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Faculty welcomed to City Campus
at Waipapa Marae

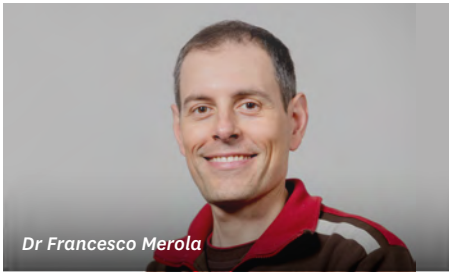
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STRIKING THE RIGHT CHORD

Musician Jack Bromwich finds
harmony in his studies

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



Dr Francesco Merola

LASER DEFENCE

Dr Francesco Merola (Faculty of Science) told *Newshub* that tiny lasers in beehives can disable and kill varroa mites. This could combat the parasitic pest ravaging bee colonies globally. Devising a cheap tool for beekeepers to protect colonies without using pesticides is the aim of the multi-year project with Plant & Food Research.

Link: tinyurl.com/newshub-francesco-merola



Eru Kapa-Kingi

SOLIDARITY AT WAITANGI

Following a strong show of solidarity at Waitangi, Eru Kapa-Kingi (Faculty of Law) told *The Wire* that attempts to delegitimise Māori sovereignty put Aotearoa in a dangerous position. He said: "Te Tiriti is a document of truth and power. My tūpuna (ancestors) never ceded sovereignty to the British crown."

Link: tinyurl.com/bFM-eru-kapa-kingi



Peter Saxton

BLOOD RULE 'DISCRIMINATORY'

The number of male blood donors could increase if gay, bisexual and takatāpui men were allowed to donate. A new report about blood donation shows New Zealand rules to be out of step with Canada and the UK, Associate Professor Peter Saxton (Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences) told TVNZ's *Breakfast*.

Link: tinyurl.com/TVNZ-peter-saxton

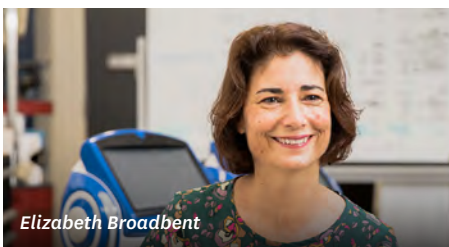


Lokesh Padhye

BAN ON 'FOREVER CHEMICALS'

New Zealand is one of the first countries in the world to prohibit the use of PFAS or 'forever chemicals' in cosmetic products. Associate Professor Lokesh Padhye (Engineering) told *Newshub* the ban is a step in the right direction, but we should continue to strive for a PFAS-free environment.

Link: tinyurl.com/Newshub-lokesh-padhye



Elizabeth Broadbent

MOOD KILLER

Walking and texting in a park has a detrimental effect on people's mental health, whereas walking in nature without a phone usually has an uplifting effect, Professor Elizabeth Broadbent (Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences) told the *New York Times*. It may just be that walking and texting is simply annoying and sours your mood, she added.

Link: tinyurl.com/NYT-broadbent



Hilary Longhurst

GENE TREATMENT BREAKTHROUGH

The BBC and *The Guardian* ran Dr Hilary Longhurst's gene therapy research used to treat angioedema, a condition that creates painful swelling. Hilary told the BBC that, "It looks as if the single-dose treatment will provide a permanent cure for hereditary angioedema patients' very disabling symptoms."

Links: tinyurl.com/guardian-gene-therapy and tinyurl.com/bbc-hilary-longhurst

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 Email: uninews@auckland.ac.nz

For the fortnightly Whaimōhio The Loop newsletter, email: staff-comms@auckland.ac.nz.
 Deadlines are on the intranet under News, Events and Notices, The Loop.

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ISAAC SAMUELS: VISION FOR MĀORI EYE HEALTH

Recent MAPAS graduate Isaac Samuels has an eye on better health outcomes for Māori.

Isaac Samuels (Ngaati Hauaa, Ngaati Tūwharetoa) grew up largely identifying as Pākehā, but his koro's death and the University's Māori and Pacific Admissions Scheme (MAPAS) fostered his pride in his heritage and vision for improving Māori healthcare.

Not long after graduating as a Bachelor of Medical and Biomedical sciences (Honours), Isaac took up a role at Middlemore Hospital. He hopes to specialise in ophthalmology.

He has already researched and developed a kaupapa Māori framework for eye-care consultations, which he hopes will contribute to improved eye care for Māori patients – and for all. Feedback from a controlled trial showed while Māori patients prefer the framework consultations, Pākehā patients do too.

"If a doctor comes in and goes, 'Cool, sit down, what's wrong with you? Okay, sweet. Here's a medication. See you later,' there's no connection there, so no incentive to return. You don't know the person. But if clinicians are able to engage, then we can be sure Māori will start to achieve better health outcomes."

Isaac is proud to be Māori, but it wasn't always like that. He grew up in relative privilege in Tāmaki, attending St Kentigern College and regarded being Māori as part of his DNA more than his identity. This belief was confirmed by an upsetting incident when he visited the family marae in the Waikato as a child. "I was chased off the marae because I was Pākehā-looking and kids didn't believe I was Māori."

His relationship with his heritage started to change when his koro, his grandfather, who lived with Isaac and his whānau, became very unwell with conditions relating to diabetes.

"I just couldn't get my head around why he didn't want to go to the doctor and why his doctor didn't seem to look after him very well."

Seeing his father's distress over not understanding the illness, or the medications, sparked something in Isaac. He saw that he could use his education and learn the skills to help his family.

Isaac gained entry into the University's medical school through MAPAS and his potential became reality in its supportive environment.



Isaac Samuels at his graduation.
Photos: Elise Mandhan

"I didn't know the extent of Māori health inequity until I heard [Tumuaki] Professor Papaarangi Reid speak in Population Health in my first year. It was all around the impacts of colonisation on Māori health, what we can do as Māori health practitioners and how few of us there are around.

"I thought, 'oh my goodness, I can help my whānau, but I can actually help all Māori by pursuing this career if I play my cards right.'"

Later, Isaac encountered ophthalmology while on a two-day placement and felt he had found his calling. He also found allies who were interested in Māori eye health. One of those was Professor Jennifer Craig (Optometry), who supported him to come up with an original research project.

Along the way, Isaac was awarded a Kupe Leadership Scholarship and was mentored as part of that by Dr Mataroria Lyndon, a senior lecturer in the Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences.

He also met doctoral candidate in optometry and vision science Renata Watene, with whom he went on to collaborate. At the outset of his research project, Isaac spoke to a large group of Māori who were either engaged with eye-care services or who had whānau who were.

The biggest theme to come out of that study was the importance of communication and a genuine connection. "We talked about this concept of whakawhanaungatanga, building relationships. It's a large reason for Māori knowing their whakapapa; so we can connect things."

Another theme was that patients' historical experiences significantly informed their healthcare practice and their healthcare beliefs.

"If they have had a poor experience, or a relative has, they are significantly less likely to go and seek care. But it also works for a positive experience. If a whānau member has a positive experience with care, they're far more likely to return to care."

Another theme was the importance of

hauora Māori – the concept of holistic Māori health. "It's the importance of the health of the family, spiritual health, mental health and how that impacts on physical health. It's often not acknowledged, especially in specialty care.

"So, in ophthalmology, they're going to look at your eye. They often don't have the opportunity, nor has traditional practice encouraged us to ask, 'How are things at home, do you have any stressors going on in your life at the moment, or is your spirituality important to you?'"

"That's massive for Māori and massive for building rapport. Clinicians can do this."

The other important points were around tikanga and tapu; the tapu of the head and eyes, sacred parts of the body for many Māori.

"It's where we connect to our tipuna and our atua. So touching the head is really full-on. It needs to be established through the consent process for Māori."

Isaac then went on to develop a Kaupapa Māori framework to provide guidelines Pākehā could use in consultations with Māori whānau.

"We talk a lot about the need to increase the Māori health workforce, but we also need to fix inequity today. We need to equip those who are in the workforce now with the necessary tools."

■ Jodi Yeats

More graduation stories: auckland.ac.nz/grad-stories



The graduating
MAPAS Class of 2023.

GOOD TO KNOW



Professor Toni Bruce
Photo: Craig Berry

TONI BRUCE: IN A LEAGUE OF HER OWN

Professor Toni Bruce (Faculty of Education and Social Work) has been recognised for her scholarship with a major award.

Toni received the International Communication Association’s (ICA) Sport Communication Legacy Award which recognises scholars with a distinguished record of research who have

positively influenced the development and growth of sport communication at the highest level. She has led the contemporary global study of women in sports media.

Professor Michael Butterworth, from the University of Texas at Austin, acknowledged Toni’s impressive work in gender in sport, women in sports media, and the intersections of sport communication and sociology.

“Quite simply, the contemporary study of women in sport and sport media is largely built on the foundation provided by Professor Bruce.”

He says Toni has helped shape the emergent field of sport communication, challenged sport media industries and academics to recognise and address gender inequities, and mentored countless students and scholars.

“She has also clarified ways that sport contributes to national identity, in particular in Australia and New Zealand, and foregrounded the symbolic possibilities and limitations for a range of individuals in sports. This includes groundbreaking studies of race, disability and, perhaps most influentially, gender.”

■ Julianne Evans

Full story: auckland.ac.nz/toni-bruce-award



Professor Melani Anae at her retirement farewell at the Fale.
Photo: William Chea

MELANI ANAE FAREWELLED

The University farewellled Associate Professor Melani Anae at the Fale Pasifika on 19 February, after an extraordinary career spanning 25 years.

It was a fitting tribute to the former rebellious teenager who became a renowned Pacific scholar, influencing a generation of Pacific people to find their agency and fight against racism.

Colleagues, former students and members of the Auckland-based revolutionary social justice movement, the Polynesian Panthers, showered her with powerful and moving tributes. They spoke of Melani’s major contribution to the University, which inspired a new generation of Pacific academics, and her role as a key disrupter with the Panthers. She was just 17 when she joined the group to protest the then National government’s policies in the early 1970s which targeted Pacific migrants, largely from Sāmoa and Tonga, through the infamous police ‘Dawn Raids’.

Her considerable contribution to research, resulting in more than 90 published books, addressed inequity and racism, challenging the status quo while seeking to empower Pacific people toward critical consciousness, a greater awareness and a deeper understanding of the world in which they lived.

Influenced by her own experience as a New Zealand-born Sāmoan, Melani documented the story of the Sāmoan diaspora through her research and contributed to tangible gains such as the historic Dawn Raid apology by former Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern in 2021.

■ Kim Meredith

Full story: auckland.ac.nz/melani-anae-retires



AUSA’s executive for 2024, top row L to R: President Alan Shaker, Jennifer Setefano (Welfare); Jimah Ruland-Umata (Māori), Andrea Va’ai (Pacific), Anna Sue (Women’s), Ben Bonn . Bottom L to R: Jade Butler, Layba Zubair, Luna Lyra le Fay, Sarah White, Te Tuhiwhakaura Wallace-Ihakara (Māori), Yueyang Chen.

RE-ELECTED AUSA PRESIDENT KEEN TO HIT GOALS

AUSA president Alan Shaker is stoked to get another chance to lead the students’ union.

“This is an important year for AUSA and I have some unfinished business from last year.”

Alan says 2023 saw significant change in the organisation, so continuity is helpful. AUSA worked on the Student Voice Policy which included discussion on remuneration and training for student representatives.

“We also made significant progress on a new funding agreement for AUSA, a partnership agreement with University leadership, and signed a memorandum of understanding with the Postgraduate Students’ Association.”

And there was fun too. “We ran our first Alfred’s Orientation concert, bringing music acts onto our front doorstep on Alfred Street.”

Alan says he is working with his new executive on how best to represent students as well as finalising the new funding agreement with the University to “allow us to expand our services and do more for our students”.

He says what will bring students back to Campus is the social atmosphere and that’s front of mind. “Obviously they come here for a degree but also for an experience. If we want more students on campus, we have to give them more reasons to do so by making these University years the best years of their lives.”

He says the University is helping with its innovations, such as the Curriculum Framework Transformation and relational teaching.

“They’ll make learning a lot more enjoyable.”
See ausa.org.nz/your-ausa/about/our-executive

NEW DEAN'S FUTURE-FOCUSED AGENDA

The new Dean of the Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences (FMHS) is focusing on solutions to complex problems and boosting the health workforce.

Professor Warwick Bagg has taken the reins from Professor John Fraser as the University refreshes its strategic direction with an increased emphasis on transdisciplinary research and teaching. Warwick joined the University in 1997, while working as an endocrinologist at Te Whatu Ora Te Toka Tumai Auckland. He started as a diabetes research fellow before moving into academic leadership, including being Deputy Dean from 2021 until the end of 2023.

Warwick says the faculty has been rethinking how it works internally and with the wider university. He says his priorities are to tackle issues such as inequity, the existential crisis resulting from human-induced climate change, and to harness the opportunities presented by artificial intelligence. He says the solutions to these complex issues lie in collaboration with other faculties, research institutions, key national and international stakeholders, the community and funders.

"All of us, our biomedical, population and clinical teachers and scientists, professional colleagues and most importantly our students, are at the centre of this critical work."



From left: New FMHS Dean Professor Warwick Bagg, former Dean Professor John Fraser and School of Medicine head, Professor Phillipa Poole. Photo: Chris Loufte

There is also the immediate need to respond to the health workforce crisis which he says the University is well equipped to deal with if funded accordingly. Warwick sees the faculty lifting its student intake and offering new and renewed qualifications while maintaining excellence.

Meanwhile, around 200 current and former staff, associates, friends and family gathered to celebrate John Fraser's 12 years as Dean at an event on 13 February. The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Dawn Freshwater, thanked him for his leadership, including during the pandemic.

"John led the faculty through the challenging times when our communities leaned on

knowledge and expertise to navigate those uncharted waters," she said.

Said John: "I've never considered myself as leading the faculty, but really supporting all the wonderful activities that thrive within and outside of these walls."

His research will continue, on a national project developing an mRNA vaccine platform and another developing an mRNA vaccine against notorious super bug, *Staphylococcus Aureus*.

He finished his speech with the saying: "Old deans never die, they just lose their faculties."

■ Jodi Yeats

Full story: auckland.ac.nz/FMHS-dean

STARS ALIGN FOR RESEARCH

The Governor-General Dame Cindy Kiro was a special guest at the official launch of University of Auckland research centre Ngā Ara Whetū, the Centre for Climate, Biodiversity and Society on 14 February.

Ngā Ara Whetū can be translated as 'star paths', a metaphor acknowledging the knowledge of the Pacific people who navigated to Aotearoa, to inspire today's pathfinders.

The centre aims to connect the diverse pockets of expertise in climate, biodiversity and society, creating transdisciplinary research to respond to persistent societal challenges. It has brought together more than 130 researchers from eight faculties, including engineers, architects, biologists and social scientists.

Dame Cindy said the aims of the centre aligned with those of her office – stewardship of the natural world, applying the value of knowledge and understanding, and celebrating

the diversity and the commonalities of Aotearoa New Zealand – and that informed decision making was vital to meet these shared aspirations.

"In an era when misinformation and disinformation are so easily disseminated, it is too easy to suggest simple answers to complex questions," she said.

University of Auckland Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research, Professor Frank Bloomfield, said the country and world faced major challenges in each of the areas of climate, biodiversity and society.

"Some might see them as separate challenges, but clearly they are interwoven and interconnected and critical to our way of life and the future of our tamariki."

■ Gilbert Wong

Full story: auckland.ac.nz/nga-ara-whetu



Professor John Hosking and Governor-General Dame Cindy Kiro at the launch of Ngā Ara Whetū.



Clockwise from left: Deputy Pro Vice-Chancellor Māori Michael Steedman and Māori Medium Education expert Hēmi Dale at the pōwhiri; the newly refurbished Waipapa Marae; master carver Arekatera Maihi; the stunning new whakairo. Photos: William Chea

WARM WELCOME AT REFURBISHED WAIPAPA MARAE

At an event many years in the making, the Faculty of Education and Social Work was formally welcomed to the City Campus with a pōwhiri at Waipapa Marae on Friday 9 February.

When Kaiarataki, Deputy Pro Vice-Chancellor Māori Michael Steedman, challenged the manuhiri (visitors), history came full circle. He reminded them that they were the “big brother” in the relationship with the University, as the then Auckland Teachers’ Training College was first established in 1881 in Wellesley Street, ahead of the University itself, which wasn’t opened until 1883.

Later iterations – Auckland Training College, the Auckland College of Education – eventually merged with the University of Auckland in 2004 at Epsom to become the Faculty of Education and then in 2015, the Faculty of Education and Social Work, to reflect the breadth of the faculty’s teaching and research.

The welcoming party included Pro Vice-Chancellor Māori, Associate Professor Te Kawehau Hoskins, Provost Professor Valerie Linton, deans of other faculties and research institutes and Poutaki Hāpai Taura, and Heta Gardiner, (Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor Māori) who gave a formal whaikōrero.

Professor Linton noted the strong reputation of the faculty internationally, where it occupies a top 40 position in the Times Higher Education Subject Rankings, and said she was hopeful the

move would bring many more opportunities for cross-University collaboration, as well as informal chats in B201’s new atrium café, which she said is fast becoming her favourite place for a coffee.

She finished with a whakatauki (proverb) that translates to, ‘Let’s keep close together.’

Dean Professor Mark Barrow paid tribute to the long list of people who had made it possible to leave Epsom Campus; in particular, former Vice-Chancellor the late Professor Stuart McCutcheon, Tristram Collett, associate director of planning and development in Property Services, and faculty project manager Mike Renwick, who facilitated the relocation of 260 staff and 50 doctoral students.

He said how delighted he was to see the faculty back at the centre of University life.

The manuhiri were led by kaikaranga (callers) Dr Tauwehe Tamati (Epsom) and Dr Maia Hetaraka, the programme director of Tai Tokerau Campus. Māori Medium Education expert Hēmi Dale and Tai Tokerau professional teaching fellow Michael Harrison responded on behalf of the manuhiri, with Hēmi also giving a humorous account of the many years this move had been in the making.

Waipapa Marae itself was in particularly fine form for the ceremony because in January, its weather-worn exterior whakairo (carvings), which had adorned the marae since their installation in 1987, were entirely replaced

with new carvings in the likeness of the old. The original carvings were crafted by the late tohunga whakairo (master carver), Dr Pakariki Harrison, QSO, and represent Tāne-nui-a-Rangi (God of forests and birds) at the marae entrance, with the koruru (human face) at the apex symbolising his head and the maihi (facing boards), his welcoming arms.

Master carver Arekatera Maihi, of Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei and Ngāpuhi, has restored the mauri (life force) of the old carvings, paying homage to their history. They were buried rather than discarded, in keeping with Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei tradition, and to reflect their spiritual significance.

Carving the new ones took Arekatera nine months to complete, alongside a team at Toitū Design, and the process involved working from photos of the original carvings, including drone footage, rather than working in view of the marae itself, as would normally have been the case had it not been in use.

Arekatera’s focus was on maintaining the integrity of the original whakairo patterns.

“I didn’t want to change anything about an iconic marae,” he said.

■ Julianne Evans

Full stories at: auckland.ac.nz/edsw-waipapa-marae and auckland.ac.nz/new-waipapa-carvings

EMPOWERING DIVERSE LEARNERS

There can be hurdles to learning, but help is on hand.


As thousands of enthusiastic students descended on Waipapa Taumata Rau in February, among them were those who could face challenges beyond deciding what to buy at Munchy Mart.

They're bright (they're here!) and keen, but students who process information in diverse ways sometimes have to work a bit harder to achieve their goals.

The University of Auckland's Inclusive Learning team is geared up to help students who require support. They may have been diagnosed with conditions such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), autism spectrum (AS), dyslexia or dyscalculia (a learning disorder that affects the ability to do maths), among others. They may also have chronic fatigue or other conditions that impact their attention and concentration.

Inclusive Learning advisers Glenis Wong-Toi and Dulcie Brake support neurodivergent students to be academically successful and to maintain their well-being while they're at Waipapa Taumata Rau.

"We see students from when they first start right through to doctoral level," says Glenis, who advises it's preferable for students to access support early if possible.

A portrait of Dulcie Brake, a woman with short grey hair and glasses, wearing a black cardigan over a patterned top. She is sitting in a chair and smiling.

*Dulcie Brake works with neurodivergent students to support them in their studies.
Photo: Chris Loufte*

She says students may get in touch with the Inclusive Learning Team before or during their degree. The level of assistance they receive depends on whether there has been an official diagnosis. In 2023, the team received more than 580 student referrals.

Glenis and Dulcie say it's good that teaching staff are becoming more aware of neurodivergent thinkers, but they can only help if advised by the students of their situation.

To encourage that, they suggest lecturers foster an environment where students feel like they could make them aware of their condition early – not a few weeks after an assignment is due.

"It's vital to create trust and show them you're willing to work with neurodivergent students."

Lecturers could say something like, 'I understand everybody works differently. If you

have a different way of learning and you'd like to discuss that with me, please make sure you do.'

"Teaching staff who are responsive to student needs can have a positive impact on that student in terms of their confidence in their ability to succeed," says Dulcie.

"It has been really encouraging to hear from students that their lecturers have responded positively to their request for support."


The Inclusive Learning advisers can help students with workload management and organisation, academic reading and writing, and even note-taking for study. There is also a lot of digital technology that can help with learning challenges.

Campus Care and Assessment Services can also assist with modifications to the physical environment neurodivergent students use for tests, including adjustments to lighting and noise levels.

Glenis and Dulcie say that students sometimes find the move from a prescribed timetable at school to University challenging, but the flipside is they are taking subjects they prefer and in which they are genuinely interested.

They say it's important not to assume it will be a struggle for all, but to let them know there's a place they can turn to for assistance if they need it.

Dulcie adds: "Sometimes just acknowledging the challenges can be helpful, but with support and help, students can develop the academic skills they need to be successful at university."

A portrait of Glenis Wong-Toi, a woman with long dark hair, wearing a dark blue sweater and a necklace. She is sitting in a chair and smiling.

*Glenis Wong-Toi says it's vital to create trust with neurodivergent students.
Photo: Chris Loufte*

For more about the Inclusive Learning Team: auckland.ac.nz/inclusive-learning-services
Read one student's story: auckland.ac.nz/inclusive-learning-ruth-story

EMILSON SILVA: ENERGISING AOTEAROA

As the director of the Energy Centre, Professor Emilson Silva is helping to shape the future of energy innovation to meet New Zealand's economic and environmental needs.

Professor Emilson Silva's path to becoming a leading energy economist took a comically squeamish detour during his high school years.

Dreaming of donning a doctor's white coat and stethoscope, Emilson was met with the unsettling reality of a frog dissection in one of his high school classes. The sight of amphibian blood proved too overwhelming, derailing his medical ambitions.

This pivotal moment led the young Brazilian away from medicine and towards the equally complex, but less bloody, world of economics.

It's a decision that has turned out well. In 2023 he relocated to Aotearoa New Zealand and became director of the Energy Centre at the University. He also holds the position of Chair in Energy Economics at the Business School.

The country's rich natural resources, both renewable and non-renewable, present an opportunity for pioneering energy transition strategies, says Emilson. He envisions the Energy Centre as a pivotal player in this endeavour, focusing on electricity as the cornerstone of a sustainable future.

Recent research from the centre includes a study exploring ways to enhance New Zealand's emissions trading scheme. Another dissects New Zealand's emissions drop of almost three percent between 2007-2013, highlighting lessons for where and how to decarbonise to reach the far more demanding national target of net zero by 2050.

Another study uses Auckland-centric data to show that solar panels are positively associated with electric vehicle uptake.

"I believe we're on the cusp of a significant shift towards individuals producing their own energy, particularly through solar power," says Emilson. "This concept of 'prosumers' – people who both produce and consume energy – was something I first encountered in Perth, Australia. There I saw first-hand how families, many not connected to the grid, were generating their own solar energy, with the option to sell excess energy to others in their area.

"While we're not quite there yet in New Zealand, I see huge potential for this to develop in the near future, leading to greater flexibility in our energy systems."

Our current regulations, however, are somewhat restrictive, says Emilson, limiting peoples' ability to trade energy unless they register as retailers.

"I'm optimistic that these regulations will evolve to better facilitate peer-to-peer energy trading, mirroring trends in Australia and other countries. In my view, the move towards decentralised trading is an inevitable and rapidly approaching future for New Zealand's energy landscape."

Emilson was born in 1964 in Três Corações (three hearts), a Brazilian city that's known for being the birthplace of football legend Pelé. When he was six, he moved with his family to the country's newly established capital, Brasilia.

In the mid-1950s, the President of Brazil decided to move the capital city away from Rio de Janeiro, with the intention of building a modern, 21st-century city at the centre of the nation to open the central territories to greater economic development.

Work on the new capital began in 1956, and Brasilia, which was hailed as a modernist miracle in its early days, was inaugurated four years later in 1960.

A number of professionals, including Emilson's dad, a dentist, were asked to relocate to the new capital. In 1970, the family set up in the meticulously designed city, where Emilson enjoyed school and football in some of the city's many parks.

Inspired by a fascination for other countries and cultures, Emilson considered careers that would take him overseas, and life as a diplomat piqued his interest.

"I was thinking about how I could live and work in different countries. One of my friend's fathers was a diplomat and an economist, and my friend said that since I liked history and maths, I would probably like economics, and that studying economics was helpful in terms of becoming a diplomat.

"In my history class, I remember reading a textbook written by an economic historian who provided rationale for historical events based on economics. The book opened my eyes to the economic motivations behind things that had happened, such as wars that had been

WHAT WE'RE DOING

The University's strategic plan *Taumata Teitei* promotes the transdisciplinary approach used for the type of research being undertaken at the Energy Centre and in other related research centres at Waipapa Taumata Rau.

The University has around 50 researchers across Science, Business, Engineering and Creative Arts and Industries, involved in contributing to New Zealand's transition to a sustainable, equitable energy economy by 2050. The fields of research relate to energy efficiency and sustainability, energy security and resilience, decarbonisation, and moving to electrification (from fossil fuels).

This research plays a big part in improving decision-making by government and its agencies about the best way to transition to a net zero carbon future.





“If you have a very efficient way of preventing CO₂ emissions, fossil fuels could be used solely as a backup. This approach could balance sustainability with the need for energy security and price stability.”

***– Professor Emilson Silva, director,
University of Auckland Energy Centre***

Professor Emilson Silva is the director of the Energy Centre and Chair in Energy Economics at the Business School. Photo: Chris Loufte

fought. This was all very interesting to me, and I eventually went on to study economics at the University of Brasilia.”

Emilson graduated in 1986, and that same year, after a mentor told him he didn’t need a masters degree to pursue a PhD in the US, he signed up for his doctoral studies at the University of Illinois.

It turned out that academia was his calling and an excellent way to see the world. Emilson’s first role was as an assistant professor in the Department of Economics at the University of Oregon, where he worked for six years before accepting a position as a senior assistant professor at Tulane University in New Orleans.

“I loved the university there, and I loved the city. It felt like a sister city to a Brazilian one because of the culture, the food, the music and the attitude of the people, who tended to be warm, vibrant and social.”

In 2005, Hurricane Katrina devastated the city and its people. Emilson and around 250,000 others fled the area.

In 2006, he moved to Atlanta, Georgia, where he landed a professorship at the Georgia Institute of Technology. He played a

crucial role in developing the economics PhD programme, laying the groundwork for future scholars to explore the nexus of economics and environmental issues.

In 2012, he was invited by a colleague from the University of Alberta to apply for a position.

“They wanted someone to work on energy and environmental issues. At that time, there was a boom in terms of commodities and oil, and they wanted someone to help them with their energy sector, which was mostly fossil fuels.”

Emilson spent nearly 12 years at the University of Alberta, where he held the Campus Alberta Innovation Program Chair in the areas of energy and environmental economics from 2012 to 2019 and was department head from 2018 to 2021.

Emilson says a key concern in New Zealand’s energy sector is energy security, especially as the country increasingly incorporates intermittent renewable sources like wind and solar into its energy mix.

“A question we’re all exploring is how to ensure a reliable energy supply when the wind isn’t blowing, there’s a drought, or the sun isn’t shining.”

Energy storage solutions, such as batteries or

natural batteries like the axed Lake Onslow pumped hydro project, become critical in this context, he says.

“Geothermal energy is a good renewable energy source, but efficiency challenges exist. We can also consider the role of hydrogen and the possibility of using thermal plants powered by natural gas or coal as a backup, provided that you have carbon capture and storage available.

“If you have a very efficient way of preventing CO₂ emissions, fossil fuels could be used solely as a backup. This approach could balance sustainability with the need for energy security and price stability.”

The concept of a capacity market, similar to systems in the UK, could provide a structured solution to ensure the availability of backup energy resources during peak demand periods or dry spells, says Emilson, offering long-term security and motivating the maintenance of essential backup infrastructure.

“I think this could be one of the arguments used by the government to revive the oil and gas industry – that we may need to have a thermal plant sitting there that can be turned on very quickly when needed.”

■ Sophie Boladeras



Jack Bromwich says studying music has helped to take his songwriting to the next level.

Photo: Ryo Nishikawa

READY TO ROCK

Last year marked a crucial turning point for up-and-coming Auckland musician Jack Bromwich.

Mid-way through the first year of his Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) and Bachelor of Music conjoint degree, Jack found himself struggling to balance the demands of both disciplines.

“The engineering side of my degree had become too busy for me to also pursue music, and I thought, ‘I could never leave music out of my life.’”

He decided to trust his instincts and drop engineering from his degree to fully dedicate himself to his music studies. Much to his surprise, the decision has proved fruitful, with his band scoring numerous gigs and valuable opportunities to showcase their music.

“Changing degrees has been a life-changing choice,” he says.

The 19-year-old singer/guitarist is specialising in popular music and in September 2023 was a runner-up at the Dig the Gig grand final, a competition for student bands from the University of Auckland. He has released two EPs of upbeat indie rock and a steady stream of singles in the past 18 months.

One of those songs, ‘Nothing To You’, was written at the start of last year and has helped him to win over audiences.

“There were people singing along to it at my shows. That was something I hadn’t experienced before.”

The introspective song delves into the theme of feeling like one’s efforts will never be enough, a sentiment he has found he can relate to as an emerging musician.

“It can be tough, especially at this early stage, when it feels like what I’m doing isn’t getting as much traction as I want despite how much effort I put into it. But you have to strive to be enough to yourself and not other people,” he says.

Jack was born in Manchester, England, and moved to New Zealand when he was four. He first got into playing music ten years ago when his parents bought him a guitar for Christmas.

“I fell in love with playing and it snowballed from there. I find the process of being able to create something that I can listen back to anytime really enjoyable. I always try to push myself to do more.”

He says the first artist that really resonated with him was Radiohead, but he also found inspiration in local bands like Daffodils and Park

Road, who have been able to carve out a career for themselves in New Zealand.

“I’ve been grateful for the opportunities I’ve been given to play in the last year. I’ve met some awesome people through gigging and doing music in Auckland, including some of my closest friends,” says Jack.

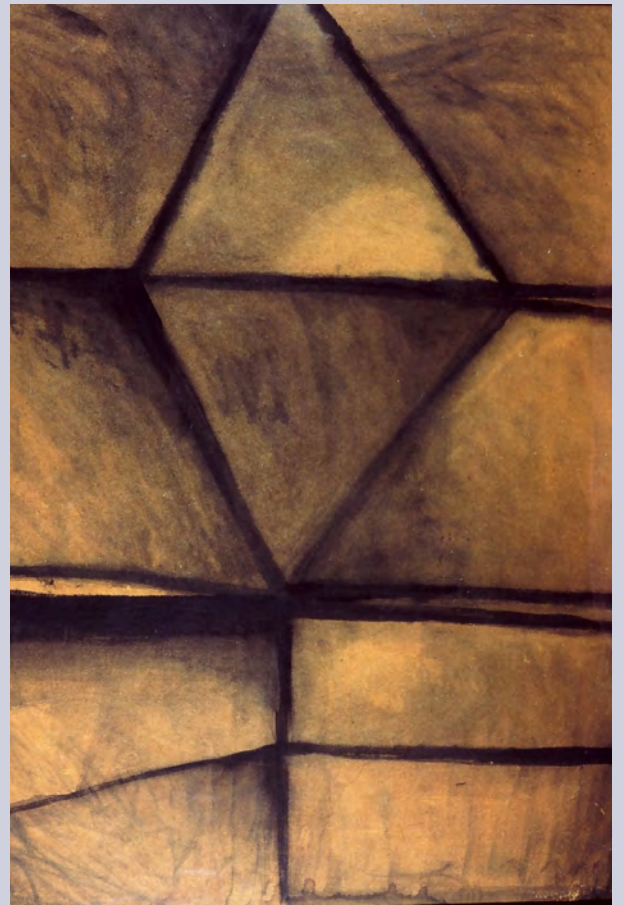
Lately, he has been back in the studio to record an upcoming single called ‘For You’ that takes influence from Irish post-punk band Fontaines D.C.

“I wanted a different vibe to what I’ve done already. The song is about how sometimes life can get you down and you can feel a bit grumpy. But it’s not because of anything someone else has done. It’s more about what’s going on with us.”

Jack says his experience since changing his degree and choosing to study music full time has helped him take his songwriting to the next level.

“It’s great to be in an environment with lots of people in the same boat trying to hone their craft. The lectures and workshops have helped me take the steps to get better. It’s been great to be able to learn how to do that.”

■ Hussein Moses



Left: Don Binney's *In the Lee of a Looted Island* (1966).
Right: Colin McCahon's *Landscape Through a Victorian Window* (1959). Both are from the University of Auckland Art Collection.

READ, BUT ALSO TAKE A LOOK

The Reading Room at the General Library has become a bit more distracting for visitors – in a good way.

Colin McCahon's 1959 painting *Landscape Through a Victorian Window* has gone on display alongside Don Binney's *In the Lee of a Looted Island*. McCahon is considered one of New Zealand's most prominent painters and one of the first adopters of Modernist principles. Key qualities of his work include its large scale, the

overlaying of text in white and its depiction of the New Zealand landscape.

The painting is not the only material created by or relating to McCahon cared for by the Cultural Collections team. A bronze bust of McCahon by Anthony Stones, a long-standing feature of the Reading Room, sits directly opposite, and there's also a selection of related McCahon ephemera in the Reading Room showcase.

The Cultural Collections team also care for another 20 artworks by McCahon, a set of his designs for stained-glass windows, books illustrated by him, and seven poems written in homage to Rita Angus.

Both paintings recently underwent routine conservation, with the Binney receiving extensive treatment for over a year to restore it to optimal condition.

■ The artworks are on Level G of the General Library.

POETIC CASTING

Renowned poet and scholar Selina Tusitala Marsh has taken up the role of co-director of the University's Centre for Arts and Social Transformation (CAST).

A professor in English and Drama in the Faculty of Arts, specialising in Pacific literature and creative writing, the former poet laureate and author will be joining Professor Peter O'Connor at the helm of the centre, whose projects include taking an arts-based approach to issues like homelessness, post-disaster recovery, disengagement from school and youth mental health.

Selina says accepting the co-directorship of CAST, an organisation where her community-based critical and creative output has found a natural home these past years, means she can help the centre cast its net wider, particularly within the Pacific and diasporic communities.

"I'm thrilled to be able to bring my background in the humanities, English literature and performance poetry into creative synergy with CAST and the Faculty of Education and Social Work to enrich our world."

In 2020, her book *Mophead* (AUP) was the supreme winner at the New Zealand Book Awards for Children and Young Adults, and also

won the Margaret Mahy Book of the Year and Elsie Locke Award for Non-fiction. She talked about its genesis and her latest book, *Wot Knot You Got? Mophead's Guide to Life* in the Faculty of Arts Research and Reason podcast, available on Spotify, Apple, Google and Amazon.

■ Julianne Evans

Full story: auckland.ac.nz/cast-co-director



Professor Selina Tusitala Marsh and Professor Peter O'Connor

HERE'S WHAT

ENTREPRENEURIAL

WOMEN NEED MOST

The theme for International Women's Day on 8 March is 'inspire inclusion'. Professor Christine Woods outlines important ideas to embrace on this day, and always.

While significant challenges face entrepreneurial women in Aotearoa New Zealand, three concepts – allyship, mentoring and paying it forward – offer effective strategies for building gender-inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystems. These interconnected concepts form the backbone of my work that focuses on unlocking and amplifying entrepreneurial potential through research, teaching and engagement to break down barriers and biases.

The goal is to empower girls and women on their entrepreneurial journey. Throughout my career, I have been supported by wonderful allies and mentors and am fortunate to be part of the University's entrepreneurial ecosystem, so it's important for me to share why these concepts are so important.

Allyship is embedded in solidarity and support. It is so much more than mere acknowledgement of gender bias – it involves active advocacy and action. In entrepreneurship, allyship involves men leveraging their positions, influence and resources to amplify women's voices, visibility and opportunities. It requires a commitment to challenging biases, dismantling structural inequalities and fostering environments where women can thrive. In short, it's about changing the system, not the woman.

On the eve of the first match of the 2022 Women's Rugby World Cup, the University launched the Aotearoa Centre for Enterprising Women (ACEW) at an event co-sponsored by New Zealand Trade and Enterprise. We heard from a number of influential women involved in world rugby, including Vicky Dombroski. Instrumental in establishing the women's game, Vicky helped name the Black Ferns and has been their only female head coach to date. Central to her conversation with us was the support of Laurie O'Reilly, an ally who worked tirelessly for women's rugby. His support, vision and mentoring of other men (including then head coach Wayne Smith) helped build a platform for the success of girls' and women's rugby.

Mentorship is a cornerstone of allyship and involves the transfer of knowledge, guidance

and support from experienced entrepreneurs of all genders to emerging talent. Mentorship is a vital conduit for bridging gaps in access, skills and networks.

Women entrepreneurs, in particular, often face unique challenges ranging from limited access to funding to pervasive gender biases in business settings. Mentoring counteracts these obstacles by providing guidance, insights and essential connections. Importantly, mentorship extends beyond traditional one-on-one relationships to include diverse support networks and communities. Businesswoman Theresa Gattung has been pivotal in mentoring women entrepreneurs as well as establishing and supporting mentoring networks such as Coralus, Global Women and ACEW. She is a great supporter of the University's research, and a strong example of a woman who pays it forward.

Paying it forward embodies the ethos of reciprocity and communal giving, urging beneficiaries of mentorship and support to extend similar opportunities to future generations. As individuals progress in their entrepreneurial careers, they carry the invaluable lessons, insights and networks they have gained. The invitation to 'pay it forward' asks those who have succeeded to reinvest in nurturing the next wave of aspiring entrepreneurs.

At its core, paying it forward transcends individual success to engender systemic change and transformation. It catalyses a ripple effect of empowerment, inspiration and inclusivity, amplifying the impact of allyship and mentoring. Through fostering a culture where success is measured not only by personal achievements, but also by collective advancement, paying it forward creates virtuous spirals of empowerment that transcend gender boundaries.

Crucially, the intersectionality of gender and entrepreneurship demands nuanced approaches that recognise and address intersecting identities, experiences, and challenges. Wāhine Māori, Pacific and other women of colour, Rainbow individuals, and other marginalised groups encounter compounded barriers stemming from systemic racism, homophobia, and other forms of discrimination. Allyship, mentoring and

paying it forward among entrepreneurial groups require concerted efforts across multiple fronts. Policy interventions, university engagement and community-led programmes play complementary roles in dismantling systemic barriers, and promoting and nurturing inclusive cultures.

The part we play in ACEW involves several initiatives in teaching, research and engagement. As part of the curriculum, we offer two specific for-credit courses on women and entrepreneurship. The first is open to any stage-three student at the University, while the second is part of the MBA.

With all the demand, it's great to see the University's response to need, including developing a masters level course on inclusive entrepreneurship. In partnership with Rise Global, which offers leadership and coaching for Indigenous women, we have a scholarship focused on wāhine Māori entrepreneurial leadership. We also have funding for another PhD scholarship in gender and entrepreneurial finance and several masters degree scholarships, thanks to support from the Chau Hoi Shuen Foundation.

Research in progress is exploring the gender investment gap, building on a report commissioned last year by Theresa. And Girls Mean Business is now under way following a successful launch with nine schools in November 2023. GMB is a university student-led programme offered to Year 7 and Year 8 girls. Supported by ACEW, in-person and online programmes are being developed to engage and encourage the potential of the next generation of entrepreneurs.

Allyship, mentoring and paying it forward are powerful ways to boost women's entrepreneurial potential. If we want systemic change, individual growth and collective prosperity, we need to incorporate this kind of thinking into our daily practices and organisational cultures.

■ Professor Christine Woods is the Theresa Gattung Chair in Women in Entrepreneurship at the Auckland Business School and director of the Aotearoa Centre for Enterprising Women. She gave her inaugural lecture on 29 February.

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



Professor Christine Woods
Photo: William Chea