



**New major HRC grant
for School of Nursing
research team**



Reason
Research at the School of Nursing
The University of Auckland

EDITOR'S NOTE

I devote this editor's note to honouring Rāwiri Wharemate (Ngāti Wai, Ngāti Moerewa, Ngāpuhi), a wonderful friend and wise counselor to the School. Matua Rawiri passed through the veil on 26 June.



He offered guidance and support to Head of School Julia Slark and was central to the development of the School's Whaea Kaiwhakahaere role taken up by Erana Poulsen.

He was also instrumental in establishing Te Ārai Palliative Care and End of Life Research Group in 2013 and continued to lead its Kāhui Kaumātua. Under his guidance the group's bi-cultural focus matured and strengthened. He was always keen to listen and help shape the focus and direction of Te Ārai's research.

Since 2003, Matua Rawiri had been the Kaumātua for the University's Werry Workforce Whāraurau, a national centre for Infant, Child and Adolescent Mental Health (ICAMH) workforce development. His work there reflected his dedication to child and youth wellbeing.

In remembering Matua Rawiri, it is appropriate to reflect on this proverb: Kua hinga te totara i te wao nui a Tane. *The totara has fallen in the forest of Tane.* It takes hundreds of years for a totara tree to grow to full height and reach its potential. When it falls, it is a great tragedy for all of us.

We have lost a valued friend, but the School will continue the work he has gifted to us.

Lisa Williams



Professor Vanessa Burholt

MAJOR DEMENTIA GRANT

The Health Research Council (HRC) has awarded Professor Vanessa Burholt a \$1.2 million grant to study promoting continence and managing incontinence for older people living with dementia in the community. The 3-year grant will enable Vanessa and her co-researchers to study the challenges associated with these issues that not only affect people with dementia but their caregivers and whānau/family as well. "The most important activity that caregivers want people with dementia to retain is the independent use of the toilet," she said. "Yet there's no structured pathway for continence care for people living with dementia, and the evidence to guide practice is limited."

The research team will examine the prevalence and incidence of faecal and urinary incontinence and the current practices caregivers use to manage it. "We'll identify promising strategies for promoting continence and managing incontinence. A priority will be developing culturally appropriate guidelines and support materials to improve outcomes," Vanessa added.

The team on the cover: Vanessa, Drs Deborah Balmer, Kathy Peri and Lisa Williams. Not shown: Dr Tess Moeke-Maxwell.



Dame Judy Kilpatrick

FROM NURSE TO DAME

Former Head of School Judy Kilpatrick was named a Dame Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit in the Queen's Birthday Honours. The award recognises her contributions to nursing education over nearly 50 years.

Judy planned a career as a teacher, but a last-minute change of mind saw her train as a nurse in Christchurch. She later moved to Auckland and completed stints at both Auckland and Greenlane Hospitals.

After working overseas, she returned to a career in nurse education, and in 1999 she co-founded the School of Nursing with Dr Margaret Horsburgh. Two decades later, the School reached 35th in the 2020 QS World University Rankings.

She cites the creation of conjoint degrees for nursing students and the establishment of the Bachelor of Nursing Honours programme as "exciting developments" during her tenure. Another noteworthy achievement she is proud of is the development of nurse practitioner training – a means to the end of helping nurses to achieve the "highest level of clinical skill within the scope of practice."



Ebson Abraham

RESEARCH-BASED PRACTICE

Nurse Practitioner (NP) Ebson Abraham is always keen to put into practice what he learned during his post-graduate studies. Based at Onerahi Family Healthcare in Whangarei, he has tackled many health issues that impact his rural patients, including a successful cervical screening programme that attracted many rural Māori women.

In addition, a critical analysis assignment completed in N701 (Research Project) led by Dr Cynthia Wensley was key to his development of a successful smoking cessation telephone conversation intervention. These same conversation skills became "a valuable consultation aid", Ebson said, that he relied on extensively during the Covid-19 lockdown period.

Ebson also cites the influence of Dr Sue Adams and Professional Teaching Fellow Sandy Oster. An assignment in the NP training programme (NPTP) saw him introducing a new role as an NP to a semi-rural population. "They had never heard about NPs, only doctors and nurses," Ebson said. The results have been promising. "So far, the NP role has been successful in closing the gap of the GP workforce."

A BRIDGE BETWEEN CULTURES

Little did Erana Poulsen (Ngapuhi, Ngati Porou, Tuhoe, Waikato) realise that when she joined the School in late 2019 she would become central to staff morale during the 2020 lockdown. Appointed the School's first Whaea Kaiwhakahaere, she moved her tikanga Māori sessions from in-person events to online in March of that year.

The half hour spent with Whaea Erana each morning on Zoom buoyed staff spirits. Those who attended learned waiata, te reo and other aspects of tikanga interspersed with a good deal of laughter. "During lockdown, tikanga set me up for the day – and still sets me up for the day now that we're meeting in person again," said Deputy Head of School, Lesley Doughty.



Whaea Erana leading waiata at a recent Matariki celebration.

Erana's journey to the School began in an unlikely place. She trained as a chef in the early 1970s and worked for Cobb and Co for 10 years. A career change led her to Newmarket's Te Ungawaka marae where she was a youth worker. From there, she went to AUT as a cultural advisor in the Community Health Department and on to the Auckland District Health Board where she was the first cultural advisor for child and adolescent health. Later, she moved to Waitemata DHB to become a cultural coordinator and then a senior cultural advisor.



Whaea Kaiwhakahaere Erana Poulsen

She was on a gap year from WDHB doing volunteer work for Vision West when she was approached about the Whaea Kaiwhakahaere role. "We needed just the right person," said Head of School Julia Slark, "and felt her many years of experience made her a good fit. Now we couldn't imagine life without Whaea Erana. She's so embedded within the culture of the school."

Though Erana acknowledges there have been challenges coming into a pre-dominantly non-Māori workplace, they haven't been as big as she anticipated because of the staff's "willingness to be guided and participate, to work at a partnership." This may be because of Erana's priorities. She sees creating a culturally safe environment as key.

Another priority has been reaching out to Māori nursing students – undergraduates as well as post-graduates. "I want to base a lot of my work on supporting them through their degrees in a pastoral way."

Underpinning Erana's approach is a strong belief in the need to support not just the individual but the wider whānau. She plans to continue building good relationships within the School and outside of it. "From a tangata whenua and a non-Māori perspective, this can be done."

COVID-19 DIET DISRUPTIONS

2020's seven-week lockdown introduced disruptions to people's food and drink habits. [A new paper](#) co-authored by Dr Victoria Egli in the *Journal of the Royal Society of New Zealand* reports on these changes. Gleaned from 3000 responses to an online survey, the results showed decreased enjoyment of grocery shopping and increased home cooking and baking from scratch. Overall, dietary habits deteriorated, a finding echoed in overseas research. More sweet and salty snacks, alcohol and sugary drinks sneaked onto the menu for many.



NOT ALL DEATHS EQUAL

Focusing on deaths during Covid-19, Natalie Anderson led a media analysis on the role the media played during the pandemic's early days in 2020. [The results](#), in a paper led by Tessa Morgan, were published in *Kōtuitui: New Zealand Journal of Social Sciences Online*.

A key finding of the research was that Covid-19 made the death of older New Zealanders newsworthy. However, not all deaths were reported in the same way. People living in their own homes were more typically described as active, participating family and community members. In contrast, people living in aged residential care were described as frail and vulnerable as well as withdrawn from society and awaiting death.



Drs Deb Balmer & Rosemary Frey

SPIRITUALITY IN AGED CARE

Drs Rosemary Frey and Deb Balmer explored spirituality in aged care residents and their bereaved family members. The findings published in the *Journal of Religion, Spirituality and Aging* suggest that spirituality may best be described through the lens of 'connection'.

Whether it's religious beliefs, identity, family support, group affiliation, or aspects of space, it's the notion of connection to both a higher power and to others that, at least in part, defines spirituality for those they interviewed.

Among the other findings they reported on is the need within residential aged care for culturally informed strategies to support the spiritual well-being of residents and their families.



Dr Willem Fourie

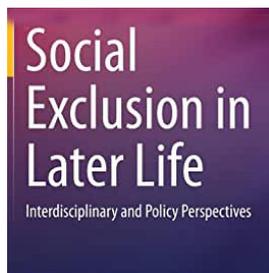
EMPOWERING NURSING SCHOOLS

Empowerment is the theme of Dr Willem Fourie's new book chapter published in the fourth edition of the [Nurse Educator's Guide to Management](#). The Guide is widely used in South Africa as a prescribed text. Its purpose is to empower nurse educators and managers of nursing schools to function more effectively. Willem's chapter, titled 'Empowerment Towards School of Excellence', makes the point that excellence can only be achieved when all staff are empowered, regardless of rank or position.



FIRST PAST THE POST(GRADUATES)

The four inaugural Victoria League scholarship recipients received their Postgraduate Diploma Health Sciences (Advanced Nursing) during June's graduation ceremonies. They are Caroline Donaldson, Andrea Lawrence, Jane Aloys and Cyrene Villocillo. "They completed 2 years of part-time study through challenging times, said Deputy Head of School, Lesley Doughty. "We were delighted to share and celebrate their success at graduation." The scholarships were established in 2018 by the Victoria League (Auckland) Charitable Trust. They are intended to encourage and support registered nurses based in Auckland who would otherwise be unable to undertake postgraduate nursing study at the University of Auckland.



INVESTIGATING SOCIAL EXCLUSION

The new open access book, [Social Exclusion in Later Life: Interdisciplinary and Policy Perspectives](#), draws on interdisciplinary, cross-national perspectives to help develop a scientific discourse on the social exclusion of older people. The book considers five domains of exclusion: services; economic; social relations; civic and socio-cultural; and community and spatial domains. Professors Vanessa Burholt and Marja Aartsen (Oslo Metropolitan University) led a working group on exclusion from social relations, facilitated by the [ROSEnet Cost Action](#), and one section of the book is dedicated to this domain. In the section's introduction, they describe the development of a conceptual model of exclusion from social relations for older people which considers the interrelationship between systems in the critical human ecology framework.

Three further chapters in the section address gaps in evidence that contribute to the eco-bio-psychosocial understanding of differences in experiences of exclusion from social relations for older people. They discuss such issues as cross-national similarities and differences in the experiences of exclusion, advance an understanding of micro and macro level drivers of loneliness, and explore the importance of relationship conflict and quality, and the impact on outcomes.



Dr Michelle Honey

INFORMATICS HONOUR

Dr Michelle Honey has been named a Founding Fellow of the Fellow of Health Informatics New Zealand (FHiNZ) programme. The programme recognises health informatics leaders who have demonstrated significant digital and data achievement through their contributions to leadership and service in the health and disability sector of Aotearoa New Zealand. Michelle acknowledges that the development of nurses roles in informatics has been encouraging, but believes “a strong nursing voice in all health informatics remains essential.”



Dr Deb Raphael

RESEARCH TO HELP CANCER SURVIVORS

Congratulations to Deborah Raphael for successfully defending her PhD thesis. Her work focused on survivors of haematological cancer. She identified critical evidence about the psychosocial distress they experienced after treatment ended. Barriers to their wellbeing revolved around a lack of information and discussion regarding psychosocial issues.

The gap in promoting relevant psychosocial resources also contributed. Significant predictors of distress included not being born in Aotearoa New Zealand, low social support and high fear of cancer recurrence. In her thesis she recommends implementing ‘distress screening’ as part of post-treatment follow-up to identify survivors who may be struggling.

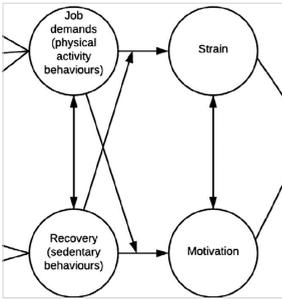
She also identified a need for individualised psychosocial interventions that are suitable for haematological cancer survivors in the post-treatment period. [The Te Ārai research group blog](#) features a list of her publications from her PhD that focus on the topic.

CARDIAC SURGERY IMPACTS WELLBEING

New research into the early effects of cardiac surgery performed on adults 75+ has found that it significantly improves their quality of life. Authors Maxine Anderson and her master’s supervisors Professor Andrew Jull and Associate Professor Rachael Parke [published their results](#) in *Heart, Lung and Circulation*. To gauge changes, they measured mental and physical health-related quality of life indicators in patients aged 75 and older. Measurements occurred before cardiac surgery and 12 weeks afterward. While the relative safety of cardiac surgery for older adults has been established, this is the first New Zealand study that explores the patients’ self-reported perspectives. The article is an outcome of Maxine’s master’s thesis for which she won the 2019 Kilpatrick Research Publication Award given by the School of Nursing.

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ON THEIR FEET

Physical workloads for intensive care unit (ICU) nurses involve plenty of time on their feet, a conclusion PhD student Fiona Yu’s research supports. In a presentation to the Auckland District Health Board staff, she discussed ICU nurses’ physical activity patterns during 12-hour shifts. The significant amount of ‘dynamic standing’ they engage in refers to their physical movements when performing such tasks as bed baths and equipment set up. In contrast, ‘standing still’ occurs when they take observations of their patients. The research has significant implications for health and safety in the workplace, and Fiona has identified the need to develop strategies to help ameliorate the impact of nurses’ physical workloads. [Read her paper](#) to learn more.



HOW CAN KIDS GET TO SCHOOL ACTIVELY?

Associate Professor Melody Smith is leading a new study about young children’s active school travel (AST). AST, which refers to walking or wheeling to school, offers significant health benefits due to increased physical activity and reduced vehicle-related pollution.

Funded by the Ministry of Social Development, the \$125,000 grant will be used to gain more insight into factors important for supporting AST in 6-8 year-olds.

The study is especially critical now as AST levels have declined significantly over recent decades “to the point where they are among the lowest worldwide,” Melody said.

Among the study’s aims is the goal to understand how individual, household, school and community factors interact to support or hinder AST. Other School of Nursing researchers participating in the project are Dr Jinfeng Zhao and PhD student Yijun Zhang.



Sean Mathieson

NEW CLINICAL SERVICES PATHWAYS

Sean Mathieson’s thesis about his co-design of best-practice non-acute rehabilitation (NAR) for older people following injury has earned him a PhD. Using participatory action research, he developed new clinical service pathways in hospitals to streamline systems, emphasising where service would be best carried out for any given patient. His results, which were gathered across five district health boards, show that the changes introduced have influenced a three-day reduction in the average inpatient length of stay for all NAR patients. They have also brought about a shift in the use of community rehabilitation services, with an eight percent increase in the total number of NAR patients accessing community NAR services, and a reduction of 20% of NAR users accessing inpatient NAR services. Sean’s PhD supervisors were Associate Professor John Parsons and Professor Paul Rouse (Faculty of Business and Economics).



Gemma Aburn (centre) & supervisors

STAFF RESILIENCE IN CANCER CENTRES

Feeling like you are a member of a 'work family' contributes to resilience for staff working in children's blood and cancer centres in Aotearoa New Zealand. Such is the conclusion Gemma Aburn came to in her successfully defended PhD thesis. Using a constructivist, grounded theory approach, she constructed a theory to explain blood and cancer centre staff experiences, with a particular focus on how they maintained resilience. [Gemma's research](#) highlighted that while children's blood and cancer centres remain a challenging environment to work in, staff are able to thrive through being a collective, a work family. Her supervisors were Professor Merryyn Gott and Associate Professor Karen Hoare (Massey University).



Judy Moselen

BUSINESS CASE A WINNER WITH DHB

Judy Moselen has put her freshly-minted taught master's degree to work in the Auckland District Health Board (ADHB). An oncology nurse specialist at Auckland City Hospital, she developed a business case for nurse-led clinics designed for patients who had completed chemoradiation for cancer. Judy drew upon knowledge she gained about evidence-based practice during her master's coursework. "It gave me the skills to critique and present research," and "what I learned formed the backbone of the business case." Her business case promoted the senior nursing role and detailed how the clinics would be advantageous to patients/whānau and also meet the strategic goals of the District Health Board and cancer unit. The ADHB has responded positively to Judy's plan. "It has been accepted in principle, and the process of implementation for myself and other nurse specialists is now in progress."



The Māūr lelei logo symbolises the Pacific treasure talo (taro) for sustained health and wellbeing together.

Māūr lelei logo credit:
Kylah Williams & Mark Dewes

PACIFIC HEALTH PERSPECTIVES

Dr Ofa Dewes served as co-host and presenter for the inaugural Māūr Lelei: Health and Wellbeing Together – Pacific Peoples Fono in the Community. The event was sponsored by the Maurice Wilkins Centre for Molecular Biodiscovery and the National Science Challenges for A Better Start, Healthier Lives and Ageing Well. The day's programme offered diverse perspectives on Pacific health with presentations ranging from immunity and vaccines, genetics, and chronic health diseases to Samoan traditional plant medicines. Ofa spoke about her recent research exploring the experiences and challenges of younger aiga carers looking after older relatives. Her preliminary findings highlighted challenges they experience, such as communication, mental health issues, and logistical difficulties in managing schooling and employment expectations.