and a joy", while reviewer and journalist Chris Bourke notes in the festival programme that the film's support material – archival footage, photographs, scrapbooks, stage designs, posters – is "extraordinarily rich".

"The documentary is like witnessing Red Mole during its triumphal season at Carmen's Balcony while experiencing the excitement and exhaustion of joining a dramatic, intellectual circus.

"As in the best theatre, there is laughter, and tears."

■ Julianne Evans

***Red Mole: A Romance* will screen in Auckland on 4 and 5 August at the ASB Waterfront Theatre. There is also a special event release planned for November involving around a dozen cinemas, likely to be in Auckland and Wellington.**

Sally Rodwell, Neville Purvis and Deborah Hunt backstage at Carmen's Balcony in 1977.

Red Mole at Coney Island in New York. Photo: Joe Bleakley

L to R: Dr James Cheeseman, Steve Hutana, Victoria Hutana, Deana Lye, Wikitoria Tewhata, Dr David Cumin, Associate Professor Craig Millar, Associate Professor Guy Warman and pastor Paul Wihongi.

SPYING ON BUSY BEES

A group of researchers in the Department of Anaesthesiology recently hosted an iwi delegation led by Kaumatua Wikitoria Tewhata (Ngāti Porou) at Old Government House to discuss a research project aimed at improving the health of honey bees.

The researchers have used honey bees as a model for research on human circadian (daily) rhythms, which govern sleeping and waking, but now they are turning their attention to the bees themselves, with a view to helping them survive.

"Bees are vital to our agricultural industry and our environment, but there hasn't been as much investment in science around their health when compared to dairy, for example," says Associate Professor Guy Warman, who is the principal investigator and leader of the chronobiology research team.

"We have preliminary data and access to sophisticated monitoring equipment to observe bee activity non-invasively. The connection with tangata whenua will strengthen our work and we are looking forward to a fruitful partnership."

At the hui on 30 June, Wikitoria shared his knowledge, handed down over generations, of the whenua and people.

Steve Hutana (Te Aitanga a Hauiti), founder of charitable trust Māori Initiatives, spoke about the importance of bringing a Māori perspective to the project.

"Steve has established links with Māori beekeepers on the East Coast who are interested to share their experiences and mātauranga as we embark on this exciting project," Guy says.

The delegation included representatives of iwi in Northland (Ngāpuhi), as well as the East Coast (Ngāti Porou, Te Aitanga a Hauiti).

The research team is collaborating with researchers in Berlin who have developed state-of-art equipment that can be installed in hives to 'spy' on bees' activity.

The idea is to use this system to monitor bees' circadian (daily) rhythms in order to detect changes that predict worsening health in the colony. This early warning system will help beekeepers intervene to keep the bees healthy.

Guy and the team are applying for a Catalyst Seeding and a MBIE Smart Ideas grant to fund the work. The group has also engaged with Plant and Food, New Zealand Bee Keepers, and experts in Germany and the US.

■ Jodi Yeats

Ashlea Gillon

HEALTHY FUNDING

Doctoral candidate Ashlea Gillon (Ngāti Awa, Ngāpuhi and Ngāiterangi) has been awarded a Māori Health Emerging Researcher First Grant from the Health Research Council (HRC).

Ashlea secured almost $250,000 for her project looking at fat bias within healthcare settings for Māori and how it contributes to, and is part of, a system that inhibits and restricts access to wellness and equitable healthcare. She will work with Professor Melinda Webber (Education and Social Work) and Professor Terryann Clark (Medical and Health Sciences).

Waipapa Taumata Rau received more than $12m of the $53.7 million allocated by the HRC for health research projects.

Other major recipients include Associate Professor Natalie Walker, who is leading a project on a quit-vaping product; Dr Tess Moeke-Maxwell who is looking at Māori whānau experiences of assisted dying in Aotearoa New Zealand; Professor Winston Byblow who is developing a biomarker tool predicting stroke recovery; and Dr Sarah-Jane Guild for improving the lives of hydrocephalus patients, through the first human trial of a novel device.

Read about all the recipients: auckland.ac.nz/HRC-grants-2023

PHYSICS AWARD TO CATHER SIMPSON

Professor Cather Simpson, the founder of the Photon Factory, is the inaugural winner of an award for significant contributions to the field of physics in New Zealand.

The Physics Impact Award was awarded by the New Zealand Institute of Physics at its biennial conference on 4 July.

Cather, a professor of physics and chemical sciences at the University, has made an "unprecedented" contribution to the commercialisation of New Zealand physics research, according to the award citation.

Founded in 2010, the Photon Factory is a research hub using ultrafast lasers. After founding start-ups including Engender Technologies and Orbis Diagnostics, Cather has more biomedical spinoff companies in the pipeline. She is a partner at the deep-tech investment company Pacific Channel, and a director on the boards of companies including Fisher & Paykel Healthcare. In 2022, she won the highest honour in the annual KiwiNet Research Commercialisation Awards.

"I am not built for my dream career, which was to be a professional basketball player," she said in an interview with *Optics and Photonics News*.

"If I couldn't be a scientist today, I think I'd continue to grow as a director but would try to become a writer," she said.

"There's a series of short stories I've been thinking about writing."

The award citation describes Cather as a strong advocate for diversity in science, women in science, and ethics in education and research.

Professor Cather Simpson

Professor of Engineering Ajit Sarmah's research includes contaminant mitigation in soil and water environments.

HIGHLY CITED RESEARCH CELEBRATION

The University celebrated researchers who have a global impact at the inaugural Hīkina kia Tutuki, Rise to the Challenge: Researchers with Global Impact event, on 19 June at the Fale Pasifika.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research, Professor Frank Bloomfield, said the event recognised researchers whose work is "at the peak of international recognition in their field or in cutting across fields of research".

He congratulated Auckland's researchers who featured in the Clarivate Highly Cited Researchers list. To be named in this list, researchers' publications have to rank in the top one percent of their field by citation, or be researchers who work in cross-disciplinary fields but have equivalent impact and reach. Only one in 1,000 researchers made the Highly Cited list in 2022, but include six from Waipapa Taumata Rau.

- Professor Andrew Allan, plant science
- Emeritus Professor Roderick Brodie, economics and business
- Professor Brent Copp, pharmacology and toxicology
- Adjunct Professor Ed Gane, cross-field
- Professor Ajit Sarmah, cross-field
- Professor Geoffrey Waterhouse, materials science

TELLING MORE ASIAN STORIES ON SCREEN

More Asian Kiwi filmmakers are better equipped to tell their own stories, thanks to a ground-breaking programme run by the Pan Asian Screen Collective (PASC) and hosted by the University of Auckland.

Six teams of mainly pan-Asian New Zealand creatives, including around nine University of Auckland staff and alumni, took part in the year-long, part-time programme to develop their series' ideas and produce a pilot, closely supported by a team of industry experts.

The programme was designed by Associate Professor Shuchi Kothari, a filmmaker who has been teaching screenwriting and producing in the University's Faculty of Arts since 2001. In 2021, she approached the PASC board suggesting she design a programme to emulate the kind of pilot season they have in the US.

"You develop an idea, write the pitch deck (standard presentation template) and screenplay and then shoot the pilot, so you learn through the whole process and also have something tangible to show for your vision.

"There's no way to learn except through doing, but there's also no better way to learn than with a lot of smart people helping you along; it's a model we call 'scaffolded development'."

PASC received funding from NZ on Air through the Ministry of Culture and Heritage's special Covid fund for development in the arts. The Faculty of Arts agreed to host the course. Five pilots were created and, of those, two projects have since received broadcaster support and further development funding, and one has been optioned by a production company to be developed further. "The course was hard work, they all did so well to complete it," says Shuchi. "The goal was to develop teams and build capacity, so this is just the cherry on the cake!"

Watch the pilots: www.pasc.co.nz
Full story: auckland.ac.nz/PASC-pilots

The filmmakers and funders of the pilots through the Pan Asian Screen Collective, with Professor Shuchi Kothari (centre).

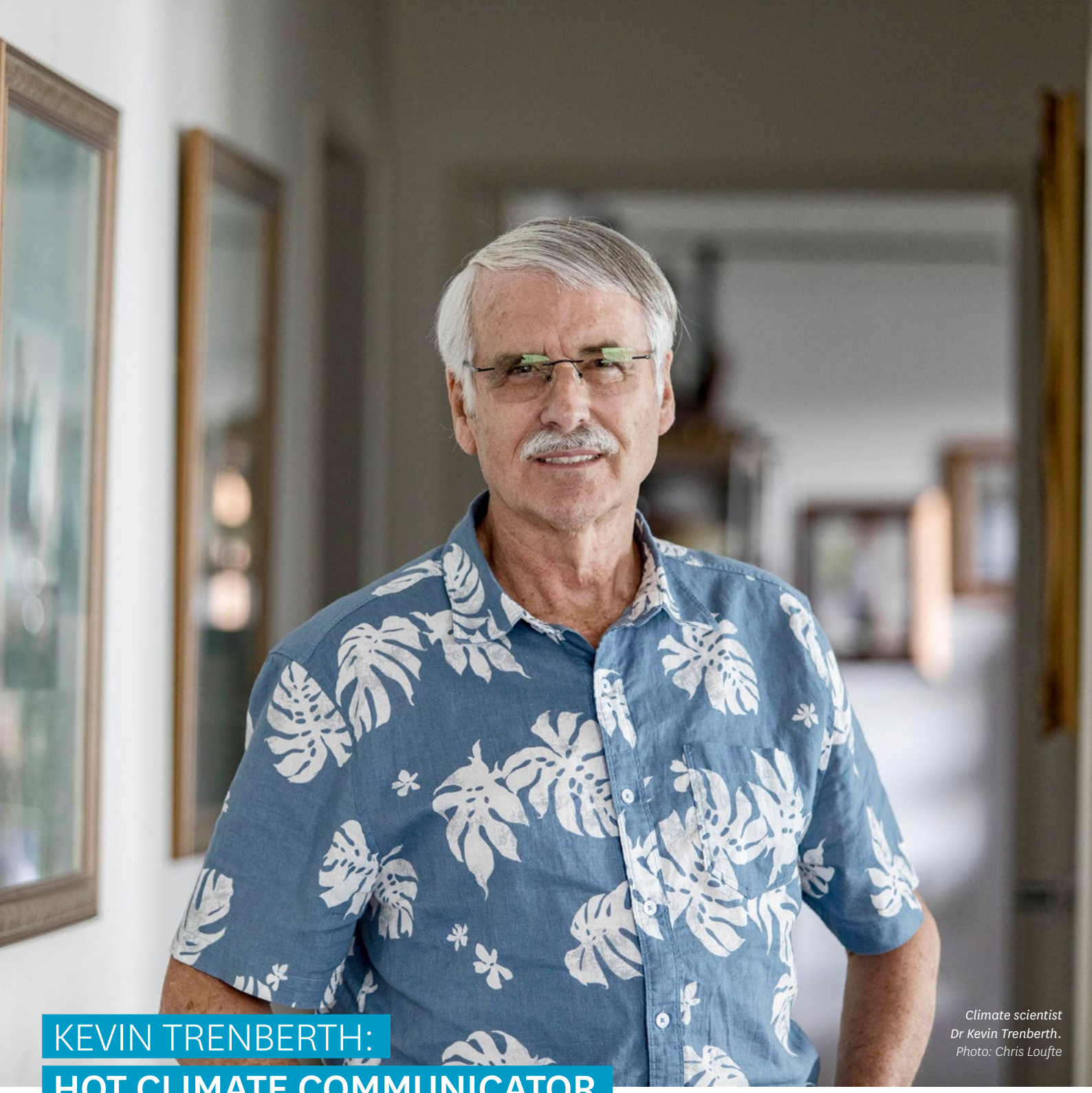
Alumna Chlöe Swarbrick (Greens) will return to the Fale as part of a debate on 11 August (pictured there in 2020).

ELECTION DEBATE AT THE FALE

The University is holding an election debate on the City Campus with media partner *Newsroom*.

The debate will be held on 11 August and moderated by *Newsroom* founder and editor Tim Murphy. Titled Auckland Matters, it will examine issues facing Tāmaki Makaurau as voters prepare for the 14 October election.

Four MPs were confirmed to take part by *UniNews*' press time. They are Labour's Shanan Halbert, National's Simeon Brown, Greens' Chlöe Swarbrick and ACT's Brooke Van Velden. NZ First and Te Pāti Māori representatives have been invited.
Register at EventBrite: tinyurl.com/auckland-matters



Climate scientist Dr Kevin Trenberth.
Photo: Chris Loufte

KEVIN TRENBERTH: HOT CLIMATE COMMUNICATOR

Climate commentator Dr Kevin Trenberth didn't let injuries from a terrible incident involving his Shih Tzu and a pit bull stop him from picking up the phone to talk about climate change.

Climate scientist Dr Kevin Trenberth explains climate change to journalists from the *Washington Post* to 95bFM, rarely refusing a request.

"When I started off there were science reporters on the smaller newspapers in the US – then they gradually started disappearing," the 78-year-old says from Rothesay Bay, where he lives with wife Gail. "Now, only really major news media like *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* have them."

If anyone's qualified to talk about the climate, it's Kevin.

Hanging on a wall, a certificate from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) recognises his contribution to the IPCC winning a Nobel Peace Prize in 2007, shared with former US Vice President Al Gore, for informing the world on climate change.

From 1996 to 2017, Kevin had the highest tally of highly cited papers for an environmental scientist, according to a study published in journal *PLoS*. In Held v Montana, the landmark climate-change case seeking to hold the state accountable for pro-fossil fuel policies, he was an expert witness for the young plaintiffs.

Retirement in the US drew Kevin and Gail back to New Zealand to be closer to a daughter and her family, the Trenberths slipping in just before Covid-19 restrictions blocked borders in 2020.

Now an honorary academic with the Department of Physics at the University of Auckland, he's contributing to scientific papers,

delivering talks, and explaining El Niño and La Niña to anyone who asks. His book *The Changing Flow of Energy Through the Climate System* with a foreword by Al Gore, was published by Cambridge University Press in 2022.

Targets set by the Paris Agreement in 2016 are to restrict the average increase in the world's global surface temperature to 1.5 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial level (probably impossible) or 2 degrees (unlikely).

Earth's overall energy imbalance is Kevin's focus. Because of an ever-thickening blanket of greenhouse gases, incoming energy from the sun isn't matched by energy heading back out to space. The imbalance doesn't seem much: about one part in 250 of the energy flowing through our climate system, he says.

However, for the ocean, which absorbs most of the extra energy, he says that's the equivalent of about seven Hiroshima atomic bombs detonating each second, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Warming was evident in the top 500m of the global ocean by about 1980. Twenty-five years later in 2005, waters as deep as 2km were warming, a remarkable feat for an immense body of water.

Born in Christchurch, Kevin loved mathematics and playing rugby, graduating from the University of Canterbury with a Bachelor of Science with first-class honours in 1966 after studying applied mathematics including relativity and quantum mechanics, dynamics and mechanics, and fluid dynamics.

"Then I had to find a job – the closest I could find was in atmospheric science, meteorology," he says.

Employed by the New Zealand Meteorological Service in Wellington, he experienced first-hand the violent storm of 10 April 1968 when the inter-island ferry *Wahine* disaster killed more than 50 people.

As Kevin drove along a coastal road, awash from raging seas, winds lifted the front wheels of his tiny Austin A35 car and sandblasted paint off the vehicle.

"Getting to the Met Office in Kelburn, right at the peak of the storm with 200 km per hour gusts, I rounded a corner of the building to make for the entrance but was knocked back four times."

Across the city, roofs and debris were flying through the air.

Visiting the US courtesy of a New Zealand research fellowship for doctoral studies from 1968-71, Kevin met his wife-to-be, bought a Mustang, and completed a thesis on sudden warming in the stratosphere, at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Unaffordable New Zealand house prices – what's changed? – and low pay encouraged a semi-permanent move to the US in 1977.

Thrillers lining a bookshelf are a clue to Kevin and Gail's eventual destination. Author Stephen White sets his crimes in Boulder, Colorado, Kevin's home for most of his career, working at the National Centre of Atmospheric Research (NCAR).

El Niño (a periodic increase in sea surface temperatures in the eastern Pacific Ocean), climate variability, rain and the water cycle, and the energy cycle were key interests. Kevin used observational data extensively to understand what happened in the real world and how well computer models replicated those climate observations.

"We have to live with some warming and the best we can hope for is to slow the process down and build resilience to the new extremes."

- Dr Kevin Trenberth, climate scientist and honorary academic in physics, University of Auckland

"All models are wrong, some are useful," is an assessment he quotes approvingly.

Robotic deep-diving floats checking conditions in the oceans and advances in the capabilities of super-computers have aided climate modelling, he says, but shortfalls remain.

"El Niño is not simulated adequately," Kevin says. "Precipitation is a big shortfall in every model that I've looked at – the amounts are generally about right but it's the frequency and intensity, which are most affected by climate change, that remain a challenge."

Sophisticated global climate models with detailed simulations of clouds can involve a quintillion (a billion billion) calculations per second and suck up the energy output of a small nuclear reactor, illustrating why the power consumption of supercomputers "is a real issue", Kevin says.

The Trenberths' Shih Tzu poodle cross Ethan trots into Kevin's home office. The dog featured in a traumatic and life-changing event late last year. Struggling with a pit bull attacking Ethan, Kevin was thrown over a bank, smashing his pelvis and badly damaging a leg and foot, injuries still limiting his mobility, interfering with his fitness regime, and keeping his golf game on hold.

Stuck in hospital, where he caught Covid-19, Kevin demurred from television interviews but pressed on with others, such as discussing climate change reparations with 95bFM.

As a self-professed introvert, Kevin is an unlikely climate communicator. First talking to journalists as a junior weather forecaster in Wellington, his clear explanations of science would later lead to thousands of interviews, from CNN to podcasts to *Playboy*. He answers questions from students who email him. In 2013, the American Geophysical Union awarded him their Climate Communication Prize.

A knack of being in the wrong city at the wrong time has seen Kevin experience more than his fair share of climate disasters: the *Wahine* storm; Lower Hutt flooding in 1976; Superstorm Sandy in New York in 2012; record flooding in Boulder in 2013; and Cyclone Gabrielle in New Zealand this year. (He was also in Christchurch for the earthquake of February 2011.)

"Raindrops keep falling on my head," is the title of his chapter in the just-published book *Adventures in Climate Science*, an anthology of personal essays by climate scientists.

In a memoir, yet to be published, he describes his extensive involvement in the World Climate Research Programme, and authoring IPCC scientific assessments. He witnessed oil producers such as Saudi Arabia fighting to water down IPCC assessments, and was one of the victims in "Climategate," where hacked emails from climate scientists were distorted by climate-change deniers to sow confusion.

Over decades, some of his key messages are unchanged.

It's real, the problem is cumulative, and we're causing it. Today's blanket of greenhouse gases would disperse only over centuries. Cutting emissions is the most important of all possible responses.

Interviewed on the US national public broadcaster's PBS Newshour in December 1997, as negotiators met in Kyoto, Japan, to set targets for limiting emissions, he talked of more intense rain, worse droughts, and the difficulty of adapting to faster rates of change in the climate than had ever occurred in nature.

"We have to live with some warming," he says now. "And the best we can hope for is to slow the process down and build resilience to the new extremes."

■ **Paul Panckhurst**

Medical student Thomas Swinburn won an international award for a student essay on the patient-doctor relationship.
Photo: Billy Wong

THOMAS SWINBURN: WINNING HUMAN TOUCH

On his first clinical placement, medical student Thomas Swinburn discovered medicine was best dispensed with a large dose of humanity. Writing about it earned him a global award.

Honours student Thomas Swinburn taps the air in time with his carefully considered words.

At 25, he displays great wisdom, giving the impression he would be a safe pair of hands. He has already proven he can be trusted as a leader and has all the qualities needed to be a reassuring doctor.

Thomas is president of the New Zealand Medical Students' Association, following a year as president of the Auckland University Medical Students' Association.

When he has a bigger idea to communicate, both hands bloom into a circle shape. And he has some grand ideas.

Channelling these into creative writing won Thomas the Ascona Prize, an international award for essays by students on the patient-doctor relationship. This included a trip to Brussels in late 2022 and publication in a book that has just been presented to the University's Philson Library.

Thomas's winning essay, 'An Unexpected Journey', opens with his meeting an (anonymised) Māori cancer patient he calls Ereuti on day one of his first fourth-year hospital placement.

"The medical team bowled into 14B as the sunlight streamed into that whitewashed room. Ereuti was a gaunt, pale man with sunken eyes, in a hospital gown, sprouting various lines leading to various whirring devices. He asked whether he could go home. The oncologist was sympathetic but didn't mince his words. He could, but without the constant intravenous infusion, he would be making the choice to go home to die. Ereuti looked at his hands and said nothing."

"As doctors, we're trained to be clinicians and to act at the individual level, but we can be compelling advocates if we take these stories and observations and use them as a force for good, and a force for change."

– Thomas Swinburn, President of the New Zealand Medical Students' Association

As he goes about the wards, Thomas keeps thinking about Ereuti, left alone to contemplate matters of life and death, after the patient's fleeting encounter with a medical team.

"Later that day, I was asked to take a medical history from Ereuti. Intuition spurred me to ask what mattered most to him now. He replied, 'What matters is regaining health, eating without this tube in my throat and moving my bowels naturally. Relationships. Relationships where I can be myself. Relationships like the one we're building'."

Thomas realises he is learning valuable life lessons from this patient.

"Over the next few days, I asked myself the same question I had asked Ereuti. He wished simply for a healthy body and meaningful relationships. Meanwhile, the value I placed on academic and career pursuits, often at the expense of spending time with family and friends, seemed short-sighted. As confronting and refreshing as it was, I couldn't help but question my values, and what matters most."

It was an important early insight into the way that doctors learn from their patients.

Medicine has always been both an art and a science, Thomas says.

"We get robust scientific training but, in a way, that essay was about my discovering the art of medicine, the art of human connection, and that those things are just as healing as the science."

Fittingly, Thomas is enthusiastic about his favourite pastimes of travel, photography and tramping, often all in one trip, and badminton.

Among his various roles, Thomas is co-chair of the Koi Tū Rangatahi Advisory group. He is also a Kupe Leadership scholar, which entails workshops and mentoring.

For most mortals, a medical degree is more than enough to cope with. So how does he do it?

"I've found that, often, just putting in that little bit of extra effort, really goes a long way," he says. "But as I talked about in the essay, I am constantly re-evaluating that balance between personal and professional commitments – spending time with friends and family, and switching off as well."

Thomas is also researching Rainbow-friendly healthcare and how best to achieve it.

His Kupe mentor is Professor Sir Ashley Bloomfield, whom he says is an exception to the rule you should never meet your heroes.

Sir Ashley, in turn, has enjoyed meeting Thomas and mentoring him. "I'm always impressed by his thoughtfulness and insight. He brings curiosity to our discussions, and we've had great conversations about the centrality of values and behaviours to good leadership."

When Sir Ashley brought up the topic of values-based leadership, Thomas realised he had to dig deep to arrive at his research topic.

"One of the values Ashley spoke about was courage. It wasn't necessarily one that I would have placed at the top of my list when thinking about my own values. But when I think back over these five years, I'm proud of myself for having the courage to step into that space, which is still quite stigmatised. It has been an important step in finding my own voice; towards being a leader and an advocate in a way that feels authentic."

"We get robust scientific training, but, in a way, that essay was about my discovering the art of medicine, the art of human connection, and that those things are just as healing as the science."

- Thomas Swinburn, medical student

Advocacy is critical to advancing equity within healthcare, he says, and likely to be a part of his future career, something he is still figuring out.

"Every interaction is an opportunity for the clinician to reflect on what parts of that patient's journey have brought them to this moment, whether it be the social determinants of health, or whether their pathway to and through care may have been suboptimal.

"For me, writing has been a way to express that. As doctors, we're trained to be clinicians and to act at the individual level, but we can be compelling advocates if we take these stories and observations and use them as a force for good, and a force for change."

Thomas's empathy and interest in writing may well be linked to his younger years as the only child of estranged parents.

"Combined with boarding school, I think it taught me to be independent from a young age but also to grow comfortable putting myself out there and meeting people of all ages and backgrounds."

He says attending Dilworth School, where he became dux, was a positive experience. His 2016 School Leaver award was "for the most optimistic, positive, outgoing, supportive, loyal, hard-working school leaver".

Thomas has a Pākehā father, who was originally from Taranaki before moving to West Auckland. His Malay-Chinese mother was born in Singapore, but moved to Aotearoa New Zealand when she was eight. Boyd Swinburn, Professor of Population Nutrition and Global Health, is Thomas's father's cousin.

Population health calls to Thomas, although he has clinical interests, too. He's still figuring it out, but, wherever he ends up, he is sure to be making a difference in people's lives. Perhaps his essay says it best:

"When I set out on the very first day of our very first clinical year, I thought medicine was about diagnosing and treating disease … But Ereuti showed me that sometimes it is the humanity we all possess that is the most powerful medicine."

Read the full essay:
auckland.ac.nz/thomas-swinburn-essay

■ Jodi Yeats

Thomas Swinburn is a Kupe Leadership Scholar whose mentor is Sir Ashley Bloomfield.

Associate Professor Paula Morris.
Photo: Jason Dorday/Stuff

FRESH APPROACH TO SHORT STORIES BY MĀORI WRITERS

How Associate Professor Paula Morris gets time to write anything is anyone's guess.

This month she adds another offering to New Zealand's literary landscape, after a challenging selection process to narrow down selected Māori authors' short stories into a new anthology.

As well, she is keeping several Aotearoa literature websites ticking over, ensuring this country's writing, and reviews of it, are accessible, including the recently launched Aotearoa New Zealand Review of Books site, developed with seed money from the Faculty of Arts.

There's also Whārerangi, the Māori literature hub (maorilithub.co.nz), conceived a few years ago and funded by Creative New Zealand, which contains multiple resources for all writers, such as contests to enter and publishers to contact.

Paula (Ngāti Wai, Ngāti Manuhiri, Ngāti Whātua), who is the director of the University of Auckland's highly respected Master of Creative Writing Programme, has just added to the body of work available for lovers of local literature. She has edited an anthology *Hiwa: Contemporary Māori Short Stories* (Auckland University Press), launching on 10 August. The Hiwa refers to Hiwa-i-te-rangi, the ninth star of Matariki, signifying vigorous growth and dreams of the year ahead.

"I've been working on it for a long time so I'm very excited to see it being published at last. These are contemporary Māori short stories and all 27 writers are alive."

Four stories are written in te reo, and consulting editor Darryn Joseph (Ngāti Maniapoto) assisted with those, while the rest are written in English, including one by Paula. The anthology includes big names people are familiar with, such as Witi Ihimaera and Patricia Grace, but being well-known wasn't the criterion for this book.

"There are other names readers may know, such as Tina Makereti, Alice Tawhai and Becky Manawatu, but many are emerging writers publishing fiction in print for the first time.

"There's a substantial introduction in the book to contextualise the writing of this selection of Māori short fiction and also a short introductory essay for each writer with some context for the story itself."

Paula wanted her anthology to include a range of writers, styles, subjects and points of view.

"I wanted an anthology where there was no particular kaupapa to the stories, and where people weren't expected to write in a particular style or to a particular theme. The *Huia* story anthologies are good, but they only include writers – mostly emerging names – who've entered the Pikihuia writing contest that year."

"The idea is that *Hiwa* is about Maori writers, not about Māori subjects or imposing a mātauranga Māori lens on the whole project."

Some stories are new work and some have been published before, but in many instances appear in revised form partly, Paula admits, because of her "intrusive editorial bossiness".

The editorial process included an open call for submissions in te reo or in English, as well as direct commissions. The open call drew around 120 stories by Māori writers in New Zealand or based overseas. "Some of the writers who submitted via the open call were known to me, like David Geary, who's an accomplished dramatist and fiction writer based in Canada. But with many of the writers, I was reading their work for the first time. So that was exciting."

Paula is all about giving budding writers opportunities, with up to 12 admitted to the Master of Creative Writing Programme every year. Some of them are included in *Hiwa*, including well-known flash-fiction author Jack Remiel Cottrell, Commonwealth Story Prize finalist Shelley Burne-Field, and recent graduate Pamela Morrow, now a PhD student at the University.

Boosting opportunities was also part of the reason Paula became involved in Whārerangi. The website is a trove of information for and about contemporary Māori writers of poetry, fiction and non-fiction.

"It was conceived at a national Māori writers' hui where I realised so many emerging writers have no idea where they can get their work published, what opportunities are available, what contests they can enter, what residencies they can apply for. There was a lot of misunderstanding about publishers as well. People would say to me, 'Publishers aren't interested in Māori writers or Māori books.' Well, the absolute opposite is true."

She says the site is also useful for non-Māori writers, because it enables them to find Māori work easily and see who's publishing what.

"It can be accessed by anyone in the world and I hope it's a way for people outside New Zealand to find out more about our great writers."

Paula is also passionate about the art of reviewing books. With many media publications getting rid of specialist book critics, she's helping develop the art of long-form book reviewing among writers through the new Aotearoa New Zealand Review of Books (ANZRB) website (nzreviewofbooks.com). The site now has a relationship with the *New Zealand Listener*, with some of its reviews published in edited versions in the print magazine before the long form appears on the ANZRB site.

"It's a challenge in New Zealand to get lengthy review coverage, in-depth and well-written, of local books. That's what the review site is about.

"As part of the Faculty of Arts' support for this initiative, I ran webinars on the art and craft of reviewing and offered mentorships with experienced review editors. Initially, this was for our own PhD students and our MCW alumni.

"But I've just received more funding, this time from the Mātātuhi Foundation, so I can put out a call nationally and offer the webinars and mentorships to people around the country."

The goal is to develop writers of well-argued reviews, not people just talking about what they can relate to personally.

"People probably don't really care what you think unless you create an argument and use quotes from the book to back it up. Reviewers need to have the confidence not only to express their views, but to be able to support them, giving evidence. You're also trying to write something that is interesting and well-crafted in itself so people don't get bored after the first paragraph."

Paula Morris can be heard in a new fortnightly Faculty of Arts podcast called 'Research and Reason' on Spotify, Amazon, Apple and Google.

Hiwa: Contemporary Māori Short Stories
Edited by Paula Morris; consulting editor Darryn Joseph
Auckland University Press, $45, 10 August

OBITUARY

WILLIAM ROBERT (JIM) ALLEN
22 JULY 1922 – 9 JUNE 2023

Jim Allen, circa 1967.
Jim Allen Archive, E H McCormick Research Library, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, gift of Jim Allen, 2012

Artist Jim Allen, who passed away aged 100 on 9 June, left an incredible legacy and his impact on the arts in the city is profound.

A veteran of World War II, serving as a machine gunner, Jim was also a skilled sailor, frequently journeying across the Hauraki Gulf and crossing the Tasman more than a dozen times. After the war, Allen resolved to train as an artist, and travelled to London to undertake a degree in sculpture at London's Royal College of Art, graduating in 1952. He then returned to New Zealand and committed himself to art education.

Alongside his pioneering art practice, Jim is regarded as the most influential art educator of his generation in Aotearoa and Australia, where he was a vital force in shaping the local art scene during the 1960s and 1970s. Employed by New Zealand's Department of Education as part of the Gordon Tovey-led art education initiative, Jim undertook a radical hands-on teaching role in schools in the Far North alongside the revolutionary educator Elwyn Richardson.

Allen's commitment to student-led education informed his tenure as head of sculpture at Elam School of Fine Arts at the University of Auckland from 1960 to 1976. He is credited with rejuvenating Elam's sculpture department, with a new emphasis on critical practice, and fostering a series of student-led initiatives after witnessing student involvement in the 1968 protests across the United Kingdom, Europe and the US.

This in turn spurred the development of a radically new local contemporary art scene which saw the creation of major sculptural projects in Auckland's central city, international symposia which generated many public sculpture commissions that can still be seen today, off-site performance events, and a host of young students ready to challenge established norms in art.

Describing his approach to teaching, Jim said 'My effort went into creating a supportive environment, encouraging experiment and exploration, insisting people find their own answer rather than providing them with one. I guess it was backdoor teaching, not leading from the front.'

As an artist, Jim realised several significant sculptural commissions across the country, and was a pioneer of post-object art. He believed 'live' performance offered an opportunity to directly engage with a rapidly changing world. He instigated Auckland Art Gallery's first performance art programme where he realised, with a team of students and artists, an ambitious three-part work, *Contact*, timed for the 1974 Auckland Festival. Unlike any previous exhibition at a public gallery in New Zealand, the participating artists did not show individual works of art; instead, they staged actions and performances within temporary sculptural installations, incorporating new video and 'live playback' technology to alter how audiences encountered the artworks.

The following year, he had a large solo exhibition of his new work *O-AR II*, 1975, staged at the gallery. In 1976, during his sabbatical year, he undertook a residency at the Experimental Art Foundation in Adelaide, where he continued to develop his performance practice. The same year he participated in the Biennale of Sydney with the performance installation *There Are Always Elephants to Be Made Drunk*, 1976.

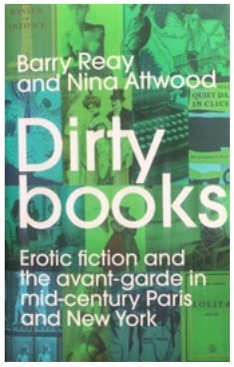
After time in Adelaide, Jim became founding Head of the Sydney College of the Arts (1977-87). His return to Auckland in 1998 was once again marked by an engagement with art education (this time at Auckland University of Technology, from which he holds an honorary degree) and a re-invigoration of his experimental art practice, with him restaging many key early performance works.

In 2004, Jim was made a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit for services to education and the arts, and in 2015 was awarded the Arts Foundation's Icon Award Whakamana Hiranga, an honour that recognises the extraordinary achievements and impact of 20 of New Zealand's most significant artists.

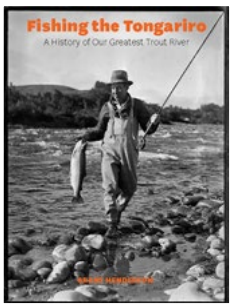
Jim had a lasting influence on the establishment of the contemporary art scene in Auckland and a life-long connection to the Auckland Art Gallery which holds a collection of his key works, from his early formal sculpture to his most radical performance works. It also holds his artist archive and, in 2021, Allen gifted three significant works to the gallery's collection: *Arena*, 1970; *Community*, 1970; and *O-AR II*, 1975. (Read more at **tinyurl.com/jim-allen-AAG-article**)

■ This piece is abridged from an obituary by Natasha Conland that ran on Auckland City Art Gallery's website on 13 June.

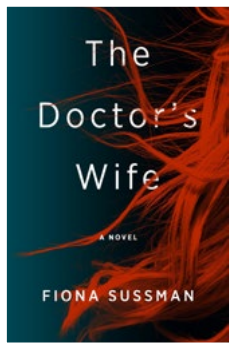
BOOKS



Dirty Books: Erotic Fiction and the Avant-Garde in Mid-Century Paris and New York
Emeritus Professor Barry Reay (History) and Dr Nina Attwood (History, ORSI) tell the stories of publishers and authors, including Anaïs Nin, whose erotic or pornographic works were banned from the 1930s to 1970s.
Barry Reay and Nina Attwood, Manchester University Press, $40



Fishing the Tongariro
Law alumnus and keen angler Grant Henderson worked with Taupō historian John Parsons for this book. It's a comprehensive history and photographic record of trout fishing on the Tongariro River.
Grant Henderson, Bateman Books, $60



The Doctor's Wife
This psychological thriller by Dr Fiona Sussman, who has both a medical degree and is a Master of Creative Writing, was released last year, but has now been longlisted for a Dame Ngaio Marsh Award. Fiona is a previous winner, picking it up in 2017 for best crime novel for *The Last Time We Spoke*. The Doctor's Wife has also just been picked up by a UK publisher.
Fiona Sussman, Bateman Books, $38

STAFF DISCOUNT ON BOOKS

University staff get ten percent off everything in store at Ubiq bookshop, Level 1, 2 Alfred Street.

FISSION OVER NUCLEAR WASTEWATER

Dr Karly Burch wonders who is providing the most accurate scientific data following Japan's decision to discharge nuclear wastewater into the Pacific Ocean.

Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO) is planning to discharge 1.3 million tonnes of treated nuclear wastewater into the Pacific Ocean, beginning this year and continuing for at least 30 years.

The plan was first announced by the Japanese government in April 2021, approved by Japan's nuclear regulator in May 2022 and approved by the United Nations' International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in July 2023.

This 1.3 million tonnes of wastewater exists because TEPCO has been using water to cool melted nuclear fuel rods within Fukushima Daiichi's damaged nuclear energy reactors since the earthquake, tsunami and nuclear disaster of 2011.

When water is poured onto melted nuclear fuel rods, it leaves a chemical cocktail of radionuclides. Some of this wastewater has already leaked directly into the Pacific Ocean (at around 300 tonnes per day in 2013), so the 1.3 million tonnes represent the estimated amount currently being stored on land in large tanks.

TEPCO has framed its current plans to filter and discharge the wastewater as the optimal solution to its overflowing problem, and the IAEA has examined the data produced by TEPCO's scientists and said the plan aligns with the agency's standards.

Yet many people throughout the Pacific and Japan, including many scientists, say the plan is problematic. This includes members of an independent panel of scientists gathered by the Pacific Islands Forum to examine TEPCO's data.

Science is always driven by research questions which come from particular people and places. Tokyo Electric's scientists are focused on answering questions that are of importance to TEPCO and the IAEA, and therefore on collecting data that shows the wastewater discharge plan aligns with IAEA standards.

Answering these questions helps TEPCO avoid legal and financial responsibility for managing its nuclear waste on land. Unfortunately, the IAEA's nuclear safety standards are extremely limited as they only address questions related to chemistry and external radiation dose.

Dr Karly Burch
Photo: Chris Loufte

The independent panel of scientists working with the Pacific Islands Forum is attempting to use the most up-to-date scientific findings to answer research questions posed by people across the Pacific. This includes questions about the possible health and environmental consequences of the nuclear wastewater release.

However, these scientists are relying on data produced by TEPCO which they have described as "incomplete, inadequate, and inconsistent". In other words, while TEPCO's scientific data can answer questions posed by the IAEA, it can't answer questions posed by people in the Pacific who will be forced to deal with the consequences of the wastewater discharge.

While TEPCO is pushing for the wastewater discharge, it does have other options.

Scientists working with the Pacific Islands Forum have proposed a plan which would involve using the wastewater to create concrete that could patch up leaks and contribute to other on-site remedial work.

This is estimated to take approximately five years and would respond to recent scientific findings on the biological consequences of tritium (radioactive hydrogen) which are not currently accounted for in the IAEA's standards.

However, Japan has so far rejected the plan since the concrete would be classified as nuclear waste under Japanese law, illustrating how the IAEA's approval allows Japan to discharge its responsibilities for managing its own nuclear waste by using the Pacific as a dumping ground.

Unfortunately, as the scientists working with the Pacific Islands Forum have illustrated and discussed, voicing scientific concerns about Tokyo Electric's data is not going to sway the power company or the IAEA.

This has been the case, even when the IAEA has been called out for ignoring the principles underlying its own standards, which would require TEPCO to clearly illustrate that the wastewater discharge plan's benefits to countries other than Japan outweigh its possible harm. The fact that there are no benefits should disqualify the plan under the agency's own standards.

In the long term, we need serious discussions about the appropriateness and reliability of the agency's standards and how these are based on threshold limits which assume access to lands and waters as waste sinks to sustain the nuclear energy industry. We also need to examine how the standards are often used to legitimise ongoing trends in nuclear colonialism.

In the short term, it's important to stop TEPCO's wastewater discharge and use it as an opportunity to engage in rigorous scientific deliberation on how to responsibly manage nuclear waste without perpetuating nuclear colonialism and impeding the sovereignty and self-determination of others.

One option is for a neighbouring country to file a case against Japan before the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea. This is an important option for New Zealand and other countries who claim to be advocates of evidence-based policies, and who are committed to protecting ocean biodiversity and a nuclear-free Pacific.

■ **Dr Karly Burch is a lecturer in sociology at Waipapa Taumata Rau, University of Auckland. She has spent the past decade studying food safety governance in the aftermath of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster.**

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