

CELEBRATING OUR DONORS' GENEROSITY

The University of Auckland Annual Report to Donors



2025



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Thank you to our donors



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In 2025,
WE RECEIVED
\$51,449,598
THROUGH
4,951
GIFTS FROM
2,788
GENEROUS DONORS.

Each and every donor has made a valued contribution to the work of the University.

Thank you for your support.

\$28,199,839

WAS RECEIVED TO SUPPORT MAJOR PROGRAMMES OF RESEARCH ACROSS MANY DISCIPLINES, ESPECIALLY IN THE AREAS OF

health & medicine. 



SUPPORT FOR academic chairs and fellowships CAME TO A TOTAL OF **\$2,804,681.**

The University of Auckland Foundations use CASE (Council for Advancement and Support of Education) global standards for calculating total funds raised in any year. These figures include all philanthropic income received through the University of Auckland Foundation, the Medical and Health Sciences Foundation and directly to the University of Auckland.

THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND IS NEW ZEALAND'S **top-ranked university**
IT IS ALSO THE **largest and most comprehensive,**
WITH MORE THAN **45,000 students,**
INCLUDING **international students representing around 100 countries.**

THE UNIVERSITY IS RANKED **65th in the world** BY THE QS WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS 2026 AND IS 5TH IN OCEANIA AND 28TH IN THE WORLD FOR SUSTAINABILITY.

THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND IS IN THE **Top 200**

IN THE TIMES HIGHER EDUCATION WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS 2026, PLACED AT 156TH.

It is 28th IN THE TIMES HIGHER EDUCATION UNIVERSITY IMPACT RANKINGS 2025.

IN 2025, THE LARGEST NUMBER OF GIFTS WAS TO SUPPORT **student scholarships and projects**
- A TOTAL OF **2,550.**
















947 students WERE AWARDED **\$5,370,509**

IN DONOR-FUNDED SCHOLARSHIPS, PRIZES AND AWARDS.

WE NOW HAVE **560** members in the University's cumulative giving society, the **Chancellor's Circle:**
44 members in the **SIR MAURICE O'RORKE SOCIETY,** which recognises giving of more than \$5 million,
106 members in the **SIR GEORGE FOWLDS SOCIETY,** which recognises giving between \$1 million and \$5 million, and
410 members in the **SIR DOUGLAS ROBB SOCIETY,** which recognises giving between \$100,000 and \$1 million.

GENEROUS GIFTS IN WILLS WERE RECEIVED FROM **17 donors.**

THESE GIFTS ARE SUPPORTING:

-  **AUCKLAND CANCER SOCIETY RESEARCH CENTRE**
-  **GLIOBLASTOMA RESEARCH**
-  **THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY**
-  **SCHOLARSHIPS AT MEDICAL AND HEALTH SCIENCES**
-  **THE GROWING UP IN NEW ZEALAND STUDY**
-  **ARCHAEOLOGY RESEARCH**
-  **THE AUCKLAND LAW SCHOOL**
-  **SCIENCE SCHOLARSHIPS**
-  **ELAM SCHOOL OF FINE ARTS**
-  **CANCER TRIALS NZ**
-  **THE LAW SCHOOL INNOVATION AND DEVELOPMENT ENDOWMENT**
-  **FIRST-YEAR UNDERGRADUATE OR POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS**
-  **ECONOMICS SCHOLARSHIPS AT THE BUSINESS SCHOOL**
-  **THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND STRATEGIC ENDOWMENT**
-  **GENETICS RESEARCH AT MEDICAL AND HEALTH SCIENCES**

IN 2025, DONATIONS CAME FROM SUPPORTERS IN

27 countries.

The largest number (2,309) came from New Zealand, followed by Australia, the UK, and the US.



In 2025,
the median gift was
\$100

Staff and former staff of the University
contributed a total of



1,242 GIFTS

for student support
and a variety of research projects.

We received
\$579,578

through
4,090 gifts
from our
ANNUAL GIVING PROGRAMME,
supporting a range
of appeals including:



Marine Science
outreach to schools



scholarships for students from a
refugee background

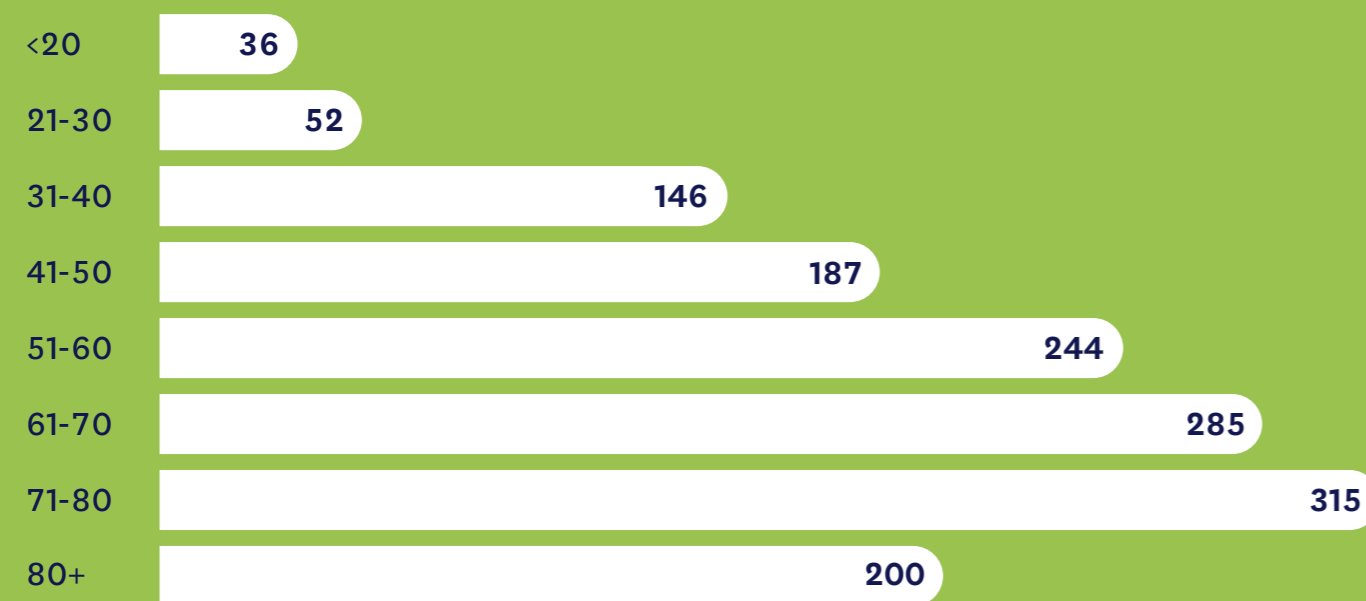


alumni scholarships



and dolphin research.

THE NUMBER OF DONORS ROSE STEADILY WITH INCREASING AGE UP TO 80*:



(*Age for those donors whose ages are recorded)

36.7% of our **246,156** alumni engaged with us –
THROUGH GIVING FINANCIALLY, THROUGH VOLUNTEERING ACTIVITIES
AND THROUGH EVENTS AND COMMUNICATION.



Volunteering



Alumni Connect



Physical Events



Virtual Events



Virtual Book Club

	Volunteering	Alumni Connect	Physical Events	Virtual Events	Virtual Book Club
2019	902	243	7,283	0	0
2020	718	889	4,549	1,897	0
2021	829	909	8,784	1,180	472
2022	903	579	12,311	1,092	562
2023	943	508	14,233	815	536
2024	928	328	14,517	224	559
2025	1,208	538	13,667	79	578

Thank you to our donors



Long-term growth

Firstly, I would like to sincerely thank our generous 2025 donors. I am pleased to report that we received well over \$51 million across the year to support important research programmes and student initiatives.

As I step down from my role as Vice-Chancellor, I also want to acknowledge the vision and support of all our philanthropic partners since I took up this position in March 2020. It has been a privilege to work with you to advance the work of the University.

And finally, I want to pay tribute to the trustees of the Foundations, whose prudent management has enabled stability and long-term growth of our funds, even through a period of significant global socio-political and economic events, including the Covid-19 pandemic.

On behalf of all those who benefit from your support, whether students who receive scholarships or academic colleagues who benefit from gifts to support research, thank you all for your commitment and your valued contribution.

PROFESSOR DAWN FRESHWATER
Vice-Chancellor, the University of Auckland



Ensuring the greatest possible impact

The Foundation trustees are honoured to be responsible for stewarding the incredibly generous donations received into the University of Auckland Foundation and Medical and Health Sciences Foundation. Through ongoing refinement we seek to ensure the Foundations remain appropriately structured to manage, invest and distribute gifts to the University to help enable the greatest possible impact.

Of particular note in 2025 are the contributions of \$1 million or more from nine donors, many of whom are ongoing philanthropic partners. This level of giving is transformational, supporting major projects such as life-changing health research and comprehensive programmes to nurture the next generation of leaders.

I want to acknowledge my fellow trustees and the board members of the UK and US Friends for their outstanding service, and I would especially like to thank Vice-Chancellor Professor Freshwater for her exceptional leadership and dedication over the last six years.

DAVID CARTER
Chair, the University of Auckland Foundation



An extraordinary year

Thank you to everyone who supported the University's mission in 2025. In total, close to 2,800 donors gave nearly 5,000 gifts – an extraordinary result, which will have a long-term impact on the lives of many individuals and their communities.

Around half of these gifts were from donors wanting to support student scholarships and projects, some to improve access to higher education, others to provide unique opportunities for our most talented students.

Other donors are helping young New Zealanders' ocean literacy through activities at our Goat Island Marine Discovery Centre by supporting our 2025 Giving Day. Many of our longest-standing donors are supporting research in areas including health, the arts, and innovation.

I hope you will enjoy reading the inspiring stories about the impact of some of these generous gifts in our report.

MARK BENTLEY
Director, Alumni Relations and Development

The University recognises the exceptional generosity of the following donors, who gave \$1 million or more in 2025:

- An anonymous donor
- Auckland Medical Research Foundation
- Buchanan Charitable Foundation
- Cancer Society Auckland Northland
- Henry and Trudy Hudson
- Neurological Foundation of New Zealand
- Estate of Louise Stuthers via the Fatbird Trust
- Thanksgiving Foundation
- The McCall MacBain Foundation

In addition to their outstanding gifts in 2025, many of these generous donors are ongoing major supporters and are acknowledged through our cumulative giving society, The Chancellor's Circle.

(See page 26.)

Developing a bionic pacemaker

Television got its first bionic man in the 1970s, when astronaut Steve Austin was rebuilt after a catastrophic test flight. They gave him two bionic legs, an arm and an eye and called him The Six Million Dollar Man.



Professor Julian Paton

“A patient barely alive in heart failure ... we can rebuild him. We have the technology. We have the capability to make the world’s first bionic human.”

Fifty years later, researchers at the University of Auckland’s Manaaki Manawa, the Centre for Heart Research, have taken that sci-fi dream to a new level by developing a bionic pacemaker for the heart. And, with much more than \$6 million already invested in their work, they’re making Austin’s six million bucks look cheap.

Centre director Professor Julian Paton uses the analogy himself in presentations about the work, including those to potential donors, asking them to imagine its potential. “A patient barely alive in heart failure ... we can rebuild him. We have the technology. We have the capability to make the world’s first bionic human. You may be that human. Better than you were before. Better ... stronger ... faster.”

And yet for Julian, the device his team has been developing since his arrival in 2017 is based not on science fiction, but the simplest of theories: “What we are doing is giving the heart a taste of its own medicine.”

Our heart rate naturally increases when we inhale and slows when we exhale (variable heart rate). It’s a rhythm that’s been preserved across species for 430 million years and one that helps repair and restore the heart when it recovers from the day’s activities.

“During the day, the heart’s working harder because we’re alert, we’re upright and it has to pump blood up into the brain. We’re exercising, it’s having a workout. It has to repair itself. It has to prepare and optimise energy for the next day. And it does that particularly at night when you’re asleep. When you’ve switched off, your brain is repairing, your muscles are recovering. And that includes your heart.”

The pacemakers inserted in around 2500 New Zealanders annually, mainly for rhythm disturbances and signalling abnormalities, have not allowed the heart to do that, firing instead at an unnatural metronomic rate. The new device Julian’s team calls Cysoni (Welsh for synchronisation), which mimics the heart’s natural rhythm, is set to change all that and save potentially thousands of lives.

By analysing the heart muscle cells of sheep with induced heart failure who’ve been wired up to the bionic pacemaker externally, they’ve discovered that it helps damaged cells in the heart muscles to repair themselves.

In heart failure, these cells become “big and baggy” as the proteins within them vital for the normal contractions that occur with every beat become scattered and ineffective. “After our form of pacing, they’re all beautifully aligned and the cells have shrunk back to their normal size. Incredibly, the new pacemaker repairs this damage. It was a completely unexpected finding.”

The research suggests bionic pacemakers can increase the pumping ability of the heart by 25%, making them three times more effective than existing devices.

Julian says the first-line treatment for patients in heart failure is usually drugs to stimulate the remaining heart muscle. “We need to rethink this because this pacemaker is doing things that go beyond our wildest imagination about what pacemaking can do.”

In February last year, the first patient was wired up to an external bionic pacemaker – its shoebox size prevented implantation – after coronary artery surgery at Waikato Hospital. Since then, matchbox-sized devices have been developed in Cardiff and are due to be implanted soon in a specially bred flock of sheep at the University’s Ngapouri Research Farm near Rotorua. GPS trackers will then monitor movement of the sheep to demonstrate that the bionic pacemaker enhances exercise and prolongs life.

Julian hopes a clinical trial to insert the new pacemakers in human patients can begin as soon as next year. ►



Two years after becoming one of the first private donors to Manaaki Manawa, the Centre for Heart Research at the University of Auckland, octogenarian Garth Barfoot became a heart patient himself.

In 2021, Garth’s \$100,000 donation was used to buy a state-of-the-art ultrasound imaging platform for the newly launched centre. In 2023, a year after having a heart valve replaced, he was back in North Shore Hospital having a pacemaker fitted after suffering spells of dizziness caused by bradycardia (abnormally slow heartbeat).

Garth’s name is well known through Barfoot & Thompson, the real estate company his father founded in 1923, but in more recent years, he’s forged a new reputation as a distance runner, completing more than 30 marathons and triathlons.

The pacemaker enabled him to fulfil a long-held dream. In November 2024, at the age of 88, he became the oldest finisher in the New York marathon, completing the event in a gruelling 11 hours, 29 minutes and 49 seconds. The achievement had eluded him the year before when he had to pull out of the event because of the cold.

The news that the pacemaker technology that assisted him is about to become even better doesn’t surprise Garth, who calls it a “no-brainer”. Garth has talked about the new device with its developer, Professor Julian Paton.

“He said that when he was working, they would always look forward to the next model of car, and now, at his stage of life and after what he had gone through medically, he was waiting for the new pacemaker models to come through.”

Garth doesn’t have a wish list for a dream pacemaker. “But at 89, as someone who is old enough to have seen the uptake in use of pacemakers by my contemporaries, I know that with the help of researchers like Julian, we will be finding them even more useful in the future.”

Private donors like Garth are a vital source of funding for Manaaki Manawa. Others who’ve generously supported Julian’s work include the Kelliher Charitable Trust and the Heart Foundation.



Associate Professor David Budgett

Another transformational advance is wireless charging, being developed at the University's Auckland Bioengineering Institute by a team led by Associate Professor David Budgett and Dr Daniel McCormick. This allows pacemakers to be recharged after implantation and provides the energy for them to co-ordinate their activity with other devices in the body.

When it's time to recharge, electrodes are put on the body surface and small electrical currents pass near the pacemaker which captures energy to store in its battery. With wireless charging, the devices can be smaller and smarter: conventional pacemakers need to be surgically replaced to swap out the battery every 10 years or so.

The devices will establish a new standard for "lifelong pacemakers". Vivaly, their tiny size

allows them to be located inside the chambers of the heart, delivered through blood vessels using simple surgery. The availability of power means they can communicate with each other to synchronise pacing at multiple sites, which is essential for 70% of pacemaker recipients.

"They have loads of advantages," says David. "You don't have leads that can break, they're quicker to put in with lower surgical risks and you can add more devices later if needed." And they can use more energy to do smarter pacing. "Current pacemakers are very conservative in their functions because of the need to preserve power."

David believes the new technology may be 10 years away from common use, mainly because of the transition through regulatory approval processes. ■

Dance stories

"Choreography tells a story," says Kisha September. "At the base of every powerful dance is a deep and resonant story that is brought alive and played out through the artistry of movement."

Collaboration is an essential element, she adds.

Kisha, who is Head of Dance at Excel School of Performing Arts, is a PhD student in Dance Studies at the University of Auckland and in 2025 became the first-ever recipient of the new Buchanan Dance Research Residency Award.

Kisha's PhD research centres on "conversations about choreography" – especially the question of how "to strip back the process of creating it and handing it on to others".

She is constructing a set of tools to be used by other practitioners, which are designed to open new creative possibilities.

These comprise a book and a collection of cue cards, providing a vital spark to be built on through brainstorming. Together they form the base for a workshop spanning two or three days. Each participant takes a cue – either verbal or visual – to create a series of movements which they note down as intersecting, wavy lines. They then get together in pairs, and then in threes and fours and fives, to combine their movements and create new sequences based on a collaborative exchange and integration.

These resources are totally new, and unique in two important ways.

One is that they're centred on "ubuntu", a philosophy common to many African cultures and often translated as "I am because you are". Ubuntu is based on belief in a bond that connects the people in a community and is shared by the whole of humanity.

The other is that Kisha has been influenced also by the Māori concept of tūrangawaewae, which is about the profound connections between people and the land, often translated as "a place to stand". She has found "there are aspects of tūrangawaewae that mirror the beliefs of ubuntu".

Kisha was born in South Africa and lived five years there, in Cape Town, where she will do her six-week residency at the university where her father studied. This gives an amazing chance to extend her understanding of ubuntu "in the soil in which it grows", exploring how its philosophy is embedded in the community and applied in creative contexts such as music and theatre.

The donor is Lady Rosemary Buchanan, a former Principal Dancer in the Royal New Zealand Ballet company who is committed to the advancement of dance through research.

Kisha feels honoured to have received the award, which has already opened doors that she never even thought of – including a publishing opportunity – with the strong encouragement of her supervisor. She hopes the generous and "thoughtfully-designed" gift will have a "ripple effect" that flows on to other researchers at the University of Auckland and elsewhere. ■



Kisha September and colleague Elijah Kennar 13

Supporting future engineering leaders

Whatumoana Paki scholars Olivia Tukia and Hunter Blakeman have each notched up their first year of engineering happy in the knowledge that they'll eventually graduate without hefty debt.

Auckland-raised Olivia, aged 19, and Bay of Islands 18-year-old Hunter were in 2025 each awarded a \$40,000 scholarship named for the father of late Māori king Tūheitia Paki and funded by Waste Management.

"The scholarship means I can juggle what's often considered a high-performance degree with a high-performance sporting life," says Olivia, a medal-winning surf lifesaver and swimmer.

For Hunter, the scholarship "is a huge help" in keeping down his student loan. It will pay for most of his fees and, with earnings from working while he undertakes an engineering science degree, his flatting and transport expenses will be covered.

"It gives me peace of mind – I can focus on my studies without worrying about the financial cost of attending university."

"It gives me peace of mind – I can focus on my studies without worrying about the financial cost of attending university."

In just her second year in civil engineering, former Green Bay High School student leader Olivia is already making a splash.

Describing herself as a practical person with a liking for physics and mathematics, she "fell for engineering" and envisages working on projects involving coastal protection, water infrastructure or climate resilience for vulnerable communities.

"Growing up in and around nature, especially through my sport of surf lifesaving and swimming, I have deep respect for the ocean and the environment. My ambition is to work on sustainable infrastructure projects, particularly in Māori and Pasifika communities in both Aotearoa and across the Pacific, where resilient culturally informed civil engineering solutions are most needed.

"My dream is to found or lead an engineering company that holds many of the values that Whatumoana Paki upheld such as kaitiakitanga."

Her honours degree graduation might still be three years and "a lot of grit and determination" away, but that's not holding Olivia back from her watery pursuits.

The scholarship allows her to study and remain a full-time athlete, competing and getting podium finishes in surf lifesaving and swimming events up and down New Zealand and in Australia. She is a key figure at Piha Surf Life Saving Club on Auckland's west coast.

"I don't have to choose between the community volunteering I love as assistant club captain and patrol captain at Piha SLSC and paying for the costs of my studies through long hours of work."

Olivia says qualifying for the scholarship called for high grades and demonstration of her community commitment. "But the process helped me clarify why I am doing engineering in the first place as a Māori and Pasifika wahine."

At school she often found herself a rarity in studying the STEM subjects science, technology, engineering and mathematics. That changed at university when she joined South Pacific Indigenous Engineering Students (SPIES).

"SPIES has been invaluable in building bonds and experiences with other Māori and Pasifika wahine in STEM, showing that I can do it too."

Hunter arrived at engineering through curiosity about the inner workings of machinery combined with the same attraction as Olivia to physics and maths while at Kerikeri's Springbank School.

Another sports-minded teen – he is a gym-goer and plays basketball – Hunter says his technical interest was sparked by his father.

"He had a background in mechanics so I grew up around a man who could repair farm vehicles and cars and I think that inspired me as a kid to want to know how things work and why."

He is still translating that into an engineering specialisation.

"In my second year I am exploring the different pathways within engineering science and am particularly interested in how its strong analytical and problem-solving focus can be applied across a range of industries.

"Engineering science is a really broad degree so I'm keeping my options open in terms of future jobs.

I think that as I spend more time at university and move further into my specialisation, I'll get a better idea of what kind of role I want to work towards.

"In the long term I'm also interested in pursuing an MBA to further develop my technical background and enhance my business and leadership skills."

As an antidote to coursework, Hunter says physical activity keeps his studies on track.

"Whether it's to take my mind off my university work or to get moving after sitting for long periods, being active helps me stay focused and motivated. Going to the gym and playing basketball give me a sense of accomplishment that carries over into my studies."

Given the financial relief provided by the Whatumoana Paki Scholarship, Hunter and Olivia urge others to apply. They both acknowledge the generosity of Waste Management in putting up the money and also appreciate the validation that comes with it.

"I am extremely grateful to have received the scholarship and it means a lot to me," Olivia says. Says Hunter: "Knowing that an external organisation believes in and supports you is extremely rewarding." ■



Olivia Tukia



Hunter Blakeman



Dr David Waterhouse. Photo: Medical Assurance Society (MAS) / Medium Rare.

On the road to better health

As an otorhinolaryngology (ORL) surgeon and Professor of Surgery at the University of Auckland, Dr Richard Douglas works at the forefront of medical technology. Yet it was a precedent set decades ago that inspired him to create a mobile clinic serving rural communities in Northland.

Dubbed the tarāpunga – or red-billed gull – the clinic offers free ear, nose and throat (ENT) services to people in need. It’s modelled on an initiative by Sir Patrick Eisdell Moore, a medical officer with the 28th Māori Battalion, who after World War II converted his Land Rover into a makeshift clinic and travelled the East Cape assessing children’s ear health.

Thanks to Richard, who generously funded the clinic in its entirety, the tarāpunga is now on a similar mission in Te Tai Tokerau.

To bring the van to fruition, Richard worked with Dr David Waterhouse, a Whangārei ORL surgeon who is now responsible for running the clinic.

“It definitely wouldn’t have happened without Richard’s massive donation and the dedication of people wanting to do good,” says David.

Having grown up in rural Northland himself, David says there is a “massive” need for ENT care across the region.

“There are big chunks of Northland with really poor access to care, mainly around the mid-north and Dargaville. People have to travel a huge amount of time to get to Whangārei; it takes a day out of work and sometimes they have to bring all the kids down, and the fuel cost is huge. This has a major impact on families.”

The clinic launched in November 2024. Figures from its first five months show 306 patients were treated at 46 locations, with David estimating the total number of patients seen to now be around 600 to 700.

The van is run by Health NZ staff and is set up to help everyone “from babies to people in their nineties”.

“We’ve basically got everything in the van that we have in the hospital,” says David.

Community reaction to the clinic has been “overwhelmingly positive”, with a notable flow-on effect for staff.

“This has been so good for morale. Staff feel like they’re really giving back to their community.”

In the long term, David hopes the van can act as a blueprint for similar initiatives elsewhere.

“In South Auckland, access to care is even worse than what we have up here in Northland so having something like this in an urban setting would be useful too.”

One University of Auckland-backed initiative focusing on South Auckland is Vision Bus Aotearoa.

Launched in 2022, the bus aims to improve access to eye care in underserved communities. Travelling to schools, marae and refugee centres, the bus provides eye tests and treatments – including glasses – at no cost to patients. In 2025, it visited 19 schools, with 709 children referred for a comprehensive eye examination. Seven out of ten children seen on the bus need glasses for significant refractive error, while others have conditions such as amblyopia, ocular trauma, allergic eye disease and keratoconus.

“This has been so good for morale. Staff feel like they’re really giving back to their community.”

The initiative has been funded from the beginning by Peter and Rae Fehl, with additional philanthropic support coming from the Blake family, Essilor – a prescription lens provider – and the Buchanan Charitable Foundation.

“There is no public funding for the majority of the population when it comes to primary, community-based eye care, so the need is immense,” says Dr Joanna Black, Deputy Head of the School of Optometry and Vision Science, who oversees the bus.

Even when people know they or their children need glasses, financial barriers often prevent them from seeking help, she says.

“They’re reluctant to come forward and have their children tested when they know they won’t be able to afford what’s needed – and that’s really difficult.”

The bus also aims to raise awareness of eye health. While people know they need regular general health check-ups, Joanna says eye care is “more often seen as something that you only access when you have a problem – and that means many conditions go undetected for longer”.

While the bus serves people of all ages, its primary focus is schoolchildren.

“With children, we know that having clear vision is really important for early literacy and learning,” says Joanna. “If vision conditions aren’t detected in those first few years of school, children are much more likely to become disengaged from their education.”

Dr Andrew Collins, Head of the School of Optometry and Vision Science, says the bus also plays an important role in training future optometrists. Bachelor of Optometry students are placed on the bus during their final year, allowing them to “work with a range of different communities, demographics and age groups”.

The bus also supports research aimed at improving understanding of eye conditions in Aotearoa – work intended to inform long-term policy change that will hopefully one day lead to eye care being state-funded.

“The aim is to raise awareness and influence policy over time, to create a system where people – particularly children – can access eye health care in their own communities, much like they can access dental care,” Andrew says. ■



Vision Bus Aotearoa with students at Nga Iwi School

Oxford-bound engineer striving for a sustainable future



Jannik Wittgen

Mechatronics engineer and Kupe Leadership Scholarship alumnus Jannik Wittgen hopes to contribute to a more sustainable society as he embarks on a renowned Rhodes Scholarship.

Being busy is in Jannik's nature. An aptitude for physics and problem solving and a desire to build a career that improves lives led him to enrol in a Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) specialising in mechatronics at the University of Auckland in 2020. There, he joined the Mechanical & Mechatronic Students Association and took part in the Auckland Programme for Space Systems, all while continuing a ten-year stint volunteering for the New Zealand Cadet Forces – where he is currently a commissioned officer – and spending every spare moment tramping in the Aotearoa wilderness.

In 2023, he was awarded a Kupe Leadership Scholarship, joining a cohort of students selected for their academic excellence and leadership potential. It was an amazing opportunity which pulled him out of the “engineering silo” and exposed him to different perspectives, he says.

Jannik was mentored by serial entrepreneur Greg Cross and his scholarship was funded by the late John Turnbull, a fellow engineering alumnus of the University who spent many years working for Fletcher Construction on major infrastructure projects. An active member of the alumni community throughout his life, John left a bequest of more than \$5 million to the Faculty of Engineering, as well as a gift towards the acquisition of coastal properties in Auckland for public reserves.

“It is wonderful to be sponsored by another engineer who had a similar path and interests to me,” says Jannik. “John left an inspiring legacy and showed engineers can have a broader impact in society.”

Since graduating in 2024, Jannik has worked as a process development engineer at Fisher & Paykel Healthcare – a job he loves but is about to leave behind. In 2026, he is bound for England on a prestigious Rhodes Scholarship at the University of Oxford, where he will complete a Master of Science in Sustainability, Enterprise and the Environment and a Master of Business Administration.

Learning he had won the scholarship was “exciting and surreal”, says Jannik.

“I plan to shift into sustainability with a policy management or leadership focus, where I can lead change at scale to drive organisations and society to put people and planet first.”

He is looking forward to experiencing a taste of British culture and plans to approach the years ahead as he has approached life so far: with an open mind.

“I like the concept of proactive serendipity. There are so many factors that play into where you end up. You have to get lucky, meet the right people and come across opportunities – that’s serendipity. But there’s also proactivity: setting yourself up to be in the best position to jump on those opportunities when they do come your way.” ■

Koha Refugee Award recipient finds ‘freedom through education’

After being forced to flee Afghanistan and spending more than nine years in a refugee detention centre in Indonesia, Hussain Shah Rezaie is now studying to become a psychologist. His long-term goal is to help others who have experienced displacement and trauma.

Now 27, Hussain arrived in New Zealand two years ago through the Community Organisation Refugee Sponsorship scheme. At just 16, after being threatened and beaten by the Taliban, he paid a people smuggler to help him escape his home country and get to Indonesia. What he expected to be a temporary stop instead became nearly a decade in a detention centre – an experience he describes as being “like a prison”.

Despite the harsh conditions, Hussain nevertheless held tightly to his desire to learn.

“I always had a great hunger for knowledge and education,” he says.

With little access to formal schooling, Hussain turned to the internet, using online courses to teach himself English. He also studied psychology and photography.

“I came to find freedom through education.”

It was during this time that Hussain also discovered creative writing – a practice that not only helped him process his trauma but would also change the direction of his life. While still in detention, he sent an email to the University’s Emeritus Professor Helen Sword, who runs an online writing community. Moved by his words, she began mentoring him and eventually helped him make the journey to Aotearoa.

“She’s the best thing that happened to me in my whole life,” Hussain says.

After arriving in New Zealand at the end of 2023, Hussain enrolled in the University of Auckland’s New Start initiative – a bridging programme designed to prepare students for undergraduate study.



Hussain Shah Rezaie

And in 2025, Hussain received the Koha Refugee Award, which provides financial support throughout his degree. He describes the award as “life-changing”.

“I arrived in New Zealand without any family or community support, and I was desperate for financial help to keep going with my studies. So when I received the refugee award, I was so, so happy.”

He says it’s also heartening to know that this kind of support exists for others with similar backgrounds.

“We refugees are extremely driven because we have been through so many difficulties. We really appreciate the opportunities we are given here, especially in education. Financial support and scholarships help us to not give up.”

Now in his second year of a Bachelor of Arts conjoint degree, majoring in Psychology and Communications, Hussain hopes to continue on to postgraduate study, in either clinical psychology or psychotherapy. Alongside his academic ambitions, he remains committed to creative writing and to helping others rebuild their lives.

“I want to help as many people as I can,” he says. “And I want to give back to the community.” ■



Monique Forbes and Brianna Verspeek

Mentoring programme shapes career success

“Asking strategic questions is the key to success as a mentor,” says Paige Wilkinson, who took that role for the fourth time in 2025 with the Women’s Mentoring Programme (WMP) in the University’s Business School.

“It’s not about telling the mentees what to do. It’s about helping them to discover themselves, explore their values, plan their moves, and acquire the tools they need to take them where they want to go.”

The programme, which is offered in the Business School and the Law School, matches the students with successful professionals who are well placed to help with their transition into the workplace.

Brianna Verspeek, a BCom/BSc student with a strong interest in digital futures, was, in 2025, Co-President of the Auckland University Commerce Students’ Association and also a mentee in WMP,

which, she says, opened up exciting possibilities and helped her place her values at the centre of her life.

“My mentor, Monique Forbes, was absolutely fantastic,” says Brianna. “She put a magnifying glass over my life and gave me feedback, from a place of love, to help me do better.”

Brianna has always been a ‘yes’ person, open to ideas and up for new challenges: “Monique said that was great, that saying ‘yes’ meant moving forward.”

However, she also cautioned that some “fine-tuning” was needed to ensure Brianna’s decisions were aligned with her goals.

What made this match ideal is their shared commitment to advancing Māori.

Brianna is part of an organisation with just that purpose: to uplift Māori skills and opportunities in technology – and Monique took an interest in that.

“Tech Taniwha is unique,” says Brianna. “It’s very much my passion project. It’s a place where people meet and learn from each other. If I’m not on campus, that’s where I am.”

Tech Taniwha people are taking many paths. One is making a video about what being Māori might look like in the future. Others are seeking ways of protecting indigenous arts or guarding secret knowledge in the context of AI, “which is powerful”, says Brianna, “but can be invasive of things that are tabu”.

The absolute key to what WMP has given her is “the idea of shaping my future to accord with what I care deeply about: diversity and inclusion”.

Brianna and Monique were both delighted at her success in winning a place, for the first semester of 2026, as an exchange student at the University of Stony Brook in New York.

Meantime, Paige Wilkinson, who is Global Marketing Strategy and Transformation Manager at Fonterra, thinks back to her own time as a mentee in 2015, which helped her with the “big question” of “What can I do with my life?”

In her final year of a Commerce degree in Marketing and Entrepreneurship, she felt she had the fundamental knowledge she needed but the mentoring programme “helped translate it into the real world”.

While Paige’s mentees have all been very different, their common trait mirrored what she had experienced. “They were seeking to learn about the real world and what it means to start a career. What I tried to do is come and meet them where they’re at – exactly what my mentor did for me in 2015.”

“I pose different scenarios, to uncover and understand the root of their perspective. What are they worried about? What are they actually wanting? What do they need to be clear about?”

“I often describe student life as a sprint and professional life as a marathon. That mentality shift can be a lot for young people stepping into their first job – mentors support students through this transition into their careers, and guide them from a place of experience.”

She also works on practicalities, such as conducting CV workshops or modelling job interviews. “I’m happy to do that more tangible stuff, but I usually don’t go there first.”

Paige was always keen to come back as a mentor to a programme she sees as “incredibly successful”.

“The students gain a good education from the University, with the theory, the knowledge and skills they need. But WMP brings them face to face with a tangible reality and shifts their perspectives in ways that help create well-rounded people.”

The programme’s other great power is in building connections, and Paige urges her mentees to take full advantage of that. She advises them to attend all events and engage with the students and visitors, and puts them in touch with her own contacts with whom they have common interests.

“This programme expands the orbit of everyone in it,” she says. “To quantify its impact is impossible – its ripple effects are vast and exponential.”

The Women’s Mentoring Programme in Law and Business is made possible through the generosity of its donor, Cecilia Tarrant, the University’s Chancellor, who actively participates in the programme, helping identify potential mentors and guest speakers, assisting with matching mentors with mentees, and planning and hosting events. ■



Paige Wilkinson



Dr Caroline Walker and Distinguished Professor Dame Jane Harding

Better outcomes for moderate-to-late preterm babies

As a student with a disability, Lionel Briery was forever grateful for the financial support that helped pay taxi fares to attend lectures during his tertiary studies in Auckland, and that gratitude has been demonstrated many times over with long-term research funding for the Liggins Institute.

Although he passed away in 2003, The Jubilee Trust founded by Lionel has supported a range of projects over the past two decades that have helped improve understanding of how to better detect, intervene and improve the lives of children with disabilities like cerebral palsy.

Up until now, most research on preterm babies has focused on those born many weeks early. However, the Trust is now funding the MoPED study – Moderate-to-late Preterm Babies Early Brain Development – which will concentrate on those born between 32 to 36 weeks who represent more than 80 percent of all preterm babies.

“We’re interested in the moderate late preterm babies because they don’t have any routine follow-up, they don’t have any routine brain-scanning, they are assumed to be okay, but they are at increased risk of a number of disabilities of which cerebral palsy is one,” says Principal Investigator, Distinguished Professor Dame Jane Harding.

Co-ordination and balance problems, previously described as ‘clumsy kids’, are among the broader impairment challenges, along with behavioural problems and cognitive and language delays as children get older.

Which is why the current study, led by Liggins Institute Senior Research Fellow Dr Caroline Walker, is conducting follow-up research with the development of a two-hour school-aged assessment to check how the six to eight-year-old children are doing later in life.

“Most of them are going to be absolutely fine and within what we would expect for a child that age,” says Caroline. “But for some of them, things are not going to be so easy.”

A key benefit of The Jubilee Trust funding has been the ability to leverage additional support from the Neurological Foundation and the Health Research Council so that researchers can take fresh MRI scans to compare with those taken at birth and when the babies were due to be born.

The overall objective, says Jane, is to identify who is at greater risk of later problems so they can receive the right support early on “so that we can provide reassurance to most, and direct resources to those who are at greater risk”.

The MoPED study has enrolled 165 children from a previous study, and Caroline says they’re “a very motivated cohort” because they want more developmental information about their child.

“The gap between seeing a child at two and seeing a child between six and eight years is a long time,” she says. “But we have an amazing follow-up team here at the Liggins Institute who really build relationships with these participants.”

While 2025 has been about starting the school-age study rather than establishing any clear-cut findings, Jane says that the findings from previous MRI scans taken at birth are “very interesting” and could help clarify findings in cases where babies have non-accidental injuries from abuse.

“We have the potential to identify changes and potentially predictors and outcomes that will help millions of these babies around the world.”

“It is entirely left field and not what the study was about,” she says. “But we’ve been able to report this is what happens in these babies’ brains after they’re born, and that’s going to be helpful for people in the future to distinguish what normally happens from something that is not normal.”

In the short term, Caroline says “we have impacts on families every day and every week. We either reassure them that their child is developing completely as expected, or actually, maybe we should do some further monitoring or check in with your doctor – or perhaps a referral is necessary.”

Having the continuity of funding from The Jubilee Trust for the school-age assessment is also “tremendously important”, according to Jane, especially when they’re still awaiting data from the previous two-year study. “Having funding that isn’t contingent upon having finished the last phase is absolutely critical in longitudinal studies because you have to keep going when the children are growing up.”

The MoPED study is also in keeping with The Jubilee Trust’s longstanding commitment to fund world-class research that helps deliver better outcomes to the physically disabled community worldwide.

“We have the potential to identify changes and potentially predictors and outcomes that will help millions of these babies around the world,” says Jane. “They’re a huge group, and they’ve had very little focus on them. It’s time we did.”

In addition to providing opportunities to recruit and train the next generation of researchers, Caroline says that working alongside a globally respected neonatologist like Jane is an “incredible” opportunity. “It’s such a purposeful work, trying to understand how we can improve the lives of these incredibly vulnerable babies – that’s a pretty rewarding day at the office.” ■

A legacy of scientific curiosity

Inspired by the late physicist Dr Alan Maxwell, PhD candidate Ruofan Wang is on a mission to make an impact through research and education.



Ruofan Wang

He likens the challenges of a PhD to climbing a foggy mountain, where the path is unclear and the end point unknown: "Sometimes you go the wrong way and have to retrace your steps, which is disappointing. Alan probably faced problems during his PhD, but he got through them and became an excellent physicist and teacher – so why can't I?"

Ruofan grew up in China's small but populous Henan Province, where he developed an early interest in science fiction films and books. This, and a fascination with computer science's dynamic nature, spurred him to enrol in

a Bachelor of Computer Science at Chongqing's Southwest University in 2017. There he had the opportunity to pursue a Master of Professional Studies in Data Science at the University of Auckland in 2021 through a collaboration between the two institutions.

Leaving his family in China, he moved to New Zealand and found himself welcomed into the University's community. Progressing to a PhD, he took on the role of graduate teaching assistant and later professional teaching fellow, where he discovered a love of teaching he connects to Alan.

"I'm inspired by Alan to share my knowledge with younger students. He showed me being a good teacher is not only about achieving in research, but educating the next generation."

This is something Ruofan intends to continue in the future, along with furthering computer science research – possibly as part of postdoctoral study, if the opportunity arises.

"I'm motivated to build stronger interdisciplinary collaborations, applying AI to meaningful real-world challenges across domains. Wherever I land, I hope to contribute as someone who can advance research and create practical impact." ■

Alan's lifelong career in physics was marked by many milestones. As a student at the University of Auckland he pioneered the detection of radio waves from sunspots and later obtained a PhD in radio-astronomy from the University of Manchester. While working at Harvard University, he spearheaded the establishment of the Harvard Radio Astronomy Station and taught future leaders, including 1993 Nobel Prize for Physics winner Joseph Taylor.

Following his passing in 2021, Alan left a bequest of nearly \$3 million to the University to establish the Alan Maxwell Science PhD Scholarship and support, in perpetuity, students studying physics, computer science or mathematics. Now, the scholarship's current recipient is continuing his journey of scientific advancement.

"This scholarship has meant far more than financial support to me," says Ruofan Wang, who is in the third year of a PhD in computer science focused on multimodal representation learning and artificial intelligence. "Dr Alan Maxwell's legacy in scientific curiosity and commitment to education is deeply inspiring and gives me confidence and a sense of responsibility to pursue meaningful research and contribute to our student community."

Inaugural digital Giving Day boosts marine conservation

Enhancing ocean literacy is central to the mission of the University's Goat Island Marine Discovery Centre, which was the focus of a successful new appeal.

The appeal was the University's first online Giving Day, which took place on 11 June 2025. Over 36 hours, money was raised through digital channels including a dedicated website to support the Centre's school outreach work.

Funds raised from the appeal are now enabling schools to visit the Centre and learn about the importance of ocean conservation. During a day visit, students can engage with live sea creatures in the on-site aquarium, explore interactive exhibits and snorkel inside New Zealand's oldest marine reserve, Goat Island. The aim is to inspire a new generation to care for our country's unique marine environment.

"Education is the magic word!" says scientist and philanthropist Dr Beate Schuler, who backed Giving Day 2025 with a generous matched gift to encourage support from others. "Our children will become aware of the damages that can be done by pollution, overfishing and imbalanced bio-equilibriums. With that knowledge, they will hopefully avoid the same mistakes previous generations have made and act more in harmony with nature. Carefulness and caring will become part of their DNA."

The Centre's marine research efforts were also supported through Giving Day.

"Because our seas are so much endangered, we need to act," says Beate. "Giving Day is an opportunity to reach out to many people, to make them aware of our needs and to support this research."

The inaugural digital Giving Day resulted in the largest number of donations received in response to one of the University's appeals. Altogether 331 donors, many of whom are new donors to the University, gave a total of \$73,399.

Giving Day is part of the University's appeals programme, which encompasses a range of initiatives including refugee and alumni scholarships and a unique dolphin-tagging project to protect the endemic Hector's and Māui dolphins. The programme highlights the significant, real-world impact of many people giving to the same cause, with gifts of every size making a difference.

Across the 2025 appeals programme, \$579,000 was given by 2,350 donors – a significant increase from 2024, which saw \$376,000 given by 1,067 donors. This growth reflects the University's efforts to ensure it is easy for people to support areas of interest to them through innovative initiatives such as Giving Day and the Phone Appeal. In 2025, the Phone Appeal was successfully rejuvenated after a two-year break and led to nearly 400 gifts. ■



The Chancellor's Circle

The Chancellor's Circle recognises generous philanthropists who, over the years, have made important contributions to the University of Auckland. Partnerships with these generous supporters have provided opportunities for this country's most talented young people to gain a world-class education, whatever their financial circumstances, and for our researchers to create knowledge that will transform our futures.

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<p>“This fellowship allows me to help imagine a future where tino rangatiratanga is not just acknowledged but actively lived, where Māori communities shape the systems of care and wellbeing that reflect our own values and aspirations.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;">– Law researcher</p>				
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“[The scholarship] felt like an encouragement and recognition of both my academic and professional work. There’s a little bit in your brain that says, Okay, I can focus more fully on my learning and on applying that knowledge to my work, knowing there is some funding there.”

– *Medical and Health Sciences student*

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– *Liggins Institute researcher*

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Gerald McNeel
Ian McNeill
Ian McPherson
Amelia McVinnie
Shayna McWhirter
Sarah Meikle
Bruce Mellor
Kim Mellor

“This scholarship has meant far more than financial support to me. The donor’s legacy in scientific curiosity and commitment to education is deeply inspiring and gives me confidence and a sense of responsibility to pursue meaningful research and contribute to our student community.”

– *Science student*

Adele Marshall
Liz Marshall
Nicholas Marshall
Simon Marshall
Lee Martelli
Fran Martin
Jason Martin

Vicky McCulloch
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Suzanne Nikoia
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Jacqui Parker
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Helen Parkes

“It is wonderful to be sponsored by another engineer who had a similar path and interests to me. The donor left an inspiring legacy and showed engineers can have a broader impact in society.”

– *Engineering student*

Frank Parkinson
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Jan Partridge
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Josie Peach
David Peacock
Patricia Peacock
Brittany Peacocksmith

“The donors are paying it forward. These are women who want to make opportunities accessible. I'm really grateful.”

– *Business researcher*

Carey Pearce
Helen Pearce
Nicholas Pearce
Ann Pearl
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Kim Thibault
Chris Thom
Suzanne Thom
Belinda Thomas
Dominic Thomas
Jane Thomas
Ryann Thomas
Barrie Thomlinson
Debbie Thompson
Grant Thompson
James Thompson

“It’s really motivating and encouraging knowing there are people and corporations supporting you and believing in your potential. Receiving the scholarship will significantly alleviate my student loan and allow me to continue giving back to my community.”

– *Business and Science student*

Brian Simmons
Caroline Simmons
Heather Simpson
Heather Simpson
Kenneth Simpson
Lester Simpson
Lydia Simpson
Ngamihi Simpson
Shane Simpson
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Barry Sinclair

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Katherine Stachurski
Lisa Stamp
Nick Stanish
Sean Stanning
John Stanton
Jason Starkey
Charlotte Starr
Ana Stastny
Kim Stedman
Susan Steedman

“This fellowship has introduced me to valuable networks where I can learn, exchange ideas and collaborate on topics I am passionate about. The value I have gained is priceless and offers lifelong benefits in the academic industry.”

– *Arts and Education student*

Harpreet Singh
Jasmine Singh
Paul Sinton
Marana Sione
Dianne Sisley
Peter Skegg
Peter Skelton
Elizabeth Skirving
Peter Sluyter
Bruce Smaill

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Rosanne Sparling
Alisa Speight

Ann Steele
Caleb Steele
Sarah Steele
Jules Stephan
Arthur Stephenson
Brian Stephenson
Richard Stevens
Ian Stevenson
Fiona Stewart
Sandra Stewart

“I am deeply honoured to receive this scholarship. It will greatly reduce my financial burden and stress, allowing me to spend my time working hard to achieve the best grades I can get.”

– *Science student*

Hudson Smales
Lisa Small
Elizabeth Smart

Gail Spence
Helen Spence
Meagan Spence

Martin Stiles
Hans-Peter Stoffel
Zoran Stojanovich

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Kien Tat Wai
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 Marion Wainman
 Christopher Waite
 Bruce Wakefield
 Craig Walker
 Curtis Walker

“Philanthropy is incredibly important for initiatives like these, which often face difficulties securing funding from traditional grant agencies due to their need for diverse teams and the creation of new capabilities and infrastructure.”

– *Auckland Bioengineering Institute researcher*

Eva Walker
 Joanne Walker
 Mike Walker
 Grant Wallace
 Jan Wallace
 Alison Wallis
 John Walls
 Michael Walmsley
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 Angela Walter
 Scott Walters
 Caroline Wang
 Char-Le Wang
 Vicky Wang
 Wilma Wang
 Xiaorui Wang
 Te Piere Warahi
 Gillian Ward
 Marie-Louise Ward
 Robin Ward
 Amaria Waretini

“Funding towards The Changing Room 2026 has been vital to ensuring we can continue supporting artists. Enabling artists to make new work and be financially supported to do so is essential, and I’m thankful to the donor for enabling the kaupapa of Gus Fisher Gallery to thrive at a time when valuable commissioning and exhibition opportunities like this for artists are becoming increasingly rare.”

– *Arts and Education curator*

Trudy Warin
 Andrew Warrington
 Mark Warren
 Pauline Warrington
 Hamish Washburn
 Anna Washer
 Douglas Waters

Noel Watson
 Roger Watson
 Raymond Webb
 Penelope Weber
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 Roger Whilding

Geoff Whitcher
 Bob White
 Christine White
 Michael White
 Geraldine Whiteford
 Michael Whitehead
 and Felicity Barnes

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 Richard Whitelaw
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 Auckland Medical History Society
 Auckland Medical Research Foundation

“Philanthropic support was critical to me establishing an independent research trajectory. The donor’s support has often underpinned the launch of successful research careers, providing invaluable funding that enables early- and mid-career researchers to pursue their own ideas, demonstrating independence and supporting the move from the person who ‘does everything’ to emerging leadership of a research group.”

– *Liggins Institute researcher*

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“The residency is an incredible gift and I’m exceedingly grateful and honoured to have been its first recipient. It was a wonderful opportunity to have a complete break from the demands of day-to-day life to solely concentrate on my project.”

– Arts and Education student

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 New Zealand Pharmacy Education and Research Foundation
 New Zealand Society for Oncology
 New Zealand Society of Gastroenterology

“Often the big grants in New Zealand are so competitive. This funding was really important and will make a huge impact to the research that we’re doing.”

– Auckland Bioengineering Institute researcher

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 Stantec New Zealand

“Doing this scholarship was a really great opportunity for me, because it gave me a taste of postgraduate study. I feel like I have a big advantage, because I now have experience doing independent supervised research, I know where the databases are, I have connections with archival experts.”

– Arts and Education student

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 University of Melbourne
 University of Queensland
 University of St Andrews
 UoA Case Club

“Philanthropic support has brought a group of new and emerging researchers into this field and given more secure funding than just the year-to-year stuff, so that’s certainly a good outcome for supporting research in New Zealand.”

– *Medical and Health Sciences researcher*

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 The Fred Hollows Foundation Australia
 The Gerrard and Marti Friedlander Charitable Trust
 The Goodfellow Foundation
 The Gut Foundation
 The Hynds Foundation
 The International Bonhoeffer Society
 The Jubilee Trust
 The Kate Edger Educational Charitable Trust
 The Kelliher Charitable Trust
 The Law Association of New Zealand Incorporated (TLANZ)
 The Lou and Iris Fisher Charitable Trust
 The Luna Foundation
 The Marie Clay Literacy Trust
 The Masfen Foundation
 The McCall MacBain Foundation
 The Nature Conservancy (TNC)
 The One Billion Trust
 The Pakowhai Maori Committee Trust
 The Paradifference Foundation
 The Pindrop Foundation
 The Pink Cow Company
 The Poynton Residents Committee
 The Property Foundation
 Theresa Gattung Investment Trust
 The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists
 The Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners
 The SA and GJ Ombler Charitable Trust
 The Shorebirds Trust
 The Sir John Kirwan Foundation
 The Sir William and Lady Manchester Charitable Trust

The University of Auckland Foundations

The University of Auckland Foundation Group is responsible for receiving, investing and distributing gifts to support students, teaching and research at the University of Auckland.

The Group comprises the University of Auckland Foundation (Registered Charity CC10985) and the University of Auckland Medical and Health Sciences Foundation (Registered Charity CC30871).

Trustees of both boards formally meet, four times a year, to variously oversee and approve the use of gifts and the investment of funds, and other fiduciary duties. The Investment Committee meets quarterly to review investment policies and performance. It receives regular advice from its investment consultant, Cambridge Associates. The Audit and Risk Committee works closely with the Foundation’s auditors (EY) to prepare the annual financial statements, manage risk and ensure processes are robust.

The University of Auckland Foundation Trustees 2025

David Carter (Chair)
 Keren Blakey
 David Bridgman (Chair, Audit and Risk Committee)
 Miriam Dean, CNZM, KC
 Jonathan Mason
 Alice Mew (Chair, Investment Committee)
 Dr Arthur Morris
 Lyndy Sainsbury, ONZM

The University of Auckland Medical and Health Sciences Foundation Trustees 2025

Dr Arthur Morris (Chair)
 Professor Warwick Bagg
 Associate Professor (Adjunct) John Dunn
 Darren Manning
 Lyndsey Partridge
 Dr Kathryn Philipson
 Faye Sumner, CNZM

Thank you to our international board volunteers

The UK Friends and US Friends of the University of Auckland play a crucial role in supporting our alumni engagement and fundraising endeavours overseas. Our sincere thanks to the respective boards for their ongoing commitment and support of the University in 2025 and beyond.

The US Friends of The University of Auckland Board 2025

Dr Peter Rajsingh (Chair)
 Grant Biggar
 Privahini Bradoo
 Tim Cameron
 Professor Dawn Freshwater
 Quentin Hills
 Dr Lynette Jones
 Dr Simon Talbot
 Jody Visser

The UK Friends of The University of Auckland Board 2025

Eric Tracey (Chair)
 Matt Barrett
 Dr Penelope Brook
 Lady Rosemary Buchanan
 Michael Butler (on sabbatical from 14 November 2023)
 Professor Michael Davies
 Bronwyn Fitzpatrick
 Misti Melville (from May 2025)
 Dr Seth Rankin
 Sean Topham
 Jon Vollemaere
 Robert Whitehouse

Updates from the Foundations

Trustee Changes

In December 2025, Faye Sumner attended her last board meeting after 22 years as a trustee on the University of Auckland Medical and Health Sciences Foundation board. Trustees and management would like to acknowledge Faye's incredible service and wish her well for the future.

The University of Auckland Foundation was delighted to appoint Keren Blakey as a trustee in January 2025. Keren's career is grounded in over 30 years of audit and assurance experience locally and overseas and across a broad range of sectors. Prior to joining the Foundation board, Keren was the head of PwC New Zealand and a PwC Asia Pacific Board member and Partner.

Succession planning is an active consideration for the Foundation to ensure it retains the appropriate skills and experience.

Reappointment of Cambridge Associates

During 2025, the University of Auckland Foundation undertook a comprehensive review of the service we receive from our investment consultant. After working with Cambridge Associates for over a decade, it was considered timely to review the market to ensure we continue to receive the best advice and support, to enable philanthropic funds to generate optimal returns and thereby a greater potential impact for the University.

Led by Alice Mew, Chair of the Investment Committee (IC), the RFP process resulted in seven submissions from local and domestic firms. After presentations from the shortlisted firms, a unanimous decision was made to reappoint Cambridge Associates. While impressed with the submissions received, the decision to reappoint Cambridge Associates was due in part to their greater global reach, deep research capabilities and extensive first-hand experience of university endowments.

Foundation Management

Noting the Chair and trustees of the two Foundations are ultimately responsible for the governance of the University of Auckland Foundation and the University of Auckland Medical and Health Sciences Foundation, day-to-day activities are overseen by a dedicated management team.

PAUL CUNNINGHAM

Foundations General Manager

Paul's experience in fundraising, donor relations and the finance industry makes him eminently qualified to oversee the operations of the two Foundations. With extensive knowledge of the University of Auckland, Paul ensures that funds are appropriately stewarded and distributed to the University, enabling the generous gifts received from donors to have a positive impact on staff and students across the University.

ALLISTER JENNINGS

Research & Trust Accounting Manager

Allister is effectively the "CFO" of the Foundations and is responsible for managing the financial administration of the thousands of gifts that are received from donors. A chartered accountant, Allister joined the University in 2019 with an extensive background in accounting, finance and senior leadership roles in the private sector. Allister also looks after the compliance, audit and the preparation of financial statements.

PATRICIA YAP

Treasurer

Patricia is the University Treasurer and manages the Foundation's treasury operations. Working closely with the Investment Committee, Patricia is responsible for managing cashflow, liquidity and executing transactions in line with Investment Committee approvals. A chartered accountant, Patricia joined the University in 2024 after 22 years working in the UK in multiple financial services roles, primarily in banking.

Investing and Managing Funds



Investing donors' money responsibly

The Trustees seek to balance optimal investment returns with the goal of creating a portfolio that follows the best practices of responsible investing. Trustees will appoint fund managers who apply the principles of responsible investment and have the appropriate policies and practices in place to do so.

The Foundation will not invest in funds that invest in companies that derive any revenue from fossil fuel reserves, illegal or nuclear weapons, or the manufacture of tobacco products.

The Foundation seeks to include sustainable investment managers when institutional quality options are known and available. Trustees favour such managers, assuming they demonstrate reasonably comparable investment characteristics relative to their non-sustainability peers.

Investment in fossil fuel reserves has now effectively been eliminated from the portfolio. In the Foundation's 2025 annual fossil fuel review only 0.0000852% of the Foundations' investments were held in companies deriving revenue from fossil fuel reserves.

During 2025, the Foundations investment pools changed from a Current Use Pool and an Endowment Pool to a Short-Term and a Long-Term Investment Pool. As at 31 December 2025, the University of Auckland Foundation managed funds valued at \$487.1 million.

Short-Term Investment Pool (STIP)

At 31 December the STIP had a closing balance of \$51.1 million.

The STIP is invested in cash and term deposits in order to maintain the value of the capital and provide adequate liquidity to meet short-term distribution requirements.

Long-Term Investment Pool (LTIP)

At the end of 2025, the LTIP had a closing balance of \$436.0 million.

Each endowed gift received by the Foundations is invested into, and allocated its share of, the LTIP which is structured for long-term growth while also allowing for some of the investment income to be distributed to support its intended purpose – be that a scholarship, research programme or academic position. The LTIP also receives funds which are not endowed, but have a longer-term distribution profile, thus ensuring the impact of such gifts is maximised through greater investment returns.

Long-Term Investment Pool Performance

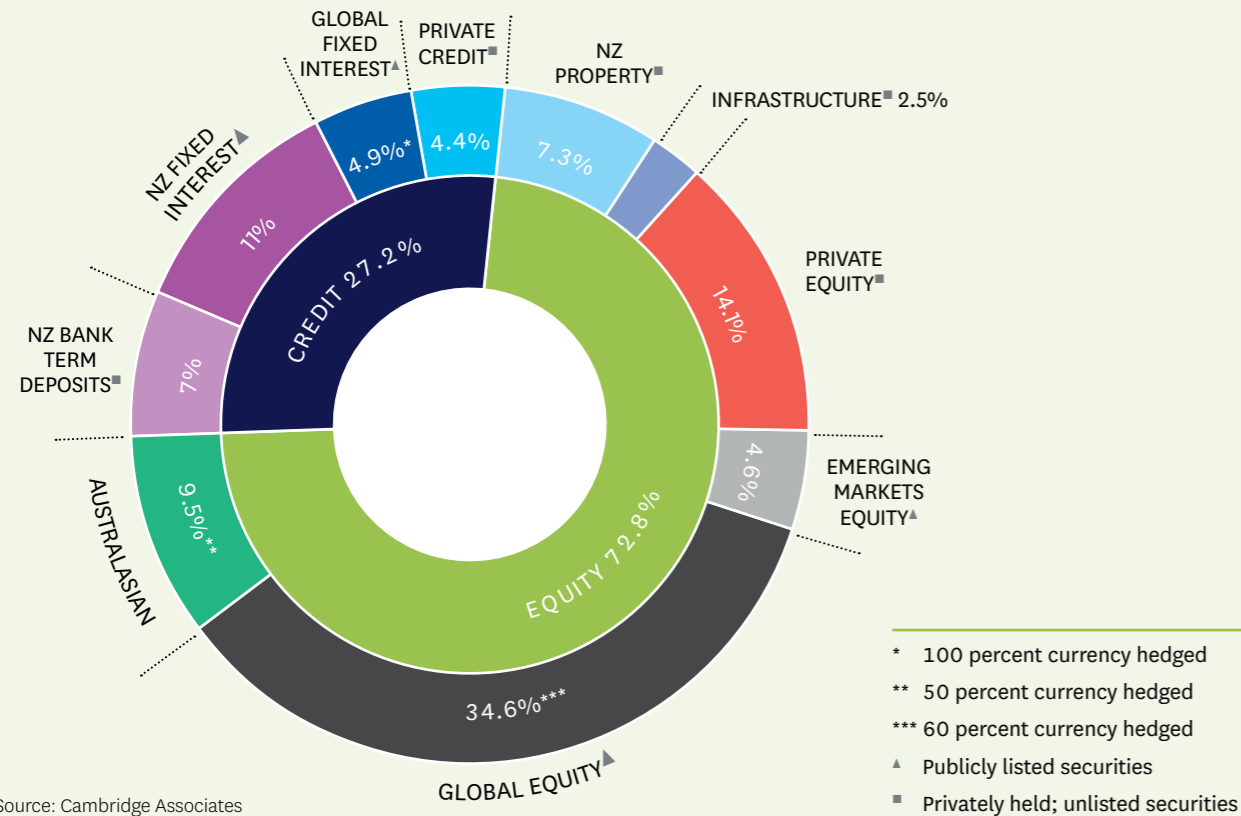
In 2025, the Long-Term Investment Pool (LTIP) returned 8.2%. The LTIP continues to meet our 5.0% net real return ten-year investment objective but underperformed the annual market benchmark.

Performance in 2025 reflected the broader challenges for active management and the continued concentrated rally in passive listed equity markets, particularly in technology and AI. However, absolute performance remains healthy, and the portfolio continues to be managed with a long-term, diversified approach.

Over the year, targeted changes to the LTIP were made, rebalancing allocations and replacing underperforming funds, leaving the portfolio more optimised and well-positioned for the future.

Overview of the LTIP's long-term performance

	Description	Return % per annum		
		One year	Five years	Ten years
LTIP return	Actual return for the Long-Term Investment Pool	8.2	7.1	8.2
Blended Benchmark	Derived benchmark reflecting the actual performance and weightings of the target asset classes in the portfolio	12.0	8.4	8.4
Investment Objective Benchmark	To deliver a real return in excess of 5.0% over a rolling 10-year period	-	-	8.2



The returns presented above across all time periods are net of fund manager fees, investment consultant fees and currency overlay.

These returns are calculated at the pool level (by Cambridge Associates) using the industry-standard, modified Dietz method. This method calculates total pool returns on a monthly basis. Each underlying investment is valued individually and a monthly weighted average return is calculated. Monthly pool returns are then extrapolated into annual returns on a time-weighted basis.

The LTIP is managed cost effectively by the Foundation. No fees are charged for the internal management of the bank term deposits. The LTIP represents the bulk of the Group's equity. The total external management and advisory fees amount to no more than 0.67 percent per annum of the LTIP's average monthly balance.

Summary Financial Statements 2025

In 2025, the University of Auckland Foundation and Medical and Health Sciences Foundation (together, the "Group") received \$33 million in gifts and made distributions of \$41.9 million.

Consolidated Summary Statement of Comprehensive Revenue and Expense For Year Ended 31 December 2025

	GROUP*	
	2025 \$,000	2024 \$,000
Gifts and Legacies	32,967	38,575
Investment Gain	37,299	48,589
Operating Expenses	(960)	(942)
Distributions and Grants	(41,903)	(41,727)
Total Comprehensive Revenue and Expense for the Year	27,403	44,495

Consolidated Summary Statement of Changes in Equity For the Year Ended 31 December 2025

	2025 \$,000	2024 \$,000
Equity at the Beginning of the Year	396,048	351,553
Total Comprehensive Revenue and Expense	27,403	44,495
Equity at the End of the Year	423,451	396,048

Consolidated Summary Statement of Financial Position As at 31 December 2025

	2025 \$,000	2024 \$,000
Current Assets	59,054	55,092
Non Current Assets	433,598	412,680
Current Liabilities	(69,201)	(71,724)
Net Assets	423,451	396,048

Represented by:

Equity at End of Year	423,451	396,048
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*University of Auckland Foundation and Medical and Health Sciences Foundation combined

The figures contained in these consolidated financial statements do not include philanthropic income received directly by the University of Auckland and only reflect cash received in that financial year.

These summary financial statements have been extracted from the Group's 2025 audited financial statements but are themselves unaudited. They are provided to give interested persons a succinct overview of the Group's financial performance. The full and audited financial statements (which give a more complete understanding of the financial performance, financial position and cash flows of the Group) are available online at "www.uoafoundation.org.nz" or may be requested in writing from Paul Cunningham, Foundations General Manager, Alumni Relations and Development, The University of Auckland, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142.



Waipapa
Taumata Rau
**University
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