



Waipapa  
Taumata Rau  
University  
of Auckland

# Auckland Law

Te Wāhanga Ture o Waipapa Taumata Rau



AUCKLAND LAW SCHOOL  
ALUMNI ANNUAL 2025

## Professor Joanna Manning

Fond farewells for 40-year  
Law Faculty veteran

## Justice Glazebrook

Lessons in law, history  
and humanity

## Professor Alexandra Andhov

Algorithms now shape what  
people read, buy and believe

## Auckland Law

Te Wāhanga Ture o Waipapa Taumata Rau  
Auckland Law School Alumni Annual 2025



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Mark Henaghan, Lorraine Correia,  
Sophie Boladeras, Anish Yardi.

The academic editor of *Auckland Law* magazine wants to thank Anish and Sophie for all their highly professional, good-humoured and patient work in putting this magazine together and making sure it is delivered on time. – Mark



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# From the Dean



Kia ora tātou

What an eventful year for the Faculty of Law!

It is my very great honour and privilege to be part of the leadership team taking the Faculty of Law forward into the next period. Professor Jaime King will join the leadership team as the first Head of School for Law. A Deputy Dean will be appointed in the new year and we will also appoint an advisory board.

It is likely that we will launch a Juris Doctor (JD) degree in 2027, the first degree offering postgraduate law leading to practice in New Zealand. We will also focus on working more closely with the profession, international visitors and University colleagues on research and teaching collaborations, as well as continuing to excel at what sits at our core; legal teaching and research.

Exciting times lie ahead for the Law Faculty as we all contribute to the planning and design of the new faculty building, scheduled to open in 2029. A state-of-the-art Moot Court will be a centrepiece of the building.

Thanks to the dedication of everyone connected with the faculty it has been an exceptionally busy and rewarding year. The achievements of 2025 reflect not only hard work but a shared pursuit of excellence. As we celebrate these successes, we also acknowledge the passing of some of our alumni and former colleagues. Their contributions have shaped our journey, and they remain an enduring part of our story. Looking ahead, we anticipate that 2026 will present significant opportunities for continued success and further accomplishments.

We look to make the time spent in the Law School a positive experience for everyone.



**PROFESSOR SUSAN WATSON**

**Acting Dean of Law**

University of Auckland



The new faculty building, scheduled to open in 2029.



# The Dean's highlights

Ngā kōrero whakanui a Te Manukura mō te tau 2025



## Achievements of faculty members

A year of successes for members of the Law Faculty that bear testament to the excellent quality of teaching and research that underpins the faculty and remains a strength.

**Scott Optican** and **Guy Fiti Sinclair** were promoted to Professor of Law and **Arie Rosen** and **Jane Norton** were promoted to Associate Professor. **Caroline Foster** received a Research Excellence Medal from the University. **Marcelo Rodriguez Ferrere** received a University Early Career Research Excellence Award. **Justin Sobion** was one of only five recipients of the Vice-Chancellor's Prize for Best Doctoral Thesis.

This was an outstanding year for the faculty winning grants. **Andrew Erueti** received both a Borrin Foundation Justice Fellowship and a prestigious \$1,160,000 Mana Tūānuku Research Leader Fellowship for his research investigating legal frameworks for addressing inequities in health and child welfare. **Alex Allen-Franks** was appointed to a four-year, \$820,000 Royal Society Te Apārangi Mana Tūāpapa Future Leader Fellowship to look into how improperly obtained evidence is handled by courts, lawyers and prosecutors.

**Julia Tolmie** received a Borrin Research Grant of \$446,218.25 to lead a three-year project identifying "justice gaps" for tamariki, rangatahi and wāhine in the responses to female offenders.

**Scott Optican** and **Alex Allen-Franks** are co-authors of *Mahoney on Evidence: Act and Analysis* (2nd ed), which won the JF Northey Memorial Book Award.

I was delighted that the Faculty of Law topped the University's statistics in two important domains: the student evaluation of teaching – with 700-level teachers averaging 90% GA and with overall teaching at the Law School achieving 85.8% GA across all levels – the highest of all faculties.

In December I had the privilege of announcing the inaugural Law Research Excellence Awards. The quality of applicants was exceptionally high, and the panel very much enjoyed reading the submissions. The 2025 winners were:

- Early Career Research Excellence Award – **Joshua Yuvaraj**

- Mid-Career Research Excellence Award – **Marta Andhov**
- Sustained Research Excellence Award – **Hanna Wilberg**
- Research Impact Award – **Kate Doolin**

## Achievements of graduates and students

On my return to Law, I remain in awe of our talented students who succeed in so many spheres not just in law but beyond. **Danica Loulié-Wijtenburg**, **Maria Romero De Medeiros**, **Phoebe Jennings** and **Ysabella Stevenson** represented New Zealand in the international Philip C Jessup International Law Moot Court Competition and competed with distinction. **Jimin Seo**, **Francis Wee** and **Gulliver MacDonald** represented New Zealand superbly in the Red Cross International Humanitarian Law Moot competition.

**Saskia Wigman** and **Louisa Freiin von Fircks** won the Stout Shield (Bell Gully Senior Moot) competition. **Alex McClintock** was a joint winner of the Legal Research Foundation's Unpublished Undergraduate Student Paper Award.

**Nikita Sionetali-Tuitea** was the first in her family to attend university and graduated with a conjoint law and arts degree. **Sione Roberts'** Māori whakapapa gave him a deeper purpose to complete his conjoint Law and Music degree. **Joel Newson**, **Renee Chandra** and **Danielle van Rixel** were placed second out of 47 teams during the Australasia Procure for Impact Challenge.

## Events

**Philippe Sands KC** gave three outstanding presentations in the faculty which were very highly attended.

New Zealand's first legal tech hackathon, organised by the Center for Advancing Law and Tech Responsibly (ALTeR) and the Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (CIE), attracted a wide range of students.

The faculty hosted the Alcohol and Other Drug Treatment Court Conference, which was attended by over 300 delegates, including 30 judges.

**Professor Claire Charters** delivered her inaugural professorial lecture on 10

December on "Implementing Indigenous Peoples' Rights: A Journey Around the Globe".

**Nicole Roughan** co-organised a hugely successful conference centred on Indigenous-settler relations in contemporary legal and political philosophy, which attracted leading scholars in the area from around the world. The conference was funded in part from Nicole's prestigious Rutherford Grant.

Towards the end of the year the faculty held the Nin Tomas Memorial Lecture with **Professor Angela R Riley**, who is the Carole Goldberg Endowed Chair of Native American Law at UCLA and Special Advisor to the Chancellor on Native American and Indigenous Affairs. Using examples from tribal law, this lecture highlighted how tribal law has become a critical tool in advancing Native self-determination and good governance across Indian country.

## Alumni and supporters

Our alumni continue to succeed in multiple areas. In August this year, **Justice Christian Whata** took up his position on the Court of Appeal. Later in the year, **Justice Simon Mount** and **Justice James MacGillivray** were appointed to the High Court. Effective 9 February next year, **Justice Rebecca Edwards** will sit on the Court of Appeal, and former faculty colleague **Justice Amokura Kawharu** will sit on the High Court.

**Sir Mark Cooper KNZM KC** and **Sir Peter Skelton KNZM** were made Knights Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit for services to the judiciary and environmental law, respectively. **Linda Te Aho MNZM** was made a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit for services to Māori and legal education, and **Frances Tagaloa KSO** was made a Companion of the King's Service Order for services to survivors of abuse in state and faith-based care.

**Peter Cooper CNZM** was awarded a Distinguished Alumni Award. **Tiana Epati KC** was made the first Pasifika King's Counsel, alongside **Simon Ladd KC** and **Richard Marchant KC**.

Supporters of the faculty donated generously to the Student Support Fund, to international competitions, to conferences and to research initiatives, including a Pacific legal research hub.

# Joanna Manning

Joanna Manning retires after nearly 40 years of outstanding service in the Law Faculty. Her colleagues reflect on the work Jo has done.

It has been my good fortune to be Jo Manning's academic colleague, fellow health law academic, friend and near neighbour in Devonport since her appointment as a Law School lecturer in 1986. Jo's friendliness, concern for others, dedication to work, humour and irreverence have been a constant.

Jo began teaching and writing in medical law, now health law, in the mid-1990s and has become a leading scholar in the field. Fairness is a theme of her research: the fair allocation of limited health resources and the fair resolution of health disputes. Drawing on her expertise in torts, accident compensation and patients' rights, Jo has argued for improved remedial rights for patients after an adverse event and fair compensation for patients injured in research trials. Her publications on informed consent, duty of care, treatment injury and professional discipline are regularly cited with approval by the courts. Recent publications have argued cogently for a right to appeal Health and Disability Commissioner (HDC) decisions and for greater judicial scrutiny of clinicians' decisions to withdraw life support from an incapacitated patient.

A keen interest in the legal and societal effect of Judge Silvia Cartwright's Report of the Cervical Cancer Inquiry (1988) led Jo to become an active member of the Cartwright Collective of women health consumers and advocates. Jo's expertise as a health lawyer and her practical skills have seen her organise major conferences and lobby health authorities to ensure patients' rights – in areas as diverse as screening programmes and research on incompetent patients – are not eroded and that the legacy of the Cartwright Inquiry is not undermined by revisionists.

Jo has also generously given her time and expertise to help patients seeking to challenge HDC decisions. On a personal note, Jo's wise counsel and support were invaluable to me when serving as HDC and ombudsman. Over many years we've enjoyed debating issues in health law, co-teaching courses and organising conferences.

Within the Law School and in the broader University community Jo's pragmatism, efficiency and even-handedness have seen her shine as a highly regarded deputy dean and acting dean, reviewer and member of a range of University committees. Unfailingly modest about her own abilities, Jo excels in using humour to ease tensions between warring academics and in finding sensible compromises. She has also assumed the role of kuia to her female colleagues, advising and encouraging them in their own careers.

These personal and professional attributes have earned Jo Manning the universal high regard and affection of her colleagues. We owe Jo – and her entertaining husband Tony – a debt of thanks for all she has given the Law School over four decades.

**Emeritus Professor Ron Paterson**



## A friend and a scholar

Jo Manning started as a lecturer at the Law Faculty about the same time as me in the mid-1980s. That was an era when the faculty was largely self-governing with one of its number taking a turn as dean. Halcyon days. From the beginning Jo has been a core faculty member as trooper and officer. She is hilarious, both intentionally and unintentionally. As to the former, the humour is often irreverent and teasing (one wouldn't say coarse would one?), but benevolent nonetheless. As to the latter, she has been a worthy successor to the late Margaret Vennell in attracting mishaps. And each of them a wonderful teller of stories against themselves. Both of them teachers, too, of torts and accident compensation; life imitating art. Jo did not, however, teach air and space law nor fly by Concorde, unlike Margaret. Jo has also been a very caring colleague, always solicitous and helpful. As to research, her role as one of the faculty's pioneers in health law has been shown not just by her leading scholarship on a wide range of topics across the field but also in her appointments to various medical ethics committees outside the faculty. Her torts law scholarship has been important too. Alongside her busy career she and her husband Tony have done a fantastic job of bringing up a family of three and latterly in grandparenting. After some 40 years of service to the University, Jo's retirement is very well earned.

**Emeritus Professor Peter Watts KC**



## Janet McLean on Jo Manning

Professor Joanna Manning (Jo) is one of the longest-serving members of the Faculty of Law having started as a lecturer in 1986.

She distinguished herself at the University of Auckland in her law and arts degrees. She won the Stout Shield moot cup and was famously credited by Professor Brian Coote as a – rare – woman who was capable of having a conversation about contract law. They were different times.

She worked for Meredith Connell and as a young idealistic lawyer was given the unenviable task of prosecuting protesters against the Springbok tour. From there she went on a Rotary Scholarship to undertake a fully funded masters at George Washington University. Her time in the US sparked her deep interest in US politics and government and forged lifelong friendships including with people who would go on to hold positions of power in Washington.

She later took up a lectureship at the University of Auckland Law School teaching administrative law, tort law and over time establishing herself as a leading teacher and scholar of medical law.

When I first encountered Jo, I considered her to be a trailblazer. Pregnant with her second child of three, she radiated efficiency, competence and good humour. Not only did she juggle work and home but she also served for 10 years as consumer representative on the Medical Practitioners Disciplinary Committee, something that would now be regarded as “impact” or “translational research” but which tended to be underappreciated at the time. Her good humour and big-sisterly care have endured over decades and her friendship has been one of the great privileges of working at the Law Faculty.

As a teacher, Professor Manning is always incredibly well prepared, demanding in an old-school Socratic style and exceptionally clear. Her students, and honours students in particular, have over decades been the beneficiaries of her deep understanding, wide knowledge and meticulous feedback. She has taken up the cause of students, including those with significant disabilities, over many years. Teaching medical law can be fraught with sensitive issues and she has undertaken her subject with exceptional care for students, their experiences and in some cases traumas.

Jo's work focuses on the plight of individuals as well as of systematic defects in grievance processes and institutions.



Professor Jo Manning

She has published widely in health law and policy, ethics, torts – including negligence and accident compensation, particularly treatment injury and medical misadventure – drug trials, health-system infrastructure and accountability. She's the editor of the *Cartwright Papers: Essays on the Cervical Cancer Inquiry, 1987–88* (Bridget Williams Books 2019), a major contributor to *Health Law in New Zealand* and has published in the leading international health law journals.

Jo is deeply committed to justice and has taken up the cause of many individuals badly treated by the medical system, including by insurance companies in drug trials, bringing both empathy and technical skill to the resolution of their problems. She undertakes this work quietly and without fanfare or desire for recognition. She's a deeply humane and generous person. In her contribution to the New Zealand feminist judgments project she embraced a feminist ethic of care in her role of judge. This reveals a lot about her life and work.

She has held many leadership and service roles in the faculty, the University and at a national level. She served for many years as deputy dean, has been acting dean and postgraduate dean. She has served on the University scholarship committee and the New Zealand Rhodes Scholarship selection committee. She's contributed her scholarly expertise nationally as the lawyer member

of the National Ethics Advisory Committee from 2005–2011 and as a member of the Scientific Advisory Committee of the Heart Foundation from 2011–2014. She gets things done. But she also brings good humour, optimism and a lack of hubris to her various roles.

The queen of the faux pas – intentional or unintentional we remain unsure – she has a unique ability to diffuse tensions in difficult meetings. Most of the stories she tells are against herself. Many of them are not for public telling but they include the time she kept the governor-general waiting; the time she pretended to drive a different car rather than reveal her husband Tony's penchant for nice cars – a stately gold Mercedes in the particular case; she appears in the guise of the Duchess of Cheltenham; inadvertently washing the BlackBerry of a senior official of the Obama administration; and having to be “patched into” the CIA and FBI at the US Embassy in order to repair communications, to mention just a few. She brings warmth and a certain eccentricity to the daily life of the Law School, which is often a delight.

What I admire most has been Jo's optimism in the face of the many challenges the faculty has faced particularly in the last 10 years, her steady persistence, her willingness to undertake hard and thankless work, her care of more junior colleagues and the vulnerable, and her commitment to the collective endeavour that is a good Law School.

Jo has occupied the office next to mine for almost 30 years. I cannot imagine the Law Faculty without her presence. Thankfully she will be continuing on a part-time basis. We wish her well for the next phase of her career.

**Professor Janet McLean KC**





## Mark Henaghan interviews Jo

Professor Jo Manning tells Professor Mark Henaghan about her journey from law student to leading academic, sharing memories of formative teachers, lasting friendships, imposter syndrome and the joys of life beyond full-time work.

### When you were young what interested you most about school?

Too long ago, Mark! It's all a haze – anything pre-1976 seems to have dropped out ...

### What drew you to law?

In short it was my brother. Like many young women of my generation, I was steered into the arts and languages rather than the sciences or maths. Is this because these were considered the “softer” subjects? Anyway, not a good thing because it limits one's options. As a result, my career choices seemed restricted. So I just imitated the choices made by my brilliant brother Bill and found myself at Law School. And it is a “choice” I've never regretted. Thank you, Bill.

### What did you enjoy most about your law student days?

There's a lovely piece of fiction I've recently read called *The Interestings* by Meg Wolitzer. It follows the lives of a small group of young children who meet at summer camp – it's set in the US – who become friends for life. The premise is that there is a human tendency to think of our own experiences and friendships as somehow more singular, more vivid – more “interesting” – than anybody else's. The narrator discovers towards the end of the book that her sister, whom she has rather looked down on as not very “interesting” and who she regards as having led an inferior life to her own, has in fact lived through events and had friendships that were or felt to her just as “interesting”.

With that caveat, looking back, my student days seem to have been during the era of the “colourful” law teacher. I had some really great teachers. Stephen Mills for torts and Francis Dawson for contract stand out for their “incentivising” – but not terrifying – use of the Socratic method in Part II, sadly becoming a thing of the past these days. I was not taught by Brian Coote but as students we were all aware of his reputation as a “rock star” scholar. Later, when on the faculty, we became friends and I was delighted – and honoured – when much later still he asked me to be the



Professor Jo Manning

“token woman” pallbearer at his funeral. Then there were “the Americans”: the exotic Bill Hodge arrived from Harvard – yet to run a single marathon – and Mike Doyle from California.

The other really important thing about Law School is of course the friendships you make. Forty years after graduation I still meet for dinner three or four times a year with a precious group of women with whom I went through Law School. We all had a role: I was the “nerdy swot”; two others were much more “worldly” – I shall say no more!; another was going to make a mountain of money; one was “sporty” and seldom frequented the lecture halls. Before *Sex and the City* was even a thing one of our number was going to write a book based on our experiences. Sadly she never got around to it – too busy with living I suppose. These people were my “interestings”.

And of course best of all I had the great good fortune to meet my future husband, Tony, at Law School. We have been married for longer than the 40 years of my Law School career. We have shared the joy of raising three wonderful children and are now watching them raise their own families.

What I have recently realised is that for all lawyers Law School is a formative experience. If not necessarily a happy time it was certainly an intense and life-changing one – part of who they were and were to become. Just as my friends and I love to tell and retell the nostalgic stories about our Law School days, so does pretty much every law graduate.

That is part of the reason – not entirely by any means – why the judiciary and the profession – not all alumni to be sure – turned out in support of the Law School during the recent proposal to combine the Law School and Business School into a single faculty. In addition to appreciating the critical role the law and the profession play in a functioning democratic society – the most important reason, to be sure – they also value the academic training they received in the law and the “seminal” – gotta use that word somewhere here – experiences they had at Law School. Our alumni, me included, recognise and value Auckland Law School as a “taonga”, one to be protected and not taken for granted. I would like to put on record that all my colleagues truly appreciate how strongly and unequivocally the profession, writ large, came out for the Law School. That episode, that support, is part of the ongoing story of Auckland Law School.

### What attracted you to become a legal academic?

It was just a vague thought when I left Law School. Then that brother went off to Harvard so I had to go and do an overseas masters as well. I was surprised at how much I enjoyed my several years of legal practice. First at Meredith Connell, where there was a group of talented and hungry young prosecutors: Teresa Spain, Paul Dacre, Simon Moore, Coral Shaw. I was privileged to be mentored by Rodger Haines, a brilliant legal mind and an extremely compassionate man who was later to go on to give so much without fanfare to the refugee and immigrant community. Then later at McElroy Milne I was again lucky to work for and learn from the inimitable Rhys Harrison during a part of his prime as a litigator.

But I think it was both the opportunity to study the law itself more deeply, as well as – to be honest – the greater freedom to have a family afforded by a more predictable academic life than that in litigation, that attracted me back to academia. One day I met a very happy Mike Taggart on the Sandringham bus, recently returned from postgraduate study and teaching in the US and Canada to join the Law School. As he described his passionate absorption with freedom of information, later to become a fat book co-authored with Ian Eagles, I thought to myself, “I would like to experience that life”.



**You are highly regarded nationally and internationally for your work in health law – what do you like about that field?**

That is a stretch, but ... thank you.

A thing about academics is we all think our area is the most important. My argument is what is more essential than one's health? Our mortality, our bodies, the quality of our lives and those of our loved ones are the most important things or interests we have. Modern medicine offers so much to protect and enhance our lives, yet to have one's life cut off prematurely or to suffer a serious injury is to lose something of irreplaceable and inestimable value. Fundamental questions arise, such as how do we protect the valuable national asset that is our public health system and make access to it more equitable? I think what makes health law feel so vital is that the issues affect every one of us – and those with whom we have interdependent relationships – in such a deep and personal way.

I have had great colleagues in health law who have been both kind and supportive. My good friend Ron Paterson, who founded the Health Care Law undergraduate elective course at the Law School, with whom I have written and who has given and continues to give such incredible service to the country, deserves special mention.

In 2020 Jaime King joined us from

Hastings College of Law in San Francisco to take up the John and Marylyn Mayo Chair in Health Law, and we have worked happily together in health law ever since. A very special and talented person, Jaime secures health law at Auckland Law School for the future. I just wish she had arrived 40 years earlier.

**What will you particularly treasure from your 40 years in the Law Faculty?**

I love my job and am proud to have spent most of my working life at the Law Faculty. I have served under 13 deans, including acting deans.

First and foremost it is always the people – staff and students. My friendship with Janet McLean, whom the chief justice once accurately described as “quite the nicest person one could ever hope to meet”, has been one of the great pleasures of my life. She has occupied the office next to mine for well nigh 30 years. I have been quite literally fed by our wonderful conversations about all manner of things: the law – an insight into that unique and quite remarkable mind – academia, books, politics.

The 1990s was an exciting time to be part of the cohort of young and energetic law teachers. Bruce Harris as dean. Who could forget Rosemary Tobin, the backbone of torts for so many years – she and I stood on the shoulders of legendary antipodean



**“I love my job and am proud to have spent most of my working life at the Law Faculty. I have served under 13 deans, including acting deans.”**



torts doyenne Margaret Vennell. We were all a bit in awe of chief agitator Jane Kelsey. Nin Tomas, banging hard on that glass ceiling. A "broad church" as Mike Taggart then described us with satisfaction. This was the heyday of Peter Watts, Julie Maxton, Janet McLean, Paul Rishworth, Mike Taggart, Ron Paterson, Scott Optican, Grant Huscroft, Neil Campbell, Treasa Dunworth, Bruce Harris, Rick Bigwood, Julia Tolmie. Legal giants, charismatic teachers and wonderful people all.

It is a source of enormous satisfaction and hope to see the Law School in the hands of an exciting new generation of equally talented and committed young academics. What more could one ask for for an institution that one cares deeply about?

### What advice do you have for anyone contemplating the academic life?

I would tell them about the one main regret I have, which is that I wish I had been a bit braver, a bit more like ... Jane Kelsey. Early on I contracted that affliction, imposter syndrome, that it took me some time to realise affects many people. Sometimes, not always, I could "feel the fear and do it anyway", as in the title of the Susan Jeffers book. It is not all bad – it makes you careful and considered – but it can also prevent you from taking risks. In academia you have an almost unique freedom as "critic and conscience of society" to say things other people might feel constrained from saying by virtue of their position or apparent lack of credibility to speak out. An academic comes with an authority and expertise that is almost presumed and their public utterances carry perhaps a disproportionate weight. Only later I realised I didn't have to know absolutely everything about a subject to express a valid opinion in public; that I could push for positive change on things I believed in and that my view would be taken more seriously because of my privileged position as an academic. I wish I had realised that sooner and made more use of the special ability that comes with the territory.

### You are now a grandmother – what's best about that special role?

My lovely friend Mark Henaghan once said to me that what he loved about being a grandfather is it brings out the inner child in you. That thing about living in the moment that young kids – and dogs – have. So true! Suddenly all the "bottom" humour is right back, you're having your nails painted and trying to jump on a trampoline. And instigating an all-staff walkie-talkie alert at the amusement park to locate the lost



Professor Jo Manning

"blonde 3½-year-old dressed as batman" who is eventually found by the crocodile enclosure. You get the fun – mostly – without the worry from the responsibility that typically accompanies being a parent.

### Will you miss meetings?

What do you think? My love for meetings is only exceeded by yours, Mark!

### What are your funniest memories of Law School?

The Law School has long been a very congenial place where we've been able to laugh at ourselves and each other without judgement. Grant Huscroft and Paul Rishworth claiming that the rotting banana in the staff fridge had been left behind by Ronald Dworkin himself and should not be disturbed!

On one occasion I remember carefully setting up my PowerPoint slides and my notes on the lectern and launching into a health care law lecture in the Small lecture theatre only to look up after a few minutes and not recognise a single one of the students. And only then to notice a rather uncertain-looking man in the doorway. Turned out I was an hour early and these were geography students! What got me though was that not one of them, not even the lecturer, said a thing ...

### Professor Mark Henaghan



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"It is a source of enormous satisfaction and hope to see the Law School in the hands of an exciting new generation of equally talented and committed young academics. What more could one ask for for an institution that one cares deeply about?"



## Jaime King on Jo Manning: she has a powerful intellect, generous spirit and kind heart

"Miss Jaime! How are ya?" Professor Manning's voice booms as she breezes into my office. I smile as a visit from Jo means she's found a fascinating new article for our research, something interesting has happened in the Law School or American politics, or she has something funny to share.

When challenging circumstances arise, Jo Manning unfailingly draws the Law School together and brings levity and laughter to the situation. You can count on Jo to make a well-reasoned case for "toilet reform" at the Christmas lunch and to carefully investigate and publicise the intricate whodunit of dishwasher-gate in Building 803. Although she sometimes likes to play the court jester, what lies underneath Jo's fun-loving, self-effacing attitude is a powerful intellect, unbounded generosity and a caring heart.

When I first accepted the job at Law School I was unsure how Jo, in particular, would feel about me. In her eyes was I an American invader coming to sell New Zealand on the benefits of corporatised healthcare? Could I ever measure up to the clout and prestige she held within the Law School and the broader New Zealand legal and medical communities? From our very first meeting, she put my mind at ease by letting me know she was an ally not a rival.

As such we became fast friends and collaborators. I quickly realised I had stumbled into something wonderful. Jo is the best kind of collaborator: knowledgeable, sharp and analytical, she eagerly dives into research on new topics, writes and edits beautifully and understands the give-and-take of a collaborative project.

While I was still in the US awaiting permission to enter New Zealand, our first collaborative project was a joint online presentation at my former law school, University of California College of the Law San Francisco, on the differences between the Covid-19 responses in New Zealand and the US. During our discussions and preparations for that talk Jo took the time to teach me a great deal about New Zealand and its healthcare and legal systems and provide me with materials just so I could expand my own knowledge.

In the presentation she kept the American students in rapt attention, pushing them to analytically explore the differences between each country's approach to Covid-19 and the varied results.



Professor Jo Manning

Since those early days Jo and I have worked on several papers and co-edited a special issue of the *Journal of Law, Medicine & Ethics* that spanned highly varied topics from environmental health and physician conflicts of interest to the regulation of private insurance. Her range of knowledge is immense and equally matched by her willingness to dive into new topics and explore them in depth.

I've been very fortunate in my life to work with some excellent collaborators. What strikes me about Jo, and what sets her apart, is that while she cares a great deal about the work being done, she cares more about the person she's collaborating with. When we were working on the presentation she analysed the legal exceptionalism occurring as a result of Covid-19 and how to help my young family adjust to an international move in the midst of the pandemic. From across the world she helped me think through what we would need in quarantine.

When we moved into our rental home she gave us a massive array of home goods and kitchen wares to ensure we had all that we would need. She introduced us to people in the community and invited us over for wonderful meals and casual drinks. She gave us a small sense of belonging in a faraway land, which is a gift I can never repay.

With three children and four grandchildren of their own, Jo and her husband Tony took in our children and our extended families

as extensions of theirs. Realising my children were far from their grandparents, Jo and Tony showed up for birthdays, sporting events and numerous other occasions to cheer on, cheer up, wage war with Nerf guns and in many ways shower my children with kindness and generosity. When our families came to visit they made time to have them over to ensure they loved New Zealand and reassure them that we were doing well.

As the longest-serving current academic staff member of Auckland Law School, Jo has spent her career working tirelessly for the patients of New Zealand, her students and her colleagues. Jo helped shape the health system of New Zealand and the lawyers who stand ready to defend it. While her retirement is a moment for celebration of all that she has accomplished, it's also a reminder that we have an obligation to carry her legacy of kindness, generosity and humour forward.

**John and Marylyn Mayo Chair in Health Law, Professor Jaime King**



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**"Jo is the best kind of collaborator: knowledgeable, sharp and analytical, she eagerly dives into research on new topics, writes and edits beautifully and understands the give-and-take of a collaborative project."**

# The Honourable Justice Susan Glazebrook DNZM: Lessons in law, history and humanity

Justice Susan Glazebrook's legal career began with a curiosity about people and the past and led her all the way to the country's highest court. Interviewed by Mark Henaghan.

## What subjects fascinated you the most at school?

History, because the teacher was a no-nonsense Scottish woman who taught not only what happened but why, and who did not concentrate only on great men and momentous events but on the ordinary and the mundane as well. She was also my best friend's mother. And mathematics, because I liked the puzzle-solving aspect of it and because my mother was the maths teacher. And English, because I always got to play a major part when we were doing any readings from plays or in school productions. I particularly enjoyed playing Sheila from *An Inspector Calls*, with the gradual realisation that her selfishness had played a part in a suicide.

## What did you dream of doing after you finished school?

I had no clear idea except in the negative sense of not wanting to be a teacher.

## You studied history up to masters level at university. What attracted you to the subject?

The ordinary and the mundane. I am a social historian by inclination and training. I particularly acknowledge my teachers and mentors at the University of Auckland, including Sir Keith Sinclair, Dame Judith Binney and professors Raewyn Dalziel, Keith Sorrenson and Russell Stone. And my fellow students and junior lecturers, including Professor Linda Bryder.

## You taught history at the University. What did you enjoy most about that?

It is somewhat ironic that I took a position as a junior lecturer in history for two years while I was finishing my law degree given that my one career ambition had been to avoid becoming a teacher. However, I did enjoy my time teaching history, especially the tutorials where I could make a real difference – helping to nurture talent

and hopefully instil some passion for the subject. I also enjoyed the collegial aspects of working with the other lecturers who had very different specialties and came from such different backgrounds.

## What attracted you to law?

I wanted a profession other than teaching and the choice came down to law or medicine. I really had no idea of what was involved in either because we had no lawyers or doctors among our family or friends. I did go to a career adviser and after a barrage of tests she helpfully said I could do anything I wanted – except she thought perhaps not car mechanics. So I had minimal assistance with my choice of career. In the end I chose law over medicine as law meant not having to brush up on my sciences.

## What did you enjoy about studying law?

The human element, but also the logic and problem-solving aspects of the law. I did not enjoy the sexism of some of the lecturers and students. One of my lecturers once told me he supposed it was not a bad thing after all that more women – he probably said girls – were studying law. The job market, after all, was very tight, and it meant more jobs for the young men. Another suggested I should become a probation officer because that was a good, caring profession for a woman. That said, professors Jack Northey, Jock Brookfield, Margaret Wilson and others were fantastic supporters and mentors.

## You went to France to do research for your DPhil and worked part-time with political refugees. What was that experience like?

It was humbling to live in a foreign city – Rouen – where I knew no one. The transition was made even more difficult by the fact that the French everyone spoke appeared to be a different language

altogether from the French I had been taught at school and university. But things got easier, and of course living in France had its compensations including those of the culinary kind. It was also good finally to have an unusual name after suffering for years with having ten Susans or Sues wherever you went. Before I lived in France I thought Suzanne was an archetypal French name, but everyone in France – at least at that stage – was called Sylvie or Nadine. Suzanne was unusually and quaintly old-fashioned.

To prolong the enjoyment, I worked in France for a while after completing my doctoral research with the organisation responsible for the settlement of political refugees in that country. This was a private organisation, but government-funded, and had been set up after the Second World War to help with the resettlement of East European refugees. By the time I was there it was dealing with a different clientele – mostly from Africa and often English-speaking – hence my role. Having adapted to a new country myself I hope I was able to help them with some understanding of what they were facing, although of course I had not had to bear the trauma of persecution in my country of origin.

## Your DPhil from Oxford University was on the criminal justice system during the French Revolution. How did you choose that topic?

I chose a topic that combined history, law and French. One of my Auckland history lecturers had studied at Oxford under Professor Richard Cobb. He was a very eccentric social historian of the French Revolution whose imagination, writing style and identification with France brought his subjects to life. He sounded like my sort of person and I was very lucky when he agreed to be my supervisor for the DPhil.



Justice Glazebrook's most memorable moments on the bench are of people rather than legal technicalities.

### What made you want to practise law and what did you enjoy about it?

Having done a law degree, the next logical step after my detour to Oxford and France was to move into legal practice. I started work at Simpson Grierson as a law clerk and I remained there until my appointment to the bench. At the beginning of my legal career I did a rotation between the different areas of the firm including litigation, but finally decided on tax law. It is obvious why: that was the area of law where I would be able to use my doctoral thesis topic every day.

Seriously though, tax was a good specialty to choose: taxation law was in the process of substantial change, to such an extent that it burnt off a lot of the older practitioners. It also meant the generalists gave up thinking they knew anything about tax, leaving the field clear for specialists. Finally, it was an area that cropped up in all

commercial transactions, therefore allowing you to be part of such transactions without having to do the uninspiring tasks usually given to junior lawyers.

I also had the good fortune while in practice to serve on some commercial boards and government advisory committees and to become involved with a number of international organisations including becoming president of the Inter-Pacific Bar Association, an organisation of business lawyers in the Asia-Pacific region. This meant attending overseas conferences. I found that experience very stimulating, not just because it broadened what can become a rather insular view of the world and the law in Aotearoa New Zealand but also because I got to meet some really fascinating people.

I remember being at one conference and someone came up and introduced himself and asked if there were any trees left in New Zealand – I was somewhat taken

aback as I thought our clean green image was secure in the world. He went on to add that he asked because I had given out so many business cards he had grave fears for the fate of New Zealand forests.

### How did you find the switch from the bar to the bench?

Terrifying, especially presiding over criminal trials when I had done just about no criminal work in practice. Indeed, apart from some six months at the beginning of my legal career, I had done very little civil litigation either. There were positives: no budgets, administration, marketing or partners' meetings. It was also very satisfying to become a generalist again after so many years as a specialist tax lawyer. Although when I was blundering around in areas I knew little about I am not sure that all counsel would have had the same view. The one aspect of the new job I really did not enjoy was sentencing, but then they do say anyone who does enjoy



that is not a suitable person to be a judge.

### **What do you see as the crucial qualities of a judge?**

Empathy, compassion, commitment to the rule of law and equal access to justice for all, the ability to see and weigh all sides of an argument but to be decisive when needed, an abiding interest in people and passion for the law.

### **What are your most memorable moments as a judge?**

The most memorable moments relate to people rather than the important or legally significant cases, although there is always intellectual satisfaction derived from working on these cases. And of course with all cases there is a profound sense of responsibility to the parties and to the law.

One particularly memorable time was when I was rostered to sentence a number of men who had committed an aggravated robbery of a sports club. They had broken in, heavily disguised and brandishing firearms. They told the staff to lie face down on the floor and not move while they emptied the till of some inconsequential sum in cash. The robbers and the victims came from the same community and the courtroom was packed and the atmosphere very tense, divided between supporters of the robbers and the victims.

One of the victims stood up and asked to speak. Although this was before there was any right for victims to have such input, I gave him permission to do so. I thought it would be highly disrespectful to refuse. He explained how he had felt lying on the ground, convinced he was going to die. He spoke of his continuing nightmares and how he had been unable to return to work since the robbery.

There was a pause and one of the robbers



**“There was a pause and one of the robbers stood up. With obvious emotion he said the victim’s words had made him realise for the first time the consequences of his actions. He begged the victim to forgive him and his co-offenders.”**

stood up. With obvious emotion he said the victim’s words had made him realise for the first time the consequences of his actions. He begged the victim to forgive him and his co-offenders.

Another pause and the victim stood up again. He thanked the robber for taking responsibility and said the apology had made him think for the first time that he could, in time, recover from the experience.

Therapeutic justice in action. And the beginning of healing, not just for the victim but for the wider community that had been fractured by the crime.

### **What advice would you give today’s law students contemplating a purposeful career in the law?**

The law, the legal profession and society in general are in a state of transition with, for example, the effect of developing technologies on legal practice, issues with access to justice and challenges to the rule of law around the world. It is important at such a time to embrace change. Do not be afraid of new challenges – they take work and courage but you will reap the rewards. But at the same time remember that however you may choose to use your law degree you are nevertheless part of an old and honourable profession. Make sure you hold on to that feeling throughout your career and remember your responsibility to the law, to human rights and to society. Finally, remember the law is ultimately about people. It is important therefore to get a proper work–life balance, one that is right for you at the particular phase of your life and career.

### **Can you describe your work as leader of the International Association of Women Judges?**

The International Association of Women Judges – IAWJ – is an organisation of some 6,000 judges from all levels of courts around the world. It is dedicated to upholding and protecting the rule of law, equal access to justice for all and human rights. It has been a real honour to be first a board member and then the president of the IAWJ. The organisation fulfils its mission through education programmes on topics of particular significance to women, including domestic violence, trafficking and sextortion – a term coined by the IAWJ to cover the abuse of power by someone in a position of authority to obtain a sexual benefit or advantage. The IAWJ also, through its regional and biennial conferences and webinars, provides support to women judges and a safe

environment to share innovative ideas.

New Zealand has hosted both a regional – Asia-Pacific – conference and the biennial conference. Unfortunately the first attempt at the biennial conference in 2020 had to be cancelled at the last minute because of Covid, but we managed to host a partly in-person and partly virtual conference the following year. Thanks are due to the Ministry of Justice for its support.

The IAWJ had a long association with the women judges of Afghanistan and two of their number spoke – virtually of course – at the biennial conference in Auckland in May 2021. They talked about the dire security situation for judges in Afghanistan: two of their colleagues had been shot and killed that January as part of a terrorist campaign targeting those – and especially women – working to uphold human rights and the rule of law. They asked for our support in publicising their situation and also for assistance with educational programmes. This was very much in line with the IAWJ’s normal activities and we set up a small committee to co-ordinate our efforts.

But all that changed in August 2021 when the Taliban reached Kabul. This put the women judges and their families in mortal danger. The idea of women judging men did not fit with the Taliban worldview and the judges generally were seen as instruments of the Western agenda. In addition the Taliban emptied the prisons of even the worst criminals and terrorists, leaving the women judges vulnerable to revenge attacks. Our small IAWJ committee then found itself having to find a way to rescue the women judges. We would not have been true to our values had we refused to try to help, despite such a humanitarian effort being well outside our normal judicial role.

With the assistance of partner organisations including Jewish Humanitarian Response and the International Bar Association, most of the 250 women judges are now resettled in Canada, Spain, Australia, Germany, Ireland, the UK and the US. Seven of the judges and their families are in New Zealand. The process took much longer than we had anticipated and there are still some 35 judges left in Afghanistan where hopes of rescue are tragically fading. And women generally are gradually being erased from public life in Afghanistan in a process dubbed gender apartheid by commentators.

# Sir Mark Cooper

Retired High Court and Appeals Court justice  
Mark Cooper receives a knighthood.

University of Auckland alumnus the Honourable Mark Cooper (Ngāti Mahanga, Waikato-Tainui) was knighted in the 2025 King's Birthday Honours.

The former High Court Judge and President of the Court of Appeal went on to distinguish himself as chair of the Canterbury Earthquakes Royal Commission of Inquiry. As noted in the citation for his appointment as a Knight Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit, Cooper chaired 33 public hearings and led the commission to deliver four reports "under intense time pressure and public scrutiny, navigating high volumes of technical material".

As he told *Auckland Law* in 2023, Invercargill-born Cooper turned to the study of law after failing at medicine, which his mother was eager for him to do. Law had been his preference.

"I was attracted to the study of law because at school I developed an interest in history." He went to school in Whanganui, where he grew up.

"In those days we were not taught much New Zealand history but we were taught about the English Civil War and I was interested in the idea of how power is allocated between the various branches of government and what happens when there is a dispute about who exercises the power.

"So I was attracted as a teenager to ideas about the separation of powers as they were played out in 17th-century England. I planned to study law as a result and tailored my school subjects accordingly. I dropped all maths and science after the fifth form and concentrated on English, history, geography, Latin and French.

"In those days Te Reo was not a subject taught at my school, and most others I think."

According to Wikipedia, Cooper graduated with Bachelor of Laws (Hons) and Magister Juris (Dist) degrees in 1979 then worked for Butler White & Hanna, where he became a partner in 1983. The firm later merged with Simpson Grierson where he remained



The Honourable Mark Cooper

a partner. From 1997 he practised as a barrister sole.

He was principal legal adviser for three Auckland territorial authorities: Auckland City Council, North Shore City Council and Rodney District Council. In 2000 he was made a Queen's Counsel.

In 2004 Cooper was appointed a High Court Judge by Attorney-General Margaret Wilson and sat in Auckland from August that year. He became a Judge of the Court of Appeal in 2014 and was named to replace Stephen Kós as President from 26 April 2022.

Cooper told *Auckland Law* his mother's desire for him to do medicine ended ignominiously.

"My initial plans to study law were derailed by a weak response to my mother's persistent idea that I should become a doctor. So having done well in scholarship history and English I then applied to Auckland Medical School and was accepted into first-year medicine, as part of a policy it had to make spaces available for people from a non-science background.

"That led to a spectacular failure in my first year of university. I failed every subject except psychology. Having failed and lost all my bursary funding I applied to repeat the course the following year but after one term pulled out and it was at that point that I enrolled in law intermediate, which I should have done at the outset."



**"... I was attracted as a teenager to ideas about the separation of powers as they were played out in 17th-century England. I planned to study law as a result."**

He did history, political studies and English and "having been in a position where I understood very little of what I was being taught at Medical School I could suddenly enjoy university life".

"I was in a small tutorial group led by Helen Clark for political studies. Mike Taggart was in the same group. One person did a lot of the talking: it wasn't me, or Helen Clark."

Cooper told *Auckland Law* he remembered his time at Law School well.

"In Law I the legal system was taught by David Williams, contract lectures were with Professor Brian Coote and Francis Dawson, torts with Stephen Mills, constitutional law with Jock Brookfield and Bill Hodge and criminal law with Bernard Brown.

"Bernard Brown delivered a series of jokes as he made the criminal law come alive. I remember a particular anecdote about the law of provocation, among others. Most of us really looked forward to Bernard's lectures because he was just so funny.

"In Law II we had Jack Northey, the dean, for administrative law, which was my first real introduction to the Socratic method, although Francis Dawson had taught part of the contract course in that way.

"I remember the pregnant silence that followed when the dean asked me about a case and I had to confess that I hadn't read it. After he took a moment to compose himself he offered quietly that I wouldn't be able to say that again, a statement which although delivered quietly was full of menace.

"I readily agreed with him. I think I did read every case after that."

**Anthony Doesburg**

# Sir Peter Robert Skelton KNZM

Sir Peter Skelton was made a Knight Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit (KNZM) for services to environmental law in the 2025 New Year Honours List.

Peter Skelton was educated at Christchurch's Christ's College and at the University of Auckland Law School where he graduated with an LLB in 1965. He was a member of the University basketball team.

With fellow student Peter Neil he was a co-founder of the Legal Research Foundation (LRF) in 1965. The foundation was set up under the aegis of the Law School but as a separate legal entity from the University. It was strongly endorsed by the dean, Professor Jack Northey, and other students, staff and alumni. During 1965 the students also organised a highly successful conference on law reform.

As part of the foundation's establishment, both Peter Neil and Peter Skelton were instrumental in inviting the eminent English jurist Lord Denning to be the inaugural patron of the foundation. Remarkably, Lord Denning accepted the position. Subsequently, Lord Denning was able to visit Auckland to participate in a dinner organised by the foundation and to contribute to a triennial conference of the New Zealand Law Society.<sup>1</sup>

After leaving Law School and working for law firms in Auckland and Hamilton for more than 15 years and practising as a barrister, Skelton was appointed a Planning Judge in 1978 under the Town and Country Planning Act 1977. His position as a judge was continued as an Environment Judge under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA). In 2000, after 22 years on the bench, primarily sitting in the South Island, he retired having more than 1,000 judgments attributed to him during this time.

Following retirement, between 2000 and 2006, Skelton was invited to become an associate professor at Lincoln University outside Christchurch, lecturing in environmental law. In 2016 Lincoln University conferred on him an honorary degree of Doctor of Natural Resources and he was accorded the status of an honorary professor.



Sir Peter Skelton with Governor-General Dame Cindy Kiro.

Between 2010 and 2019, Skelton was appointed one of seven commissioners at Environment Canterbury under the Local Government Act 2002 to replace the elected regional council that had been found to be dysfunctional. He was deeply involved in the Land Use Recovery Plan following the Christchurch earthquakes and the Canterbury Water Management Strategy. During the last three years he was appointed to the partly restored council. In 2020 Skelton was appointed the inaugural Chief Freshwater Commissioner under an amendment to the RMA for the purpose of implementing obligations on regional councils and farm owners to produce freshwater plans. He was succeeded in that office in 2022 by Environment Judge Laurie Newhook who is also an alumni of Auckland Law School.

In 2001 Sir Peter was made a Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit (CNZM) for services to environmental law. In 2013 the Resource Management Law Association (RMLA) awarded him the Principal Judge RJ Bollard

Lifetime Commemorative Award. After the establishment of the LRF, Skelton has been a strong supporter of the foundation and has been recognised with the status of life member.

As a born and bred and dedicated Cantabrian, Sir Peter has lived in Fendalton in Christchurch since 1979. He and his late wife Lady Kathleen have three adult children. Sir Peter has made an outstanding contribution to environmental law particularly to the betterment of the Canterbury region.

## Dr Kenneth Palmer

1. See BJ Brown "The Legal Research Foundation 1965–2008" in Brian Coote and others *Learned in the Law: The Auckland Law School 1883–2008* (Legal Research Foundation Inc 2009) 182.



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# Recognising excellence: Tiana Epati KC

For more than two decades Tiana Epati has helped shape the legal landscape of Aotearoa. Her appointment as King's Counsel marks the latest chapter in a career that continues to break new ground.

University of Auckland law alumna Tiana Epati has been appointed King's Counsel joining 11 other senior lawyers recognised by the Attorney-General in 2025. Her appointment is another milestone in an already distinguished career.

Being appointed KC is regarded as one of the highest distinctions in the profession and when announcing the appointments, Attorney-General Judith Collins highlighted the rigorous criteria required for the honour. "The standards to be appointed King's Counsel are extremely high and I am delighted our legal profession continues to feature such distinguished individuals.

"All our new King's Counsel have demonstrated a particular commitment to improving access to justice alongside their excellent work as advisers and litigators. They all have strong links to their communities and significant instances of pro bono, legally aided and similar work."

Epati, who graduated with a Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Laws in 2000, was inspired by her father, A'e'au Semi Epati, who came to New Zealand on a scholarship and later became the first Pacific judge in the country. The family moved from Sāmoa when she was 10 and her father's work shaped her understanding of justice and community responsibility.

After completing her degrees and being admitted to the bar, Epati went on to build a formidable career. She has appeared as lead counsel in the Court of Appeal and Supreme Court in more than 100 appeals involving interlocutory issues, extradition, conviction and sentence. She's also appeared as independent counsel assisting the Court of Appeal, the Coroners Court and the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Historical Abuse in State Care and in the Care of Faith-based Institutions.

In 2019 she became the first Pacific person and only the fourth woman in 152 years to be elected president of the New Zealand Law Society. That same year online legal publication *LawFuel* named her Lawyer of the Year.



Tiana Epati KC followed her father into law.

Today Epati frequently works to assist courts in matters requiring independent counsel. She is a barrister with Bankside Chambers, a mother of three and a highly respected figure whose achievements continue to expand what representation and leadership look like in Aotearoa's legal profession.

**Sophie Boladeras**



# From law to landmarks: Peter Cooper's legacy of place

Peter Cooper received a Distinguished Alumni Award from the University of Auckland in 2025 for his significant contributions to business and property development.

Raised in Kaitia and of Ngāti Kahu, Ngāti Kuri and Te Aupōuri descent, Peter Cooper completed a Bachelor of Laws (Hons) at the University of Auckland in 1978 before joining Russell McVeagh where he became a partner. His work helping develop the firm's new office block sparked an enduring passion for the built environment.

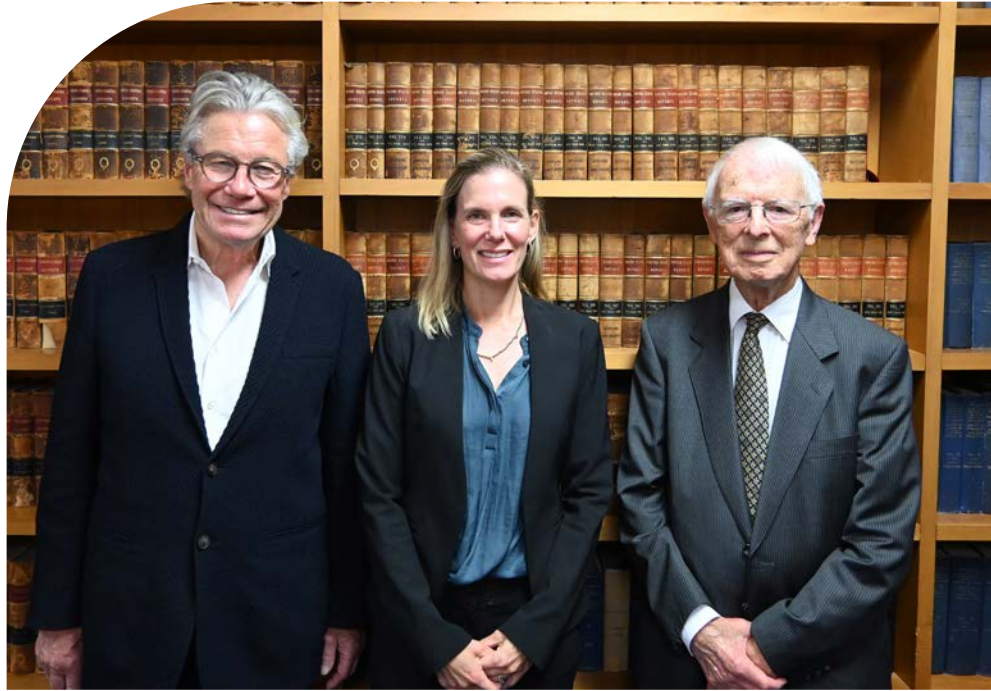
In 1989 Cooper moved to California and founded Cooper and Company, a firm focused on sustainably developing global real estate assets while preserving heritage and building community.

From 2004 he led the Britomart Urban Restoration Project, transforming downtown Auckland through the regeneration of 18 heritage buildings and the addition of new Green Star-rated structures. The result – a vibrant precinct of offices, retail and hospitality spaces crowned by the award-winning Hotel Britomart – has given the city a new lease of life. To further support the city's creative ecosystem Cooper also established the Britomart Arts Foundation.

In the Bay of Islands he has developed The Landing, a 400ha property that combines a vineyard and accommodation with ecological restoration and the protection of dozens of historic sites marking early interactions between Māori and European settlers.

Cooper was named Outstanding Māori Business Leader of the Year by the University of Auckland Business School in 2008, appointed a Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit (CNZM) in 2014 for services to urban development and received the Kea World Class New Zealand Supreme Award in 2021.

For Cooper, development is as much an act of creativity as it is construction. "Most people, if they had to build a building, would find it a very laboriously boring thing to do," he says. "Whereas if you allow your mind to think about trying to do something different – maybe that's creativity. I inspire myself by trying to push my own boundaries."



Peter Cooper with Professor Jaime King and Dr Kenneth Palmer at Auckland Law School.



**"Most people, if they had to build a building, would find it a very laboriously boring thing to do ... if you allow your mind to think about trying to do something different – maybe that's creativity. I inspire myself by trying to push my own boundaries."**



# Distinguished alumni: 40 Under 40

40 Under 40 celebrates alumni aged 40 and under who are making significant contributions in their chosen professional fields and communities. The programme highlights the breadth and diversity of the University's global alumni community, while inspiring the next generation of alumni leaders to make a positive difference in the world.

## Hui Wen Tan

As a steward of the \$4 billion trade relationship between Malaysia and New Zealand, lawyer Hui Wen Tan cares deeply about both lands.

The past 12 months have been huge for University of Auckland-trained lawyer Hui Wen Tan. She not only was elected to the committee of the Malaysia New Zealand Chamber of Commerce (MNZCC) but also became a partner in and head of dispute resolution at Malaysian law firm Jeff Leong, Poon & Wong (JLPW).

But the honour that matters more to Hui Wen was bestowed on her by her alma mater.

"I realised I had achieved success when I received news about my selection as a University of Auckland 40 Under 40 Business Leader," she says.

Since graduating from Auckland Law School and beginning work as a lawyer in Malaysia more than a decade ago, Hui Wen has maintained strong links with the University as alumni co-ordinator in her home country. The citation for her inclusion on the 40 Under 40 list notes her long-standing commitment to pro bono and community work.

As the International Chamber of Commerce Young Arbitration and ADR (alternative dispute resolution) Forum South Asia regional representative from 2019 to 2021, and an elected member of the Kuala Lumpur Bar Committee and chair of its Young Lawyers Committee from 2023 to 2024, she distinguished herself through her promotion of youth empowerment and access to legal education.

In 2023 Hui Wen spearheaded the Kuala Lumpur Bar's biggest moot and nearly two dozen other events for junior lawyers and future lawyers. She has trained university students from Asian countries in advocacy and coached refugee students in public speaking.



**"I aim to bring a fresh perspective and support the chamber's kaupapa of fostering trade, investment and collaboration between Malaysia and Aotearoa."**

In her MNZCC role, Hui Wen is the youngest committee member, one of just three women and the only New Zealand-trained lawyer.

"I aim to bring a fresh perspective and support the chamber's kaupapa of fostering trade, investment and collaboration between Malaysia and Aotearoa," she says.

"This role aligns with my volunteer work as University of Auckland alumni co-ordinator in Malaysia, where I have witnessed the power of building networks and meaningful partnerships beyond borders."

Through her efforts at the MNZCC, Hui Wen says she will work to strengthen connections, inspire innovation and create opportunities for growth between Malaysia and New Zealand.

New Zealand's trade relationship with Malaysia is our 10th-largest, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and Malaysia is our third-largest export market in Southeast Asia. Two-way trade in goods was close to \$4 billion in 2024.

Hui Wen's other major milestone of the past 12 months, her appointment to JLPW after a decade at top-tier law firm Skrine, was hailed by JLPW as pivotal in the firm's evolution in dispute resolution practice.

JLPW is availing itself of her experience in Malaysian courts and at international arbitration on behalf of Fortune 500 companies, government-linked companies and state agencies. Hui Wen's involvement in high-profile cases involving major infrastructure projects and native customary rights was recognised by Asian Legal Business in 2024.

**Anthony Doesburg**



## Lexie Kirkconnell-Kawana

Lexie Kirkconnell-Kawana, CEO of Impress in the UK, has built a multidisciplinary career spanning law, policy and the media driven by a passion for public service and ethical journalism.

When 16-year-old Lexie Kirkconnell-Kawana left school to start university she admits she was both "quite naive about career options" and at the same time "stubborn and determined to forge a qualification bespoke to my diverse interests".

Thankfully for her she found a place that catered to just those needs.



**"I believe the service we've built is valuable not just to the media and information sectors but also to all communities and businesses alike interested in how to communicate in the radically changing information ecosystem."**

"The University of Auckland offered a rich smorgasbord of flexible learning pathways that allowed me to explore and experiment till I settled on the right fit," she says. "I was very fortunate that many of my lecturers and the administrative staff never tried to curb my enthusiasm but enabled me and advocated for my learning development needs."

Lexie eventually decided to pursue law, as well as psychology and political studies, graduating with a Bachelor of Laws and a Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in 2013, before also earning a Master of Laws from Victoria University of Wellington in 2016.

Since then she has carved out a career path that has been anything but run-of-the-mill. She has held roles spanning the fields of research, investigation, policy and community building and has spent time in private practice, independent government bodies and regulatory organisations, including the New Zealand Office of Film and Literature Classification and the UK's Advertising Standards Authority.

That diverse background prepared her well for her present position as the chief executive of Impress, an independent press monitor in the UK. Dedicated to shaping a more trustworthy media landscape, Lexie's role is inherently multidisciplinary, covering the media, law and human rights, human behaviour and psychology.

"The cookie-cutter career path fell away for me a long time ago," she says. "But it makes sense looking back how I've ended up where I am: leading a regulator with such a big mission at the cutting edge of addressing information harm."

One of the most rewarding parts of her job is seeing the effect her work has, which she enumerates: "Hundreds of independent news publishers and thousands of journalists working to ethical standards co-created with their community and tens of millions of readers getting

access to news published with integrity to inform and educate them and help them make sense of the world."

Lexie says it was her family, and in particular the wāhine toa in her life, including her late grandmother Diane Kawana, who instilled in her the value of public service.

She also draws inspiration from "those thinkers tackling the big, tough questions of our time and the community leaders turning those solutions into practice".

One of the most important lessons about leadership she learned along the way is "you cannot qualify or specialise yourself into authority".

"For the longest time I thought being the subject-matter expert would open doors and force those who had dismissed me to sit up and pay attention. You can lose yourself in that, what is ultimately a solipsistic exercise. Good faith and investing in meaningful relationships were the qualities that set me up to lead and support others."

Ultimately though it's passion for what she does that drives her forward.

"I love the work I do and it shows," she says.

"I believe the service we've built is valuable not just to the media and information sectors but also to all communities and businesses alike interested in how to communicate in the radically changing information ecosystem. I find that earnestness resonates, it piques people's curiosity and they are much more willing to go on the journey with you."

**James Fyfe**

## James Palmer

Two companies set up by James Palmer and backed by the likes of Stephen Tindall are out to help struggling households by disrupting the affordable housing market.

When James Palmer was interviewed on RNZ in June 2025 after receiving two ethical investment awards, it didn't matter that radio comes to us without pictures: his smile was practically audible.

James, a law and political science alumnus of the University of Auckland, is chief executive and founder of companies Community Finance and Community Housing Funding Agency (CHFA). The former manages money that the latter channels to the Salvation Army and 13 other social housing providers that support the 21,000 Aotearoa households struggling to put a roof over their heads.

The awards – for best new ethical investment fund and best impact investment fund – given out by charity Mindful Money, which tracks where funds put their money, were the icing on the cake for James: earlier in the year the government committed \$150 million to CHFA to lend at below-market interest rates to community housing providers for home-building and rent subsidies.

As James told RNZ's Jesse Mulligan, that would allow CHFA, the government, philanthropists, banks and KiwiSaver providers to "all come together, pool our resources and then provide loans to these charities at a much lower cost than banks".

It is the pinnacle of his organisations' achievements to date.

"We have notched up a number of firsts when it comes to impact investing, raising hundreds of millions of dollars for charities, bringing different sectors together and helping enact policy change from government.

"But the big one was securing government support. The \$150 million facility for CHFA will help us to deliver billions of dollars more efficiently in the future. The day we learned we had secured that support, 28 February, is one we won't forget."

How did James, who says he left school with no great confidence in his abilities, go on to complete two university degrees



**"I hadn't known what I was capable of before university. It gave me a foundation of confidence that enabled me to innovate and disrupt an entire sector of our country and reject the status quo."**

and inject social-good values in the deeply conservative finance sector? He says it was university that gave him a personal shot in the arm.

"Probably the biggest thing it provided me with was confidence. I didn't have that from high school. With great professors, courses that inspired me and meeting other students who shared my interests, it opened my eyes to what I could accomplish."

He was initially surprised when he began getting great results.

"I hadn't known what I was capable of before university. It gave me a foundation of confidence that enabled me to innovate and disrupt an entire sector of our country and reject the status quo."

Not that he thinks confidence is all it takes.

"On its own it is never enough. You need experience, training, resilience and discipline and both degrees helped teach me those essential skills as well."

He has encountered his share of sceptics.

"I constantly faced smart, well-educated, deeply experienced people along the way telling us we would not succeed and that change like this was impossible. We have faced many hurdles, but the successes only followed through sheer grit and belief in our work to transform."

Apart from the boost university gave him, James says his home background – he worked for a time in his father's law firm – set his course for him.

"My family instilled in me the value of supporting others and the importance of justice and standing up for what's right."

He has nothing less than fixing the country's housing shortcomings in his sights.

"With my team and our backers, who include such amazing Kiwis as the Tindalls, Lindsays, Edgars and Anna Stuck, we have a lofty goal of helping New Zealand tackle and beat its affordable housing crisis. This requires system change and will take billions of dollars. It's improbable but possible – and we believe entirely necessary – for the sake of our people and the next generation."

**Anthony Doesburg**

## Min-Kyu Jung

Min-Kyu Jung is CEO and co-founder of Ivo, an AI start-up that helps businesses efficiently negotiate and review contracts. The company has raised more than US\$22 million in capital since its launch and its clients include Canva, Pinterest and Fonterra. Min-Kyu's achievements earned him a place on the 2024 Forbes 30 Under 30 Asia list.

As a law student at the University of Auckland, Min-Kyu Jung had mapped out a legal career that would take him to the UK, not into the world of Silicon Valley start-ups. But life had other ideas.

"I used to have a life plan that included being a lawyer in New Zealand for a few years and then practising at a large law firm in London. Things have turned out very differently," he says.

Now based in San Francisco, Min-Kyu is chief executive and co-founder of Ivo, a legal tech company using AI to help businesses negotiate and review contracts up to 80 per cent more efficiently than traditional methods. The idea for Ivo came while Min-Kyu was working as a corporate lawyer at Bell Gully in Auckland. Frustrated by the endless hours spent drafting contracts, he began imagining a smarter, faster solution – and set out to build it.

Together with Jacob Duligall, a former senior software engineer at Xero, Min-Kyu founded Ivo in 2021 and moved to the US in 2023. Since leaving law for the tech world he hasn't looked back.

"I've had the absolute time of my life building Ivo. As a fresh grad I remember feeling very directionless; I don't take for granted that I have the privilege to do what feels like my life's work."

A defining moment came when Ivo's first investor, Daniel Gross, came on board.

"He not only gave Ivo its initial capital but also helped convince me to move to San Francisco and, whether intentionally or not, massively expanded the scope of my ambitions," says Min-Kyu.

Another pivotal moment came with the reaction to an early prototype.

"Lawyers either loved it to the degree that they asked if they could invest in the company, or they seemed to have a visceral hatred of, or aversion to, it. This was a much better signal than the lukewarm positive feedback that earlier prototypes had elicited."



**"I used to have a life plan that included being a lawyer in New Zealand for a few years and then practising at a large law firm in London. Things have turned out very differently."**

Still, Min-Kyu says a good idea on its own isn't enough. His biggest lesson so far: "Slow start-ups don't win."

"Most companies don't want to buy from unproven start-ups so the only way to win their business is by going above and beyond," he says. "The overall speed of the entire company needs to be much faster than what feels normal or comfortable."

Now entrenched in the heart of the tech world, Min-Kyu has embraced the culture and allowed himself to think big.

"My ambition is for Ivo to be one of the most important companies in the world," he says. "Although it's far too early to declare victory – we still have a long way to go."

So far, however, Ivo is well on track. As well as raising US\$22 million in funding, the company has more than 150 customers, including Eventbrite, Canva, Fonterra, Pinterest and several Fortune 500 companies. In 2023 Min-Kyu was also named on the Forbes 30 Under 30 Asia list.

And while his life today is a far cry from the law rooms of Auckland, he remains grateful for both his former career and his years at university.

"My time at the University of Auckland helped me develop an interest and appreciation for law, which led to me entering the legal profession. It's safe to say that without this experience Ivo wouldn't exist."

**James Fyfe**



## Sam Clearwater

As technology firms jostle for supremacy in artificial intelligence a University of Auckland-trained lawyer is in the thick of the action.

Kiwi Sam Clearwater can claim some of the most impressive credentials of any technology and AI lawyer in the world.

The University of Auckland graduate, named in 2025 as a rising star at the New York Legal Awards, is the lead AI lawyer at global investment and technology development firm the D. E. Shaw group in the Big Apple.

Last year he was included among Bloomberg Law's "top 40 under 40" lawyers in the US, one of only two technology specialists to make the list.

"I am passionate about the intersection of law and technology and eroding the belief that lawyers can't be experts in the underlying tech," says Sam.

He disproved that generalisation early in his career while advising on a US\$1.1 billion project to modernise Transport for London's Underground ticketing systems. Sam took the advice of a colleague to master the complex contactless payment technologies.

"With that technical basis I was able to add real value to both the client's engineering and legal teams," he says.

But he never imagined he would become an AI specialist – "not least because the field was non-existent when I began my legal studies".

What he did know was he wanted to work overseas and pursue professional excellence. That's meant a circuitous journey from Auckland Law School to the D. E. Shaw group, ranked by Investopedia as one of the top five hedge funds in the world, where he is a senior vice president.

"I studied in Auckland and Copenhagen, have worked in the UK, France, Senegal, Japan and the US and am admitted as a lawyer in California, England and Wales, Ireland, New Zealand and Australia," says Sam.

His professional journey included a detour into international law, which he studied under Professor Treasa Dunworth, leading to a six-month sabbatical in West Africa investigating war crimes and human rights violations with Human Rights Watch.



**"I am passionate about the intersection of law and technology and eroding the belief that lawyers can't be experts in the underlying tech."**

Sam's Bloomberg Law recognition focused on his decade of work at Google, including five years at Area 120, the company's former start-up incubator. As part of the investment team, he was de facto general counsel for more than 40 portfolio companies. This included advising on the global launch of Aloud, which uses AI to translate and dub videos into various languages.

"This was before the current AI boom and accompanying regulation so it required novel consideration of how existing privacy and copyright laws might apply to this innovative product," Sam says.

In early 2023 he moved to Google Research, the search giant's AI lab, where he worked on foundational models such as Gemini and advised on the launch of a free AI-powered language tutor that converses with users and provides real-time feedback.

He also served as the sole lawyer for Google's climate and crisis response AI projects, including several focused on mitigating the damaging effects of flooding and wildfires.

Before he joined Google, Sam worked at global law firm Herbert Smith Freehills in London, Paris and Tokyo, advising large technology companies.

Now as the D.E. Shaw group's lead AI lawyer he aims "to further strengthen the firm's already-stellar reputation" and continue to develop his expertise and reputation in AI.

He is already making a significant mark, co-authoring the official course for the International Association of Privacy Professionals' AI Governance Professional certification.

"In 2023 I was appointed to the UK Law Society's technology and law committee and AI working group, where I advise on policy, legal and ethical debates concerning technology and the law."

Another source of pride is being listed as co-inventor on two pending AI patent filings for machine learning models he helped develop at Google.

"Both Google and the D. E. Shaw group hire brilliant people from a diverse range of academic and professional backgrounds. Working with cross-functional teams on the future of AI is incredibly exciting," Sam says.

**Anthony Doesburg**

# From law to DJing dance parties – and teaching Brazilian zouk

Ana Lenard, who distinguished herself in dispute resolution as a lecturer at Auckland Law School, describes her dazzling career shift.

"I was one of those kids who just loved moving to music. With years of dance classes and competitions under my belt in Latin and ballroom, I made the classic migration to salsa and bachata once I grew up.

"In the late 2010s a dance called Brazilian zouk, which is based on lambada, started making an appearance at social dance parties. Initially I was unimpressed. Unlike the other social dances, I couldn't pick it up easily, which was annoying and of course meant I had to prove to myself I could do it.

"I joined a choreography team at Viva Dance School and devoted myself to getting up to speed for a performance. Through this experience – in which I made many amazing friends from all walks of life – I got absolutely hooked on what I came to realise was an incredibly playful, expressive and versatile dance style that can be danced to almost any genre of music from pop, to hip hop and even electronic music.

"In 2023 I started DJing Brazilian zouk parties and came to find another passion in curating epic sets and developing the skill of reading the room – something I was already adept at as a lawyer – in a new context. In 2024 my now-husband and I were invited to join a dance school in Sydney, Zouk Life, as trainee teachers. This year we stepped up as co-owners and head dance teachers. We're now teaching weekly classes, DJing dance parties and running Sydney's only annual zouk festival. I'm fortunate to have an amazing gig working part-time in the law, which enables me to juggle law work with running a dance business.

"It's been a real privilege to experience careers at opposite ends of the spectrum.

"I had the best start to my legal career I could have asked for and I'm very proud of the work I did around dispute resolution, access to justice, gender justice and culture change in the legal



Ana Lenard

profession. I'm especially grateful to all the staff at Auckland Law School and colleagues who saw potential in me and supported my journey.

"Recurring burnout ultimately led me to decide that a traditional legal career was not to be. I had to accept the hard truth that I was not coping with the stresses and culture of the law and needed to take time to look closely at why that was, being open to wherever that path would lead. I'm still deep in the transition, figuring out what's next. But for now I'm grateful to be able to work in law part-time with a good group of people while exploring my creative passions.

"In my creative life I've relied on many of the skills I developed while I was at Auckland Law School as a student and lecturer. Attention to detail, strategic thinking and a teaching methodology that brings theory to life through practice are all things that help me curate classes, sets and events I am proud of. However, I have learnt



**"In my creative life I've relied on many of the skills I developed while I was at Auckland Law School as a student and lecturer."**

that it's not all roses transforming a passion into a business. You soon realise work is work, politics is everywhere and the lack of pressure to perform is one of the most beautiful things about having a hobby.

"What I love about dancing is it grounds you in the present moment and keeps you active and social. These are some of the essentials of a happy and healthy life. No one can dance like you, whether you're a trained professional with years of experience or you're grooving in the kitchen while making dinner. The way you dance is entirely unique to you – it's a reflection

of your embodied experiences, your emotions, your unique interpretation of the music.

"Through dance you can come to see just how creative, capable and confident you are. That's why I absolutely love teaching dance – I get to help people of all ages unleash their inner artist. I also love that when people are dancing they aren't polluting, they aren't hating, they aren't warring, they aren't gossiping, they aren't scrolling, they aren't shopping. Getting people hooked on something positive and healthy helps make the world a better place. Dancing is the people's art – something anyone can do for joy and that strengthens a happy vision of the future.

"I'd like to give a special shout-out to my very first zouk teachers, Shannon and Trajano of ZoukArt in Auckland. Please check them out if anything I have said has landed. And if you'd like to see more of what I'm doing these days you can find me on Instagram @dev.and.ana."

## Tracey Hu

Tracey Hu graduated with a conjoint Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Laws degree with honours in 2013 as a senior scholar in the Faculty of Law, collecting senior prizes in English and political studies from the Faculty of Arts along the way. Hu has fond memories of Law School and has gone on to enjoy a diverse and fulfilling career in both criminal and civil litigation (and where they intersect), acting as both prosecution and defence. She credits her professors at the University of Auckland for encouraging her intellectual and professional curiosity.

After two years as a judges' clerk in the High Court, Hu worked as a prosecutor at Meredith Connell from 2014 to 2018. She prosecuted a range of regulatory and core criminal offending. In 2019 she completed an LLM at Columbia University specialising in criminal procedure, evidence and constitutional law topics. She graduated as James Kent Scholar (First Class Honours equivalent) before returning to New Zealand to work at LeeSalmonLong in Auckland, where she defended clients facing regulatory investigations and prosecutions, including the Serious Fraud Office prosecution following the collapse of CBL Insurance (*R v Harris* [2023] NZHC 2635).



Tracey Hu

Hu has acted in a broad range of civil litigation, including the directors' duties litigation arising from the collapse of Mainzeal Property and Construction (*Yan v Mainzeal Property and Construction Ltd* [in liq] [2023] NZSC 113).

She joined City Chambers as a barrister sole in 2022 specialising in defending clients against regulatory and criminal investigations and prosecutions. She also acts in a range of commercial disputes and is member of the Manukau Crown prosecution panel.

## Karen Sherry joins Watercare board

Auckland Council has appointed Auckland Law School alum Karen Sherry (below) as a director of Watercare Services. Councillor Daniel Newman chaired the selection panel and welcomed Sherry to the board in late 2024. "Karen is a lawyer with deep governance experience in the utilities sector and is well placed to oversee the [Watercare] capital raising," he said.

Following completion of a Bachelor of Arts and a Master of Arts, Sherry graduated from Auckland Law School with an LLB in 1992. She went on to work as a director at legal practice Donnell Sherry and is an experienced governor with 30 years of board experience.

Her governance career has included all aspects of the electrical utility sector including power generation, distribution, consumer trusts and regulation. She has had roles at Mercury Energy, Entrust (elected), Vector, the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (EECA), Electra, the Power Company and PowerNet.

In 2014 she was awarded the Queen's Service Medal for her work in the electricity industry.





# Mastering taxation: From Azerbaijan to Aotearoa

A passion for learning has taken Jamil Eldar from studying international economics in Azerbaijan to leading finance at one of New Zealand's top publicly listed companies.

University of Auckland alumnus Jamil Eldar graduated with a Master of Taxation Studies (with distinction) in 2024 and received the First in Course Award in International Taxation.

Originally from Azerbaijan, he built a strong academic foundation before coming to New Zealand, earning both a bachelors and a masters degree (with distinction) in international economic relationships from the Azerbaijan State Economic University.

After settling in Christchurch he completed a Legal Executive Diploma through the Open Polytechnic of New Zealand and an MBA at the University of Canterbury.

He was inspired to study further by his uncle and grandfather, who both studied law, and by a mentor who recommended the Master of Taxation Studies (MTaxS) programme at the University of Auckland. Several respected tax professionals he knew had also completed the degree.

Jamil says the calibre of teaching and course design made the experience exceptional.

"I highly recommend the Master of Taxation Studies to anyone interested in tax research, professional practice or policy. I'm always happy to share my experience with aspiring students, current students and alumni."



Jamil Eldar



**"Begin with the end in mind; approach each subject with the questions you want to find the answers for. Seek knowledge and it will be yours."**

He completed most of his studies online from Christchurch, balancing full-time work and family life, and says programme director Professor Craig Elliffe was "very generous with his time, sharing his knowledge and supporting my study goals".

Through the programme Jamil met experienced tax practitioners, expanded his professional network and was invited to join CPA Australia's New Zealand tax committee. The knowledge he gained has had a direct effect on his career at NZX50-listed company Scales Corporation where he is group head of finance.

"The Master of Taxation Studies equipped me with practical skills to confidently execute the tax compliance aspect of my role. It helped me engage effectively with external tax advisers, develop the team reporting to me and contribute to continuous improvement of the tax-compliance process. It was instrumental in my professional development and helped me get promoted."

Jamil encourages future MTaxS students to approach their study intentionally.

"Begin with the end in mind; approach each subject with the questions you want to find the answers for. Seek knowledge and it will be yours."

## Linda Te Aho awarded New Zealand Order of Merit

Auckland Law School alumna Linda Te Aho (right), of Ngāti Koroki Kahukura, Ngāti Mahuta and Waikato, and an associate professor at Waikato's Te Piringa Faculty of Law, has been awarded the New Zealand Order of Merit (MNZM) for services to Māori and to legal education.

The 2025 New Year Honours announcement highlighted Te Aho's dedication to improving communities and legal minds.

Māori Development Minister Tama Potaka said: "Her mahi has resonated across the mighty Waikato. From sharpening the legal minds at Te Piringa Faculty of Law, University of Waikato to developing a vision for the magnificent Waikato awa, the influence of Mrs Te Aho has significantly enhanced this rohe."

Te Aho graduated with a Bachelor of Laws from the University of Auckland before gaining a masters at the University of Waikato in 2000.

After graduating from Auckland Law School she practised in a large commercial firm. However, she quickly became interested in working as a legal academic, adviser and mentor. For 25 years she has specialised in teaching and researching Māori law and governance issues.



# Law and leadership in the New Zealand Army

Auckland Law School alumnus Troy Wilson McLaren loves his role as a regional lawyer in the New Zealand Army, where he provides legal expertise on the day-to-day operations of camps and bases.

Troy Wilson McLaren, who graduated in 2022 with a Bachelor of Laws, originally wanted to be an engineer. But he found his true calling when he delved into two first-year law papers.

"I really enjoyed those papers and when I was accepted into Law School it was a no-brainer to continue with the degree. The decision to pivot fully into the legal domain felt natural."

Working in military law is highly specialised but Troy says his legal education gives him a solid foundation in critical thinking, clear communication and structured problem-solving.

He spent his first three months after graduation with Emirates Team New Zealand, which wanted someone with a mix of technical and legal expertise to support submissions to the Rules Committee for the 37th America's Cup.

From there he moved to the New Zealand Army where he initially worked as a legal officer in support of operations.

"One of my career highlights has been the opportunity to travel to Australia to support a large-scale 'command-post exercise'. There I represented the NZDF legal team during a simulated Australian Defence Force operation scenario. This experience allowed me to work alongside international military counterparts and apply my legal training in a dynamic and high-pressure environment."

Troy says among his most memorable moments at the University of Auckland was the 2017 law camp – "definitely an experience". Racing with other last-minute students to deliver assignments to the law building before cut-off time and insightful discussion groups during honours lectures are also clear memories.

He interned with the New Zealand Centre for Environmental Law working under Professor Klaus Bosselmann and also secured an exchange to the University of Melbourne in his final year.



Lt Troy Wilson McLaren

Troy's advice for people exploring career options in law is to be open to opportunities in unexpected places. "The field of law is incredibly diverse offering career paths that range far beyond traditional legal practice. Don't hesitate to look into areas that may initially seem outside your comfort zone – you may discover rewarding roles you hadn't previously considered."

Troy, who's completing legal officer training in Sydney and is on track for promotion to captain in the New Zealand Army, says the University of Auckland was instrumental not only in shaping his career but also in enriching his personal growth.

"The friendships and intellectual challenges I encountered during my time there continue to influence both my personal and professional life."



"The friendships and intellectual challenges I encountered during my time there continue to influence both my personal and professional life."

# Missive from Michigan

Before heading to the US for masters and doctoral studies in law, Nadia Sussman was a professional teaching fellow at Auckland Law School. She graduated with a Bachelor of Laws (Hons) and a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Auckland in 2019. In Nadia's own words, this is an update on her research at the University of Michigan.

"I'm approaching the end of my first year as a doctoral student in the University of Michigan's SJD programme. This is my second year in Ann Arbor at Michigan Law – last year I undertook the LLM programme here. I am supervised by Professor Sherman Clark – chair of my committee, Michigan Law – as well as professors Maureen Carroll, also Michigan Law, and Julian Webb of Melbourne Law.

"I am pursuing the doctorate in law because it offers an opportunity to develop scholarship in a privileged space insulated from client agendas and the demands of teaching. As of fall 2024, when I began, Michigan Law's Doctor of Juridical Science (SJD) programme was revised to strengthen engagement through a weekly colloquium and to provide full funding to students during their first three years. Once a semester, each SJD student has the opportunity to present. I value the colloquium for a number of reasons: it functions as an accountability mechanism; it provides a space for workshoping early output; and it helps you feel like you're part of the academic community.

"My research considers how lawyers seek to communicate on behalf of others. In civil proceedings across common law jurisdictions, a witness may furnish their evidence by way of written document. Notwithstanding the ostensible primacy of oral evidence, that document can come to influence or even constitute the witness's evidence in chief, their sole opportunity to communicate to the court in a manner unstructured by opposing counsel's questioning. The document will purport to emanate from the witness. It will very likely have been prepared by a lawyer.

"Such documents take various names including affidavit, brief of evidence, witness statement and will-say statement and have important differences. Some of these documents are not 'evidence' in the proper sense of the word but rather proposed evidence. The essence, or exact words of the document, will only enter the court record following some other

procedure – the witness might read the document aloud in court, or it might be updated by a deposition or another form of oral testimony. Or, as in the majority of civil cases, the documents will not be updated or enter the court record at all because they contribute to a settlement. So I call these documents 'evidential documents'. I'm considering them as a class because they share those two characteristics: purported emanation from the witness and preparation by a lawyer.

"There is growing awareness in the profession, judiciary and academy that the way in which lawyers prepare these documents may not produce the 'best' evidence. Some are considering how the regulatory rules might be redesigned. My work accepts the existing framework, in which there is a spectrum of permissible ways for lawyers to prepare evidential documents. I'm examining three roles a lawyer plays when undertaking this practice in the permissible range – that of the officer of the court, advocate and 'world-builder'. From here I will consider the ethical demands we might want to attach to those roles if we are to fulfil our implicit and explicit ambitions for the law and lawyers. Such an evaluation seeks to arm lawyers with a developed awareness of their impact when they are considering where on the spectrum of permissible ways to prepare a witness they wish to land.

"As an SJD at Michigan Law I am also able to 'audit' classes, which gives me the chance to observe different pedagogical approaches with an eye to my future teaching. One significant difference – beyond the Socratic-style cold-calling – is that professors here are able to designate their classes 'device-free' and limit lecture recording availability. This promotes a culture of participation, generates energy and fosters connections between students and their teachers.

"I have been delighted the Auckland Law community has continued to support me as a junior scholar. Between the end of my LLM and the start of my SJD I had



View to the Michigan Law Quadrangle over the year.



**"It has been a troubling period for international students – and those who care about legal ethics – in the US recently. So it makes my day to get messages of support and inquiry from back home."**

the opportunity to workshop my thesis proposal at Auckland Law. I'm grateful to Jesse Wall for organising it and to all who generously shared their time and feedback. It has been a troubling period for international students – and those who care about legal ethics – in the US recently. So it makes my day to get messages of support and inquiry from back home."



# Hannah Reid: Make the most of Law School

From mooting competitions to prosecuting serious cases as a senior associate at Meredith Connell, Hannah Reid has forged a legal path guided by purpose and principle.

From assisting Amal Clooney on international human rights publications to prosecuting cases as a senior associate at Meredith Connell, University of Auckland law graduate Hannah Reid is using her legal education to make a mark both locally and internationally.

Hannah, who graduated with a Bachelor of Laws (Hons) and Bachelor of Arts in 2017, credits her success in the industry to her formative years at Auckland's Law Faculty. "There have been several key points in my career where I could pin developments on an experience at Law School," she says.

Her interest in international law was sparked as a student in Auckland and strengthened when she completed her Master of Laws at the University of Columbia Law School in 2020. Hannah says her time at Columbia "was one of the moments where I realised just how well Auckland Law School set me up to engage in more advanced academia and work with excellent lawyers abroad".

Hannah, who recently had a baby daughter, says although she's proud of certain case outcomes and reaching various milestones, what she's most proud of is sticking to her core values.

"Litigation can be challenging and in that adversarial environment, while others at times take quite different approaches to me, I am proud that I have grown as a lawyer but not morphed into a more aggressive or apathetic version of myself."

The immersive and practical experiences at Auckland Law School, especially mooting competitions, inspired her career path. Hannah participated in prestigious competitions such as the Jessup moot, the Red Cross International Humanitarian Law moot and the aviation law moot, describing them as formative experiences. "They were the experiences that best prepared me for working in litigation because of the advocacy skills developed and also the teamwork involved," she says. The competitions also offered fully funded travel



Hannah Reid

overseas, which Hannah remembers as "a real luxury when living on a student budget".

Mooting and her honours seminar course and dissertation were the most memorable times during her studies. "Those were aspects of the degree that involved working closely with other students and the lecturers, delving into new areas of law and presenting the outcomes of hard work."

For students considering Auckland Law School, Hannah's advice is enthusiastic and direct. "Make the most of everything at Law School. Go to class, do the readings, engage with the lecturers and meet the others in your cohort. The faculty are incredible and a source of inspiration, wisdom and support so make the most of the access you have to them."



**"Litigation can be challenging and in that adversarial environment, while others at times take quite different approaches to me, I am proud that I have grown as a lawyer but not morphed into a more aggressive or apathetic version of myself."**

# Pacific law graduate follows in mother's footsteps

Siobhan Sharkey has been awarded a conjoint degree in law and arts majoring in linguistics.

Following in the footsteps of her pioneering mother and "prayer warrior" grandmother, law and arts graduate Siobhan Sharkey was destined to aim high.

The University of Auckland graduate was awarded a conjoint degree in law and arts majoring in linguistics on 15 May. She was among a cohort of 25 law graduates with Pacific heritage graduating from Auckland Law School.

The daughter of Auckland Law School alumna Tania Sharkey, New Zealand's first District Court Judge of Tongan descent appointed in the family jurisdiction, and granddaughter of Kalolaine Fotu Sharkey, Siobhan says her parents and mama have been some of her biggest supporters throughout her university studies.

"My parents cheered me on every step of the way. They never failed to remind me how proud they were and were very understanding of my stress-induced mood

swings – my siblings too actually," she said laughing.

Her mama (grandmother) plays a major role in her life and has been Siobhan's "prayer warrior".

"She never fails to wake up early in the morning and pray over me and my family and there's no doubt in my mind that her prayers have played a huge part in getting me to where I am today."

Siobhan's roots are in Houma village on Tonga's main island Tongatapu and the town of Strabane in Northern Ireland from where her maternal grandfather William Sharkey hailed.

Catholic-raised Siobhan says faith has guided her through life's challenges and triumphs.

Siobhan's parents were determined she and her siblings wouldn't miss out on their Tongan language and culture. She spent a



**"My parents cheered me on every step of the way. They never failed to remind me how proud they were and were very understanding of my stress-induced mood swings – my siblings too actually."**

year living in Tonga with family in Fanga, near the capital Nuku'alofa.

"When I was younger I lived with my family in Fanga, attending Fanga GPS [government primary school]. My parents wanted me to deepen my understanding of and connection to our culture and family."



Siobhan Sharkey, law and arts graduate. Her mama (grandmother) plays a major role in her life and has been Siobhan's "prayer warrior". Photo: William Chea





Law and arts graduate Siobhan Sharkey and her family on graduation day, with mother Judge Tania Sharkey, left, and her "prayer warrior" mama, Kalolaine Fotu Sharkey, right. Photo: William Chea

Siobhan and her siblings spent most summers in Tonga throughout their school years.

"I'll always be grateful for the experience of living there. The love and hard work of my family in Tonga continues to ground and motivate me to work hard so that one day I will return the same love they have always shown me."

The decision to study law came about after her mother invited Siobhan to a Pacific Lawyers' Association conference. She sat in on a panel discussing "What you can you do with your law degree?"

"I had just returned to New Zealand after living abroad, with no idea what I wanted to study but just the knowledge that's what I was going to do.

"Long story short, I enjoyed what I heard. My decision to study linguistics was because of my time overseas. I enjoyed experiencing other cultures and I wanted to keep learning about other languages and maintain the French language. Thankfully that's worked out fairly well."

She describes the university experience as a major learning curve both academically and personally.

Learning to juggle studies with her other commitments, especially in her final year, was overwhelming. Siobhan was determined to graduate and also continue

with her role on the executive of the Pacific Islands Law Students' Association (PILSA).

"I put a lot of pressure on myself to graduate and carry out my role on PILSA's executive team in a way I could be proud of, but it just clouded everything else going on in my life and the burnout was really hard."

Throughout it all Siobhan says she relied on the support of her family, and prayed a lot.

"I wish I had a better blueprint for how I got through it but it came down to the support of my loved ones, trusting the process and remembering that it was all a means to an end."

She says one of the best features of Auckland Law School was the network of friends she finished with.

"As cheesy as it sounds the biggest highlight was the friends I made, since my first year of uni right up until my last. I owe a large part of that to PILSA."

She aimed to complete the professional legal studies course with the Institute of Professional Legal Studies for admission to the bar by September.

"I'm interning at a criminal defence law firm and I am looking forward to what life looks like without assignments."

**Kim Meredith**



**"I wish I had a better blueprint for how I got through it but it came down to the support of my loved ones, trusting the process and remembering that it was all a means to an end."**



# West Auckland graduate realises childhood dream

Graduating in law and arts, Nikita Sionetali-Tuitea has turned her dreams into reality.

The first in her family to attend university, law and arts graduate Nikita Sionetali-Tuitea had dreamed of becoming a lawyer since her days at Glen Eden Primary School.

The University of Auckland graduate crossed the stage on 15 May, receiving a conjoint Bachelor of Laws and Arts degree.

"I'd always dreamed of being a lawyer, but by the time I got to high school I had expanded my dreams to becoming a judge. And I've held on to that dream ever since."

Born and raised in West Auckland, Nikita's blended heritage is Sāmoan, Niuean and New Zealand European.

"In Sāmoa I hail from the village of Taufusi in Apia, Upolu. My grandma is from Falealupo in Savai'i and my grandpa is from Tuana'i in Upolu. In Niue, my grandad is from Hakupu, and I get my New Zealand European ancestry from my nana.

"From a young age I knew I wanted to help people. But medicine was not for me – and I am terrible at maths unless it has to do with my payslip.

"One thing I knew for sure was that I had a passion for justice – and I'm really good at talking. So for me law and arts, majoring in criminology and sociology, was the perfect degree."

Navigating student life while also making sense of her new environment was gruelling.

"Adapting to university life was particularly hard. As the first in my family to attend university I had no idea what 'Canvas' was, let alone its importance," she said, referring to the University's online learning tool for course materials.

It was those small things that made her feel as if she was falling behind compared to her peers.

"My peers seemed to have it all figured out. One thing I particularly struggled with was the language. English is my first language but every time I walked into class it was like they were speaking French. I was literally googling every third word my lecturer said



Law and arts graduate Nikita Sionetali-Tuitea: "I wish I had a more magical answer, but the truth is, it was really hard, but totally worth it." Photo: William Chea

because there were so many fancy new words I had to learn."

Nikita looks back on the hours spent in the library going over lecture material, reading the same passages over and over again.

"I was researching things I didn't understand – until I did. It took a lot of training, memory retention and time.

"I wish I had a more magical answer, but the truth is it was really hard but totally worth it. If I could offer any advice to others starting, I would say be consistent. Consistency brings results. I was never the smartest in the class, but I was always consistent, perseverant and determined."

Nikita still managed to immerse herself in the University community. She joined several associations and clubs, including the Pacific Islands Law Students' Association (PILSA), the Moana-Oceania Academic Initiative (MAI), the Malosi Project, Tuākana Arts and Auckland Catholic Tertiary Students (ACTS).

"Being a class representative, taking on various executive roles in ACTS, being



**"If I could offer any advice to others starting, I would say be consistent. Consistency brings results. I was never the smartest in the class, but I was always consistent, perseverant and determined."**

PILSA's academic officer, a Tuākana teaching assistant, a MAI tutor, a law student panellist at the University's Open Day and part of the 2024 Pacific Prospectus, plus attending the University of Auckland's first Pacific Law Week, were all highlights.

"Not only did I get to meet and work with some amazing people, but also I got to serve others, give back to my community, grow as a leader and hopefully inspire others to continue or pursue a law degree too."



She was grateful to the PILSA, MAI and Tuākana Arts villages for being the backbone of her degrees. Many of the people she met through those groups have become firm friends and have opened doors to new opportunities.

She acknowledged her church community at Our Lady of Lourdes Glen Eden, with a “special shout-out to the Legion of Mary for all your prayers over the years”.

“Thank you, Mum, for your daily positive affirmations, prayers, and ongoing support and encouragement throughout my studies. To my dad, thanks for showing me the person I wanted to be and ensuring there is always a pot of coffee to-go!”

She gave a special mention to her sister for shouldering Nikita’s share of family responsibilities, allowing her to focus on her studies.

“I also want to thank my family – all my aunties, uncles and cousins – for everything you have done for me over the years. Finally, to my best friend, thank you for always doing the most for me on the daily. Thanks for feeding me as a broke student, reminding me to get fresh air, take a break and reassuring me that I will pass and that I can do it.”

**Kim Meredith**



Nikita Sionetali-Tuitea and family members before the graduation ceremony. Photo: William Chea



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# From rugby referee to Supreme Court clerk

Keeping rugby players on the straight and narrow ensures law and engineering graduate Nathan Pinder stays grounded.

From laying down the law on the rugby field to grappling with it in the country's highest court, Nathan Pinder, who tackled two demanding undergraduate degrees, law and engineering, graduating with honours, is enjoying post-university life in Wellington.

The autumn graduate, who's now working as a judges' clerk in the Supreme Court, says being a young referee helped him both personally and professionally.

"I started refereeing when I was 10 years old and was a pretty lippy player back then. I didn't like referees much. I thought they always had it wrong. So my dad told me to 'Stop being so arrogant about it and go pick up a whistle.'"

He did, and found it equally humbling and exciting. "Trying to explain your interpretation of rugby laws to full-grown adults when you're a teenager teaches you a lot about communication."

Refereeing was a precursor to studying law in many ways, says Nathan, who was born in Canada and whose parents and sister live in Ontario.

"You're always applying legal principles. Questions of materiality, for example, or the context of a decision, are always present in rugby games, and that helped my legal analysis."

After two years of high school at St Peter's College in Auckland, Nathan finished his secondary studies in Canada at Regiopolis-Notre Dame Catholic High School. He then began studying engineering at Ontario's McMaster University, but missed the big ethical questions that had drawn him to philosophy and English in high school. So he returned to New Zealand to study law, alongside engineering.

After starting in biomedical engineering, he switched to engineering science for its strong data focus. "I felt it would give me good tools for how to view the world, especially since technology seems to be developing so rapidly. The technical perspective from engineering helped in law too.



**"You're always applying legal principles. Questions of materiality, for example, or the context of a decision, are always present in rugby games, and that helped my legal analysis."**

"Honestly, it was difficult. When I started, looking down the barrel of a seven-year degree was pretty daunting. But I had amazing support. Friends, family and staff in both faculties really pulled me along. I can't put into words how grateful I am to those people."

Thanks to careful planning and hard work, Nathan completed the conjoint degree in five years. He was awarded the Law Association Prize for the best undergraduate record in law and named a senior scholar in engineering. "I'm obviously stoked, but it wouldn't have been possible without the people around me," he says.

"My parents never doubted anything. They helped so much with late-night tutoring sessions and pep talks, especially in the early years. They were always involved, even from the other side of the world."

Nathan's love for the law grew steadily during his time at Auckland Law School thanks to inspiring lecturers and mentors. He credits Professors Janet McLean KC, Mark Henaghan and Dr Arie Rosen with shaping his legal journey early on.

"They were phenomenal. Professor McLean and Dr Rosen helped me learn in my first research assistant roles and Professor Henaghan lit the spark for so many of us in first-year law. They helped me see how the law connects with real-world issues.

"I found all my lecturers at Auckland



Law and engineering graduate Nathan Pinder.  
Photo: William Chea

Law School to be incredibly committed to making sure students learn how to apply legal principles in the real world. I was often reminded that law is a service industry and felt motivated to use my education to serve others."

In his role clerking for the Chief Justice at the Supreme Court, Nathan is helping to consider some of New Zealand's most important legal issues.

And the whistle's still in hand. Refereeing, he says, keeps him grounded. "It's a reminder that law is ultimately about people."

Looking ahead he's keeping his options open. For now Nathan is enjoying the moment.

"My parents flew down from Canada for graduation. So that's really special."

**Sophie Boladeras**



# Model student emerges from Hawke's Bay surf

From music gigs to overseas travel, Sione Roberts made the most of university life, but it was his focus on Māori and Pacific legal perspectives that gave him deeper purpose.

Lockdowns, late-night gigs, international travel, modelling and a drive to understand how the law affects Māori shaped Sione Roberts' six years at the University of Auckland.

The conjoint music and law graduate started a full-time role in 2025 as a law clerk at MinterEllisonRuddWatts, and when he has time he's playing an eclectic mix of soul, soft rock, jazz, indie and RnB with his new band Tūi.

"The band is an integral part of my life and loads of fun. It's my creative hub, giving me more energy and happiness than anything else."

Sione's childhood was full of skateboards, basketball, broken bones, cello, guitar and East Coast surf.

"The beauty of Hawke's Bay is that there's a beach within 30 minutes no matter where you are so I spent loads of time swimming and getting obliterated by the waves at Waimārama and Ocean Beach."

School life was a mixed bag. Sione loved learning from an early age but started to struggle in his mid-teens. His academic turning point came following a high-school orchestra camp.

"I decided to turn things around. I made a goal to try my absolute best at every subject and challenge put in front of me. Thank goodness I changed my mindset, changed schools and locked those changes in because I would not be where I am today if not for that personal decision."

That decision enabled him to complete his conjoint degree while performing with his band, debating, travelling internationally and modelling for the likes of Zambesi, Superette and Hallensteins.

"Modelling was such an awesome and rewarding side hustle while at uni. I was able to travel all over New Zealand and to Canada and the US."

He also travelled to the US, Vietnam and South Korea through the University of Auckland programmes focused on innovation and entrepreneurship.



**"Modelling was such an awesome and rewarding side hustle while at uni. I was able to travel all over New Zealand and to Canada and the US."**

Sione credits much of his academic success and drive to his whānau. His mum studied for a business psychology degree while raising him and working full-time. Her determination proved to Sione that he could set big goals and achieve them through hard mahi.

"Mum has been my biggest supporter, always texting and calling when I first moved to Auckland to check I was happy and not too stressed with study or extracurriculars."

His late grandfather also left a profound mark.

"All my childhood I was in awe of the multitude of qualifications on the walls of his study room. He even wrote a few books about his life and learnings, which serve as great reminders of what someone can achieve if they constantly learn."

Sione's partner Alice has been with him throughout university, encouraging him when he doubted himself. His sister Willa took him out for food and chats and his uncle Robert was also a huge support.

"I'm also grateful to my dad, my nana Jean and Alice's parents for their ongoing support," says Sione whose Māori whakapapa gave his legal studies a deeper purpose.

"Aotearoa's history has been riddled with the oppression and discrimination of Māori, driven primarily by instruments like the legal system. One of my key reasons for studying law was to understand how the law has caused intergenerational harm to Māori and how we, as Māori lawyers, can change the



From music gigs to overseas travel, Sione Roberts made the most of university life, but it was his focus on Māori and Pacific legal perspectives that gave him deeper purpose.

law. These changes can prevent this chain of harm and provide remediation so Māori can one day be free from the consequences of colonisation."

Sione's time at university wasn't without its challenges. His first year was his first real taste of independence and his second and third years were marred by Covid disruptions.

"Some semesters I got good grades, some I didn't ... but I gained a thicker skin and developed a knack for bouncing back from bad grades."

Sione ended on a high note, achieving his best academic results in his final semester.

**Sophie Boladeras**

# Law and Lucía:

## Graduate hits law degree for six

A lifelong kilikiti player and huge fan of rugby and rugby league, Auckland Law School graduate Veronica Kirsome hopes to one day run her own sports law agency.

Veronica Kirsome found out she was pregnant about the same time she was accepted to study law at the University of Auckland.

The prospect of raising a newborn and studying full-time was daunting, Veronica says.

"I was so keen to pursue law but I thought I might have to hold off on it. I was sitting there thinking what the heck do I do?"

It was in the silence of lockdown that she decided she could actually cope with study and motherhood.

"That's when I decided to call my baby Lucía, meaning light," she says. "She was the light I needed to see that I could do both."

Although staff told her it could take until 2026 to finish her degree, Veronica set herself a personal deadline: graduate before Lucía turned five. And on 10 September 2025, a month before her daughter's fifth birthday, she crossed the stage.

Veronica was born in Aotearoa into a traditional Sāmoan home. Her parents spoke mainly Sāmoan and had strong connections to their faith, family and friends.

"My parents worked very long hours in laborious factory jobs. They did this to support my older siblings and me in going to school. In a way education was very foreign to my parents because they weren't able to pursue it themselves. But it was what they wanted for us and they did everything they could to make it work," she says.

When she was around 14, Veronica saw a pile of mail on the kitchen table in their Glenn Innes home that included several bills for education-related expenses. She said she had a bit of an epiphany.

"I had this really tangible evidence in front of me about how much education costs, and I thought, 'Okay, they're really invested in this. They really believe in me.' From then on, school became even more important – I knew how much of my parents' money, sweat and tears were going into it."



Veronica's value for education continued throughout high school, where she excelled. She then enrolled at the University of Auckland in a conjoint Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Laws. Partway through she decided to focus solely on her arts degree, majoring in criminology and sociology. After graduating she stepped into an office management job.

"Everything was great – great job, great colleagues but for some reason my cup wasn't full and I realised it was because I wanted to go back and finish my law degree."

### Soldiering on

Veronica gave birth to her daughter in 2020 and at times the pressure of study and parenting felt overwhelming. "I was getting my grades, but I was doing too much," she says. "Sometimes I thought people weren't open to my ideas, and I would dwell on this. I would think I wasn't smart enough and I had negative self-talk."

After a "mini breakdown" midway through Law School, Veronica rebuilt her life around a routine. She would wake at 4.45am, pray,



Veronica Kirsome on graduation day (top) and with daughter Lucia.

then start the day with her hardest task: running 5km with her labrador Soldier. She keeps to this routine today.

"I would tell myself I've already clocked the hardest thing today. Lectures aren't harder



Law graduate Veronica Kirisome with her mum and dad.

than that. Criticism isn't harder than that."

Veronica deliberately chose papers outside her comfort zone, including company law, consumer law and employment law. "At first it felt like another language. But I wanted to challenge myself. Now I can walk into a room in those fields and contribute."

She credits family, friends, faith and faculty for helping her get through her law degree. "I couldn't have gone through these years without my parents, my siblings, my church and my friends. They really saw that I was made to be a lawyer and a mother."

Veronica's mentors and professors at Auckland Law School were a great support too. "Jodi Gardner gave me boss energy. Mark Henaghan, though not one of my teachers, helped me sort out a payment plan for my last two papers. Without him I would have had to delay my graduation. And Annette Sykes inspired me with how she loves and works so hard for her people."

Meanwhile, professional teaching fellow Simon Schofield inspired her interest in employment law. "Simon was so cool. He opened my eyes to this area where I can help my people."

"Some Pacific people who come to New Zealand don't know their rights at work. Seasonal workers are especially vulnerable. I want to make sure people in these positions aren't coerced, that bargaining levels are equal," says Veronica, who volunteers at a community law centre and as a migrant advocate.

Sports law also interests her: a rugby and rugby league fan and lifelong kilikiti player, her ambition is to run her own sports law agency.



Playing kilikiti is Veronica Kirisome's happy place.

Kilikiti is a Sāmoan version of cricket that Veronica has been playing for more than 25 years. "We play with a ball made out of rubber tree and a triangular bat. I love it. I play every summer and my team, the St Pius GI Girls, have had two international tours to Brisbane. We've taken them out both times!"

The sport is a great discipline. "It teaches me when to lead, when to perform, when to strategise. And when I'm on the pitch, I can let off steam."

### Keeping it in the family

When she passed her final law exam, Veronica's daughter Lucía delivered the news to her grandparents, who now live in Brisbane along with her older siblings.

"I asked Lucía to tell them that I passed my last exam because I knew they would be very emotional and I couldn't face them. After Lucía told them, all I could hear was my mum crying and telling Lucía to thank me because I made their dreams come true. Their dream was for their daughter to be a lawyer."

At her graduation dinner, Veronica presented her parents with her law and arts degrees.

"It only makes sense that I give them my certificates," she said. "It's their tears, hard work and dedication that allowed me to do this. My name might be on them, but it's definitely their achievement too."

**Sophie Boladeras**



**"Some Pacific people who come to New Zealand don't know their rights at work. Seasonal workers are especially vulnerable. I want to make sure people in these positions aren't coerced, that bargaining levels are equal."**



# Graduate follows path of trailblazing Pacific women

**Lisi-Malia Teaura Nuulopa Pereira crosses the stage carrying the legacy of generations.**

Lisi-Malia Teaura Nuulopa Pereira's name reflects more than lineage – it's a tribute to the ancestors who have guided her on her journey.

She carried their legacy across the stage on 10 September when she received a conjoint Bachelor of Commerce and Bachelor of Laws degree.

The 22-year-old Sāmoan-Chinese with Cook Island, Tokelauan and Tahitian ancestry described feeling excited and nervous about the ceremony. "But I'm so happy that everything worked out. I want to thank my family who travelled to be here and all my friends as well."

Born in Taufusi in Apia, Sāmoa's capital, she is the eldest daughter of Benjamin Pereira and Audrey Brown-Pereira, who were at the graduation ceremony.

Her mother, an alumna of the University of Auckland, said: "We came from Sāmoa to celebrate this day. I'm a very proud parent – but as her father Ben says, she's great with words and numbers."

Her daughter's graduation was particularly special with her own connection to the University.

## Upbringing steeped in traditional values

The young graduate said her upbringing in Sāmoa was steeped in the values of faith, family and service passed down from ambitious and aspirational great-grandmothers.

Trailblazing paternal great-grandmother Lisi Vaai led from the front: a teacher, principal and Sāmoa's first female Public Service Commissioner. She raised seven children and many more extended family members after being widowed young. Having faced discrimination for having mixed Sāmoan-Chinese heritage and being abandoned by her father, she turned adversity into strength.

"Education was sacred to her – the one inheritance no one could take away," said Lisi-Malia.

On her maternal side, great-grandmother Teaura sacrificed her dreams by leaving home in Atiu in the Cook Islands to work on remote Mauke, a smaller island 70km away, to provide for her family.

Another great-grandmother, Nuulopa, taught Lisi-Malia that a gentle and loving nature can be a great source of inspiration for the family.

"The love and kindness we give always comes back to us when we need it most."

She said acknowledging the strength and resilience of Pacific women is important given their vital roles as carers, educators and artists who help to shape communities and society.

## Pursuing university education

Lisi-Malia said university study was inevitable for her with the example of her family's quiet achievers. Her late aunty Ula (AloSāmoa Erna Vaai-Aiono) was chief executive of the Sāmoa International Finance Authority.

Her aunty Lei (Ioana Chan Mow) is a professor at the National University of Sāmoa and her uncle Afoa Asiata Kolone Vaai served as Financial Secretary for the Ministry of Finance. Her father Benjamin, an economist and consultant, is a former Assistant Governor of the Central Bank of Sāmoa. Her mother Audrey is a renowned poet, executive officer at the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme and a former diplomat.

Grandfather Anthony Jose Pereira, meanwhile, played a pivotal role in



Lisi-Malia Teaura Nuulopa Pereira says she is following the example of the quiet achievers in her family. Photo: Simon Young



Lisi-Malia with proud mother Audrey Brown-Pereira. The Pereira family travelled from Sāmoa for Lisi-Malia's graduation. Photo Simon Young

Sāmoa's political history, helping draft the constitution for the Human Rights Protection Party, which governed for nearly 40 years up to 2021.

But Lisi-Malia's academic journey wasn't without struggle.

"I have always felt our islands are strong and invincible," she said, "but in so much of the literature and theories we study we are treated as backwards or not recognised at all."

This disconnect between lived Pacific realities and academic frameworks led to periods of depression, especially during the isolation of Covid-19 lockdowns.

However, that changed when Lisi-Malia began working as a research assistant at Te Poutoko Ora a Kiwa (the Centre for Pacific and Global Health).

"The things I felt were missing from my studies I found within Te Poutoko," she said. There she undertook research that centred on the wisdom of Pacific peoples, especially those living across the region.

"They wear many hats, they maximise what they have and they take on the practical application of knowledge. No book could ever describe their experience."

She credited leaders like Professor Sir Collin Tukuitonga and Nalei Taufa for showing her what is possible when leadership is grounded in service, strategy and community accountability.

"They challenge the status quo through research, advocacy and innovation," she said. "They hold themselves to the highest standards of accountability to our communities."

At Te Poutoko Ora a Kiwa success isn't measured by traditional academic metrics, she said, but by translating research into real outcomes for Pacific communities.

"We are not breaking barriers to fit into existing structures. We are building limitless possibilities for Pacific peoples to lead research that shapes our own futures."

She said her story is a powerful reminder that Pacific leadership is not new – it is ancestral; rooted in the strength of women after whom she is named: Lisi, Teaura and Nuulopa.

As a young leader Lisi-Malia not only honours those trailblazers but also is committed to forging new paths for future generations.

**Kim Meredith**



**"The things I felt were missing from my studies I found within Te Poutoko ... They wear many hats, they maximise what they have and they take on the practical application of knowledge. No book could ever describe their experience."**



# Law lights investing fuse

Amy Sparks completed her Master of Legal Studies (MLS) with distinction at Auckland Law School while working full-time at Deloitte. She talks to Mark Henaghan.

## Where do you work, what do you enjoy most about it and would you recommend it to new graduates?

I work at Morrison, one of the world's longest-standing, highest-performing infrastructure investors. I am a manager in the sustainable investment team in Sydney. I look after the delivery of the responsible investment programmes for two of our funds and recently also started a secondment working with James Shaw, one of our operating partners – and a familiar name to many New Zealanders – on next-generation decarbonisation opportunities. Although I find myself squarely in the sustainable investment field now, I have had a varied professional background in finance and investments. I started out in New Zealand in wealth management as an authorised financial adviser at Rutherford Rede and then ANZ Private Bank. I moved into equities trading at Macquarie before going into corporate finance and advisory work at Deloitte. I enjoy Morrison because it gives me variety, I like working with smart people and we are always thinking about tomorrow – it is an inspiring place. I would 100% recommend working in finance and investment to any graduate, particularly law graduates. I wasn't a finance or business graduate and yet I am building a career in the field. As my late boss at Macquarie, Dave Robertson, always told me, you can learn anything.

## You say that you are interested in pursuing a PhD – in what area?

One idea I would like to explore, possibly through a PhD, is testing the real outcomes of mandated climate-related financial disclosures across different jurisdictions. Given the relative novelty of these mandatory disclosure regimes I would hope my research could contribute to informing policy- and law-making decisions in the future.

## What are the essential qualities for someone in your line of work?

Saying yes. Taking opportunities. Working hard. Work on communication skills. It's not all about IQ. EQ – emotional intelligence



**"I would 100% recommend working in finance and investment to any graduate, particularly law graduates. I wasn't a finance or business graduate and yet I am building a career in the field."**

– is probably more important. Practise leadership even when you are not in a leadership position. And a learning mindset is key. My sister graduated from the University of Auckland with a Bachelor of Science in physics and chemistry and in the graduation ceremony a line from a speaker stuck with me: always be willing to change your mind. This is not only an advantage for your career but for life in general. It will make you a better listener, learner and thinker.

## What is your favourite hobby?

I like running, hanging out with friends and family and travelling. Occasionally I will attempt to be creative and go through phases of writing poetry and playing guitar.

## What career advice would you offer recent graduates?

This is a hard question because I was probably not the usual graduate. I've tended to apply – and get job offers – for roles some people would say I had no business applying for. I applied for my first job at Rutherford Rede, a boutique wealth adviser in Auckland, simply because it sounded like I would enjoy it and I liked the people in the interviews. I had no experience in wealth management but they were willing to take a bet on me and support a graduate. That job opened the door for my next, and that my next and so on. So perhaps unhelpfully my advice is stress less. I have lots of conversations with young people overthinking their first job. If you think it's a good company where you will get the support you need to develop, enjoy the work and like the people, then give it a go. There is only a limited amount of information you can get from an interview anyway. In the worst case you get experience and move on – which is not really a worst case at all. Your first job is not a life sentence and you do not have to have it all figured out. Also work will look very different in 10 years, 20 years, so planning out your perfect career path from day one could be challenging.



# Diplomatically speaking

Jessica Minehan Fitzgerald has swapped life in Christchurch for a diplomat's career in the UAE after a sojourn at Auckland Law School.

Jessica Minehan Fitzgerald left her family and friends in Christchurch to move to Auckland at 18.

"The transition was difficult at first but it helped being in University Hall where we were all in the same boat and were really well supported. I think saying yes to every opportunity to meet people and do things on campus and around Auckland really helped."

Willingness to embrace change and challenge has taken her from Ōtautahi to Sweden to the United Arab Emirates, where she's now a New Zealand diplomat based at the Embassy in Abu Dhabi covering the trade, economic, climate, technology and consular portfolios, as well as Qatar.

"I'm arguably living my goal. I'm passionate about international relations and how geopolitics intersect with economics and trade – geoeconomics – to ultimately affect and benefit my stakeholders, New Zealanders."

Jessica's path to diplomacy began with a conjoint LLB/BCom degree at the University of Auckland completed in 2019.

"I was the first in my immediate family to attend university but there was definitely a family expectation that I would go. My parents are both business owners so a BCom always seemed a natural fit.

"I was exposed to a lot of lawyers and judges growing up through my parents' divorce. This taught me how important the work was, especially when done right, and left me with a sense that change could only happen from within the system.

"My clerkship during Law School evolved my thinking towards wanting to use my law skills outside a traditional law firm environment, which then led me to an EY consultancy internship and then onwards to MFAT."

Law School highlights included the people she met and the sheer breadth of what she learned.

"While I didn't love all the compulsory papers, in hindsight the foundation they gave me – and at least then knowing what I



Jessica Minehan Fitzgerald: an exchange to Sweden's Lund University was a stand-out experience.

wasn't passionate about – were invaluable. The later more specialised papers taught me what I was truly passionate about, ultimately leading to my work experiences and my role as a New Zealand diplomat.

"A challenge was balancing these intensive studies with other parts of my life – family, friends, volunteering, work, health – which quickly developed my organisational skills. For example in my penultimate semester before going on exchange I completed six papers and worked two jobs to help afford the exchange. It was all a bit of a blur but good preparation for juggling an intensive job across multiple time zones with the other parts of my life and hauora."

In her final-year LAWGENRL paper she worked under Rosslyn Noonan at the New Zealand Centre for Law, Policy and Practice. "I learned a huge amount about how to efficiently and accurately research a new topic, brief a principal on it and assess the implications for New Zealand – from an HR expert."

An exchange to Lund University in Sweden was also a stand-out experience. "It was a fantastic way to end my time at the University and in hindsight excellent preparation for joining the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. My time at Lund was an absolute highlight of my university experience and I recommend exchanges to everyone who can do so."

Now covering trade, economic, climate, technology and consular portfolios for Aotearoa New Zealand, Jessica credits her studies with preparing her for a career that spans continents.

"Law and business school taught me to write analytically, clearly and succinctly, which is critical in my line of work. Mooting further developed my public speaking and advocacy skills. Above all, diplomacy is about building connections between and with people – and my University of Auckland studies equipped me to listen deeply, think critically and connect meaningfully."

# Legal Research Foundation celebrates 60 years

The Legal Research Foundation, established in 1965, celebrated its 60th anniversary in October 2025. The non-profit organisation, which is affiliated with the University of Auckland, continues to promote the highest calibre of legal education and research, encourage informed dialogue on law reform, and foster relationships between the legal profession, the judiciary, academics and students.

At its 60th celebration on 30 October at Old Government House, Auckland Law School alumnus and former lawyer, judge and ombudsman and Governor-General Sir Anand Satyanand spoke about the foundation's work and its early days.

"The whare may have changed and members of the whānau have come and gone but the success of the Legal Research Foundation has continued bolstered by students, graduates and contributors of many kinds.

"Bernard Brown has remained a central pillar in maintaining the foundation's spirit. In this he has been assisted by notable 'can-do' supporters like Jane Kilgour in the past and Julia Clancy of the present. There have been many excellent leaders, Sir Ian Barker and Sir Bruce Robertson coming readily to mind. The success of the foundation has continued with a number of graduates and contributors of many kinds."

Sir Anand described the law library and student life in 1965 colourfully.

"The law library was a place where characteristics of later lives were already borne out. I bring to mind the recollection of seriously studious people like David Baragwanath and Ted Wright, David Williams and Jim Farmer, Peter Blanchard and Tony Molloy – people who could be described as champion students – ranging to those who managed a mixture of study and contribution to the rowdy and riotous student forums in the Lower Lecture Theatre where one spoke until shouted down. Recalling law students like Jim McLay and Mick Brown orating in full flight



A group of distinguished guests, including two Chief Justices, a Justice of the International Court of Justice, a former Governor-General, and many other eminent judges, lawyers and academics attended this wonderful occasion.

up against debate characters like Moon McGowan and Tim Shadbolt is a pleasant memory."

Satyanand finished with a wero.

"The challenge I leave everyone is for the continuance of the Legal Research Foundation in all its present and future endeavours."

Foundation executive director Simon Ladd KC, who graduated from the University of Auckland and was admitted to the bar in 1995, shared some of the foundation's recent history, illuminating the remarkable things the organisation "has quietly achieved in its 60 years".

"The LRF is a funny old organisation, born in 1965 to student parents, midwived by an inspired group of faculty and students, loosely brought up by a collection of well-meaning volunteers from the academy, judiciary and profession, but really raised, at least in recent times, by efficient and endlessly patient executive secretaries.

"As the foundation has grown up, and batons have passed across generations,



**"The whare may have changed and members of the whānau have come and gone but the success of the Legal Research Foundation has continued bolstered by students, graduates and contributors of many kinds."**

what has united us has been three things: I think the fellowship and energy of the many people who have supported the LRF's endeavours; the Law School, its anchor and heart; and a shared love of law in all its variety."

At the end of the evening Bernard Brown played a podcast on a 100th birthday party for Lord Denning: "The Devlin in the Detail". The podcast can be accessed via Julia Clancy: [julia@legalresearch.org.nz](mailto:julia@legalresearch.org.nz)





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# Judicial appointments

## Court of Appeal

### Court of Appeal welcomes Justice Christian Whata

**Justice Christian Whata** was appointed as a Judge of the Court of Appeal from 1 August 2025.

He graduated from the University of Auckland in 1992 with a BA and LLB (Hons), and was admitted to the bar the same year.

He commenced practice as a solicitor with Simpson Grierson in Auckland until 1993 and then took a position in the general litigation team at Kensington Swan until 1995. Justice Whata obtained an LLM (First Class) from the University of Cambridge in the United Kingdom, and in 1997 joined Russell McVeagh, where he specialised in resource management law and Māori issues. He became a partner in 2001. Justice Whata was appointed a Judge of the High Court in 2011.

### Justice Rebecca Edwards joins Court of Appeal

Auckland Law School alumna **Justice Rebecca Edwards** was named a Judge of the Court of Appeal in 2025 with the appointment taking effect from 9 February 2026.

Justice Edwards, who graduated with a Bachelor of Arts and a Bachelor of Laws (Hons) in 1993, started work as a solicitor with Russell McVeagh in Auckland. In 1996 she graduated with a Master of Laws from the University of Virginia.

In 1997 she took a position with Herbert Smith in London, before returning to Russell McVeagh as a senior solicitor in 1998. She left Russell McVeagh in 2003 to practise as a barrister sole, specialising in commercial civil litigation with a particular focus on contract, shareholder and insolvency related disputes.

Justice Edwards was admitted to the permanent bar in the Cook Islands in

2010 and subsequently represented the respondents in the first two Cook Islands appeals to the Privy Council.

Justice Edwards was appointed a Judge of the High Court in June 2015.

## High Court

### Simon Mount KC named High Court Judge

Attorney-General Judith Collins announced the appointment of **Simon Mount KC** as a High Court Judge from 1 June 2025.

Justice Mount graduated from the University of Auckland with a Bachelor of Laws in 1996 and a Master of Laws in 2000, having been a High Court judges' clerk from 1995 to 1996.

From 1997 to 1999 Mount was a teaching associate at Columbia Law School in New York, from where he graduated with a Master of Laws in 1999. Between 2001 and 2015 he was a teaching fellow at the University of Auckland.

Mount joined Auckland firm Meredith Connell as a Crown prosecutor in 2000 and was seconded to Crown Law as a Crown counsel from 2008 to 2009.

Mount has practised out of Bankside Chambers in Auckland as a barrister sole since 2010, specialising in public law, criminal and regulatory law including health and safety, professional discipline and public inquiries.

He was a visiting justice from 2011 to 2018, a district inspector of mental health from 2012 to 2018 and the senior advisory district inspector from 2023 until the present.

Mount is admitted to practise law in the Cook Islands and has been Attorney-General of the Pitcairn Islands since 2015, serving as the principal legal adviser to the Governor of Pitcairn. He was appointed a Queen's Counsel in 2017.

### James MacGillivray appointed to the High Court

Waikato barrister and Auckland Law School alum **Justice MacGillivray** was named as a High Court Judge in May 2025.

Justice MacGillivray graduated from the University of Auckland in 1995 with a Bachelor of Laws and a Bachelor of Arts. After graduating he worked as a litigation solicitor then an associate at Bell Gully in Auckland until 2000. He then moved to London and worked as a litigation senior associate at Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer until 2003.

Justice MacGillivray joined Tompkins Wake as a litigation senior associate in 2004, becoming a partner specialising in civil and commercial litigation in 2006.

In 2020 he obtained a Master of Laws (First Class Hons) from the University of Auckland and in 2024 he was awarded the University of Waikato Medal in recognition of his contribution to the university and the broader Waikato community.

He went on to join Mills Lane Chambers in Auckland in January 2025, practising as a barrister in the areas of contract, commercial, corporate, insolvency, aviation liability, insurance, professional negligence and local government law.

His High Court appointment took effect on 1 August and he sits in Auckland.

### Liz Gellert appointed High Court Associate Judge

**Liz Gellert** was appointed by Attorney-General Judith Collins as an Associate Judge of the High Court from 21 July.

Associate Judge Gellert graduated from the University of Auckland in 2003 with a Bachelor of Laws (Hons) and a Bachelor of Arts. She was a law clerk with David Williams KC before joining Russell McVeagh's general commercial litigation team in 2004.

In 2007 Gellert went to Simpson Grierson as an associate, becoming a senior associate in 2008 specialising in banking and finance litigation.

She joined ASB Bank as head of disputes and corporate advisory in 2017 and spent time as the bank's legal services acting general manager in 2020 and 2021.

Since 2021 Gellert has been a litigation partner at Lowndes Jordan in Auckland with a general commercial litigation practice focusing on insolvency, debt recovery, enforcement, regulatory advice and maritime law.

### Amokura Kawharu appointed as Judge of the High Court

**Justice Kawharu** (Ngāti Whātua and Ngāpuhi) graduated from the University in 1996 with a Bachelor of Arts and a Bachelor of Laws (Hons). She was a clerk and then a solicitor with Chapman Tripp in Auckland, before joining law firm Gilbert & Tobin in Sydney as a solicitor in 2000.

During 2003 and 2004 she was corporate counsel with Vodafone NZ Ltd. In 2004, she graduated with a Master of Laws (First Class) from the University of Cambridge in England.

From 2005 to 2020 she taught at the University of Auckland, progressing from lecturer to associate professor. During that time, she published extensively in legal journals and books, focusing her research primarily in the areas of commercial and international arbitration and related fields.

Justice Kawharu obtained a Doctor of Philosophy degree from Victoria University of Wellington in 2023 and completed a five-year term as president of the Law Commission in September 2025.

Justice Kawharu will take up her appointment as a Judge of the High Court on 9 February 2026 and will sit in Auckland. She will be sworn in on 16 February 2026 at the Auckland High Court.

## District Court

### Sacha Nepe sworn in as a new judge

Auckland Law School alumna **Sacha Nepe** (Rongowhakaata, Ngāti Porou, Ngāi Tāmanuhiri and Te Aitanga a Mahaki) was appointed a District Court Judge in 2025 to be based at the Manukau District Court.

In 1997, Nepe graduated with her Bachelor of Laws and was admitted to the bar.

She started her legal career in Rotorua as a staff solicitor with Rangitauira & Co before moving to Hamilton, joining Preston Matenga in 1999. In 2004 she moved to Bogers Scott & Shortland as a senior solicitor before becoming a barrister and solicitor in 2007.

Nepe has worked primarily as a litigator in the District Court, in both the summary and jury trial jurisdictions. In the Family Court she has worked as a lawyer for child, youth advocate and lawyer for subject person.

### Hermann Retzlaff appointed as District Court Judge

**Hermann Retzlaff**, who graduated from the University with a Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Laws in 1998, and later completed a Master of Laws, was appointed as a District Court Judge in 2025 and is based at the Dunedin District Court.

Mr Retzlaff is currently serving as the National Public Defender of New Zealand. He was admitted to the bar in 2003 and, after serving his scholarship bond in Sāmoa with the National University of Samoa, started his legal career in New Zealand in 2005 as a Crown prosecutor with Meredith Connell. He joined the Public Defence Service in 2009 as a senior solicitor, working in all the Auckland courts, and latterly as the public defender of North Shore.

In 2016 he was appointed the Attorney-General of Sāmoa, serving four years in that role before moving to Kayes Fletcher Walker as a senior Crown prosecutor in 2020. In 2021 he was appointed as public defender of Waitākere, rejoining the Public Defence Service until being appointed to his current position in February 2024.

Mr Retzlaff served as president of the Pacific Lawyers' Association from 2012 to 2014 and carries the chiefly matai titles from his family in Sāmoa of Lemalu from Safato'a Lefaga, and a bestowed chiefly title of Mua'utasi from Puipa'a Faleata.

### Waitangi Tribunal welcomes law alumnus

Law and arts alumnus **Philip Crump** has been appointed to the Waitangi Tribunal. Crump, who has a Bachelor of Arts in English Literature and Māori Studies and a law degree from the University of Auckland (1997), was the 1996 editor-in-chief of *Auckland University Law Review*.

He has more than 25 years of legal experience in New Zealand and the United Kingdom, practising at Russell McVeagh in Auckland before becoming a partner at Kirkland & Ellis in London, where he was recognised as a leading lawyer by Chambers and Partners and Legal 500. Crump is also on the board of NZ On Air.

Meanwhile University alumna **Linda Tuhiwai Smith** (arts and education), who received a Distinguished Alumni Award in 2024, has left the Waitangi Tribunal. Smith (Ngāti Awa, Ngāti Porou) is renowned for her work on decolonising research methodologies. She has had senior roles at the universities of Auckland and Waikato.

## King's Counsel

### Congratulations to Auckland Law School alumni who have been evaluated to KC.

#### Tiana Epati

Tiana Epati specialises in complex regulatory and serious criminal investigations with particular expertise in appeals. She graduated from the University of Auckland and was admitted to the bar in 2000. She was a partner at Rishworth Wall & Mathieson before becoming a barrister sole in 2022. Tiana served as president of the New Zealand Law Society (NZLS) from 2019–2022.

#### Simon Ladd

Simon Ladd is a commercial litigator. He graduated from the University of Auckland and was admitted to the bar in 1995. He earned a Master of Laws from the University of Chicago in 2000 and was a partner at Bell Gully before joining Shortland Chambers in 2021. He is the executive director of the Legal Research Foundation and the chair of the Judicial Tribunal of Athletics New Zealand.

#### Richard Marchant

Richard Marchant is a criminal lawyer. He studied at the University of Auckland and was admitted to the bar in 1985. He was a partner at Meredith Connell before establishing Regent Chambers in 2016. In 2025 he joined Acacia Chambers. He has been a Transport Accident Investigation commissioner and is a Parole Board convenor.

# Code red for democracy: When big tech towers over government

Algorithms now shape what people read, buy and believe.

In a captivating talk to a packed bar Professor Alexandra Andhov, the inaugural chair in Law and Technology and director of the Center for Advancing Law and Technology Responsibly, warned democracy is under threat from a handful of technology giants whose influence rivals that of governments.

Speaking as part of the University's Raising the Bar series, she argued companies such as Google, Meta and Amazon have accumulated extraordinary power over information, behaviour and public discourse while the law lags.

Andhov described how algorithms invisibly shape many aspects of daily life, influencing what people read, buy and believe. Just a few private corporations control the bulk of internet traffic effectively determining the flow of human knowledge, she said.

Andhov said technology companies have become "digital oligarchs". She compared Amazon's dominance to that of such monopolies as Standard Oil, dissolved in 1911.

"Here's what's really happening: when you search for a phone charger, Amazon's algorithm prioritises Amazon's own products. It buries competitors. It uses data from other sellers to create competing products. Then it makes those competing products harder to find."

Similarly, she said, social media platforms have become modern town squares.

"But unlike actual town squares they can silence presidents, influence elections and shape public discourse with zero [US Constitution] First Amendment protections. Meta can decide your political post gets seen by 12 people instead of 1200. X can determine the news story you shared doesn't fit its community guidelines. TikTok can decide your opinion doesn't align with its algorithm's preferences."



Professor Alexandra Andhov

Andhov warned that unchecked algorithmic systems pose a "code red for democracy".

"We have centuries of legal wisdom about power, accountability and justice. The question is whether we'll apply it to the most powerful force shaping human behaviour today or let private multibillion-dollar corporations with their algorithms write the rules for all of us. Because here's the thing about code-red situations: they require immediate action, not eventual consideration.

"The window for meaningful regulation is closing every day as these systems become increasingly powerful and entrenched. So the question isn't whether we can afford to regulate big tech. The question is whether we can afford to let private companies continue governing our lives without any of the accountability we demand from actual governments."



**"The window for meaningful regulation is closing every day as these systems become increasingly powerful and entrenched."**

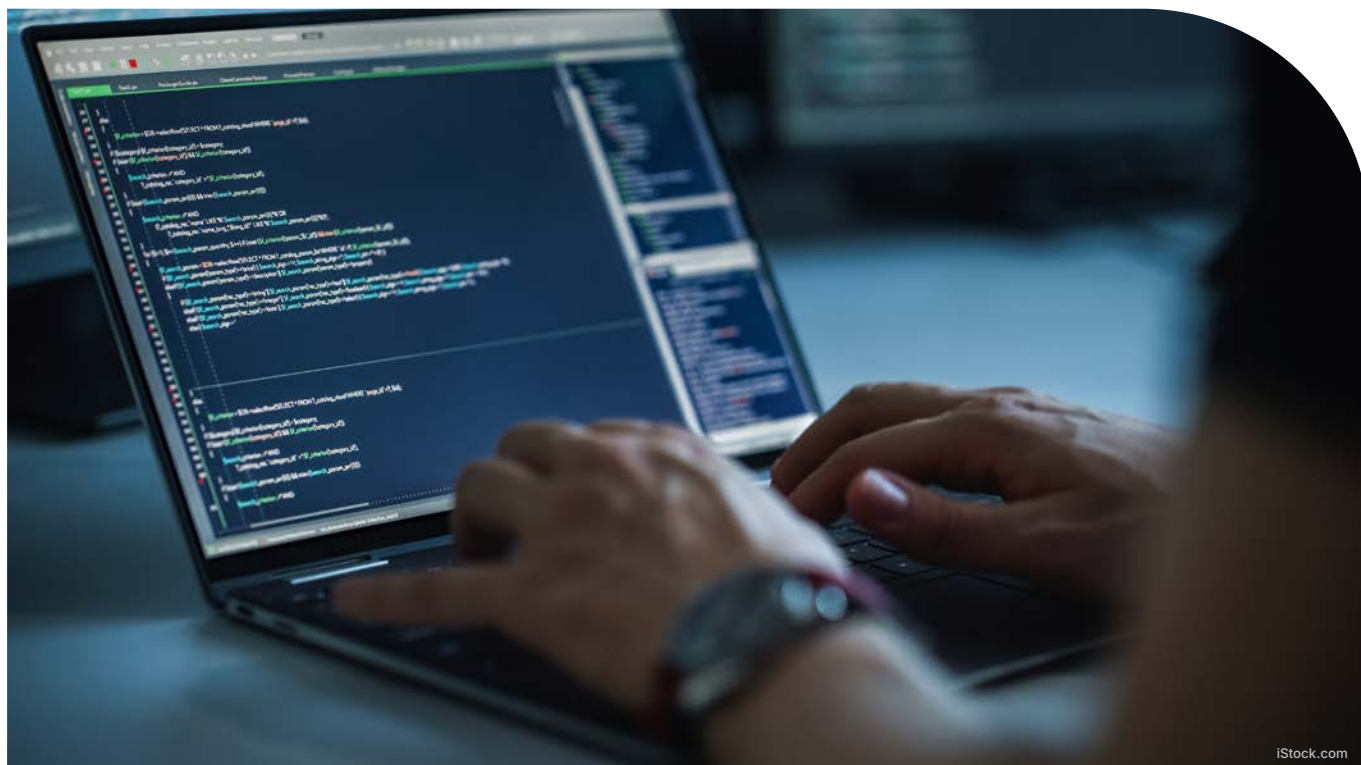


Professor Alexandra Andhov's full talk is on Spotify



# AI as an inflection point

Joshua Yuvaraj is a senior lecturer at Auckland Law School and co-director of the New Zealand Centre for Intellectual Property. This article builds on his forthcoming paper in the *Monash University Law Review*, "The Verification - Value Paradox: A Normative Critique of Gen AI Use in Legal Practice", available on SSRN and ArXiv.



Everybody is talking about generative artificial intelligence (AI). More broadly, everybody is talking about AI. The legal profession is no different. Judges, lawyers and organisations are grappling with how to harness technology that purports to turbocharge legal practice.

Chief in the AI-law discourse is the idea of efficiency, that AI will streamline much of what lawyers do. Lawyers broadly seem to acknowledge that AI currently won't replace us. But the idea is it can automate much of the "grunt work" of practice enabling us to focus our attention elsewhere.

AI is not just a panacea for efficiency. It raises several troubling implications for the legal profession and society at large. Worldwide, lawyers have been reprimanded and sanctioned for submitting materials to courts generated by AI tools featuring fictitious cases, quotes, paragraphs and materials. Judges in the

United States have had to quietly retract judgments for the same problem. And both lawyers and judges are grappling with how to respond to clients and self-represented litigants who use that technology in a well-meaning but inaccurate way.

This is to say nothing of the potential for AI's ability to generate content to upend the rules of evidence. The production of "deepfake" video, audio and other material – which looks plausible but is not real – can lead us to the dystopian reality of not being able to trust what we see and hear. In court proceedings the accuracy and completeness of evidence is sacrosanct. How judges and lawyers respond to this threat remains a work in progress.

What is also underplayed is the broader social effect of AI use. AI data centres use massive amounts of energy and water. There is a significant cognitive dissonance at play when organisations claim to pursue sustainability on the one hand and

**“AI is not just a panacea for efficiency. It raises several troubling implications for the legal profession and society at large.”**

encourage the wholesale integration of AI services into their workflows.

Further, data security and confidentiality concerns remain unresolved even though they are of prime importance for lawyers and judges dealing with confidential information – for whom the maintenance of confidentiality and privilege represents one of the utmost values of the profession.

Last, the fact that many of the largest models in use today, and on which custom legal AI software is built, have developed on the basis of – at the very least – questionable use of copyright-protected material worldwide is typically underplayed. One large company recently settled a lawsuit brought by authors for training its AI model on their works without authorisation for US\$1.5 billion, the largest copyright settlement in history. The law remains unclear but it appears technology companies and industry at large are content with the “move fast and break things” attitude popularised by Uber co-founder and former head Travis Kalanick and his company as it muscled into and eventually transformed the delivery of on-demand car transport in cities worldwide.

None of this means lawyers and judges should or should not use AI. It is important, however, for the use of AI to be accompanied by critical thinking about these issues. In particular there are three things lawyers, law graduates and judges should consider when faced with the prospect of AI integration into their workflows.

First, any consideration of AI integration requires discernment. Legal professionals should be able to sift through considerable amounts of hype and marketing material to determine exactly what the capabilities and corresponding risks of any AI tool are. For example, there is considerable uncertainty about whether the benchmark tests used to measure AI capabilities are accurate. If this uncertainty is borne out it has significant implications for whether AI merits take-up in the profession at all: we may well be reduced to anecdotal evidence of our peers and colleagues in the meantime. We do know, however, that tests reveal even custom-built tools for the profession continue to hallucinate – that is, they produce incorrect or non-existent material. Legal professionals must be realistic about the products they are integrating – and be ready to bear the consequences of absorbing the hype uncritically, whether in lawsuits from clients, sanctions from judges or professional bodies and potentially even criminal prosecution.

Second, any consideration of AI integration requires clear use cases. It is dangerous for legal professionals to fall into the cycle of being “left behind”. AI use requires a clear evaluation of how it can benefit the firm, judicial office or barrister’s chambers – cognisant of the live issues discussed above. Otherwise lawyers may be spending unnecessary time, money and effort using technologies with no clear benefits beyond being able to say they are keeping up with the times.

Third, any consideration of AI integration requires reflecting on the role of the lawyer. The role of the lawyer has not fundamentally changed in thousands of years. It is to fearlessly advocate for the client’s interests, provide full, frank and comprehensive advice on the application of the law, and to facilitate the administration of justice as an officer of the court. An efficiency-only mindset risks shelving this perspective. Yet such reflections are precisely what society and the wider world needs in a time of political unrest, growing authoritarianism, wealth disparity and consolidation of supersized technology companies. Legal professionals are the bulwarks against these unrestrained, baser instincts by their fidelity to integrity, the rule of law and the administration of justice. To the extent that lawyers, law students and judges fail to keep these ideals central they are likely to become tools of AI rather than being able to wield AI technologies in service of those ideals to the extent that doing so is possible.

Whether the rush to integrate AI in the legal profession will come to be viewed as a stroke of genius or folly is an open question. If legal professionals approach the debate with caution as to the claims made about these technologies, a clear understanding of what they could be reliably used for and a continually renewed commitment to the sacrosanct high calling of the profession, there is a better chance we will not be consumed by the AI machine.



Dr Joshua Yuvaraj



**“Whether the rush to integrate AI in the legal profession will come to be viewed as a stroke of genius or folly is an open question.”**



# What does sentience mean for animals' legal status?

Until we seriously consider the legal status of animals, there will be no legal requirement to ensure the joy of your dog nor to respect the indifference of your cat, writes Associate Professor Marcelo Rodriguez Ferrere.

Every dog owner knows the feeling: coming home after a long day at work, walking through the front door and being met with unmitigated, unconditional and seemingly limitless love and joy from your mutt. It's a wonderful experience. Similarly, all cat owners know how it feels coming in the door from work and being met with unmitigated, unconditional and seemingly limitless ... indifference. It's an experience that has one questioning, as many cat owners do, who owns whom?

Just as we have emotive experiences – joy, disappointment, confusion – so too can our dogs and cats. They are, in a word, sentient. This isn't a controversial idea and indeed one that few would or could disagree with. The New Zealand Veterinary Association's official view is animals are sentient in that they are "not only capable of feeling pain and distress but also can have positive psychological experiences such as comfort, pleasure or interest that are appropriate to its species, environment and circumstances". And yet despite both scientific and popular consensus that many – if not most – animals are sentient, the law has been remarkably slow to recognise that. Indeed 2025 marks only the 10th anniversary of New Zealand's explicit legal recognition that animals are sentient, and we were the first common law jurisdiction in the world to do so.

To understand why, we need to briefly canvass the history of animal sentience. Many had already accepted animals are capable of having feelings by the time Jeremy Bentham outlined his argument as to why animals are due moral consideration. In 1789 he argued that just because they were not capable of language or reason that was no cause to ignore their interests: "The question is not can they reason, nor can they talk, but can they suffer?" That idea – that animals can and do suffer – was the rationale behind the enactment of animal cruelty statutes in England and later New



Blondie, the writer's sentient, pub-enjoying dog.



Zealand. We understood animals can feel pain and that its unreasonable infliction should attract criminal sanction.

In the 20th century things regressed somewhat: a branch of psychology, “behaviourism”, dominated thinking in behavioural science and disregarded all non-observable phenomena. As prominent behaviourist James Watson noted in 1928, “The behaviourist sweeps aside all medieval conceptions. He drops from his scientific vocabulary all subjective terms such as sensation, perception, image, desire and even thinking and emotion.” That thinking stalled development in how science considers animal feelings and experiences until the 1960s when Ruth Harrison’s book *Animal Machines* exposed the terrifying reality of factory farming and helped force scientists to think about animal welfare for its own sake.

Since then animal welfare science has come along in leaps and bounds in its investigations of sentience. Not only has it investigated the depth of animal sentience – what kind of emotions they are capable of, how they experience consciousness – but also it has investigated the breadth of animal sentience. Today we know with some certainty that all vertebrates are sentient and many invertebrates too. Anyone who watched the documentary *My Octopus Teacher* will know cephalopods have memories, can learn to use tools and can form relationships. Today, at the outer edges of sentience research, scientists are trying to determine whether some insects meet the definition.

And yet New Zealand only explicitly recognised animals as sentient in 2015, when an amendment to the long title of the Animal Welfare Act 1999 included that recognition. Other jurisdictions have followed, most notably the United Kingdom, which now has an Animal Sentience Committee to consider how central government policy decisions take account of animal welfare.

In Aotearoa, however, we have no such committee and the recognition of animal sentience has had little effect: there has been no major systemic change to properly take account of the fact animals can experience both pain and joy.

Part of that is explained by the fuzziness of the definition of sentience and a concomitant lack of clarity as to the effect its recognition could or should have in the law. Simply recognising animals are sentient is by itself insufficient to impose further obligations on their animal owners.



Associate Professor Marcelo Rodriguez Ferrere

However, the major explanation is that very word: owners. Animals are considered chattel property within the law and unless that status is changed recognising they are sentient will have little effect. That status as property allows us to do whatever we wish with them so long as it is necessary and reasonable. Thus while we can – and do – legally dock the tails of lambs without anaesthetic, doing the same to our cat would amount to committing the most serious offence under the Animal Welfare Act. Despite the infliction of pain in both cases it’s deemed necessary and reasonable with regard to lambs – it helps prevent disease and farmers have done it for decades – and obviously neither necessary nor reasonable when it comes to cats.

Other lacunae abound within animal welfare law. Simple recognition of sentience in such a legal environment is laudable but cannot have much more than a symbolic effect. Until we seriously consider the legal status of animals there will be no legal requirement to ensure the joy of your dog nor to respect the indifference of your cat.



“Today, at the outer edges of sentience research, scientists are trying to determine whether some insects meet the definition.”

# A korowai of support bolsters new research

New research ranging from exploring Māori self-determination in social services to tackling barriers in welfare and tenancy law is being supported by the Borrin Foundation.

Law School Associate Professor Andrew (Anaru) Erueti (Ngā Ruahinerangi, Ngāti Ruanui, Āti Hau Nui a Pāpārangi, Ngāti Pākehā) has been granted \$60,000 to lead a scoping study, Tino Rangatiratanga in Post-Treaty Settlement Aotearoa New Zealand, exploring Māori self-determination in social services.

"This support allows me to help imagine a future where tino rangatiratanga is not just acknowledged but actively lived," says the associate professor, "where Māori communities shape the systems of care and wellbeing that reflect our own values and aspirations."

Crucially, he says the research draws substantially from tikanga Māori – its principles of whakapapa, mana, manaakitanga and utu – as a method for addressing core questions related to identification, authority and engagement.

As part of the multi-year project Erueti, who is Auckland Law School's Tumuaki Māori (associate dean Māori) and co-director of the New Zealand Centre for Indigenous Rights, will look into such questions as how iwi and Māori organisations can have influence in service delivery, how to address claims that Māori-specific measures discriminate against non-Māori, and how Māori collectives can engage more effectively with the Crown and one another.

## Exploring tikanga's role in contemporary law

The second Borrin Foundation 2025 Justice Fellowship awardee also has ties to Auckland Law School. Natalie Coates (Ngāti Awa, Te Arawa, Ngāti Hine, Tūhoe), a leader in the Māori legal community, is a former Law School lecturer and was co-director of the University's New Zealand Centre for Indigenous Peoples and the Law.

Coates, a barrister at Thorndon Chambers and a pouako at Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi, was awarded a \$120,000 Justice Fellowship to lead a series of wānanga exploring tikanga's role in contemporary areas of law such as contract, torts and legal ethics.



Associate Professor Andrew (Anaru) Erueti

Borrin Foundation grants and scholarships committee chair the Honourable David Goddard KC says the foundation is delighted to support the work of Erueti and Coates as they examine the implications of tikanga Māori in critically important fields and of tino rangatiratanga in the context of social services.

## Support for PhD research

Law School doctoral candidate Meredith Herbert has been awarded the Borrin Foundation's 2025 Community Law Fellowship.

Herbert, who works as a solicitor and social worker at the Rotorua District Community Law Centre, has been granted \$52,400 to support her PhD research into the systemic barriers in welfare and tenancy law that impede access to justice for vulnerable populations.

As part of this research she will conduct comparative analysis of welfare and tenancy systems internationally, including in Australia and the United Kingdom, as well as researching the effects of these systems on vulnerable New Zealand populations.

"Iti rearea teitei kahikatea ka taea, although small, you can ascend great heights' – the support of the foundation feels like someone has wrapped a korowai around my shoulders and said, 'Ae



Meredith Herbert

**"The support of the Borrin Foundation feels like someone has wrapped a korowai around my shoulders and said: 'we believe in you'."**

Meredith Herbert, Auckland Law School

Meredith, you are small, but we believe in you. You can and will make a big difference through this mahi we are supporting."

## Alumni awardees

Law School alumni are also being supported by Borrin Foundation awards. Three graduates – Luke Elborough (LLB, BA), Bridget Fa'amatua'inau (BHSc, LLB, MProfStuds) and Leon Tan (BCom, LLB) – were among seven recipients of 2025 travel and learning awards.

## Sophie Boladeras

*The Michael and Suzanne Borrin Foundation was established in 2018 through a \$38 million bequest by the late Judge Ian Borrin. It is a philanthropic organisation that supports legal research, education and scholarship. The foundation's current strategic areas of focus are the criminal justice system, family law and access to civil justice.*

# Study to probe use of unlawfully obtained evidence

A new \$820,000 study could help rewrite how justice is delivered in New Zealand.

Should unlawfully obtained evidence ever be allowed in court? That's the question at the heart of a major new research project by Auckland Law School's Dr Alexandra Allen-Franks – one that could reshape how justice is delivered in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Dr Allen-Franks has been granted a four-year Mana Tūāpapa Future Leader Fellowship to the tune of \$820,000 by the Royal Society Te Apārangi to look into how courts handle evidence gathered unfairly or unlawfully.

Courts in Aotearoa can exclude evidence in both criminal and civil cases if, for example, it was obtained through coercion or torture. Yet the Law Commission has raised concerns that this type of evidence may be admitted more often than it's excluded, prompting recommendations for reforms to the Evidence Act.

Allen-Franks will explore how lawyers, including Crown prosecutors, view the role of improperly obtained evidence, gather data on how frequently such evidence is admitted or excluded, and look at how those decisions shape courtroom practice.

Her findings could inform legislative reform and spark wider discussion about how courts balance fairness, accountability and human rights.

Allen-Franks says she's excited to be awarded the fellowship and is looking forward to starting the project when she returns from parental leave in 2026. The work will build on her PhD thesis as well as her co-authorship of *Mahoney on Evidence* (Thomson Reuters).

"Writing the fellowship application in between feeding my newborn twins was a mission but I'm glad it paid off and I'm very grateful to the Law Faculty for its support, in particular Jodi Gardner, Charlotte Bennett and Janet McLean."

Twenty promising early-career researchers have been awarded Mana Tūāpapa Fellowships in 2025, each receiving \$820,000 and leadership support from



Dr Alexandra Allen-Franks' research is being supported by an \$820,000 Royal Society Te Apārangi Mana Tūāpapa Future Leader Fellowship.

the Royal Society. Their work spans areas as diverse as quantum computing and artificial intelligence to climate-change resilience, child development and law.

Selection panel chair Professor Renwick Dobson of Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha the University of Canterbury says the fellowship scheme provides a springboard to launch the careers of some of Aotearoa's best researchers, fostering innovation, leadership and impact across disciplines.

"It was a privilege to work with the selection panel and to award fellowships to a group of truly diverse and excellent early-career researchers. There's no doubt in my mind that they have the support to excel in their chosen research fields and the potential to become our future leaders in Aotearoa New Zealand."

## About the Royal Society Te Apārangi

The society is an independent not-for-profit organisation that works to advance education in science and technology, promote public understanding of science and research and support scientists and researchers through project grants, career grants, other funding, journal publications, guidelines, ethical codes and other knowledge infrastructure.

**Sophie Boladeras**



**"Writing the fellowship application in between feeding my newborn twins was a mission, but I'm glad it paid off and very grateful to the Law Faculty for the support, in particular Jodi Gardner, Charlotte Bennett and Janet McLean."**



# International engagement 2025

Professor David Grinlinton highlights the Law School's wide range of engagement.

The Law School has a strong international profile and maintains a high level of international engagement with other leading law schools and organisations. This includes outgoing and incoming student exchanges, postgraduate opportunities both for international students here and our students abroad, staff exchanges and research collaborations, hosting visiting international scholars and delegations, and contributions by Auckland academics through presentations at international conferences and symposia and to international and regional organisations and agencies.

The Law School has a very successful exchange programme with many final-year students taking advantage of this opportunity. We have about 35 law exchange partners and this year 65 Auckland students attended law schools in countries including Belgium, Canada, China, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Exchange agreements are two-way and this year we hosted 47 students. Student exchanges add an excellent dimension to the Law School providing a unique and stimulating experience for the visiting students while exposing our own students to different perspectives, cultures and experiences overseas. In addition to academic pursuits, exchange students have the opportunity to travel and participate in student activities and events at their host university, building international contacts and networks that will often prove useful in the future.

One of the countries we have been developing co-operation links with is India and the Law School, with 360 International, was successful in obtaining one-off Prime Minister's Scholarship funding of \$64,850 to enable five students to go on exchange in 2026 to the Jindal Global Law School, one of India's top private law schools. Further expansion of our exchange programme in India and elsewhere is planned.



Professor David Grinlinton

The school has a busy visitor programme and often hosts delegations and individuals from overseas. In 2025, visiting scholars included Professor Robert Gatter from Saint Louis University School of Law, Dr Qing Luo and Associate Professor Xingfeng Li from Zhejiang A&F University, Associate Professor Lael Weis from Melbourne Law School, Associate Professor Cristina Fernández-Pacheco Estrada from the University of Alicante in Spain, Associate Professor Banaś Paweł from the University of Warsaw and Associate Professor Dora Neo from the National University of Singapore.

The Law School also benefitted from a number of guest seminars by international academics. These included:

- Professor Bobby V Reddy (University of Cambridge), "Deconstructing the 'Anglo-American' Corporate Model" (16 April 2025);
- Dr Arthur Ehlinger (University of Glasgow), "Surviving as a Visual Artist: Earnings, Contracts and Market Challenges" (7 May 2025);
- Dr Wenting Cheng (Australian National University), "Making Legal Transplant

Meaningful in a New Context: Geographical Indications from Europe to China" (3 June 2025);

- Dr Michelle Lim (Singapore Management University), "Let it Grow! Enhancing law students' nature-connectedness and sustainability competencies through hands-on learning with edible native plants" (17 June 2025);
- Dr Liu Nengye (Singapore Management University), "Small States, the Polar Regions and International Law" (19 June 2025);
- Shinji Matsui, (Consul-General of Japan, Auckland), "Reflections on a legal career in diplomacy and foreign service" (27 August 2025);
- Dr Ben Yong (Durham University), "A 'They' and an 'It': Parliament's Two Bodies" (12 August 2025);
- Associate Professor Dora Neo (National University of Singapore), "Unconscionability in Contract Law" (8 September 2025); and
- Dr Kevin Walton (University of Sydney), "The Associative Argument for a Moral Obligation to Obey the Law" (23 October 2025).

The visiting scholar and guest lecture programme is administered by Dr Jesse Wall of the faculty ([jesse.wall@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:jesse.wall@auckland.ac.nz)).

A number of our students and alumni also won prestigious international scholarships and awards and these are noted in the acting dean of law's foreword and in other places in this magazine.

**Professor David Grinlinton**

# Staff excellence

## Legal trailblazer honoured for research excellence

Law School Professor Caroline Foster is one of three leading University of Auckland academics to have received a Research Excellence Medal in 2025.

The internationally recognised legal scholar was honoured for shaping a more effective and equitable international legal system.

Foster's research focuses on improving how international law protects the environment and human health. Her work on international dispute resolution, supported by the Royal Society's Marsden Fund and published by top academic presses, has influenced legal thinking on how courts handle environmental and health disputes.

She is also advancing the use of facilitative compliance mechanisms (FCMs) as alternatives to traditional litigation. Collaborating with global experts, Foster's

findings will be presented at the prestigious Hague Academy in 2026. Her research has had real-world impact, including advising the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in major climate cases and contributing to legal arguments cited at the International Court of Justice.

Beyond the courtroom Foster co-leads international efforts to reform trade law for environmental sustainability, has advised on New Zealand's pandemic treaty negotiations and works on Antarctic environmental protection.

"I'm presently conducting a project exploring facilitative non-compliance mechanisms as an alternative to traditional litigation and giving Hague Academy of International Law lectures on this topic. I'm also co-leading an international team on reforming trade law to support more sustainable global food systems."



Professor Caroline Foster

Foster says she's optimistic humanity can shape international law for a better and more liveable planet.

## Shaping fairer laws for people and animals

Associate Professor Marcelo Rodriguez Ferrere is leading critical conversations about fairness, accountability and animal welfare. His research in administrative and animal law has been recognised with a 2025 University of Auckland Early Career Research Excellence Award.

Rodriguez Ferrere is a respected voice in administrative law (the challenge and restraint of government power) and animal law (the regulation of the relationship between humans and animals). He's presented his research at parliamentary select committee level and has been consistently cited by New Zealand courts, including the Supreme Court of New Zealand.

He has comprehensively documented and challenged Aotearoa New Zealand's legal relationship with animals.

"I focus particularly on animal sentience and the systemic underenforcement of animal welfare legislation – both here and in Alberta, Canada, where I completed my PhD. This underenforcement undermines the rule of law and poses constitutional risks.

"In administrative law my work explores the evolving relationship between government and the Waitangi Tribunal, particularly recent and unusual judicial reviews – a novel area with national and international implications."

Ultimately Rodriguez Ferrere says he aims to spark critical discourse, guide principled legal development and to support the next generation of scholars in these fields.



Associate Professor Marcelo Rodriguez Ferrere with Professor Frank Bloomfield - Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation).

## Best thesis award: Dr Justin Sobion

Law School's Dr Justin Sobion was a recipient of a best thesis gong in the University's Celebrating Research Excellence Awards 2025, which recognise top researchers, support staff and doctoral theses.

Titled "Earth Trusteeship: A Framework for a More Effective Approach to International Environmental Law and Governance", Sobion's thesis quotes politician, iwi leader and activist Debbie Ngarewa-Packer, who said "the moment you become attached to the water, the ocean, you become guardians, kaitiaki".

Guardianship, a central theme of Earth trusteeship, suggests states could hold Earth and its resources in trust for present and future generations.

Sobion's thesis explores whether trusteeship could provide a framework for a more effective approach to international environmental law and governance, thereby addressing the planet's ecological crisis head-on.

"To be a trustee means giving up some authority because you're acting on behalf of someone else," he says. "That's a challenge, especially in a world where many states prioritise their own interests."

His thesis discusses the traditional scope of international environmental law (IEL) and its capability to address head-on the triple planetary crisis posed by the climate emergency, collapse of biodiversity and pervasive pollution. Acknowledging inherent flaws in IEL, he explores the novel Earth trusteeship idea and whether it could offer a more effective approach to environmental law and governance.

"Earth trusteeship is described as a legal framework that includes the duty of states and individuals to protect Earth's ecological systems. For my research I focused on the duties of a state to act as trustee for Earth and Earth's ecological systems for the benefit of present and future – the unborn – generations," he says.

"My research accepted that it's difficult to politically conceive the state as a trustee

for the Earth. Nevertheless I found that Earth trusteeship offers a new paradigm and represents a logical evolution of the law and politics. For this reason Earth trusteeship could inspire the transformation of IEL and our social behaviour in the context of the triple planetary crisis."



Dr Justin Sobion with Professor JR (Julie) Rowland.

## No jargon required: academic aces research translation

Associate Professor Marta Andhov of the University's Law and Business schools won national recognition for showing how fresh thinking can make legal contracts more accessible.

She was named runner-up in the senior or established researcher category of the 2025 New Zealand Business Research Translation Competition held at AUT.

The competition challenged academics from New Zealand business schools to translate a published research paper, typically ranging from 4,000 to 8,000 words, into a 750-word article easily understood by a non-academic audience.

Andhov's article, "Say it with a picture: overcoming legalese in public procurement contracts", explores how visuals – from diagrams to comic strips – can improve the way legal contracts are written and understood.

"Visual contracts can make public procurement more transparent and inclusive," says Andhov. "By simplifying complex legal documents, governments could attract more diverse suppliers and improve outcomes for taxpayers."



Associate Professor Marta Andhov with AUT Professor Alireza Tourani-Rad (right) and competition judge Jason Cordier, a principal consultant at Mosaic.

Her research examines international examples of visual contracts reducing disputes and improving compliance in such industries as construction, banking and employment.

But she also highlights challenges: questions of legal enforceability, design

costs and the need for buy-in from policy-makers and procurement officers.

The judges praised Andhov's essay for its clear, engaging writing and innovative approach to making public procurement more inclusive.

**Sophie Boladeras**



# Associate Professor Scott Optican promoted to Professor of Law

Scott Optican, a fixture in the Law Faculty for more than 30 years, has been promoted to professor to the delight of his academic colleagues and students.

Scott Optican's teaching includes legal systems, evidence, criminal procedure, criminal law and policy (an honours seminar), criminology and selected topics in evidence and criminal procedure (a masters intensive seminar). Many alumni will remember his stimulating lectures, which gave them a love of the law of evidence and criminal procedure.

In 1996 he received a Distinguished Teaching Award from the University and in 2023 he won the Law School's Student Choice Teaching Excellence Award.

He is a much sought-after supervisor. Optican has overseen more than 160 honours dissertations and masters papers and many students he has supervised have gone on to publish in law journals. He is also a mentor to junior colleagues in the art of teaching and has taught and presented his research on the New Zealand law of evidence and criminal procedure at universities and law schools worldwide.

Optican's research focuses on the analysis of the New Zealand law of evidence and criminal procedure, in particular police investigative powers and criminal trial adjudication under both statute and the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990. He is widely known throughout New Zealand by practitioners, judges and law students for his publications and research in these areas, for which he has won several awards.

The recognition he has received includes the Legal Research Foundation Sir Ian Barker Published Article Award for the best published article by a New Zealand-based author for his 2017 *New Zealand Law Review* piece entitled "*Wilson, Kumar and Wichman: An Examination, Analysis and Discussion of Undercover Police Scenario Cases in the Supreme Court*". In 2025, along with co-authors, he was the winner of the 2024 Legal Research Foundation JF Northey Memorial Book Award for *Mahoney on Evidence: Act and Analysis* (2nd ed, Thomson Reuters, Wellington), a volume he has worked on in various forms

for many years and that covers every aspect of evidence law under the Evidence Act 2006. Optican also co-authored a book on the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 and is the evidence law editor and reviewer for the *New Zealand Law Review*.

Optican has been engaged by the New Zealand Law Commission on law reform projects developing and codifying evidence law and criminal procedure, work that is invaluable not only because the rules of evidence are crucial to fair trial rights but also on account of the public interest in the prosecution of crime and the fair hearing of civil cases. His work offers clear guidance to law-related stakeholders on ever-changing and key areas of criminal justice, police powers, criminal procedure, evidence law and trial practice.

Optican gives an annual update at the Criminal Bar Association conference on evidence and criminal procedure law, a function he has also undertaken for the Law Association and the Legal Research Foundation with co-presenter and barrister Jack Oliver-Hood. He has also presented at the Auckland Law School's 10-year and 20-year anniversary conferences on the work of the Supreme Court, explaining how it handles evidence law and assessing what the Court is doing well and what it can improve.

Optican's leadership responsibilities in the Law Faculty include advising students seeking judicial clerkships and those aiming for overseas postgraduate legal study, running the Law School's Part III moot programme and participating in student moot competitions at faculty, national and international levels. He has also served on a number of Law School committees and been a regular Auckland University Open Day speaker. He is also a regular participant in Law Faculty academic seminars, providing welcome and thoughtful insights and questions.

Apart from his work with the legal profession Optican is a sought-after commentator for print, radio, television and



Associate Professor Scott Optican

internet media on the rules of evidence and criminal procedure, police powers and the conduct of criminal trials. He helps ensure key aspects of the New Zealand criminal justice system are understandable to the public, and can also interpret American law and politics for local consumption, spreading the word through such outreach activities as Raising the Bar, where academics discuss their work in public bars. At the last such event he gave a full house an insight into his writing on undercover policing.

US-born and educated – at the University of California, Berkeley (BA Rhetoric), the University of Cambridge (MPhil Criminology) and Harvard Law School (JD) – Optican is dedicated to his family, valuing the support of his wife Claire, mother Barbara and children Samantha and Henry, and has been a naturalised New Zealand citizen for many years.

Optican has expressed gratitude to the University, the legal community and his colleagues and students for the recognition that goes with his promotion.

**Professor Mark Henaghan**

# Associate Professor Guy Sinclair promoted to Professor of Law

The Law School takes pleasure in the promotion of internationally eminent Dr Guy Fiti Sinclair to professor.

Internationally renowned scholar Dr Guy Fiti Sinclair has been made a professor of law to the delight of Auckland Law School. The former associate professor, now Professor Sinclair, has numerous awards for his scholarship. In 2009 he was granted a Fulbright Graduate Award, in 2018–2021 a Marsden Fund Fast Start Grant and he is currently a recipient of an \$800,000 Rutherford Discovery Fellowship to explore “Governing Moananui-a-Kiwa: International Legal Ordering in the Pacific”.

His book *To Reform the World: International Organizations and the Making of Modern States*, published by Oxford University Press, was awarded the European Society of International Law Book Prize and was positively reviewed in leading international law journals such as the *European Journal of International Law*, *British Journal of International Law*, *London Review of International Law*, *Journal of the History of International Law* and *International Organisations Law Journal*. His work is published in such top-ranked publications as the *European Journal of International Law*, *American Journal of International Law* and *International Journal of Constitutional Law*.

Sinclair is in high demand as a speaker at international conferences. He has received 70 invitations to present his work and comment on the work of others at leading institutions around the world. These have included talks at the University of Cambridge, the University of Edinburgh, New York University School of Law, the London School of Economics, the European University Institute, the Max Planck Institute for Procedural Law, the University of Geneva and Peking University Law School.

Sinclair is an associate member of the Institute for International Law and the Humanities at Melbourne Law School. He has held an external scientific fellowship for the Max Planck Institute for International Procedural Law in Luxembourg based on his international law expertise. He has served as a consultant to the United Nations Development Programme, the



Dr Guy Fiti Sinclair

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office of the UK Government and the Global Governance Forum.

Sinclair is an outstanding teacher. He is the 2026 director of studies at The Hague Academy of International Law, which recognises his international status. He has been invited to teach at such overseas institutions as the University of Helsinki Faculty of Law for a summer seminar, the Academy of European Law Summer School at the European University Institute and Melbourne Law School.

At Auckland Law School Sinclair teaches the first-year law and society course that introduces students to how law functions in Aotearoa New Zealand and a specialist elective course on international organisations. He received a Student Choice Teaching Excellence Award in 2023. At the postgraduate level Sinclair has been invited to be an examiner of PhDs at the Geneva Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, the European University Institute, the University of Helsinki and Durham University Law School.

At Auckland Sinclair is Associate Dean Moana Oceania, supporting Pacific academics and running the Pacific law curriculum. In 2024 he led the launch of Pacific Law Week and established the Olive Malienafau Nelson Public Lecture honouring law alumna Olive Malienafau Nelson, the first Pacific Island graduate from the University of Auckland.

At a national level Sinclair has been a member of the Public Advisory Committee on Disarmament and Arms Control. He has served as the lead organiser of the annual conference of the International Society of Public Law and as a member of the programme committee for the annual meeting of the American Society of International Law. He is on the editorial or executive board of publications such as the *European Journal of International Law*, *Yearbook of the History of Global Development* and the *Max Planck Encyclopedia of International Procedural Law*. He is a peer reviewer of a wide range of journals such as the *Modern Law Review*, *International Journal of Constitutional Law* and the *American Journal of International Law*.

Sinclair graduated from Auckland Law School in 1999 with a Bachelor of Laws (Hons) and Bachelor of Arts (majoring in Asian History). In 2008 he graduated from the University of Auckland with a Master of Laws with First Class Honours and in 2014 he graduated from the New York University School of Law with a Doctor of Juridical Sciences (JSD).

His work puts him at the cutting edge of international law and elevates Auckland Law School's profile in international affairs. Away from work, he and his wife Tina have two sons, Sirus and Jian, and he participates actively in the Bahá'í community.

**Professor Mark Henaghan**

# Sustained Excellence in Teaching Award for the Law Faculty

**Marcus Roberts: making the case for the casebook method.**

Senior lecturer Marcus Roberts has been awarded the Law Faculty's Sustained Excellence in Teaching Award. In many respects he says the whakataukī "ka mua, ka muri" – walking backwards into the future – describes his pedagogical approach. In detailing his teaching ethos and philosophy, he also argues for being a firm believer in the casebook method.

"My teaching philosophy is guided by the experiences of the past and I hope to pass this knowledge on to my students – updating it where necessary in an evolutionary, not revolutionary, manner. When we walk into the future as teachers we need to be aware of the changes in the law, wider society, our students and their situations. At the same time we should keep our eyes on the past with its richness, experiences and examples to guide our journey into the future.

"When I teach I use the casebook method in which I set a large number of mainly appellate cases that I expect students to read before coming to class. I curate these cases to provide students with an introduction to a broad range of topics. I call it the 'North Platte River approach' in which, just like the eponymous river, there's an abundance of breadth at the expense of depth.

"There's no doubt the casebook has its detractors. It has been derided as artificial – students have the cases served up to them in neat categories far removed from real-life legal practice – and too focused on appellate advocacy at the expense of other dispute resolution avenues and real-world business practice. However, I believe the following benefits of the casebook method outweigh its drawbacks.

"First, it's a very efficient method of teaching a large amount of content to a large number of students in limited time. This is very important in the compulsory papers I teach where we are mandated and monitored by the Council of Legal Education. My teaching time is not wholly my own and I need to ensure we get through the voluminous material.

"Second, and contrary to what is sometimes posited, teaching from cases is skills-based teaching: it teaches how to read and analyse cases, a staple of a lawyer's job and a skill that is not picked up elsewhere. It helps students to 'think like lawyers' – critically, logically and carefully.

"Third, teaching from cases requires students to read a lot. A weak reader and analyser will make a poor lawyer and unfortunately many young people are unpractised readers, particularly of long pieces that require concentration. No matter how technology is developing there's still a need for students to learn to apply themselves to difficult and long texts and to learn from them. Unfortunately many students raised in the digital world exhibit deficiencies in basic critical reading, thinking, analysis and writing skills. Like horses led to water not all of our students will drink deeply of the cases put before them. But the casebook method provides an example of what's required to learn and practise law.

"Last, the skills developed through a casebook method for Contract Law and the Law of Torts align well with the structure of the law degree. The students have been introduced to reading and analysing cases in the compulsory first-year course, Law 131, and these skills are built upon in the compulsory Part II courses I teach. These skills are then further honed in the legal skills course (Law 298) and then used in their latter courses, particularly the important Part III compulsory courses Land Law and Equity."



Marcus Roberts



**"... teaching from cases is skills-based teaching: it teaches how to read and analyse cases, a staple of a lawyer's job and a skill that is not picked up elsewhere."**



# Emerging teachers in the Law Faculty

Simon Schofield makes the case for a law “in” action approach to teaching law.

For employment law expert Simon Schofield teaching is all about the students and making sure they have access to the resources they require. In describing his award-winning approach, he says he uses strategies designed to empower students to take ownership of their learning so they can build a professional identity.

“There are three pillars to my teaching philosophy. In essence it involves a student-centred approach to learning that is both practically oriented and humanistic.

“While I teach using the tried-and-true case method, I’ve adapted it. I believe legal education should be accessible and flexible to meet the needs of students. By encouraging self-directed learning I attempt to bridge the gap between academic theory and legal practice in a way that is both socially aware and embracing of diversity.

“My teaching starts with a focus on the student. Today’s law students are diverse, digitally immersed and often balancing study with work, caregiving or health challenges. I believe legal education must be accessible, flexible and responsive to these realities. I livestream all elective lectures, use platforms like Ed Discussion to foster engagement with students and offer a range of assessment options. These strategies are designed to empower students to take ownership of their learning so they can build their own professional identity.

“Also central to my philosophy is the idea that law must be taught as it is lived. I take a ‘law in action’ approach that integrates real-world legal practice into lectures. Drawing on my own experience, I use contemporary lower-court decisions, legal templates, guest lectures and simulated interactions to bridge the gap between theory and practice. For instance in employment law this year students had the option of either participation in a simulated oral interactive involving the provision of legal advice or participation in a moot.



Simon Schofield

“Finally I believe legal education must be humanistic. I encourage students to see the people behind the cases, to understand the emotional and psychological dimensions of legal conflict, and to reflect on their own professional identities. I provide content warnings for sensitive topics, integrate discussions of mental health and draw on interdisciplinary perspectives to deepen understanding.

“Ultimately I hope students come away from my courses not only skilled and knowledgeable but also empathetic, reflective and committed to justice. I see my role not just as a teacher of law but as a mentor helping to shape socially conscious lawyers.”



“Ultimately I hope students come away from my courses not only skilled and knowledgeable but also empathetic, reflective and committed to justice. I see my role not just as a teacher of law but as a mentor helping to shape socially conscious lawyers.”

# Research highlights 2025

Associate Dean of Research Jodi Gardner highlights 2025 Law School research.

Te Wāhanga Ture academics have maintained their research success despite an at times challenging year. The Research Mentoring programme continued and expanded bolstered by writing away days organised by Assistant Dean Research Jane Norton. Updated conference funding has allowed an increased number of academics to present research around the world. Our research centres have continued to excel, including the newly created New Zealand Centre for Intellectual Property and New Zealand Centre for Taxation.

## The faculty has had a year of big awards.

Caroline Foster received the University Research Excellence Medal, Marcelo Rodriguez Ferrere received the Early Career Research Excellence Award and Justin Sobion was one of only five recipients of Vice-Chancellor Prizes for the Best Doctoral Thesis. Andrew Erueti received a Borrin Foundation Justice Fellowship, and Scott Optican, Alex Allen-Franks and co-authors were awarded the JF Northey Memorial Book Award for the best book published by New Zealand authors for *Mahoney on Evidence*. Anna Hood received the Australian New Zealand Society of International Law Article Prize for "Law, War and Letter Writing" published in the *European Journal of International Law* (with Monique Cormier and Madelaine Chiam). Marta Andhov mentored a group of our students who took 2nd place out of 47 teams from 16 universities across Australia and New Zealand in the Procure for Impact Challenge 2025 hosted by the Australasian Procurement & Construction Council (APCC) and was runner-up in the 2025 Aotearoa Business and Economics Research Translation Awards for her article on simplifying legal contracts. Kate Doolin received \$168,700 in external research funding and donations for the University's December 2025 conference promoting and providing for the further development and sustainability of Te Whare Whakapiki Wairua/The Alcohol and Other Drug Treatment Court. The conference title is



Caroline Foster received the University Research Excellence Medal.

*Te Wānanga a Te Whare Whakapiki Wairua 2025: Mairangatia te ora/The Alcohol and Other Drug Treatment Court Conference 2025: Building Capacity, Transforming Lives, Strengthening Communities.*

It was a successful year for book publications. Hanna Wilberg's *Administrative Law in Aotearoa New Zealand* was published by Hart and had a successful launch in November. Alexandra Andhov and co-editors produced *Hidden Fallacies in Corporate Law and Financial Regulation* (Hart) and David Grinlinton and co-authors published *International Yearbook of Soil Law and Policy 2025* (Springer) and the 3rd edition of *Environmental Law in New Zealand* (Thomson Reuters). Joshua Yuvaraj co-authored *Copyright Reversion: Reclaiming Lost Culture and Getting Creators Paid* (Cambridge University Press).

## Faculty members also had an impressive number of publications in top-ranking New Zealand and international journals, including:

- "Account of Profits and Contract: Strange Bedfellows or Just Strangers?" *Singapore Law Review* (Peter Devonshire)
- "Administrative Law" *New Zealand Law Review* (Hanna Wilberg)
- "Against Relational Justice" *Canadian Journal of Law and Jurisprudence* (Arie Rosen)
- "Denying corporate effect: A renewed regulatory tool" *Law Quarterly Review* (Susan Watson)
- "Leaving Can Be So Hard: the Liability of a Fiduciary Employee for Breach of Confidence on Termination of the Employment Contract" *University of Queensland Law Journal* (Peter Devonshire)
- "Leveraging AI for Sustainable Public Procurement: Opportunities and Challenges" *Sec Sustainable Supply Chain Management* (Marta Andhov and Alexandra Andhov)
- "New Zealand's Once-visionary Accident Compensation Scheme and Australia's Revolutionary Vision in Its National Disability Insurance Scheme: A Tale of Two Countries" *Journal of Legal Medicine* (Jo Manning)
- "OpenAI's Transformation: From a Non-Profit to a \$157 Billion Valuation" *Business Law Review* (Alexandra Andhov)
- "Pluralising Legalities' Symposium Commentary: 'How Legalities Undermine Legality'" *Legalities* (Nicole Roughan)
- "Prison Gangs, Organised Crime and Prison Social Order: A Comparative Analysis of Prisons in Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia and England" in *International Criminology* as part of a Special Issue on the Eurogang Program of Research (Kate Doolin with Kate Gooch)

- "Tino Rangatiratanga in Post-treaty Settlement Aotearoa: Challenges of Co-governance, and Evolving Treaty Partners" *Public Law Review* (Andrew Erueti)
- "The Constitutionality of Class Inequality in Tonga: *Fatai Helu and Paula Peveni Piukala v The Electoral Commission and Lord Nuku*" *Comparative Law Journal of the Pacific* (Sulina Mone)
- "The Early History of the Law of Tort in New Zealand 1840–1900: worth more than mentioned in passing?" *New Zealand Universities Law Review* (Warren Swain)
- "The Law of Contract, Interpretation and the 'Great Object'", *Cambridge Law Journal* (Warren Swain)
- "The Laws of 'an old and settled society'? The law of contract in New South Wales 1815–1850" *American Journal of Legal History* (Warren Swain)
- "The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty's Gordian Knot" *International and Comparative Law Quarterly* (Anna Hood)
- "The Verification - Value Paradox: A Normative Critique of Gen AI Use in Legal Practice" *Monash University Law Review* (Joshua Yuvaraj)
- "Unveiling the Influence: The Dynamics of Corporate Group Structures" *European Company Law Journal* (Peter Underwood)
- "When Assaults on the Rule of Law, Separation of Powers and Access to Justice Become a Present-Day Reality" *UNSW Court of Conscience Journal* (Nikki Chamberlain)

### There were a wide and varied number of chapters in edited collections.

Nicole Roughan wrote "Raz's 'Service Conception' of Authority" in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Obligation* (OUP). Carrie Leonetti's chapter "Forensic Mental Health Assessments and Child Custody Proceedings" was included in Edward Elgar's *Research Handbook on Family Law and Mental Health*. Mark Henaghan published "The Law of Parenthood in Aotearoa New Zealand" in *The Law of Parenthood – A Comparative Guide* (Edward Elgar), "Promising Steps in Aotearoa New Zealand Criminal Law to Recognise Neurodiversity" in *International Perspectives of Neuroscience in the Youth Justice Courtroom* (Routledge, with Jean Choi) and "The impact, and lack of impact, of neurodiversity in the criminal justice system in Aotearoa New Zealand"



Professor Jodi Gardner Associate Dean (Research)

in *The Positive Impact of Neurojustice* (Routledge, with Jean Choi). Warren Swain wrote "Mrs Jellyby, Victorian Values, and the Legal Framework of the law of charity circa 1700–1850" in *Charity Law and Governance* (Hart). Alexandra Andhov published "When Compliance Diverges: Legal Interpretation and Tech Understandings" in *Future-Proof Legal Services* (Hart, with Olga Kokoulina) and "The Fallacy of Disclosure in the Time of AI" in *Hidden Fallacies in Corporate Law and Financial Regulation* (Hart). Guy Fiti Sinclair wrote "IO Initiatives, Ideology, and the Imaginaries of Liberal Reform" in *Evolution and Change in Intergovernmental Organizations* (Oxford University Press) and "Examining Elephants in the Dark" in *Ways of Seeing International Organisations* (Cambridge University Press). Peter Underwood has a chapter on "Deconstructing the Dichotomy: Rethinking the 'Capital' in Woke Capitalism" (with Philip Gavin) and a chapter on "Shareholder Primacy as the Foundation of Corporate Finance" in *Edward Elgar Handbook on Corporate Finance Law*. Craig Elliffe published "Article 24 in the OECD Model" in *The Non-Discrimination Provision in the OECD Model Convention* (IBFD), "Good Faith in International Tax Law" in *Tax Treaty Interpretation in Light of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties* (IBFD) and "The New Zealand general anti-avoidance rule: sharpening an old blade on the jurisprudential whetstone" in *Taxing Income and Consumption: Past, Present and Future* (Edward Elgar). Hanna Wilberg's

"Judicial Review of the Ombuds Office: Good for Administrative Justice?" was included in *Controlling the Administrative State: Essays in Honour of Matthew Groves* and "Administrative Justice Through Administrative Tribunals in Aotearoa: Exploring the Tensions and Trade-offs" in *Administrative Tribunals in the Common Law World* (both with Hart). Kate Doolin co-authored the chapter "Family Group Conferences" in *The Bloomsbury Encyclopedia of Social Justice in Education* (with Helen Bowen). Jaime King wrote "The Canary in the Coal Mine, Private Antitrust Law and New Dynamics in Health Care Markets" in *Health Law as Private Law* (Cambridge University Press).

### Law School academics got out and about.

There were many international visits, Julia Tolmie visiting Barcelona, London and Melbourne to present on Victim-Survivors of Intimate Family Violence; Anna Hood presented at the New York Bar Association Conference on Nuclear Weapons and International Law, co-hosted a conference on Popular International Law at Cambridge University and co-hosted a conference on Disarmament at the Margins at Glasgow University; Guy Fiti Sinclair had another busy year presenting in Switzerland, Berlin, Sydney, New York, Sacramento and Wellington; Craig Elliffe attempted to match Guy's frequent-flyer points with invited lectures in Milan, Toronto, Vancouver and Cambridge; Arie Rosen presented his research at Melbourne and UC Berkeley



and played a key role in the Oxford Studies in Private Law Theory workshop in Singapore; Peter Underwood presented on corporate law at the SLS conference in the UK, Queen's University Belfast and University of New South Wales; Kate Doolin was also in demand, providing conference presentations and keynote addresses in Palmerston North, Athens and Cardiff; and Suliana Mone presented her research on constitutional law in the Pacific at both the University of Oxford and Queen Mary University of London.

We had many media appearances including by Nikki Chamberlain on the proposed retrospective law that will affect a live class action (Credit Contracts and Consumer Finance Amendment Bill 137-1) and Julia Tolmie on survivor advocacy. Anna Hood provided expertise on the US strikes against Iran. Joshua Yuvaraj was a regular commentator on various IP and AI issues. Suliana Mone spoke about the role of her Tongan language roots in her research success.

### Law School academics are also making a mark elsewhere.

Professor Caroline Foster has contributed widely on the International Court of Justice *Advisory Opinion on the Obligations of States in respect of Climate Change*, issued in July. NZCEL hosted an international research workshop at Auckland Law School co-led by Caroline Foster and Professor Tonia Novitz from the University of Bristol exploring the intersection of trade in food with environmental and labour law. Mark Henaghan continued his work in family law publishing the *Annotated Care of Children Act 2024*, co-authoring the 22nd

edition of *Family Law in New Zealand* and presenting on "The Right of Children to have a Home" at the Law and Society Conference in Chicago in May. Nikki Chamberlain was busy providing oral and written submissions to the parliamentary select committee considering the proposed retrospective law affecting the class action mentioned earlier and was cited in the UK's Civil Justice Council's Final Report on the *Review of Litigation Funding* in the Supreme Court of Victoria in Australia. Julia Tolmie met the UK Law Commission, Homicide Reference in London to share her expertise on the topic. Guy Fiti Sinclair wrote "Protocol for the Establishment of a United Nations Peace Force", a report for the Global Governance Forum. Kate Doolin's work on creating safer prisons was recognised internationally and domestically with a number professional development training sessions, knowledge-exchange workshops, stakeholder summits and professional development training sessions. She also co-authored submissions for the UK Restorative Justice Council's submission to the Independent Sentencing Review 2024-2025: Call for Evidence and the UK Restorative Justice Council's submission to the Independent Review of the Criminal Courts (England and Wales). Jaime King co-authored *Brown University and American Economic Liberties Project Submission to the Oregon Health Authority Regarding the Proposed Merger Between Oregon Health & Science University and Legacy Health*, Public Comment to Oregon Health Authority and presented a keynote session at the Valuing Life Summit on "Spending to Save: Futureproofing of Health System Funding in New Zealand".

### Auckland academics are becoming regular podcast contributors.

Julia Tolmie appeared on the Centre for the Elimination of Violence Against Women CEVAW Conversations podcast and Kate Doolin recorded the seven-episode second season of the Resolution podcast with the UK Restorative Justice Council chief executive on her research on restorative justice in prisons. Guy Sinclair spoke about "Why the UN needs to adapt to 21st-century realities" as part of the Global Governance Podcast.

### We also celebrate our students' research successes.

PhD student Ben Christy, supervised by Kate Doolin and Hanna Wilberg, was one of a handful of students selected for the prestigious ICON-S Junior Scholar Winter/Summer School. Nicholas Howell (now graduated) won the 2025 LEANZ Law & Economics Essay Competition for his dissertation "Plugging the Gaps in Consent: Standard Form Contracts and their Failings" and Alexander McClintock was the joint winner of the best unpublished paper by an undergraduate student for his honours dissertation supervised by Michael Littlewood.

None of these faculty and student achievements would have been possible without the support of Charlotte Bennett, whose wisdom, patience and expertise we are grateful for. Unfortunately the changing funding landscape means it is likely research support for humanities – including law – will be harder to secure in the future. If you are interested in supporting this work please get in contact.



## Dr Jane Norton

In January 2024 Dr Jane Norton (left) was invited to attend a workshop in London with members of the United Kingdom judiciary, academics and practitioners to present her chapter on the case of *McGovern v Attorney-General* for the upcoming *Landmark Cases in Charity Law* book (edited by Rebecca Fry and Dr John Picton and to be published by Hart in early 2026). This book is an in-depth examination of the leading cases in charity law from the 18th century to the present. Alongside chapters written by academic authors the book includes contributions from members of the judiciary (including Lord Sales and Lord Briggs of the UK Supreme Court and Lord Justice Newey of the Court of Appeal of England and Wales) and leading practitioners. While in the UK Norton also presented her work to scholars at the University of Cambridge's Private Law Centre.

## Mahoney on Evidence (2nd ed) Launches / Wins Legal Research Foundation JF Northey 2024 Memorial Book Prize



At the launch of *Mahoney on Evidence* (2nd ed, Thomson Reuters, Wellington, 2024), from left: Associate Professor Scott Optican, Andrea Ewing, Fionnghuala Cuncannon, Nick Whittington, the Hon Justice Ellen France, Adjunct Professor Elisabeth McDonald, Jack Oliver-Hood and Dr Alexandra Allen-Franks.



*Mahoney on Evidence* (2d ed, Thomson Reuters, Wellington, 2024)

The new edition of the leading text on New Zealand evidence law, *Mahoney on Evidence: Act and Analysis* (2nd ed, Thomson Reuters, Wellington, 2024), was launched in Auckland on 26 June 2025.

Originally published in 2007 under the title *Evidence Act 2006: Act and Analysis*, the book was renamed *Mahoney on Evidence* for its fourth (2018) published update in honour of Professor Richard Mahoney of the University of Otago Faculty of Law, one of the founding authors of the text and a driving academic force behind the development of modern law of evidence in New Zealand. In September the new edition was awarded the Legal Research Foundation's JF Northey Memorial prize for best published law text in 2024.

At more than 1,300 pages – and with roughly 7,100 footnotes and 2,400 cross-references – this second edition of *Mahoney on Evidence* is the most significant update yet of the original work. It is a comprehensive guide to the Evidence Act 2006 including the most recent legislative amendments enacted by the Sexual Violence Legislation Act 2021. The book combines description, analysis and critique of each provision of the Evidence Act, examines noteworthy decisions from the High Court, Court of Appeal and Supreme Court and discusses the three reviews of the Act undertaken between 2013 and 2024 by Te Aka Matua o te Ture - New Zealand Law Commission.

Original authors Associate Professor Scott Optican of Auckland Law School and Elisabeth McDonald, Adjunct Professor of Law at the University of Canterbury are this edition's general editors and two of its co-authors. This revision's other authors are Dr Alexandra Allen-Franks of Auckland Law School, Andrea Ewing, Crown counsel at Crown Law, Fionnghuala Cuncannon, a partner at Auckland law firm Cuncannon – host of the book launch – Auckland barrister Jack Oliver-Hood and Wellington barrister Nick Whittington of Hawkstone Chambers. Each author is a subject-matter expert in evidence law and brings real-life experience to the discussion of the Evidence Act and its associated cases.

In the foreword to the second edition the Honourable Justice Ellen France of Te Kōti Mana Nui o Aotearoa - Supreme Court of New Zealand wrote: "[T]he importance of scholarly analysis of the law relating to [evidence] cannot be understated. This second edition of *Mahoney on Evidence: Act and Analysis* continues to provide a valuable and comprehensive guide to the topic."

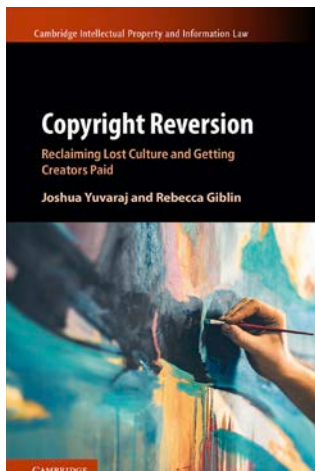
Likewise, the anonymous 2024 Northey Memorial prize adjudicator noted: "*Mahoney On Evidence* second edition is excellent. It is superbly researched and well-presented. It reliably, comprehensively and lucidly informs readers of all they need to know about the law of evidence in Aotearoa New Zealand. Put simply it is a

standout legal book ... [and] provides an indispensable resource for present and future litigation lawyers and judges. Other lawyers, legal academics and law students would be wise to include this book in their libraries as well."

The book is dedicated to the late Honourable Simon France, most recently of the Court of Appeal, who died in 2023. Aptly described in the preface and acknowledgements as an "iconic judicial expert in the field of criminal law and evidence", France was remembered in the text as a "teacher, mentor, colleague, inspiration and sage adviser in various ways to all of the past and present author team" — and as someone whose publications and judicial decisions "will remain touchstones for New Zealand students, lawyers and judges for generations to come".

**Professor Scott Optican**

# Newly published



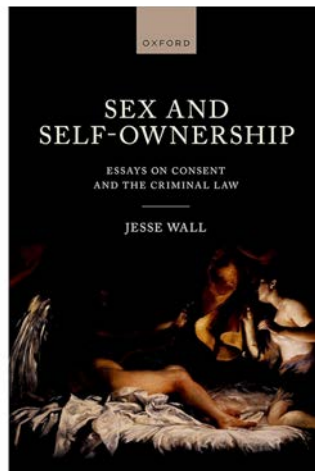
## Copyright Reversion: Reclaiming Lost Culture and Getting Creators Paid

Dr Joshua Yuvaraj and  
Professor Rebecca Giblin  
Cambridge University Press

Auckland Law School's Dr Joshua Yuvaraj and Melbourne Law School's Professor Rebecca Giblin released their new book *Copyright Reversion: Reclaiming Lost Culture and Getting Creators Paid* published by Cambridge University Press.

Around the world, publishers, record labels and other investors continue to hoover up the rights and rewards due to creators and leave masses of creativity locked away from the public. The book shows why this bargain is broken, and how reverting copyright to creators can help – allowing them to revitalise old works, turbocharged by technological advances that are providing more opportunities to do so than ever before.

With cutting-edge empirical and doctrinal analysis of dominant reversion models from the US, the Commonwealth and the EU, the book provides readers with best-practice principles for designing reversion mechanisms that can help copyright laws do a better job of supporting the public interest in access while helping artists get paid.



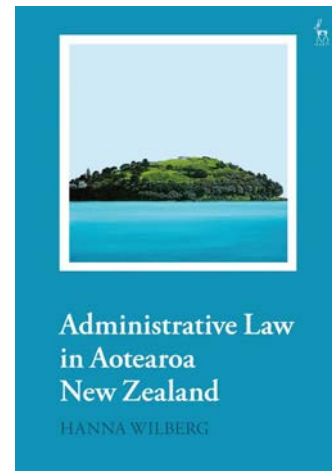
## Sex and Self-ownership: Essays on Consent and the Criminal Law

Dr Jesse Wall  
Oxford University Press

A new book by University of Auckland Law School academic Jesse Wall is reframing the way we think about sex, consent and personal autonomy.

Wall's book is concerned with the legal category of "the exculpatory mistaken belief in consent", why this category ought to be narrowed, and how it can be narrowed without departing from criminal law's retributive morality and principles of criminalisation.

The book calls for three reforms of the criminal law. First, sex itself should be a pro tanto wrong, where consent can justify the wrong or a mistaken belief in consent can excuse the wrong. Second, consent ought to be defined in terms of the objective words and overt actions that express a subjective attitude. Third, whether the defendant had an exculpatory mistaken belief ought to be determined solely by having regard to the steps the defendant had taken to ascertain whether the complainant consented.



## Administrative Law in Aotearoa New Zealand

Associate Professor Hanna Wilberg  
Bloomsbury Publishing

Edited excerpt from the Preface and Acknowledgements:

The image on the front cover of my book *Administrative Law in Aotearoa New Zealand* is a painting of North Head or Maungauika by Auckland artist Sara Langdon entitled "Above the Waterline". This promontory marks the entrance to Auckland's Waitematā Harbour. It has been prized by Māori for centuries and was used as a strategic vantage point to guard the harbour during World War II. It was also the subject of the landmark administrative law case *Ireland v Attorney-General* discussed in chapter 5 of the book, an unsuccessful challenge brought by local resident and poet Kevin Ireland to a decision by the Department of Conservation to use buildings on the reserve for its regional headquarters. It is now maintained and administered by the Tūpuna Maunga Authority, a co-governance entity representing the local council and the several iwi with mana whenua over Auckland maunga. Its connections with administrative law in Aotearoa New Zealand thus are many. I have been teaching administrative law and writing about it in earnest since at least 2009. I am primarily a doctrinal analytical scholar. So I have been wrestling all that





Hanna Wilberg's speech at her book launch.

time with how to make sense of the subject; of each of its individual parts and how they fit together. By making sense, of course, I do not mean constructing one neat and coherent structure. That would not be an accurate reflection of the complexity that comes from competing principles, concepts, objectives and values all set in a great variety of public administrative contexts. What I do mean is

to identify all those elements and the roles they play and how they relate to each other. In this book I am sharing the fruits of that endeavour.

What kind of book is this and who might want to read it? It is not a short survey of general principles but nor does it offer a comprehensive discussion of all the cases.

Instead it offers an in-depth exploration of the principles, concepts, objectives and values and of the relationships between them through discussion of the main authorities and selected other examples. I have sought to limit footnotes as much as is consistent with that enterprise while also referring readers to useful further reading. My hope is the book will serve to expose students at the level of elective and postgraduate courses to the complexities. It will be of interest to judges and members of the legal profession who wish to deepen or challenge their understanding of this area and to academic colleagues who may wish to adopt or debate aspects of my account. I hope it also adds to the picture of administrative law in Aotearoa New Zealand for international audiences.

The major influences on my thinking include my University of Otago public law lecturers, especially Stuart Anderson and Bruce Harris, and Paul Craig who taught me at Oxford. My late and great colleague Mike Taggart was never formally my teacher, but I learnt an immeasurable amount from him. My thinking has also, of course, been shaped by books on the subject, and none more so than Peter Cane's *Administrative Law*.

**Associate Professor Hanna Wilberg**  
Auckland, January 2025

## Rethinking legal frameworks for the digital age

Auckland Law School celebrated the launch of a new book co-edited by Professor Alexandra Andhov, *Hidden Fallacies in Corporate Law and Financial Regulation: Reframing the Mainstream Narratives*, in November 2025.

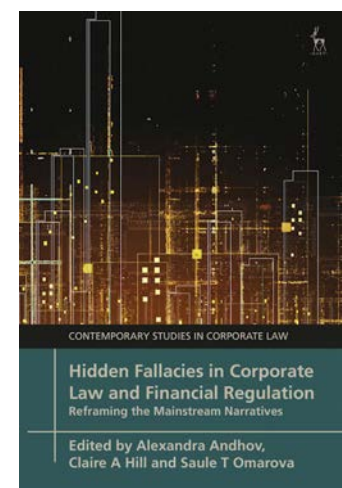
The book challenges readers' understanding of corporate, securities, and financial law and regulation, and interrogates long-standing assumptions and beliefs that have remained unexamined for decades.

Each chapter delves into the often-overlooked origins, mechanics and implications of outdated or misleading concepts (termed "fallacies") that form the backbone of contemporary corporate and securities laws, financial regulations and related domains.

These persistent fallacies, from agency theory to responsible investment and financial innovation assumptions, no longer serve modern business realities, says Professor Andhov.

What makes the book unique, she says, is its systematic deconstruction of established concepts that are often taken for granted and not often critically reassessed.

Rather than viewing corporate governance, securities regulation and financial law through isolated lenses, Andhov and co-editors Professor Claire Hill (University of Minnesota) and Professor Saule Omarova (University of Pennsylvania) say people can develop more sophisticated strategies that account for interconnected systems and dynamic relationships. This transformative approach promises to be essential for anyone committed to staying at the forefront of law and policy in an era where traditional boundaries no longer adequately capture business and regulatory realities.



# Law, literature and legacy: Philippe Sands visits Waipapa Taumata Rau

Auckland Law School was delighted to host Philippe Sands KC FRSL Hon FBA as the Legal Research Foundation's Distinguished Visiting Fellow. Sands was extremely generous with his time, meeting students, faculty members and members of the public.

He led a conversation on law and literature with Wellington-based barrister Daniel Kalderimis and shared insights on the future of international environmental law drawing from his decades of legal practice and scholarship. He also discussed themes from his latest book, *38 Londres Street*, which weaves together justice, history and human rights.

Sands gave a public lecture on self-determination and decolonisation based on his book *The Last Colony*, which tells the story of the citizens of the Chagos Archipelago in the Indian Ocean, known as the Chagossians. In 1973 their entire population was forcibly removed by the British colonial administration so a US military base could be established on one of the islands, Diego Garcia. The book focuses on the life of Liseby Elyse, who was called by Sands to represent the people of the Chagos Islands at the International Court of Justice in The Hague. Elyse spoke to the 14 international judges about the history of her country – a statement no one present would ever forget.

A British and French writer and barrister, Sands is professor of laws and director of the Centre on International Courts and Tribunals at University College London. He is also the author of several other books drawing on his legal experience, including *East West Street: On the Origins of Genocide and Crimes against Humanity*, *The Ratline: Love, Lies and Justice on the Trail of a Nazi Fugitive* and *The Last Colony: A Tale of Exile, Justice and Britain's Colonial Legacy*.

He appears as counsel and advocate before many international courts and tribunals including the International Court of Justice, the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, the European Court of Justice, the European Court of Human Rights and the International Criminal Court.



Philippe Sands (top and bottom right) captivates the audience with his stories of international intrigue and speaks with Daniel Kalderimis about life as a lawyer and writer.

# Access to Justice Series 2025

Each year Associate Dean (Equity and Diversity) Hanna Wilberg and her colleagues explore a series of events on substantive equality. This year, the theme was Access to Justice.

**27 May**

## **Climate Justice at the ICJ? Reflections From Frontline Advocates for Small Island States**

This panel discussion featured two Auckland Law School academics who appeared in person at the historic hearings of the International Court of Justice at the Peace Palace in The Hague in December 2024 on a request for an advisory opinion on the obligations of states in respect of climate change. Senior law lecturer Fuimaono Dylan Asafo appeared as external counsel for the Cook Islands. Senior law tutor Dr Justin Sobion acted for Grenada and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Asafo and Sobion shared their experiences as counsel at the world's highest court covering issues including the youth-led campaign to initiate the landmark hearing, barriers to and opportunities for climate justice for small states, and the role of international litigation in responding to the climate emergency. The panel discussion was hosted by Associate Professor Vernon Rive with an introduction to the case by Tania Fau.



Digital Bridges: Can We Transform Access to Justice in the Digital Age? From left: Associate Professor Hanna Wilberg, Dr Alexandra Andhov and Matt Bartlett.

**8-9 August**

## **36-hour Legal Tech Hackathon**

This event was the first New Zealand Legal Tech Hackathon organised by the University's Centre for Advancing Law and Tech Responsibly (ALTeR) and Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (CIE). It was focused on developing innovative solutions to the access-to-justice gap in our communities. Participants used innovation, design thinking and technology to come up with sustainable ways of breaking down barriers to justice for under-resourced communities in Aotearoa. The winning team developed an AI-powered privacy-first legal assistant that helps people understand their legal rights without needing to navigate dense legal language. The tool was designed to support users navigating social welfare systems, allowing them to upload documents or ask questions and receive real-time guidance in everyday language.

**20 August**

## **Digital Bridges: Can We Transform Access to Justice in the Digital Age?**

ALTeR director Dr Alexandra Andhov and Matt Bartlett presented an engaging and critical panel discussion on how AI can help make justice accessible and AI's promises and perils. Andhov dived into the bigger picture, reimagining legal systems and designing transformative processes for long-term change; Bartlett explored immediate actionable steps to improve digital access to justice through existing tools and frameworks. The discussion was useful for all legal practitioners, policy experts and law students wishing to shape the future of legal access.

**8 October**

## **40 years since *Finnigan*: Public Interest Litigation then and Now**

This panel discussion featured Associate Professor Marcelo Rodriguez Ferrere interviewing two major figures in public interest litigation, Patrick Finnigan and Dr James Every-Palmer. Finnigan was one of the applicants in the watershed case of *Finnigan v New Zealand Rugby Football Union*, which led to the challenge to and the eventual prevention of the All Blacks' planned tour of Apartheid South Africa. Every-Palmer is at the forefront of several actions in challenging government decisions relating to the exacerbation of or lack of action to prevent New Zealand's contribution to global anthropogenic climate change. The talk celebrated 40 years of *Finnigan* while asking fascinating questions about the barriers that prevented public-interest litigation in New Zealand then and persist today.



# Behind the screens: Hacking for good

New Zealand's first legal-tech hackathon, held at the University's Unleash Space, gave teams 24 hours to prototype creative solutions that advance access to justice. The challenge was organised by the Center for Advancing Law and Technology Responsibly (ALTeR) and research assistant Keenan Evans was there to document it.

About 50 students are scattered across the room and there's a murmur of conversation as they nurse paper cups of instant coffee. The atmosphere is a mix of anticipation and uncertainty, hardly surprising given that none of those gathered have attended a legal-tech hackathon before – this is a New Zealand first.

As the undergraduate representative for ALTeR – the Center for Advancing Law and Technology Responsibly – I am there to facilitate communication between teams and provide support. To kick things off we go over the logistics and set expectations: teams have 24 hours to answer their chosen problem statements and the broader question, "How do we make justice more accessible in New Zealand?"

## Bridging the law–technology gap

The teams work on one of three challenges: developing an AI system that translates New Zealand's Social Security Act into plain English; creating an automated system that guides users through the complex decision trees for non-repayable assistance from the Ministry of Development (MSD); or designing a system that makes the ministry's internal review process more effective for both applicants and staff.

Law students fire up the Social Security Act on their laptops while their computer science counterparts work on developing tools. As the law students explain legal processes and principles, their tech opposites nod politely. The reverse occurs when tech students show their code to blank stares from their law peers.

Despite the communication barriers and steep learning curve, the teams are motivated; they can sense they are on the cusp of a breakthrough, that their scattered ideas are coalescing into a solution. By 10.30pm, well past our official 8pm finish, I'm still encouraging groups towards the exit, reminding them that buses will stop running and that rest is essential.



Unleash Space: The Beginning.

What strikes me as a law student is observing my peers engage with product development concepts for the first time. While they can't match the technical sophistication of experienced computer science students, they work to engage with the technical development to better contribute to their teams. It is inspiring how law students go from interpreting Parliament's intention in dense statute to trying to interpreting their peers' intention in equally dense code.

## The reality check

Saturday morning brings optimism and a harsh encounter with reality. The day begins with incredible energy as teams demonstrate working prototypes: custom chatbots designed to simplify benefit applications, websites that allow users to highlight sections of the Social Security Act for definition or translation, and various other functional solutions that have evolved from mere notes on a whiteboard the day before.



**"We received so much feedback from round one that we need to make massive adjustments to both our product and our pitch."**

The mentor feedback sessions, however, are masterclasses in reality testing. We have assembled an impressive panel of experts: entrepreneurs who have built successful companies from scratch, practitioners with years of experience engaging with MSD and other access-to-justice challenges, technology and user-experience designers and legal professionals who understand system pain points intimately. These accomplished professionals dedicate their Saturday morning to supporting student innovation and practical critique goes hand-in-hand with this support.

The questions are direct and expose the gaps between good intentions and workable solutions. Several participants approach me during the second round of feedback asking for breaks or additional development time. One student confides, "We received so much feedback from round one that we need to make massive adjustments to both our product and our pitch."

This prompts my suggestion that teams split their approach: some members will continue receiving mentor feedback while others implement changes in real-time. What follows is organised chaos. Teams transform their workspaces into command centres, with members running back and forth like relay runners; one sprinting back from mentor sessions with updated feedback, another running forward to ask follow-up questions.

After the mentoring the space falls silent as everyone concentrates on the final sprint towards the 2.30pm submission deadline.

### Innovation under pressure

The pitches demonstrate what focused students can accomplish in 24 hours when addressing real problems. What impresses me isn't the technical prototypes but how every presentation remains grounded in helping people navigate the justice system.

Teams could be emphasising flashy technology or commercial potential. Instead every presentation addresses tangible problems regular people face. Students discuss real legal barriers, specific pain points in current MSD processes and practical ways their solutions may help. Whether simplifying legal forms, connecting people with appropriate services or making information more accessible, the focus remains on impact.

Once teams begin discussing problems they've identified and explaining how their solutions might help, they hit their stride and become difficult to stop. They are passionate about the issues of access to justice and genuinely believe in their solutions. No one is trying to build the next unicorn start-up; they are trying to solve real problems for real people.

The announcement of the two winning groups, Team 1.5's "Koru the Kiwi" and Team 8's "Plain Rights", is met with genuine happiness and congratulations. However, the most meaningful aspect is the subsequent mingling, where participants discuss their work, acknowledge each other's efforts and form connections. The links being made aren't just networking; it is the building of a community.



Teams would also run to get feedback between and after sessions.

### Beyond the prototypes

The prototypes created during those 24 hours vary in functionality and polish. Some work effectively, others don't and most fall somewhere between. However, the technical outcomes aren't our biggest achievement.

The real accomplishment is demonstrating incredible innovation potential in legal technology, particularly among our students. Most of the 55 participants are law students with only five having significant legal-tech experience. Most have experience with either law or technology but not both. Through this event we created a catalyst for contributing to this field – not by building the next AI mega-million company but by implementing technology responsibly that advances society, upholds equity and fairness and embodies New Zealand values.



**"We prove that when you create the right environment in which students can engage with experienced practitioners, where feedback is honest and constructive and where the focus is on helping people rather than just building technology, innovation flows."**

# Bernard Brown Poetry Competition

Poetry enthusiasts – many of them poets in their own right – attended the Bernard Brown Poetry Competition organised by Dr Jane Norton and chaired by Raynor Asher KC. Readers at the event were John Adams, Dermot Ross, Vivienne Ullrich KC, Tim McBride and Judge Alan Goodwin.

The winner of the inaugural Bernard Brown Poetry Competition is Ezra -Lee Magele.

## Contracting Out; Drafting Silence

Before the vows, I drafted.  
 I booked the morning light; it felt kinder than verdicts.  
 I called two weeks ahead so the room would agree with us.  
 I chose the window, the table that doesn't wobble.  
 I met the lawyer for coffee and rehearsed the clauses under my breath.  
 I brought blue ink because vows should resemble sky, not blood.  
 I texted, "Meet me at noon. It's just paperwork".  
 I arrived early and arranged the pages in sequence, like steps across thin ice.  
 I let the table keep its cool across my palms.  
 I smiled as you entered the room, so you'd know it was nothing.  
 I told myself love deserves a careful ledger.  
 I pencilled the dog into Clause 7, because you'd want that remembered.  
 I believed footnotes could hold what falls between lines.  
 I said, "We're being smart", and felt my hand curl, missing the fight.  
 I rehearsed mutual until it sounded like consent and then like an apology.  
 I folded the draft like a keepsake, not a warning.  
 I thought silence would mean agreement; I thought we would kiss after.  
 I did not plan for the tremor in your hand.  
 I did not plan for the hush arriving before your yes.  
 I placed the pen nearer your fingers and called it care.  
 I said "equitable" softer, as if volume could calibrate mercy.  
 I waited, learning how precision cannot prevent pain.  
 I signed where I asked for a witness and witnessed what it did not ask.  
 I wanted to vote for both of us, like a country with two constitutions.

Before the vows, we signed.  
 You learned the address that morning and followed me into the chosen kindness.  
 You sat by the cold edge of the table and counted breaths instead of clauses.  
 You nodded like you agreed, or like an auditor taking minutes.  
 You whispered, "If I die, will you inherit my hush?".  
 You found no synonyms for heartbreak in the index.  
 You read separation twice and loss three times, quietly.  
 You whispered, "What about love?" as if it needed a schedule.  
 You whispered, "What about silence?" and the room obeyed.  
 You said your mother calls it surrender; mine would call it protection.  
 You held the pen like it might burn through your name.  
 You signed slowly, as if time were a witness too.  
 You didn't cry; you didn't kiss me when it was done.  
 You now speak through the clause I failed to write.  
 You say, "We're being smart, right? It's just a precaution".  
 You no longer say I love you in full sentences; you ration vowels.  
 You measure tenderness against stipulations and find them almost equal.  
 You hold grief like a legal document, edges sharp, language gentle.  
 You touch Clause 7 again, as if the dog might feel it.  
 You look at me like a coastline with two tides, unsure which moon to follow.  
 You wait, and the waiting teaches me what assent is not.  
 You keep the morning in your mouth like a lozenge that will not dissolve.  
 You leave the window open for the part of us that needs air.  
 You lift the pen once more, and every future tilts, very slightly, toward honesty.  
 You asked, quietly, if I would inherit your hush, and I finally answer with mine.



Bernard Brown also generously shared some of his earlier poems with the audience, much to everyone's delight.

### Poetic Justice

(Poetry in a life in law and in law reform)

1942. "Brown, you will share your desk with Ronald and Reginald Kray from London. Be nice."

It was my Suffolk village school's second intake of evacuees from the East End bombing. R. and R. and I did not get on well.

I shared a desk with twins named Kray,  
who'd grow up monsters some did say.  
They got in first to make a fuss.  
"The yokel thug we share with tortures us."  
The fateful twist –  
They became world-famous crims,  
I mere criminologist.

I was caned. For torturing the Kray twins! In deep fear I survived a year of their Chinese-burns treatment (sounds worse than it was). They were billeted on the weirdo Misses Styles – "the witches". A malefic factor?

At age 11, I was whisked off to a grammar school. Caned again at 13 for "a foul writing" – actually a paean to praise of a lass on the school bus. The beating was administered before the assembled

school. It hurt. But, like the literary martyrs of yore, I bravely responded by printing more off my John Bull Outfit and selling them for sixpence, twice the price of the first run.

The poetry bug had bitten me. Later at law school in the north of England, I became enamoured of a Nordic classmate.

### Greta – Miss Norway 1951

Our old conveyancing professor called her Deodand – the gift of God. She, in my arms, related how in Oslo the Gestapo dealt to her one night and I cried. I cried for days. "Don't, don't" she said "Some were just boys." Leaving my tears, she went off with the Turk who shaved three times a day. At least. Then, when he cried, she left for good with the conveyancing professor who had called her Deodand. Deodand, for godssake, Deodand. Old conveyancers do have a way with words.

I failed conveyancing. It was the first poem about a conveyancer since Shakespeare's Act V sc.1 Hamlet. His was the better English, mine sadder.



Bernard Brown at 8 years old, drawn by Brian Lovelock.

# The opera – singing law student

For law student and opera singer Saem Millward music and study go hand in hand. Years of choir rehearsals and performing on the national stage have taught him discipline, passion and curiosity that serve him well in both worlds. Saem talked to Mark Henaghan.

## What are your first memories of singing?

I was inspired to take up singing when I saw the local high-school choirs perform at a showcase. Subsequently my first memories of singing are with my intermediate school choir when I was about 12 years old.

## When did you realise you could sing opera?

In the latter half of high school I started private lessons built on a foundation of classical singing. Along the way I was drawn to opera for its distinctly beautiful and powerful sound, but also grew fond of English, French and German art songs.

## What are the challenges of singing opera?

The main challenges are learning text in foreign languages and projecting the voice without a microphone. Texts in other languages should be studied accurately to perfect pronunciation and meaning, and learning to use the voice efficiently without microphones is a crucial aspect of classical singing.

## What do you like about singing opera?

I love the emotion and beauty of classical singing – the level of emotion trumps most songs available in mainstream music. On top of that the skill and artistry required to successfully pull off a difficult piece of music makes it rewarding to pursue.

## What is your favourite opera to sing?

That's a difficult question ... young singers are typically forbidden from singing arias out of their reach so I haven't sung many in my studies so far. An operatic aria I am currently performing is called "Come Paride Vezzoso", which is fun to sing because of the agility required in the cadenza. However, one of my lifelong goals is to sing "Nessun Dorma", perhaps the most famous aria of all time. See Pavarotti's performance and you'll instantly know why.

## How much training do you do in a week?

Ideally at present I do about an hour a day of singing although there is sometimes a need to prioritise other studies such as legal readings. If I continue my studies in classical singing and opera I can foresee having to dedicate many more hours each week, probably about 20 a week.

## What have been your most memorable opera – singing moments?

Singing choral works in China with the New Zealand Secondary Students' Choir is one. Another is my performance of an operatic aria at the Performing Arts Competition

Association New Zealand finals and placing third in the country. And busking Sinatra tunes on Auckland's Queen Street.

## What attracted you to studying law?

The need to balance musical pursuits with something more concrete. I was a part of the debate club in high school and English was my favourite subject – aside from music. Also to keep my mother happy.

## How are you finding it?

Very interesting – most of the time! I love case studies and anything that can have multiple perspectives. I am not so fond of the theory side of things at this point ... maybe I'll learn to appreciate it more.

## What do you hope to do when you finish?

I still hope to be a musician – but a law-savvy one. Even if I don't end up using my legal studies to make a living I believe critical thinking and understanding legal systems and concepts is valuable for anyone, especially in the world of music and entertainment.

## Any advice for other first-year law students with a major commitment such as yours?

I would say apply legal thought to your discipline anywhere you can. Staying curious about the law and how it fits into everyday life is a crucial part of making what you've learnt relevant to your life.



# Law student mixes it up in the polo pool

Elizabeth Gault, a New Zealand water polo representative, describes to Mark Henaghan how she got to where she is.

Elizabeth Gault is a third-year law student with degrees in journalism and English as well as a certificate in French from the University of Hawai'i where she is on a sports scholarship.

## How did you get into water polo?

I started playing flippa ball in primary school when I was aged about nine. There's a natural progression from flippa ball to water polo – the rules are the same except touching the pool bottom isn't allowed in water polo. I started playing water polo in Year 7 when I was 12.

## What attracted you to the sport?

My parents felt strongly that I needed to learn to swim given we are surrounded by water. I was a swimmer at primary school and I liked the fact that flippa ball and water polo were different from netball and hockey, which my friends played but I hadn't enjoyed so much. I loved the fact that water polo was difficult and feisty but also tactical.

## What do you like most about it?

I love the creativity involved in breaking down the opposition's tactics. As a driver one of my favourite things to do is to break their "press", which effectively means getting free when someone is trying to mark me really hard. As I get older I realise I am most grateful for what the sport has given me: friendships all around the world.

## What have your study and water polo experiences in the US been like?

I went to the University of Hawai'i in August 2017 from high school, initially on an academic scholarship before I also gained athletic scholarships. Playing in Hawai'i was one of the most challenging and rewarding experiences I think I will ever have. It is a top 5 National Collegiate Athletic Association division I programme, which means the team environment is competitive and cutthroat. A unique thing about the Hawai'i water polo team is the level of international recruitment. I gained a family away from home – my teammates were from the Netherlands, Spain, France,



Elizabeth Gault

Australia, Japan, Hungary, Serbia, the UK, Brazil and Canada as well as the US.

## What degrees did you do in the US?

I completed degrees in journalism and English and gained a certificate in French.

## You are in the New Zealand women's water polo team. How much training does that involve?

For much of the year training involves two swims, two water polo training sessions and two gym sessions a week. On top of that I train for my club and do an extra gym session, overall doing about 10 hours a week.

## What are the challenges of playing international water polo?

At the international level you have greater physicality and tactical differences. Although New Zealand water polo has made huge gains in the past 10 years we are still underfunded compared with many countries and we don't have the same professional leagues as in Europe. This means we play about 50 fewer games a year than other countries. Also, with many of our team playing in the US or Europe, we only come together for a limited time.

## What attracted you to law?

I was interested in law growing up since I loved English, history and other social sciences at school – and I saw the dedication of family members. I also find the idea of working with people and making a real difference worthwhile.

## How do you balance your study and sporting commitments?

It isn't easy but given my years in Hawai'i I have learned how to manage my time and prioritise different tasks. I have been doing it for so long I really don't know any different.

## What do you like most about studying law?

I love learning about how the law has been influenced and has shifted over time and the fact that it's something that will give me the power to help others one day.

## What advice would you give to other law students with international sporting ambitions?

I would say to them to love what you do. It's important to enjoy both so it doesn't feel like you are sacrificing too much. It is also important to prioritise rest to ensure you can be present in the classroom and in your sporting environment.



# Ballet lessons that go beyond the stage

Discipline, focus and artistry defined Sebastian Sly's years as a ballet dancer, qualities the former New Zealand School of Dance student (below and bottom) now brings to his law studies at the University of Auckland. Sebastian talked to Mark Henaghan.

## When did you start ballet?

When I was five and a half I took my first class at the Devonport School of Dance.

## What attracted you to it?

At the time it was the music. Music was a major part of my childhood and being able to experience it in a different way was what excited me at the time.

## When did you decide to take ballet to a high level?

Since I started ballet it has been a constant in my life. I was part of the national dance school's pre-full-time programme and this was an experience that inspired me to be part of the bigger picture. Throughout my time as a dancer I also watched and danced in several performances by the national company and their dancing was another inspiration for me to attend full-time training.



## What do you enjoy most about it?

What appealed to me when I was younger has not changed. The music was still a big part of why I enjoyed dancing. And as with any performative art, the "high" or "buzz" after a performance was unmatched.

## How many hours a day did you train?

Days started at 9am and often ended at 5pm, Monday to Friday, totalling about 40 hours a week. Training would involve a range of different disciplines including classical ballet, contemporary dance, partnering, and a range of extracurriculars such as anatomy and music.

## How many stage performances did you do?

At the New Zealand School of Dance there was a performance per term and one big performance at the end of the year. The nature and intensity of the training caused me several injuries and I was only able to perform in two of the eight performances on offer.

## What's your biggest lesson having taken ballet to a high level?

I learnt how important discipline is to success. Turning up every day, regardless of whether you were sore or tired, was the key to gradual improvement. That discipline is transferable to many other areas of life, including my study, here at the University of Auckland.

## What inspired you to study law?

Many things. I've had an interest in the subject since high school, particularly environmental law. And while I was living in Wellington I flatted with three lawyers who further inspired me to pursue law as a career.

## What do you like about it?

Law helps me to understand more of the world around me as it is concerned with many different aspects of our society. The writing, argumentation and taking a stand for what I believe is right also draw me towards a career in the legal profession.

## What advice would you give to someone thinking about studying law?

My advice for school leavers would be to focus on yourself. Don't compare yourself to others or stress about where you sit in your cohort as everyone is in the same position as you. While it is inherently a competitive environment, as long as you are diligent in attending lectures and actively taking on board what is said then you can thrive in Law School.



# Support services help law and marine science student thrive

After a concussion and dyslexia diagnosis, Shae Hardy found the support to stay on track.

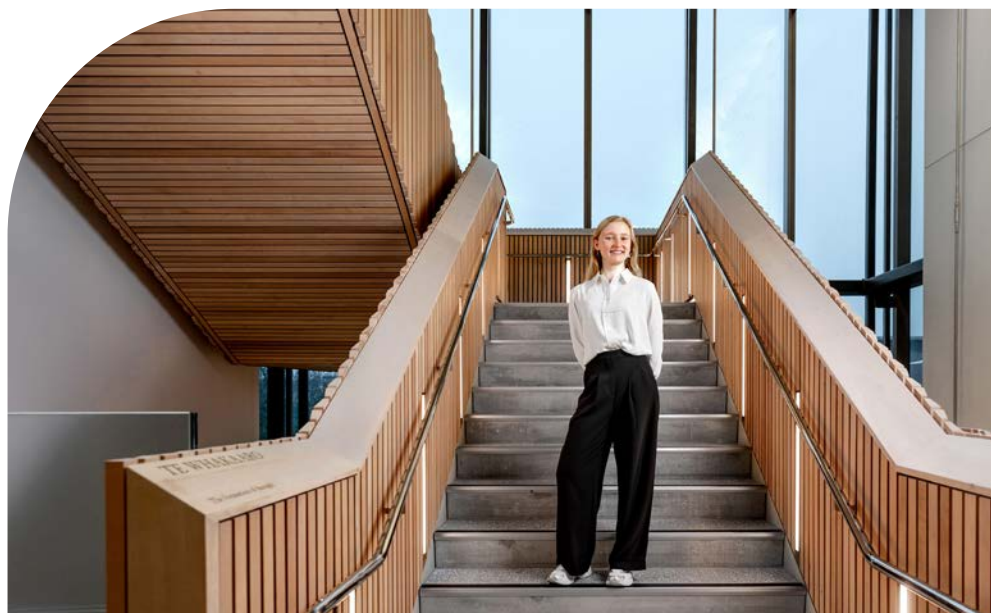
Shae Hardy's journey hasn't been straightforward. A concussion disrupted her studies and dyslexia continues to shape how she learns, but tools from Student Disability Services (SDS), Ratonga Hauātanga Taura are enabling her to thrive in law and marine science.

"Midway through last year I had a concussion that made tests and exams really difficult," she says. "That's when I first connected with SDS.

"SDS helped me put the right conditions in place so I could keep going and not fall behind."

By the second half of the year doctors had cleared her to return to full-time study and that's when she opened up about another challenge – dyslexia.

"I didn't think dyslexia was enough to get support. I thought it was just something I had to live with. But SDS showed me accessibility is about meeting people where they are, not just what you can see."



**"Take the first step. There will always be someone who wants to help you. SDS and the University genuinely care and professors are more open to accommodations than you might think."**

Getting around campus is now less daunting for Shae. SDS has supported her with class orientations, finding lecture rooms when signage is hard to read and contacting professors when things need to change.

"It's knowing I don't have to tell my whole life story to get the help I need. That's powerful," she says.

## **Leading change with the hidden-disability sunflower**

Shae is now a trainer for the hidden-disability sunflower programme, which

raises awareness and understanding of invisible disabilities. She delivers training sessions that help staff and students recognise the sunflower symbol and respond with empathy.

Wearing the sunflower has also helped her connect with other students who share similar experiences. "It's given me a platform to make a difference and help create a more understanding campus."

Two moments in her studies stand out for Shae, the first being accepted into Law School. "I didn't think I could do it so I'm incredibly proud." Second was stepping out of her comfort zone to train and present for the sunflower programme.

## **Her advice?**

"Take the first step. There will always be someone who wants to help you. SDS and the University genuinely care and professors are more open to accommodations than you might think."

**Elisa Ramirez**



Shae Hardy

# Ayolabi Martins: Advocate for accessibility

Chances are if you catch sight of Ayolabi Martins on campus he's speaking up for students, making sure accessibility is not an afterthought but a priority.

As president of the Auckland University Disabled Students' Association (AUDSA) and disability rights officer at Auckland University Students' Association (AUSA), Ayolabi Martins works to create a more inclusive University for all.

It wasn't always his plan to study law. In high school his sights were on medicine. However, his health declined during Years 11 and 12 and he realised the intensity of first-year medical school wouldn't be manageable.

"I started thinking about other options. I had just finished Youth Parliament and a few people said maybe I should look into law," Ayolabi says.

He researched, applied and was fast-tracked into a place at Waipapa Taumata Rau, University of Auckland.

## Starting with support

Before his first semester Ayolabi met a Student Disability Services (SDS), Ratonga Hauātanga Tauira case manager on campus. Together they developed an access plan, explored the campus and mapped out where Ayolabi would go and how he would get around. They made sure he knew what to expect and where to find help.

"I came from a very inclusive high school where everything was in one building. I had staff helping me during the day. I was scared that at uni I'd lose that support or get hurt and no one would notice."

With support from SDS and his family, especially his mum, Ayolabi made a confident start. He also receives high-needs funding that allows him to employ people to assist him while he's on campus.

## Raising issues, driving change

When Ayolabi enrolled in his first-year law classes some lectures were scheduled in rooms he couldn't access. When he and his case manager flagged this with faculty staff the class was moved to an accessible location for the year.



Ayolabi Martins

"That showed me how much the University values students. Changing one class for one student made a huge difference."

Since then Ayolabi has continued speaking up for himself and others. His work with AUDSA helps students build confidence and community and through AUSA he represents disabled students in the University's planning and decision-making.

"I've been in meetings about campus buildings and teaching frameworks. It's been great seeing staff taking a student-focused approach and listening," Ayolabi says.

## Advice for others

Ayolabi encourages students with disabilities to take the first step.

"Whether it's a physical disability, neurodiversity or a medical condition, you'll find the right support here – but you have to reach out."

Elisa Ramirez



**"Whether it's a physical disability, neurodiversity or a medical condition, you'll find the right support here – but you have to reach out."**



# From Football Fern to fourth-year law

Nicole Mettam had always intended doing law after her top-level soccer career but that came sooner than she bargained for.

Inspired by her best friend, Nicole Mettam started playing soccer for her local club when she was five. Nicole went on to represent New Zealand, a highlight of which was playing in the Under-17 World Cup against host nation Jordan. Nicole's team won 5-0, at the time a record for the largest winning margin by a New Zealand team at a Fifa-sanctioned tournament. She talks soccer – otherwise known as football – to Mark Henaghan.

## What level did you reach in New Zealand soccer?

I've played for Auckland's Eastern Suburbs for a few spells since I was 15. They have a very strong women's programme and a great women's football culture. It's a really fun club to be part of. I played for the under-17 and under-20 national teams playing at the Under-17 World Cup in Jordan in 2016 and the Under-20 World Cup in France in 2018. I was also in the Football Ferns' wider training squad.

The youth world cups were among the highlights of my career. Working through a stringent selection process at such a young age to make the national teams taught me invaluable life skills. I learned how to manage the highs and lows of elite-level sport, how to work towards a big end goal, and the value and essence of grit, determination and hard work. Getting to travel to amazing countries for the world cups and tours and play football at the top international level is an experience I treasure. It showed me how big the world is and the endless opportunities there are if you apply yourself and set goals.

## You went to the US on a soccer scholarship – what led up to that?

When I was growing up we didn't have the pathways in New Zealand that we do now in terms of the Wellington Phoenix women's academy and programme, so to make it to the next step in football you essentially had to go offshore. America has always been a football powerhouse and the college soccer system, especially the top programmes in the country, often mirror professional



Nicole Mettam

environments in terms of professionalism, facilities, coaching and opportunities. I wanted to experience playing in a country where football was the No 1 sport for girls so I could better myself. I signed a full athletic scholarship with Texas Tech in early 2019.

## What position did you play in the US college competition?

I played in CDM – centre defensive midfield, or 6 – for Texas Tech, a university in Lubbock, Texas.

## How would you sum up the Texas Tech playing experience?

It was a huge step up from playing in New Zealand. I played in the Big 12, which is a Power 5 conference and one of the most competitive college sports conferences. The speed and physicality of the game there was a big adjustment in the first few months. And it was a big culture shock moving to Texas and being far from the coast in Lubbock compared with growing up in and the lifestyle of New Zealand.

It took me outside my comfort zone moving to a country where I knew no one and



**"I am passionate about human connection and I want to use my law degree to help people who may be vulnerable and feel unheard. I would like to work with children and whānau who are in times of need."**

pushing my physical limits as an athlete every day. Being away from my support network and fighting for playing time made me mentally and physically fitter and stronger and better able to deal with challenges such as injuries. I made lifelong friends and got to experience US college student athlete life: from American football game days and flying in private team planes all over the country to playing in the National Collegiate Athletic Association tournament and dorm and Greek [sorority]

life. At times it was much like the movies and at others being a student athlete was the most intense, gruelling experience I've been through.

### What did you study in the US?

I was doing a Bachelor of Arts majoring in psychology, which is the conjoint that I've carried on here. The US academic experience was quite different from what I have found at the University of Auckland. The scheduling demands in-season for student athletes are quite high. We would travel across the country for games so often I was missing three days of classes a week when in season. I completed a lot of my work online and in hotels while we travelled.

College sports in America is very well regarded and the scheduling demands on student athletes are high. Professors were very accommodating in working with our in-season schedules and the athletic department at my school offered good support. We had a team-appointed academic adviser who would help us with our timetable and liaising with professors, and in my freshman year we had mandatory tutoring hours we had to attend each week to help keep on top of our academic workload. The first two years in college the classes you can take are very broad so I did a range of subjects from American history to women's studies and psychology-specific papers.

### What influenced you to come back to Auckland to study law?

I injured my back in my second year in Texas and specialists couldn't give me a concrete return-to-play timeframe. I came home to continue my rehab with the intention of going back to Texas but that didn't go as planned – it was about 20 months before I was able to run pain- and symptom-free. After five months of being back, and with the rehab setbacks, I decided to enrol at the University of Auckland for an LLB/BA. I'd always intended to do law once my football career was over. But I'd hoped for a longer playing career with the aim of following professional pursuits post college. In what was a very trying and turbulent time for me I decided to change my career path and take the opportunity to begin my Law School journey.

### How has studying law been?

Law School has been a bumpy ride at times but on the whole one that has helped me grow a lot. My first year was in and out of lockdown so was mostly online. In year two I took up a contract playing football in Australia so I went back online learning via

distance for most of my second year from Tasmania. At times the first two years were really isolating, not really having a chance to meet anyone in my cohort. I have really enjoyed getting to the elective stage and being able to find areas of law that really resonate with who I am as a person and that I am really passionate about. Family Law with Mark Henaghan ignited a passion in me – inspiring in me where I want to take my career. Law School has been a grind but I feel my past life in high-performance sport has given me a work ethic and the ability to juggle many aspects of life at once.

### One of those is work for YouthLaw Aotearoa. How has that experience been?

Volunteering at YouthLaw has taught me so much and the experience is hugely valuable. YouthLaw handles a wide range of legal issues that young people are experiencing, from education disputes within schools to employment law issues, youth justice support and family law issues – every day is different. I am constantly learning something new. It is a role that has taught me good communication skills as there often needs to be compassion and tenderness when conducting client interviews as you are dealing with people who are at the peak of stress and despair in their situations. The experience has opened my eyes further to the realities and complexities of the world we live in and the people around us.

### What do you hope to do when you finish your law degree?

My goal is a career in family law. I am passionate about human connection and I want to use my law degree to help people who may be vulnerable and feel unheard. I would like to work with children and whānau who are in times of need. I would eventually like to be a lawyer for children within the Family Court.

### What advice would you give someone considering starting a law degree?

Be in it for the right reasons – it is a grind. Make friends in your classes, study with one another and bounce ideas off each other. There is often a feeling that Law School has to be competitive but humans are better together than they are as individuals.

### Do you still play soccer?

Yes – after a year and a half off I am now playing again for Eastern Suburbs' women's team.



## Legal win for law student in High Court

Third-year Law School student Sean O'Loughlin successfully represented himself in the Auckland High Court winning a judicial review against Auckland Transport and Auckland Council.

The case centred on the installation of speed humps and a pedestrian crossing along The Parade in Bucklands Beach. O'Loughlin argued AT's installation of the humps was predetermined and implicitly unlawful.

The judge agreed with O'Loughlin's grounds of review that construction of the speed humps was predetermined. As a result of O'Loughlin's work AT must now reconsider its decision and if necessary remove the traffic-calming measures.

O'Loughlin took on the challenge because he believed the decision-making process was flawed and he wanted proper consultation for the community.

It's a remarkable achievement for a 20-year-old law student arguing in the High Court.



"The beauty of the law is it covers pretty much everything. It gives you freedom in terms of what you want to do with what you have learned and room to exercise your personality and see how you can help other people."



## Children's rights a passion for law student

Auckland Law School PhD candidate **Mateo Chitha** is advocating for the reform of intercountry adoption frameworks in his homeland of Malawi.

As a first-year student enrolled in a Bachelor of Social Science at the University of Malawi, Mateo Chitha was certain he was on the right path. The thought of studying law hadn't crossed his mind – until as his second semester finished he felt an urge to apply for entry into the competitive Bachelor of Laws (Hons) programme.

"I remember sending my application in the very day they were closing," he says. "Something was pushing me. I had to do it."

After making the shortlist and passing his entrance exams, he began his LLB in 2012 and quickly fell in love with the law.

"The beauty of the law is it covers pretty much everything. It gives you freedom in terms of what you want to do with what you have learned and room to exercise your

personality and see how you can help other people."

While initially interested in property law, Mateo's first job following graduation in 2017 changed that. As a legal officer for the Child Case Review Board in Malawi, he helped monitor implementation of children's rights in the small southeast African country.

The experience sparked a deep interest in children's rights that led him to enrol in a Master of Laws in Advanced Studies in International Children's Rights at the Netherlands' Leiden University Law School in 2021. There he found his purpose.

"My masters cemented my area of interest. From that moment I knew I wanted to do a PhD in an area within children's rights."

Following his masters degree he returned to

the Malawi judiciary, which he had joined as a senior resident magistrate in 2018. Outside his work – he is also an assistant editor of the Malawi Law Reporting Unit – he began searching for potential PhD supervisors. Before long he came across an academic with a long history of research on children's rights and family law: the University of Auckland's Professor Mark Henaghan.

With Henaghan's encouragement Mateo applied for a PhD at the University, gladly accepting the offer over other tertiary institutes despite feeling somewhat anxious about moving halfway around the world.

"For me it was an easy decision. Mark had already made me feel at home even



without me physically being in New Zealand."

In July 2024 he travelled to Auckland to begin his PhD, bolstered by a Professor Brian Coote Memorial Scholarship for which he had been recommended by Henaghan.

Established in 2021, the scholarship is funded by a significant bequest left to the Auckland Law School by the late Emeritus Professor Coote CBE, who taught there for 33 years and was both acting dean and dean for a period in the 1980s. It recognises students such as Mateo who share his passion for the law and its power to effect change.

Mateo's PhD focuses on the regulation of intercountry adoption in Malawi, an issue which was first drawn to his attention while working for the Child Case Review Board and highlighted further during his masters degree.

"When I was studying in the Netherlands Malawi was being mentioned for all the wrong reasons – because of the Madonna adoption cases," he says.

His comment refers to pop star Madonna's adoption of four children from Malawi in 2008, 2009 and 2017. The cases caused widespread international debate, largely in response to a residency requirement legislative provision arguably being

overlooked. This raised the question of the influence of aid: was the support Madonna poured into Malawi an influencing factor in the court's decision to allow the adoptions?

Since the Madonna cases concerns have been raised about the regulation of adoption in Malawi and there have been calls for a thorough review and reform of the legislative framework. Offering his reflections on that, Mateo is reviewing the influence of sociocultural and socioeconomic factors on the legal and policy frameworks of intercountry adoption in Malawi beyond the Madonna adoption cases.

"Sociocultural factors include how, in African countries like Malawi, children are regarded as an investment for the family. This means it's not an easy decision to allow an adoption," he says. "Socioeconomic factors include the economic background and issues of poverty, especially for a country like Malawi, which is one of the poorest in the world. How does this social context influence the decisions of stakeholders like the courts and guardians ad litem, who are the social welfare officers who assess child backgrounds?"

Mateo is using empirical research methods – something he says is uncommon in the legal field – to accurately understand the

social context in Malawi. Supported by his co-supervisor Dr Katherine Doolin, an experienced empirical legal researcher, he will conduct first-hand interviews with stakeholders and analyse intercountry adoption court documentation.

Through his research he hopes to influence law reform in line with recommendations made by the Malawi Law Commission after reviewing existing adoption laws. These include advocating for Malawi to become a contracting party to the Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption, an international treaty that safeguards children's rights.

"I'm already thinking ahead," he says. "What are some of the sociocultural and socioeconomic issues Malawi should consider in terms of implementing the Hague Convention if we become a contracting party?"

While only in his doctoral provisional year of study, Mateo intends to continue his work in the law following his PhD, whether through further research or a legal career. Either way, one thing is clear to him: he will be using the law as an avenue through which he can help his communities.

**Helen Borne**

## Student excellence: Alexander McClintock



In 2024 Alexander McClintock was joint recipient of the Legal Research Foundation award for best unpublished undergraduate law paper.

"My honours dissertation examined the New Zealand exempt employee share scheme (ESS) regime. This scheme is designed to incentivise employers to offer an ESS to the majority of their employees instead of only executive employees.

"The dissertation empirically evaluated the effect of 2018's significant reforms to the regime, the first since its introduction in 1973, and considered that the reforms did not materially encourage the uptake of these schemes in New Zealand.

"After reviewing tax concessionary share schemes in Australia, the UK and Ireland my dissertation suggested amendments to the regime to encourage its uptake in New Zealand by introducing employer deductions for the tax-exempt amount

to incentivise employers, increasing the tax-exempt amount for employees of small and medium-sized businesses to increase longer-term engagement, regularly reviewing the tax-exempt amount to reflect inflation, and reducing the time shares must be subject to ownership restrictions.

"I am very grateful to my supervisor, Professor Michael Littlewood, for his guidance, my family for their support and encouragement and the Legal Research Foundation for the award.

"If I have a single piece of advice for law students writing their dissertation it is to lock in a topic early. I changed my mind three times, which was stressful and time-consuming."

# Meet the law student leading change for neurodivergent New Zealanders

Kartini Clarke, named after an Indonesian activist, has turned her experience with ADHD into advocacy.

When Raden Adjeng Kartini read the journals and magazines her brother sent home from Europe in the late 1800s, she discovered that in some countries, women had the same educational opportunities as men. The Javanese noblewoman, born in 1879, turned that revelation into a lifelong mission to champion women's rights and education in Indonesia.

Her story inspires the name and spirit of University of Auckland law student Kartini Clarke, the 2025 recipient of the Blues Award for Most Outstanding Contribution in Service and Leadership.

"I was named after an Indonesian heroine and advocate of women's rights and female education," says Kartini. "She fervently fought for women's emancipation and despite her status as an aristocrat went against the grain by challenging the hierarchical norms of the time."

Like her namesake, Kartini is a passionate advocate. As head of Young Neurodiversity Champions, she mentors young leaders, lobbies members of Parliament and works with government agencies to improve access to ADHD diagnosis for thousands of New Zealanders.

Diagnosed with ADHD at 19, the fifth-year law student joined Young Neurodiversity Champions to change the education system to ensure "no neurodivergent kid gets left behind".

"There are about 14 of us and we share our lived experiences with schools and businesses throughout the country. We promote a strengths-based approach to education and some of the champions, particularly those of us who were late-diagnosed, juxtapose that with some of the negative challenges we dealt with before we knew what was up in our brains."

Kartini recently spoke overseas on the topic of neurodiversity, its biological effects and potential effects on mental health. She has also spoken to students, teachers, law firms, human resources staff, airlines and many other groups over the years.



Kartini Clarke with Cecilia Tarrant

Before her diagnosis Kartini says she thought she was "fundamentally flawed".

"I developed time-management issues as I aged and my grades were pretty inconsistent depending on the subject I was doing and my interests. School became worse over time for me.

"There was a high expectation to perform and it came with the added pressure of teenage socialisation, the sensory environment of the classroom, and feeling completely misunderstood by both peers and teachers."

Needless to say, Kartini's school years were challenging.

"I was totally disengaged from my education by Year 13. But I was passionate about my special interests such as politics and mental-health advocacy. That kept me afloat."

Once Kartini started to understand her neurodiversity, the core belief she had laboured under – that she was flawed and broken – started to dissipate. She also

began to understand how she learns best. At Auckland Law School she's undertaken much of her study online or in small classes.

"I work unconventionally but it works for me. My ADHD also has its perks – I can learn things really fast and work well under urgency."

Other perks of ADHD for Kartini include being passionate and relentless, an outside-the-box thinker and able to recognise patterns quickly.

She says alternative education pathways for rangatahi should be funded to empower them to use their strengths and prevent premature disengagement from education.

"I think children should be screened for neurodiversity at the beginning of primary school and their parents should be equipped with culturally sensitive knowledge if it's found."

Kartini also wants to see affordable diagnosis, better vocational training within the public mental-health sector and more clinicians who can diagnose neurodiversity in a timely manner.

After graduating she hopes to pursue a career in criminal prosecution.

"As a public speaker, litigation feels like a natural next step," she says. "I also think my neurodiversity will be immensely helpful when interacting with both survivors and defendants."

"Unfortunately our community has more contact with the criminal justice system – as many as 40 per cent of prisoners have ADHD. I want to ensure justice is met."

"And maybe this is idealistic, but I want to see change from the inside out."

**Sophie Boladeras**

# From top-level tennis to acing the law

Mia Milojević tells Mark Henaghan how she has gone from footing it on tennis courts internationally to preparing for a career in the law courts by studying at Auckland Law School.

Mia Milojević is a second-year law student who has played tennis on the international circuit, ranking No 3 in Serbia and No 1 in New Zealand at different ages and competing in high-level college tennis in the United States.

## When did you begin playing tennis?

I started playing tennis when I was aged about seven. It was open day at the local St Heliers tennis club so my parents decided I would give it a go. Luckily I had a knack for the sport and quickly started spending all my free time on the court.

## What was the attraction?

From young I admired players like Maria Sharapova and Rafael Nadal – their passion and the legacy they built on the court inspired me. My first coach even nicknamed me “Mini Sharapova”, which I carried with pride. I remember mimicking everything, from their playing styles to Nadal’s quirky rituals. I wanted to carry myself the way they did – with determination. Their influence made tennis feel like more than just a sport – it became a part of me.

## When did you realise you had a talent for it?

I realised quite early on. Around the age of eight I played in my first tournament and beat girls who were far more experienced than I was. Even earlier, during holiday camps, I would challenge myself to beat the older boys. I remember always aiming for the “player of the day” trophy. It wasn’t just about playing – I wanted to win every time I stepped on court.

## What are your major tennis achievements?

When my parents saw I was excelling within the New Zealand tennis system, they decided to support my development by relocating me to Serbia around the age of nine, where there were more opportunities for high-level training and competition. In Serbia I was ranked No 1 in the capital city Belgrade for several consecutive years and reached No 3 nationally. I also maintained



Mia Milojević

ties to New Zealand tennis and was ranked No 1 in my age group for New Zealand juniors on the international circuit.

## What drew you to the US?

It was the opportunity to compete in tennis at an international level while also earning a degree. Having my education funded while continuing to play the sport I had dedicated my life to was very appealing. I also love to travel so the idea of living in a new country,

meeting people from all walks of life and experiencing a different culture really excited me.

## What was playing US college tennis like?

It was intense, demanding and unlike anything I’d experienced. The level of commitment required was huge. We trained early in the mornings, had a full academic schedule during the day, then team



practices or matches in the afternoons. The team culture was close-knit, which made for high highs and low lows. It wasn't always easy but the experience pushed me to grow both as an athlete and as a person.

### What did you study in the US and how was it?

I studied criminal justice as I've always been interested in law and crime. I really enjoyed it and my professors were passionate and supportive. One of them even knew I was interested in becoming a defence attorney and went out of their way to arrange a meeting with a local defence lawyer so I could ask questions and learn more about the role.

### What attracted you to study law?

From young my parents told me I argued well and watching crime shows on TV with my mum sparked an interest in the law's

impact behind the scenes. As I've grown I've become drawn to the field's diversity and constant evolution. What fascinates me most is in law there's rarely a clear right or wrong answer as it often comes down to "it depends", which makes the work both challenging – particularly on assignment day – and fulfilling.

### How is your study going?

There was definitely a steep adjustment period, especially in first year, that I hadn't quite expected. But now I feel like I've found my footing. The content is fascinating and I genuinely enjoy learning about the field. I'm glad I decided to move back and study law here and I'm grateful for the friendships I've already fostered along the way.

### What do you hope to do with your law degree?

Initially I was set on criminal or family law and working at a family law firm has only deepened my passion for it. That said, I'm still open to exploring other areas and eager to learn as much as possible in different fields. I'm also really interested in exploring sports law down the line.

### Are you coaching tennis now?

I sure am – back coaching where it all started, St Heliers Tennis Club, and I love it!

### What advice would you give prospective law students?

Be curious and patient with yourself. Law is tough but it's also really rewarding once you get the hang of it. Make friends and join study groups too – they not only help with the workload but also make the process more enjoyable.

## From engineering to intellectual property: Designing a new career

Engineering gave Ethan Harrold a front-row seat on innovation – and the importance of protecting it. That experience saw him shift from designing new products to specialising in intellectual property law.

Ethan Harrold completed a Bachelor of Engineering (mechatronics) before spending five years working in industry, primarily in R&D-focused product development and mechanical engineering. His experience spans automated manufacturing, structural and civil engineering, packaging, food and confectionery, toys and consumer goods. He also spent a year working in China, which broadened his perspective on global engineering practices.

For the past two years Ethan has worked in the intellectual property law space as a patent executive.

"As an engineer I was first exposed to intellectual property as an inventor on a patented project. I later took on in-house IP responsibilities for several R&D and new product-development initiatives. I found the IP side of my work to be the most engaging and rewarding, which led me to pursue it as a full-time career."

In 2023 Ethan made the change from engineering to a specialist intellectual



Ethan Harrold

property law firm and in 2024 he began the Master of Intellectual Property (MIP) programme at Auckland Law School to formalise and deepen his knowledge.

"The MIP programme has given me a clear and tangible pathway towards becoming a registered trans-Tasman patent attorney. As a trainee working in patents and designs it's been incredibly valuable to also learn about

the broader spectrum of IP rights including trade marks and copyright."

Ethan says the MIP programme has also helped him connect with others in the field and he recommends prospective students seek out such contacts during their studies.

"Take full advantage of the opportunity to build connections, not just with your fellow students who are on the same journey but also with the lecturers. Many of them are experienced industry professionals with a wealth of practical knowledge. The IP community in New Zealand is close-knit and passionate, whether you're interested in patents, trade marks or copyright."

He values the flexibility of the MIP programme.

"The programme is invaluable because it complements my practical experience as a patent executive and offers the flexibility to balance study with work and family life thanks to its locally taught, in-person and online learning options."

# Mock trial competition returns for fifth year running

Richard Alley, who begins with a poem about what happened in the final, gives poetic and dramatic accounts of the schools mooting competition staged by Auckland Law School students.

In the mock court at Meredith Connell  
Was a light at the end of the tunnel  
For the teams that were there  
Were all well prepared  
For any and all kinds of trouble

The case was a bit of a rort  
About what the kids ought to be taught  
See the marriage was frayed  
Their parents dismayed  
Divorce was better they thought

Counsel just about saw red  
When a witness surreptitiously said  
I do solemnly swear  
And hereby declare  
To tell nothing but truth (if I dare)

The teams' arguments were splendiferous  
The trial's balance plainly precarious  
Those kids all could be  
Deborah Chambers KC  
It sure did make the judges' job hard for us

Justice Henaghan gravely announced  
Which team it was that had been trounced  
It was neither you see  
For all too clearly  
Their performances were well pronounced

Alas we had to pick a winner  
Before we could all go to dinner  
So by a hair and a nose  
To the victor it goes  
Though the margin could not have been thinner

Now I do not mean to disparage  
Nor imply there has been a miscarriage  
But with court now adjourned  
We do hope they've learned  
A valuable lesson on marriage

Louis and Jessica Hōne are getting divorced. Both are represented by an elite team of high-school counsel who've battled their way through five preliminary trials over 12 weeks to reach the finals of Auckland Schools Legal Mooting's fifth annual mock trial competition. Hanging in the balance are the fates of the Hōne's three children: Eruera, Emily and Ekara. The competitors seek to persuade the judging panel – comprising Mark Henaghan and two of the competition's top jurists – to



Winner Chris Hauang with Mark Henaghan.

side with their client on day-to-day care and guardianship issues arising from the couple's deteriorating relationship. Who will get to be the fifth and final name on the championship shield?

The courtroom is tense. The unhappy parents will testify to one another's failings, but if they're clever – and they are – they'll know punching down is a mug's game. What the bench wants are constructive submissions, ideas for reconciling the parents' disparate visions of their children's future. One child, Ekara, has found religion. Jessica, her mother, supports anything that encourages further education but father Louis is wary of the beliefs being taught. The case file is rife with such dilemmas. As Justice Henaghan observes in his reasons for judgment, Family Court proceedings often risk harming relationships rather than nurturing them. But with their talented counsel the Hōnes have the best shot they'll get at amicable resolution.

The Meredith Connell mock courtroom's gallery is overflowing with eager attendees. Family and friends spill into an adjoining room to which the trial is being streamed, unfortunately with dodgy sound. With 16 competitors in the fray – two divisions each with two teams of four – just the competitors' immediate family are enough to push capacity to the limit. This

year the competition had nearly 80 teams and about 400 competitors from schools across Auckland. Dozens of University of Auckland law students have given their time to help judge. The competitors got to experience family, copyright, tax and several criminal matters. Many say they now want to attend Law School. Some of our competitors, now about to leave high school, have been with us since the competition began in 2021. They could well complete Law School faster than the five years they've spent competing.

These teenagers are already experts in witness examination and cross-examination. The basics of evidence law have been drilled into them as they leap from their chairs to raise a flurry of objections. The teams' barristers have learned to craft succinct and direct legal arguments on the fly. Even the witnesses have learned how to evade and confound – handy no doubt when lecturers call upon them to answer questions about readings they haven't done.

In the end everything comes down to closing arguments. One speaker left. Five minutes on the clock. All the witness preparation and examination in the world amounts to nought unless the closing barrister, whose team is on the back foot, can knock it out of the park. And so they do, snatching victory from the jaws of defeat in a stunning display of impromptu legal reasoning spoken directly from the heart and mind. The judges retire to reflect on everything they've heard. Eventually a consensus is reached, the judgment announced and joy and disappointment echo through the court in equal measure. The tension evaporates. That's a wrap on five years of mock trial competition; here's to another five years.

The mock trial competition is open to secondary school students from years 9 to 13. The finals, generously hosted in Meredith Connell's mock courtroom, give top performers a taste of court experience. This year's winners were Pinehurst School in the junior division and Diocesan School for Girls in the senior division.

# Law and Business team shine in Australasian contest

An Auckland trio put a compelling case for making ethical procurement an enforceable requirement.

University of Auckland law and business students placed second in the Procure for Impact Challenge, a competition pitting 47 teams from New Zealand and Australian universities against each other to develop solutions to strengthen ethical procurement in the public sector.

The result in the event run by the Australasian Procurement and Construction Council and Academy Global highlights the expertise of both Auckland's Law and Business schools in public procurement law, sustainability and modern slavery, and the talent and tenacity of its students.

Team FairTrace, comprising law and commerce students Joel Newson and Renee Chandra and law student Danielle van Rixel, came up with a way of creating strategies to combat modern slavery risks in procurement of renewable energy. Their work reflected the increasingly interdisciplinary nature of procurement, which demands expertise that spans law, commerce, policy and ethics.

The team was coached by Associate Professor Marta Andhov, a leading international scholar in public procurement and sustainability law whose research has shaped policy and procurement practice in several jurisdictions. Under her guidance the students transformed a complex global challenge into a practical, enforceable and forward-looking procurement strategy.

Andhov's coaching helped the team navigate the legal architecture of government contracting, understand the levers for embedding ethical obligations, and frame policy recommendations that were both ambitious and realistic.

The team also benefited from mentoring from Associate Professor Christina Stringer, director of the Centre for Research on Modern Slavery at the University of Auckland Business School. Her expertise on forced labour and worker exploitation provided critical insights into the realities of modern slavery in global supply chains, context that strengthened the students' understanding of risk and shaped the foundations of their submission.



FairTrace – comprising Renee Chandra, Joel Newson (commerce and law students), and Danielle van Rixel (law student).

FairTrace's final strategy focused on strengthening accountability and transparency in renewable energy procurement.

Says Renee Chandra: "Our goal was to emphasise that ethical procurement must move beyond voluntary commitments. Without verification, enforceable obligations and clear accountability pathways integrity in supply chains cannot be assured."

Their recommendations included the use of independent ethical certifications for high-risk suppliers, redesigning contracting structures to support small and Indigenous businesses, and embedding clear enforcement mechanisms such as transparent reporting and defined remediation obligations.

Judges praised the team for the clarity, feasibility and depth of their proposal noting its strong alignment with emerging best practice in ethical procurement.

The team's achievement demonstrates how legal education coupled with interdisciplinary collaboration and expert mentorship can generate meaningful results beyond the classroom. It reflects the Law School's leadership in public-sector governance and showcases the capacity of its students to contribute to real-world policy innovation.



# The New Zealand Centre for Environmental Law

Book publication, research workshopping and international webinars were among the highlights of a positive 2025 for the New Zealand Centre for Environmental Law (NZCEL). Other notable events include:

## The International Court of Justice's 2025 Advisory Opinion on Climate Change

NZCEL organised two well-attended evening panel events on the International Court of Justice's landmark 2025 Advisory Opinion on Climate Change. A May panel before the release of the opinion on "Accessing Climate Justice at the ICJ: Reflections from Advocates for Small Island States" heard from Auckland academics Dr Justin Sobion and Dylan Asafo who acted as frontline advocates for small island states. The event was co-hosted by the Pacific Islands Law Students' Association (PILSA) and chaired by NZCEL's Associate Professor Vernon Rive.

Following the opinion release a September panel looked at its significance for international law and for New Zealand law, policy and climate litigation. Participating in the discussion were Professor Caroline Foster, who was legal counsel for the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), barrister Robert Kirkness, Associate Professor Rive, Dr Sobion and Jessica Palairret from Lawyers for Climate Action New Zealand Inc (LCANZI). A recording will be available on the NZCEL website.

## NZCEL Research Workshop on Trade Policy 17–18 July 2025

NZCEL hosted an international research workshop at Auckland Law School co-led by Professor Foster and Professor Tonia Novitz from the University of Bristol that explored the intersection of trade in food with environmental and labour law. With 16 research papers presented by contributors from six continents and strong engagement from both government and private-sector participants – including Te Taumata – the event sparked rich discussion on sustainability challenges on land and sea. Six Auckland law academics



Professor Caroline Foster

are participating in the work including Associate Professor Rive and publications are forthcoming.

## NZCEL 25th anniversary dinner 24 October 2024

The centre celebrated with friends from near and far at Old Government House, enjoying former director Professor Emeritus Klaus Bosselmann's remarks on its founding and tributes to his work and that of longtime deputy director Prue Taylor.

## Teaching

NZCEL members contributed to a number of Auckland Law School courses at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Professor David Grinlinton presented a paper on "Teaching Resource Management Law using an 'experiential approach'", an innovative element of his Resource Management Law course (now co-taught with Associate Professor Rive), at the Frontiers of Environmental Law Conference in Tauranga in January. Associate Professor Rive continues to contribute to the innovative University of Auckland transdisciplinary course Our Environmental Futures: Te Taiao Tāngata.

Professor Foster's course for LLBs and LLMs on Global Environmental Law has been renamed International Environmental Law, and Associate Professor Rive's new Climate Change Law course is proving popular.

## NZCEL Future Generations Series 2024

NZCEL celebrated its relationships with the community including the profession, the judiciary and other faculties through the Future Generations outreach series. Concluding events included Climate Science and the Courts with Dr Katalin Sulyok and Professor Dave Frame; and The European Court of Human Rights Climate Change Cases with Dr Corina Heri and Robert Kirkness, both chaired by Professor Foster. The papers are now available in vol 28 of the *New Zealand Journal of Environmental Law* (NZJEL) (2024). Subscription information is below.

## Working with students

The NZCEL team greatly enjoyed their quarterly meetings with the Environmental Law Students' Association (ELSA) where environmental topics were discussed. We

also loved participating in ELSA's "coffee with lecturers" series and the opportunity to be interviewed about our research for ELSA's newsletters. NZCEL was also delighted to supervise NZCEL placement students Lara Albert, Kiu Hei Chloe Yip, Maha Fier, Ellen Wang and Samuel Turner-O'Keeffe.

Professor Foster was pleased to work with former honours student Bella Belcher on co-publishing "International Law's Administrative Law Turn and the Paris Agreement" in the Sabin Centre at Columbia University and the Verfassungsblog debate series. Their work, which analyses how the rules for states' preparation, communication and maintenance of Nationally Determined Contributions under the Paris Agreement are coming to be characterised by requirements with an administrative law tone, is available online.

### New Zealand Journal of Environmental Law

NZCEL published the 28th issue of the *NZJEL* under the general editorship of Professor Grinlinton. Contributions included the transcript of an address by Klaus Bosselmann on his retirement and articles by Drs Sul yok and Heri. Other contributions covered international law and the law of the sea, indigenous issues and sustainability certification schemes. A number of detailed case notes, legislation notes and book reviews were also included. NZCEL community placement students Samuel Turner-O'Keeffe and Bella Belcher contributed articles on the *Smith v Attorney-General* and *Smith v Fonterra Co-operative Group Ltd* litigation. The journal welcomes contributions of articles, notes, legislation notes, case notes and book reviews. For new subscriptions to the journal or enquiries about publication please contact: d.grinlinton@auckland.ac.nz.

### New 2025 books with Routledge from Klaus Bosselmann

Congratulations to Klaus Bosselmann, who has published *Earth Trusteeship and the Sovereign State: Transforming International Environmental Law; and Ecological Integrity and International Law: Peace, Public Health, and Global Security* together with Kathryn Gwiazdon and Virginia Zambrano. The first book focuses on states' responsibility to co-operate to protect the ecological integrity of the Earth. The second revisits the construct of the sovereign state and addresses the transnational obligation of states to protect the Earth.

### NZCEL announces further selected research publications and presentations as below.

These include articles on international trade

law's potential as a driver of environmental action, the new "BBNJ" high seas treaty, New Zealand climate litigation and the interface between international environmental law and domestic law. They also include invited presentations, international webinars, keynote talks and participation in panels on the International Court of Justice Climate Change Advisory Opinion and systemic issues in international environmental law.

The NZCEL team's ongoing research leadership includes editing of the *International Yearbook of Soil Law and Policy 2025* (Springer) and a third edition of Salmon and Grinlinton's *Environmental Law in New Zealand* (Thomson Reuters, forthcoming). A number of NZCEL members also gave advice to government departments and NGOs and made substantial submissions to parliamentary select committees on new environmental and resource management legislation.

### Research articles and books

- Caroline E Foster "Due Regard for Future Generations? The No-Harm Rule and Sovereignty in the Advisory Opinions on Climate Change" (2024) 13(3) TEL 588 available open access online
- Caroline E Foster "Trade and Environment" in Valentina Vadi and David Collins (eds) *Routledge Handbook on International Economic Law* (Routledge, 2025) 237 available open access online
- Caroline E Foster, "Accountability Mechanisms in the United Nations Agreement on Marine Biodiversity beyond National Jurisdiction: Implications for Compliance Committees of a Procedural Turn in Treaty Design" [2024] 28 NZJEL 49
- Harald Ginzky, Oliver C Ruppel, Irene L Heuser, David Grinlinton, Atieh Khatibi, Patricia Kameri-Mbote and Natalia Rodriguez-Eugenio (eds), *International Yearbook of Soil Law and Policy 2025* (Springer, Cham: Switzerland, 2025)
- Peter Salmon and David Grinlinton (eds), *Environmental Law in New Zealand* (3rd ed, Thomson Reuters, Wellington: NZ, 2025) (forthcoming October–November 2025) (and four chapters therein)
- Justin Sobion "Earth Trusteeship – Unravelling the Mysteries of an Ecological Trust" in Bosselmann et al (eds) *Ecological Integrity and International Law: Peace, Public Health and Global Security* (Routledge, 2025) 303
- Vernon Rive and Bella Belcher "The Year in Review – International Environmental Law" (2025) 21 New Zealand Yearbook of International Law (forthcoming)

- Vernon Rive "Common Law at the Coal Face: *Smith v Fonterra* and others" in Camille Cameron, Patricia Galvao-Ferreira and Riley Weyman (eds) *Climate Change Litigation: Cases in Context* (Edward Elgar, 2025) (forthcoming)
- Vernon Rive "The Influence of International Environmental Law on Domestic Law in Aotearoa New Zealand" in Peter Salmon and David Grinlinton (eds) *Environmental Law in New Zealand* (3rd ed, Thomson Reuters New Zealand, Wellington, 2025) (forthcoming).

### Presentations

- Caroline E Foster "The ICJ Climate Change Advisory Opinion: A Turning Point for Climate Justice from the World Court" International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Webinar 2025 available on YouTube
- Caroline E Foster "European Society of International Law, Taking Stock: A Roundtable Discussion" on the Public Hearing in the ICJ Climate Change Advisory Proceedings 2024 available on YouTube
- Caroline E Foster, Keynote, "The Procedural Turn in the Design of International Environmental Treaties and Reliance on Facilitative Non-Compliance Machinery" ILA-ASIL Asia-Pacific Research Forum, Taipei, July 2025
- David Grinlinton, invited presentation on New Zealand environmental and resource management law to the "Osaka University Rights of Nature Research Group" in Osaka, Japan, 2024.

### Moderation

University of the West Indies colleague Dr Jan-Yves Remy and Justin Sobion together moderated an online event following up on the International Court of Justice Advisory Opinion "Caribbean ICJ Climate Brainstorm – What next?" and Justin will be speaking at a high-level panel event hosted by University College London's Centre for Law and the Environment.

### Management committee:

Caroline Foster – Director  
Prue Taylor – Deputy Director  
Klaus Bosselmann  
David Grinlinton  
Vernon Rive  
Jayden Houghton  
Kenneth Palmer  
Tony Randerson



# The New Zealand Centre for Legal and Political Theory

The Centre for Legal and Political Theory had a busy 2025.

The centre's seminar series featured events from international visitors and University colleagues. In February, Associate Professor Lulu Weis of the University of Melbourne presented a paper entitled "How does the Australian Constitution value 'property'? Reflections on *Commonwealth v Yunupingu*". In semester two we heard from Dr Arie Rosen (Law) on "Political Authority and Private Law" and Associate Professor Matheson Russell (Philosophy) presenting work on "The Assembly and the Court: Two Institutions for Group Deliberation". The seminar series was rounded out with a visit from Professor Kevin Walton of the University of Sydney who discussed "The Associative Argument for a Moral Obligation to Obey the Law".

The centre's annual "theory matters" lecture was postponed until March 2026, when it will be given by Professor Philip Pettit, Australian National University Distinguished Professor of Philosophy and LS Rockefeller Professor of Human Values at Princeton University.

In December 2025 we will be co-hosting a major international workshop on Indigenous–Settler Relations in Contemporary Legal and Political Philosophy. The workshop, in partnership with Te Wai Ariki Centre for Indigenous Peoples and the Law and colleagues in the Philosophy Department at Auckland and at the University of Melbourne Law Faculty, will bring together international and local scholars, judges and lawyers working on cutting-edge topics surrounding pluralism, sovereignty and democracy in Indigenous–settler relationships.

The centre's student-led jurisprudence reading group continues to provide a forum for keen undergraduates to meet and discuss work in legal theory. Students meet weekly to discuss theoretical law texts based on the group's interests. In 2025 the reading group invited several visiting and local authors to present their work to the group including Lulu Weis, Daniel Kalderimis KC of Thorndon Chambers, Dr Max Harris also of Thorndon Chambers, Dr David Bullock from Lee Salmon Long, Dr John Land of Bankside Chambers and Law School Associate Professor Anaru Erueti. The group is run by the centre's student fellows Paul McDonald, Benedict Sheehan and Jack McKenzie under the guidance of Dr Rosen. The group is open to all law students.

**Arie Rosen and Nicole Roughan, directors**



From Left: Professor Stephen Winter, Dr Nicole Roughan, Dr Jesse Wall, Dr Arie Rosen, Professor Janet McLean, Associate Professor Matheson Russell.



# New Zealand Centre for Human Rights Law, Policy and Practice

With Alexandra Allen-Franks on parental leave during 2025 it was a busy year for the centre's fellow co-director Carrie Leonetti.

Associate Professor Leonetti, a member of the UC Berkeley Center for Comparative Equality and Anti-Discrimination Law and the principal investigator for Aotearoa New Zealand for the Parental Alienation and Domestic Violence Research Group funded by Canada's Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, has continued her work relating to gender-based violence and miscarriages of justice.

In 2025 she gave presentations about the rights of victims of gender-based violence at the Aotearoa New Zealand National Family Violence Conference in Wellington, the International Forum on Parental Alienation and Domestic Violence at the University of Ottawa, the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies at the European University Institute in Florence, the Center for Comparative



Dr Alexandra Allen-Franks and Associate Professor Carrie Leonetti

Gender Equality and Anti-Discrimination Law at UC Berkeley, the Center for the Study of Law and Society at UC Berkeley,

the Macquarie University Ethics and Agency Research Centre in Sydney, the Stalking Symposium in Auckland and the International Sociological Association's 5th ISA Forum in Rabat, Morocco.

Dr Leonetti helped draft the government's Bill to add stalking as a stand-alone crime in the Crimes Act 1961 and she had commentary pieces published in *The New Zealand Herald* and *The Press* about stalking and domestic violence.

She has also continued to advocate for improvements to the justice system to prevent wrongful convictions. She was appointed to an expert panel to support the Criminal Cases Review Commission's inquiry into eyewitness identification evidence, gave a presentation about the misuse of social science research in family courts at the UNSW Evidence-Based Forensics Initiative in Sydney and published news media commentary on *Newsroom* about inequalities in funding for criminal defence.

## New Zealand Centre for Indigenous People and the Law

2025 began for Te Wai Ariki New Zealand Centre for Indigenous People and the Law with submissions made in person on the Principles of the Treaty of Waitangi Bill to Parliament's justice select committee. Centre members also gave expert evidence to the Waitangi Tribunal in its climate change and citizenship inquiries. Internationally we continue our work at the United Nations with the National Iwi Chairs Forum bringing ongoing breaches of Māori Indigenous peoples' rights to the attention of human rights bodies and with a presentation to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in November.

Activity on the publications front included Jayden Houghton's *Tikanga Māori and State Law* (see QR code for more). We provided expert advice to the Fijian Supreme Court on a constitutional case involving the right to self-determination. Our team was also active

in the media including on RNZ in relation to the Marine and Coastal Area Act reforms and on the BBC discussing the "Land Back" movement.

December would see us co-hosting a workshop on pluralism with colleagues from the University of Melbourne and the Centre of Legal Theory. We continue to work closely with Te Hunga Roia Māori Māori Law Society and our members have spoken at leading overseas universities including Yale and the London School of Economics.

The year's Nin Tomas Memorial Lecture on 15 December by Professor Angela R Riley from UCLA Law was on tribal justice. We also partnered again with Columbia University in 2025 to co-host an international seminar on Indigenous peoples' rights and policy.

**Professor Claire Charters**



# New Zealand Centre for Taxation

A sold-out event on 16 October marked the launch of the New Zealand Centre for Taxation (NZCT) with inaugural patron Dame Susan Glazebrook. The centre's directors, Victoria Plekhanova from the Business School and Craig Elliffe, outlined plans for the year ahead.

The NZCT aims to facilitate interdisciplinary research and produce publications that focus on the interaction between taxation law and business as well as between taxation law and society, the economy and the political environment.

The centre is dedicated to fostering and strengthening connections with the local legal, accounting and business communities and tax policy-makers as well as collaborating with other tax research centres and tax scholars in New Zealand and overseas.

We encourage students in the law and business faculties to study taxation at undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

This includes the Master of Taxation Studies programme, which is designed for graduates who intend to make the understanding of tax advocacy or tax consulting part of their career.

The centre launched into its work on 29 October with an examination of the use of artificial intelligence in taxation. The panel looked at the role of AI in transforming the tax profession, tax administration and tax compliance. Andrew Wierda and Geof Nightingale of Law Cyborg, Kayur Patel from PwC and Graham Poppelwell from Inland Revenue discussed the opportunities, challenges and practical implications of AI in tax practice and tax administration and the effect on taxpayers.

The NZCT's 2026 programme includes a conference on multinational tax avoidance to be held in October that will bring together leading international tax scholars, policy experts, government officials, practitioners and academics with their New Zealand counterparts to discuss experiences with aggressive tax planning and to consider best-practice responses.



Professor Craig Elliffe and Dr Victoria Plekhanova

This will be followed by another major event based on the history of New Zealand taxation. Authors who are members of tax academies, the judiciary, tax policy-makers and administrators and experienced practitioners will discuss their chapters on a wide range of extraordinary developments in New Zealand's tax history. The book containing these chapters, *New Zealand Tax Law and Policy: Critical Junctures and Development*, is under contract with Hart Publishing.

It is an exciting time to be involved in taxation as fiscal pressure builds from an ageing population and changes in work and technology, among other factors, calling for dynamic and responsive tax policy. We look forward to being at the centre of upcoming events, research and discussion on these challenges.

# The Center for Advancing Law and Technology Responsibly (ALTeR)

The Center for Advancing Law and Technology Responsibly (ALTeR) was launched by Auckland Law School in 2025 with the aim of ensuring technology advances are accompanied by appropriate legal frameworks so innovation is ethical and sustainable and doesn't threaten people and the planet.

ALTeR brings together researchers, practitioners and policy-makers to tackle challenges at the intersection of emerging technologies, sustainability and responsible governance. The centre's inaugural year focused on building infrastructure, attracting members and establishing a research community.

## Research

ALTeR's research explores questions that arise when law meets technology. One such question as AI companies grow is the relationship between artificial intelligence and intellectual property. Professor Alex Sims is examining how copyright law applies to images created by AI, addressing fundamental questions about authorship in an era when machines can generate creative works. Professor Jodi Gardner and Professor Alexandra Andhov are investigating algorithmic decision-making in financial services, exploring where duties of care lie for financial institutions when algorithms make choices that affect customers. Their work also examines the future of tort liability as technology transforms traditional legal concepts of responsibility.

Sustainability has emerged as a cornerstone of ALTeR's research agenda. Directors Alexandra and Marta Andhov are looking at how AI can help public-sector organisations achieve climate goals through sustainable procurement. Their research reveals promising opportunities and significant challenges in using technology to make government spending more environmentally responsible. And Marta Andhov has pioneered work on visual contracting, demonstrating ways to make complex legal documents more accessible in such settings as navigating public procurement processes.

## Dissemination

Sharing research with diverse audiences has been central to ALTeR's first year. The centre is using LinkedIn to engage with practitioners, policy-makers and academics



Professor Alexandra Andhov (far left) with the winning team and judges at the Legal-Tech Hackathon.

worldwide. The centre has also launched podcast Legally Wired, with the first season, produced in collaboration with AI Forum NZ, featuring conversations with thought leaders, innovators and experts on such topics as how AI affects creativity and what this means for New Zealand's people, culture and industries. The podcast's aim is to reach audiences beyond traditional academic circles.

ALTeR members also introduced the centre at events throughout the year including the Law and Fintech Conference hosted by the National University of Singapore, the Banking and Financial Services Law Association's Academic Symposium in Queenstown and the OECD Public Procurement Forum in Paris.

Alexandra Andhov appeared on an NBR podcast discussing New Zealand's AI strategy and participated in the Financial Markets Authority's inaugural Innovation Roundtable, contributing expertise on financial innovation regulation. She also advised the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe on cryptocurrency-related crime for law enforcement. Alex Sims was a regular contributor to RNZ, explaining emerging copyright issues, dark patterns in digital environments, and practical ways consumers can protect and advocate for themselves.

In November ALTeR hosted its first visiting fellow, Professor Saule Omarova, Earle Hepburn Professor of Law at the University of Pennsylvania and an influential voice shaping banking law and policy.

## Student engagement

In August ALTeR and the Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, with support from Associate Professor Hanna Wilberg, hosted a legal-tech hackathon with a focus on improving access to justice with technology. The event brought together student participants, local experts, practitioners and thought leaders, becoming a catalyst for building ALTeR's student community.

Student engagement also included informal meetings, a PizzAI seminar and student contributions to the ALTeR Blog. The centre also aids student learning through the new elective LAWCOMM 478 Start-Up Law and ongoing LAWCOMM 733 Shaping the Law in the Tech-Driven Era. Another initiative is the creation of the forthcoming Legal Tech Student Association.

Marta Andhov also coached the Law School's FairTrace team to second place in the Australasian Procurement and Construction Council's Procure for Impact challenge.

## Looking ahead

In April 2026 the centre will host an inaugural conference on the theme law, technology and trust welcoming academics, practitioners and international guests. The programme features a young scholars (PhD) day, sessions on cryptocurrency and AI in financial services, a tech showcase and Alexandra Andhov's inaugural lecture.

**Professor Alexandra Andhov and Associate Professor Marta Andhov, directors**

For more information:  
[www.alter.auckland.ac.nz](http://www.alter.auckland.ac.nz)



# Student clubs

## Korean Law Students' Association (KLSA)

Korean Law Students' Association (KLSA) is a student-run club that supports Korean Kiwi law students and students interested in Korean culture in their academic and social lives while at the University of Auckland. The club provides academic assistance and fosters the creation of a cohesive and genuine community for students to connect with legal professionals and alumni.

Here are some of KLSA's 2025 highlights.

### Collaboration with other Korean clubs

KLSA works to promote Korean culture within the wider University through activities with clubs such as the Korean Students' Association, the Korean Commerce Students' Association (KCom) and others. We have a close partnership with our sister club KCom with which we hold joint events such as Bowling Night and MT – short for member training – to encourage connections between members of the two clubs. We also co-host large community events including High School Orientation, where we provide insights into different university degrees, and the K-Club Sports Day, which brings students together through various sports and games.

### KLSA first-years' event

The first-years' event was held to welcome new law students into the club and the wider Law School community. This has long served as an important stepping stone for first-year law students giving them an opportunity to meet their peers, make connections and begin to feel at home within KLSA.

### KLSA Shinhwan (welcome night)

KLSA Shinhwan brings together students of all ages and backgrounds to welcome the first-year students into the Law School community. Shinhwan provides an essential bridge for first-years by fostering a safe and fun space to connect with both peers and older law students.

### KLSA clerkship workshop

KLSA held a clerkship workshop featuring

five past co-presidents of KLSA – Louise Hwang, Erin Choi-Brown, Jaimie Lee, Eric Kwon and Clara Kwon – who spoke highly of their involvement with the association. They shared their expertise and insights into securing law clerkships and provided members with valuable information and practical tips on how to navigate the competitive clerkship application process.

### NZYAL networking event

KLSA along with New Zealand Asian Leaders (NZAL) and the Chinese Law Club (CLC) staged the New Zealand Young Asian Lawyer networking event hosted by Russell McVeagh. It brought together Asian students with Asian lawyers who had recently begun professional careers who spoke about applying for jobs and their work experiences.

### KLSA buddy mentor-mentee programme and professional buddy programme

KLSA offers a buddy mentor-mentee programme that pairs Part I law students with seniors. The association also continues its professional buddy programme, which puts KLSA members in contact with KLSA alumni lawyers with whom they can network.

### KLSA IPLS profs workshop

KLSA hosted a profs and admission workshop by criminal defence barrister Hyeonkyeong Kim, sponsored by the Institute of Professional Legal Studies, both of whom the association thanks. This session gave senior law students insights into the admission processes and structure and pathways of the professional legal studies programme.

### KLSA "real talk with lawyers" panel

KLSA hosted a "real talk with lawyers" panel featuring Korean practitioners. The event fostered honest conversations about the challenges of Law School and practice, highlighting the value of friendship, resilience and community-strengthening KLSA bonds. Thanks are due to panellists Jung Yun Lee, Robyn Hwang, Raphael Jo and Min-Ji Yang for generously sharing their time, experiences and love for the Korean community.

### KLSA and KCom membership training camp

KLSA held its annual MT camp with a record 63 attendees, made possible



Korean Law Students' Association (KLSA)

through collaboration with KCom. There were many unforgettable moments celebrating our community and culture with resulting friendships.

**KLSA, CLC and Simpson Grierson social justice moot**

The social justice moot encouraged students to grapple with the nuances that societal and cultural differences may bring within legal work. The preliminary rounds and semi-finals took place at Law School and we had the privilege of being able to

host the finals at the Auckland District Court with an amazing bench of judges, namely Simpson Grierson senior associate Jade Magrath and partner Jo-Anne Knight, and the Honourable Justice Grant Powell, whom we thank for their time. This event has paved the way for deeper Asian representation within mooting and we hope to see it become an annual tradition.

**KLSA and Meredith Connell “two sides of justice” panel**

The association's last academic event of

the year was our “two sides of justice” panel sponsored and hosted by Meredith Connell, an opportunity for law students to discover the perspectives, challenges and motivations of both sides of legal advocacy. We are very grateful to our panellists who included criminal defence barristers Joon Yi and Esther Kim and Meredith Connell prosecutors Mohammed Chiraagh and Vanshika Sudhakar. Thanks to Meredith Connell for hosting and sponsoring the event which was a successful end to 2025 KLSA.

**Te Rākau Ture**

E tipu e rea mō ngā rā o tō ao, ko tō ringa ki ngā rākau a te Pākehā hei oranga mō tō tinana, tō ngākau ki ngā taonga a ō tīpuna Māori hei tikitiki mō tō mahunga, tō wairua ki te Atua nānā nei ngā mea katoa.

Te Rākau Ture, the University's Māori law students' club, welcomed many new tauira in 2025 and celebrated those who have graduated and moved on to begin their journeys in the legal field. Kei ō māua tuākana, tēnei ka mihi. Kei ā māua tēina, nau mai ki tō tātou kaupapa.

In 2025 our focus was on being proud to be Māori and proud to be in TRT. We looked back on the roots of our kaupapa 35 years ago, at where we stand today and what we want the club to grow into for our tēina – a conversation that will continue in 2026.

During the year we staged a successful Tōia Mai camp at Piritahi Marae on Waiheke Island and had an amazing week-long haerenga, or journey, through Muriwhenua and the wider Tai Tokerau, visiting five schools – four of which were wharekura Māori – encouraging rangatahi to come to university. As part of our journey we visited Rerenga Wairua and had the privilege of being welcomed onto Te Tii Marae, where we toured the Waitangi Treaty Ground.

In July we were proud to join the first Hui-ā-Tauira, bringing together tauira rōia Māori, Māori law students from around Aotearoa, and we introduced new events such as the future-focused TRT ki anamata wānanga.

A major highlight of 2025 was hosting our Kia mau tonu ki te Rākau Ture, our 35th anniversary gala dinner at the Park Hyatt, bringing together staff, students, alumni and law firms to celebrate our shared journey.



There was record engagement from first-year tauira during 2025, indicating that our tēina feel connected and welcomed within TRT. And our sponsorship team achieved record funding, enabling more kaupapa and opportunities for our tauira.

None of this would have been possible without the work of our tuākana who paved the way, the participation of our TRT tauira,

the support of law firms and the University, our pou āwhina Māori and the mahi of our kōmiti whakahaere. Mei kore ake koutou e tū tōnu ai te kaupapa nei; nei rā tā māua mihi maioha atu.

It is our privilege to serve Te Rākau Ture and help strengthen this kaupapa for future generations.



## South Asian Law Students' Association SALSA

This year has been one of remarkable growth, connection and community for the South Asian Law Students' Association (SALSA). What began as a small group wanting to give voice to South Asian students at the University of Auckland Law School has evolved into one of the most active and collaborative cultural associations on campus.

### Mentoring programme

One of our proudest milestones was launching the association's first mentoring programme sponsored by Kace-Fletcher Walker. The programme is intended to connect South Asian law students with senior student mentors and practising lawyers so they can develop a sense of belonging and empowerment within the legal community. Each month mentees, mentors and alumni meet for discussions and to present topics on such themes as how to navigate clerkship applications and balancing cultural identity within professional contexts. These sessions

have already sparked meaningful mentor-mentee relationships.

### Celebrating culture and collaboration

SALSA's cultural and social activities brought together South Asian students from all parts of the University. Events ranged from a stein with Auckland Lankan Students' Association and quiz night with the Auckland University Panjabi Society to a BBQ with the Auckland University Indian Society. The association also staged movie nights, games nights and social mixers that each attracted more than 60 people.

### Advocacy and allyship

As part of Women in Law's Legal Tea Series we delivered a webinar that focused on the crisis of gender apartheid in Afghanistan. The event was inspired by reflections and readings from Justice Susan Glazebrook, Judge Venus Azizi, Judge Jaweed Sikandry and Judge Raihana Attaee, all of whom spoke, with

Judge Attaee presenting in person. The presence of Judge Attaee was especially noteworthy because she was one of several Afghan judges whose evacuation to New Zealand came about during Justice Glazebrook's presidency of the International Association of Women Judges.

### Engagement and growth

It has been a record year for the association with membership more than doubling to 260, our mailing list growing to 425 people including 360 active subscribers and a newly launched WhatsApp community boasting 61 members. Our social media presence has also surged. Between July and October our Instagram engagement increased by 16 per cent, achieving 295,697 views and reaching over 12,000 accounts. In 2026 we are looking to expand the mentoring network, deepen the association's advocacy initiatives and continue to celebrate the diverse stories that make up the South Asian legal community at Waipapa Taumata Rau.

## Law Revue

Law School doesn't usually conjure up images of periwigs, cow costumes or group dance numbers. Yet somehow amid case law and coursework there exists a place where our future lawyers become sketch comedians. That place is the Auckland Law Revue.

More than just a student production, Law Revue is a chaotic, creative and unexpectedly meaningful tradition that celebrated its 50th year in 2025. It brings together law students who love theatre and comedy or at the very least are willing to make fools of themselves in front of a live audience. The student-run annual stage show blends satire, chaos, energy and the very specific humour only future KCs truly understand. It's a strange and wonderful mash-up of legal and pop culture references with original sketches.

For participants the show can be an escape – a mid-semester sanctuary from dense readings and looming assessment deadlines. Rehearsals, as well as involving blocking scenes (for the uninitiated that means working out where to stand on



stage) and learning lines, are about having fun – laughing until your face hurts and making memories with future friends.

All going well a handful of rough skit ideas will be transformed into a full-blown production complete with off-key musical numbers, dramatic courtroom parodies and niche legal jokes that somehow manage to land in a room full of students, staff, friends and family members. Along the way friendships are formed, confidence grows and potentially cherished memories of participants' time at Law School are filed away.

Making it all possible is the team of directors who quietly orchestrate the chaos, manage rehearsals, guide the plot's creative vision and make sure the process stays respectful and collaborative. Their work rarely gets the spotlight, but their care for the cast and commitment to the culture is what makes the revue feel less like a production and more like a community.

In a degree often defined by pressure and all-nighters, Law Revue offers something special: permission to be a little bit silly, to take risks and to remember that laughter can be just as important as learning.

**Cathy Lycett**



## Veritas

Veritas is a University of Auckland Law School Christian group that also welcomes non-law students and anyone with questions about Christianity. We are part of a wider New Zealand Tertiary Students Christian Fellowship (TSCF) group and the worldwide International Fellowship of Evangelical Students (IFES).

At weekly meetings on campus during semesters we explore topics about God, Jesus, us and the Bible, inviting guest speakers – who in 2025 included Dr Joshua Yuvaraj and Marcus Roberts – to talk about their perspectives on Christianity and the law. September 2025 also featured the New Zealand Christian Lawyers Conference.

Social events throughout the year included bowling, ice skating, meals out and sports events with the Christian Medical Students group.

## Pacific Islands Law Students' Association (PILSA)

### A year of Pacific Island Law Students' Association (PILSA) activities

PILSA delivered a diverse range of initiatives during 2025 aimed at supporting the academic, professional, cultural and social development of its members. These events have fostered community engagement, strengthened professional networks and celebrated Pacific identity within the Law School. Our theme for the year was "belonging" and every initiative was aimed at member engagement so they felt they belonged at Law School.

### Professional development initiatives

PILSA partnered with leading law firms including Russell McVeagh, Chapman Tripp, Simpson Grierson, and Meredith Connell to stage workshops and talks and provide mentorship opportunities for members. Highlights included a CV workshop, a "profs" workshop with the College of Law and Auckland University Law Students' Society and the launch of our mentorship programme. Internship updates shared via PILSA's online platforms ensured members stayed informed about career pathways and opportunities.

### Academic events

The association hosted a range of events including debates, the Law 121 workshop and a collaborative study fono with other associations, all of which was aimed at enhancing members' academic success. An International Court of Justice Panel and mentorship launch gave valuable insights into international law and peer support networks while orientation sessions welcomed new members into the community.



### Cultural initiatives

Cultural connection was central to the association's mission with events such as chapel services, the duavata – Fijian for unity – collaboration with Auckland University Pacific Island Students' Association (AUPISA) and our cultural day. Participation in Fetu Fest, language week celebrations and graduation ceremonies further showcased the richness and diversity of Pacific cultures at the University.

### Social Initiatives

PILSA organised social gatherings such as the "camp quiz", movie night (with Te Rākau Ture) and a joint social with the University of Auckland Fijian Students' Association, events that helped strengthen relationships

within the Pacific student community and promoted wellbeing through shared experiences.

### Health and wellbeing

PILSA encouraged holistic wellbeing through activities like the LESSPUSHHH weight loss challenge and participation in the Battle of Associations with AUPISA promoting fitness, teamwork and mental resilience.

### Feedback

Two special general meetings (SGMs) – an end-of-year meeting and a talanoa session – were held where members could reflect, share feedback and talk about the association's future direction.

## Women in Law

### Empowering wāhine and gender-diverse students through community, advocacy and connection

A big jump in membership made 2025 a defining year for Women in Law. The student-led charity has 950 members, double the previous year. This growth reflects not only the appetite for community and equity-focused spaces at Law School but also the dedication of our 16-member executive led by co-presidents Annabelle Kay and Veisia Maka. Their mahi has contributed to improving the student experience of our community. Our kaupapa is simple but powerful: to make the Law School experience more accessible, inclusive and community-driven for women-identifying and gender-diverse students.

### Academic empowerment and mentorship

Our academic programme, led by Yogita Pal and Claudia Sayers, reached unprecedented scale in 2025, offering a record number of workshops and mentoring opportunities that complemented teaching while nurturing student confidence and connection. More than 800 tickets were sold for Part I exam workshops, our mooted workshop and study sessions, each designed to make academic support approachable and free from intimidation. Events sold out within hours, demonstrating the demand for accessible peer-led learning spaces.

The women in mooted workshop was a particular highlight. We aimed to provide students with an empowering introduction to oral advocacy. Sessions combined technical guidance with confidence-building, demystifying mooted in an environment of care and inclusion. Our "get ready for Law School" and "study x mingle" sessions continued this theme, offering early-stage academic support and social connection for new students.

Equally effective was our mentoring programme, which paired 300 mentors and mentees. The programme matched students by both academic interest and lived experience, ensuring students saw themselves reflected in their mentors. Supported by Meredith Connell, the programme's launch night and mid-year mingle events drew 200 attendees, combining guidance from faculty leaders and practitioners with peer-to-peer connection.



Women in Law

### Advocacy and intersectionality

Women in Law's advocacy portfolio was defined largely by the introduction of our Legal Tea series, providing a platform for students to engage with pressing social and legal issues through open, values-driven conversation. Led by Maha Fier and Rei Harrison, each session centred on a piece of scholarship, an article or podcast circulated in advance inviting students to explore perspectives often absent from the traditional curriculum.

First-semester discussions included Professor Julia Tolmie on coercive control and systemic entrapment, New Zealand Law Society chief executive Katie Rusbatch and prosecutions manager Natalie Town on Tiana Epati's "Me Too Must Not Leave Anyone Behind", a collaboration with the South Asian Law Students' Association featuring Judge Raihana Attaee on Afghan women judges and a reflection by Rhodes Scholar Maisy Bentley on "My Life in Law School: The Unrecognised Contribution of Women Law Students to the Legal Intellectual History in Aotearoa New Zealand".

The second semester expanded the kaupapa with Professor Nicole Roughan on "Framing Relations of Tikanga and State Law in Aotearoa", Tracey Whare on taonga species and intellectual property (in collaboration with the Environmental Law Students' Association), Reia Harrison's "On the Kaupapa Mana Wāhine Inquiry" and Tina Ngata's submission – and a powerful finale in collaboration with the equity officers – featuring the Honourable Chief Justice Dame Helen Winkelmann discussing "Access to Justice: We Need More Than Lawyers".

These sessions reflected our belief that learning and advocacy are inseparable and that to study law is also to question whose voices it amplifies. The series championed intersectional collaboration and provided students from all year levels with the confidence to participate in critical legal dialogue.

In May, Women in Law hosted its annual Pink Ribbon Breakfast in partnership with the Breast Cancer Foundation, raising \$400 while sparking conversations about women's health and law. Featuring a guest speaker from the foundation alongside Acting Dean Professor Jaime King, the event explored how legal frameworks intersect with healthcare access and outcomes, combining community care with intellectual engagement.

### Wellbeing and community

Outside the classroom advocacy took an active form. Our weekly Plead the 5th KM run, supported by Wynn Williams, became a cornerstone of wellbeing and connection. Every Friday students gathered for a 5km run or walk along the waterfront, finishing with coffee (and occasional pastry). The initiative offered a consistent, low-pressure way to prioritise hauora and build community.

The focus on wellbeing and collective action culminated in the Speak Up for Her Charity Run held during Women's Fest in collaboration with the AUSA women's rights officer and other campus groups. More than 70 participants ran through the University quad and Auckland Domain raising \$2,000-plus for The Aunties. The initiative centred around asking "How do you speak up for the women around



you?”, inviting reflection on allyship and accountability.

Closet for a Cause, our thrift-market initiative addressing the financial and wellbeing barriers students face when entering professional spaces, was another hit. In partnership with Dress for Success and led by community outreach officers Sara Seyedsalehi and Grace Naden, it raised \$833 for the charity, providing access to professional clothing to make students feel confident and empowered as they prepare for interviews, the workplace and other professional environments.

### Professional development

Professional development has always been a cornerstone of Women in Law and in 2025 our focus expanded beyond traditional networking to actively dismantle the “if you know, you know” culture that often surrounds clerkships and career pathways. Our aim was to make professional growth accessible to every student by creating transparent, inclusive

and empowering entry points into the profession.

We hosted a “counsel over coffee” event that paired students with practitioners for intimate, meaningful conversations over breakfast. Eight lawyers, each from a distinct practice area, generously gave their time to mentor three selected students each. Every breakfast was fully funded to remove financial barriers, ensuring all participants could engage without hesitation or exclusion.

Students were chosen through a short application process in which they were asked to outline areas of interest and how the opportunity would contribute to their professional growth. The goal of the selection process was to prioritise students who otherwise may not have had the chance to build professional connections with someone who worked in an area they wanted to pursue. By doing so we aimed to disrupt the exclusivity that often surrounds professional networking and

create a platform for genuine accessibility and inclusion.

These events complemented both panels and targeted sessions like the DLA Piper Office Tour and Panel, which gave students a rare behind-the-scenes view of firm culture and the day-to-day realities of practice. Our “mid-year mingle” brought together more than 70 students and professionals in a relaxed networking setting, reinforcing the importance of mentorship as a career tool rather than a privilege.

Professional development officers Stella Blackwood and Mary Abaid created a Women in Law Careers Guide, a comprehensive, student-friendly resource that collated clerkship and internship deadlines, recruitment timelines and practical advice on applications and interviews. Compiled by the professional development team, the guide sought to create a centralised simple source of information for students.

## Auckland University Law Students’ Society (AULSS)

Auckland University Law Students’ Society (AULSS) sets out to enhance the experience of every law student at the University of Auckland. As the largest law student club AULSS brings the community together through a range of social, academic and sporting events and competitions.

The club kick-started a successful 2025 with the recruitment series, which consisted of panels with legal professionals, firm mixers and networking events. The series aims to provide students with insights and guidance to help them make sound career decisions and excel in their applications and interviews. The AULSS study series, meantime, offers tutor-run exam preparation sessions for all law students.

### Happy campers

The society continued the revival of law camp in 2025, an initiative reintroduced in 2024 post Covid. The camp welcomed both Part II and Part II.5 students, giving them opportunities to connect and bond with their peers in different year levels, which proved a great success.

Also on the club’s social calendar were the highly anticipated law steins, pub crawls, cocktail night and the annual law ball, and for the first time a leavers’ dinner. There was increased demand for all these events

in 2025, helping to foster a strong sense of community and lasting friendships among members.

### Putting knowledge on the line

The club’s competitions give students the chance to exercise their legal knowledge. Participants benefit from feedback provided by experienced professional judges in a range of skills-based events including negotiation, mooting, client

interviewing, paper presentation and witness examination.

This year’s competition winners were Alex Yang for witness examination, Josh Boshra and Jake Inskeep for negotiations, Vesper Lee and Uma Lee for client interviewing, Saskia Wigman and Louisa Freiin von for mooting and Jon Dobroschi for paper presentation.



Auckland University Law Students’ Society (AULSS)



AULSS also offers opportunities for students to compete across the Tasman. In 2025 five teams represented the University of Auckland at the Australian Law Students' Association Conference in Canberra in a range of competitions. Notably the client interviewing team reached the semi-finals, marking an impressive achievement for the University.

### Good sports

AULSS also had an outstanding year in sports with members taking part in a variety of events including Round the Bays and several half marathons. The society also continued its strong commitment to student wellbeing with initiatives such as Wellness Week providing thoughtful support during busy academic periods. From free coffee

to small treats, these gestures help budding lawyers stay motivated and balanced as they navigate exams and coursework.

### More to come

The society's 2026 calendar includes more of the same plus exciting new initiatives and events as it remains committed to creating meaningful and memorable experiences for all law students.

## Chinese Law Club (CLC)

### Our year in review

The Chinese Law Club's mission for 2025 was to promote diversity and engagement by supporting members' academic, professional and social development within a cohesive community. Since our founding we have built a thriving network of law students and remain committed to connecting students and practitioners of all levels and backgrounds.

In 2025 we hosted a wide range of events to advance both the social and academic needs of our members. With more than 300 members we continue to represent one of the most active and diverse student groups within the Law School. Highlights of the year included our summer clerkship series, mentoring programme and Chinese crafts events. An inaugural social justice moot – held in collaboration with Simpson Grierson and its Asian Cultures Group – was another major milestone, alongside new partnerships with the Korean Law Students' Association (KLSA) and the New Zealand Young Asian Lawyers (NZYAL) committee. Our annual Meredith Connell networking night also returned in a refreshed and more engaging format.

### To our alumni

The Chinese Law Club, now in its fifth year, aims to strengthen connections between members and alumni. We hope to build an enduring network that shares experiences, fosters mentorship and inspires the next generation of law students.

In 2026 we plan to host our first alumni-focused event and invite former members interested in reconnecting with the club to contact us at [chineselawclubuoa@gmail.com](mailto:chineselawclubuoa@gmail.com) with their name, years of involvement, graduation year and anything else they wish to share. Together we can continue the legacy of growth and collaboration that defines CLC.

### A year of outreach and community

This year CLC focused on strengthening relationships both within and beyond the Law School. Through two new initiatives we expanded our presence and continued to build a network that benefits all members of the Asian law student community.

#### NZYAL student career networking evening

With KLSA we co-hosted a student career networking evening with NZYAL at Russell McVeagh. The event offered students an invaluable opportunity to meet and connect with Asian lawyers in an engaging and relaxed environment. It served as a platform for genuine mentorship, career insights and inspiration.

#### Simpson Grierson social justice moot

The inaugural Simpson Grierson social justice moot held in conjunction with KLSA was the first Asian-focused moot at the University. Designed for mooters of all experience levels it encouraged students to develop advocacy and reasoning skills in a supportive environment. After three competitive rounds the final took place at the Auckland District Court before the Honourable Justice Grant Powell and Simpson Grierson partner Jo-Anne Knight and senior associate Jade Magrath. This event strengthened CLC's academic identity offering Asian students a platform to showcase their abilities while addressing themes of equality, representation and justice.

#### Meredith Connell networking night: breaking down barriers

Now in its third year the Meredith Connell networking night remains one of the club's flagship events. This year the format shifted from a traditional panel to interactive networking stations allowing more personal engagement between students and lawyers. Thanks to Meredith Connell for its continued support of our members' professional growth.

### Building our community

The CLC mentoring programme pairs Part I and II students with senior Part III and IV mentors fostering collaboration through study-based and social activities. This year's weekly bingo challenges proved especially effective in promoting ongoing participation and engagement. The programme provides students with opportunities to teach, learn and build relationships across year levels. Special thanks to first-year officers Renee Liao and Shayal Sharma whose leadership and creativity made this year's programme one of our most successful yet.

### Academic development and events

Our academic initiatives include the summer clerkship series, which featured a panel of senior law students sharing experiences from their clerkships and offering advice to younger students. The event is a valuable resource for students preparing for clerkship applications and planning their early legal careers. The club hosted exam workshops for Law 121, Law 131, Law 141, Law 201 and Law 211 featuring peer-led support in which top-achieving students presented summaries, key concepts and exam tips. In 2025 Law 231 and Law 241 were added ensuring all Part I and II students are supported across their core papers, a milestone that reflects our commitment to inclusive academic development.

### Looking ahead

As the Chinese law student community in New Zealand continues to expand, the club aims to be the key connector between students, alumni and professionals. Our activities are more than just events. They represent a movement to build a supportive, culturally diverse and academically strong community. Each activity, from moots to mentoring, contributes to a shared vision of collaboration, excellence and belonging within the Law School.

# The Equal Justice Project 2025

In 2025 the Equal Justice Project (EJP) mobilised 150 volunteers in six teams with one mission: increasing access to justice. EJP is unique in that in promoting our cause students are given an opportunity to hone academic skills. A wide range of projects was undertaken during the year with each team having its own goal and undertaking.

## Access

Twenty students from the access team presented at 14 schools touching on questions including access to Law School, equity issues and civics education. They successfully kept their teenage audiences engaged and received very positive feedback and bookings for further presentations. The team's 50-plus volunteer hours had the result of increasing access to justice by bridging the wide gap in education.

## Advocacy

This team has two sub-groups focused on alcohol harm and climate change, which together made five parliamentary Bill submissions, worked with Auckland Council, made OIA requests and helped law practitioners with research. Team members developed their advocacy skills with some fronting up to local councils to argue their case for change, receiving compliments from organisations they work with and contributing to reduced alcohol access and harms in vulnerable communities.

## Alliance

The alliance team, despite being the smallest, successfully raised awareness for students of pathways to working in social justice. The team launched a podcast series featuring interviews with practitioners in the social justice space shedding light on how students can get involved in this line of work and broadening horizons for people who thought corporate law was their only choice. They also posted infographics on a range of topics on social media and held panel events in which social justice practitioners talked about their work.

## Community

The community team works directly on increasing access to justice with 2025 seeing 26 members volunteering at eight community law centres and citizens advice bureaus. Volunteers worked three-hour shifts totalling about 80 volunteer hours

a week carrying out administrative work, assent in conducting research, interviewing clients, drafting letters and providing advice. Their work has been vital in keeping these centres running.

## Communications

Team members' written communication skills and creativity were directed at publishing articles and making Bill submissions. Their summaries of complex legal matters in snappy online articles had received 23,000 page views by October and covered topics from parliamentary urgency to underfunding of cultural reports in sentencing. Their work increases access to justice by breaking down one of the most significant barriers people face, namely lack of understanding.

## Pro bono

The pro bono team deploys its legal research and writing skills to promote access to justice by supporting practitioners, academics and community groups who share the Equal Justice Project's values. This year 20 volunteers contributed to six pieces of work ranging from supporting ongoing legal applications to carrying out research for judicial reviews of welfare legislation. Team members undertook up to 20 hours of legal research each semester to provide briefs and submissions.

## Beyond work

The EJP also recognises that a core part of the project is the community we build. In 2025 we ran a range of events including opening and closing functions that provided opportunities for volunteers to connect with each other and practitioners in the social justice space. Our annual quiz night provided volunteers with much-needed social time and fun in the middle of the year.

This year also marked our 20th anniversary. We staged an event to celebrate our longevity involving such alumni as EJP founder Eesvan Krishnan and former patron the Right Honourable Sir Edmund Thomas KC, who took the opportunity to look back on our development over the past 20 years.

After a highly successful year we thank all volunteers and everyone who has supported our work and invite people to reach us at @equaljusticeproject on all platforms.

**Valentino Tew (pro bono co-manager)  
and Emma Corbett (co-director)**

## Auckland University Law Review

*Auckland University Law Review*, founded in 1967 and student-run, continues its work of publishing outstanding undergraduate work with its next issue featuring articles on the status of Pacific states threatened by climate change, police use of facial-recognition technology and AI's implications for intellectual property law.

The *Review* aims to contribute to the legal community by printing student research on emerging and complex legal issues while cultivating the skills of its 30-strong publishing team and researcher-writers. Since 2023 the *Review* has also aimed to support the wider Law School community through workshops on research, writing and exam preparation.

### Read all about it

The upcoming volume has articles on a wide range of areas of law with many highlighting pressing questions posed by rapidly changing world circumstances. Among them is how international law around climate change will affect Pacific states, facial-recognition technology's use in police investigations and what artificial intelligence means for intellectual property law, among other topics.

The *Review* is also proud to continue its Ko Ngā Take Ture Māori and Moana Oceania Issues Paper sections, which highlight Māori and Pasifika issues in legal scholarship. In 2025 it established the role

of Moana Oceania editor, mirroring the long-standing position of Ko Ngā Take Ture Māori editor. Inaugural Moana Oceania editor Ezra-Lee Magele made an important contribution by helping to select and edit this year's Moana Oceania Issues Paper, advancing Pasifika viewpoints. We hope to see this role continue.

### Symposium and alumni dinner

In September 2025 the *Review* hosted its annual symposium and alumni dinner, featuring an address by Honourable Justice Christian Whata of the Court of Appeal. Entitled "The Mana of Law", the address looked at the power and authority of the law with reference to the concept of mana. Justice Whata's central thesis is that "mana" provides a useful lodestar for the rule of law and a lens for assessing whether law's agents are fulfilling their rule-of-law responsibilities. The address will be published as a special feature in this year's *Review*.

The alumni dinner is an opportunity to celebrate the contributions of both *Review* alumni and the present team and foster connections across generations of the publication. Dinner speaker Nina Khouri reflected on her career in civil and commercial mediation, exploring the influence of tikanga Māori on her practice and the role of mediation in enhancing access to civil justice in Aotearoa. Her

address, "Whiria te Tāngata", will also be published as a special feature in this year's volume.

### Workshops

The recent tradition of hosting workshops for the wider Law School community continued in 2025. Our honours symposium featured three outstanding students presenting their research from the honours programme, providing present and future honours students with guidance on how to conduct and present research. LexisNexis sponsored a later workshop focused on legal research and exam preparation. The events are intended to share the skills developed within the *Review* with the wider student body.

### Acknowledgements

We are grateful to all who have contributed to the *Review* over its almost six decades of existence. We are proud to share in a Law School institution built up by generations of alumni who continue to support our mission of legal scholarship and development. We are also grateful to the faculty for its continued support, especially to our faculty advisers; to the team at the Davis Law Library whose work enables the research essential to the *Review*; and to the students who have volunteered their time this year as authors, editors and members of the business team.

**Gulliver McDonald and Elijah Kasmara**



The 2025 AULR team at the annual alumni dinner with the Honourable Justice Whata and mediator Nina Khouri.



# Mooting competitions

It has been another strong year for the Mooting Society at the University of Auckland. From first-year students taking on privacy law in the Chambers Moot to our international teams arguing humanitarian law in Hong Kong and public international law in Washington DC, Auckland students have competed across a wide range of legal topics and moot formats. The continued strength of the Mooting Society reflects the generous contribution of staff, alumni and sponsors who commit their time and expertise to coaching, judging and supporting these competitions.

## Philip C Jessup International Law Moot Court Competition

Phoebe Jennings, Ysabella Stevenson, Danica Loulié-Wijtenburg and Maria Romero De Medeiros represented Auckland at the Jessup International Law Moot Court Competition in Washington DC, the world's largest and most prestigious mooting competition. Coached by Marcelo Rodriguez Ferrere, the team competed against law schools from more than 100 countries, arguing complex questions of public international law before distinguished panels of judges. This year's problem examined the interpretation of dispute resolution clauses in regional treaties, immunity for officials accused of serious human rights violations, the effect of rising sea levels on maritime boundaries and government legitimacy.



Back: Danica Loulié-Wijtenburg and Maria Romero De Medeiros.  
Front: Phoebe Jennings and Ysabella Stevenson.



From left: Gulliver MacDonald, Francis Wee and Jimin Seo.

## Red Cross International Humanitarian Law Moot

Francis Wee, Jimin Seo and Gulliver MacDonald represented New Zealand at the Red Cross International Humanitarian Law Moot in Hong Kong. The problem required analysis of how international humanitarian law applies to modern armed conflict including regarding autonomous weapon systems, detention and the protection of civilians in complex operational settings. Competing against leading teams from the Asia-Pacific region, the team argued before panels of international humanitarian law experts and practitioners.

## Meredith Connell Law and Technology Moot

The Meredith Connell Law and Technology Moot concerns emerging issues at the intersection of law and technology. The problem, written by the Law School's Josh Yuvaraj, examined whether advertising of cryptocurrency and non-fungible tokens (NFTs) to a vulnerable community constituted unconscionable conduct under the Fair Trading Act 1986 and whether certain exclusion clauses should be declared unfair contract terms. Louisa Freiln von Fircks and Joseph Reddish won the competition with Ayesha Hafeez and Eliza Chin as finalists.



Back row, from left: Ayesha Hafeez, Louisa Freiln von Fircks, Joseph Reddish and Eliza Chin.





Winners Hayley Brown (left) and Claire Randall display their certificates.

### John Haigh QC Memorial Moot

The John Haigh QC Memorial Moot honoured the late John Haigh with a criminal law problem written by Caccia Armstrong. The scenario involved a university student who set fire to her flatmate's property, requiring competitors to work through questions of intent, recklessness and endangerment under s 267 of the Crimes Act 1961. Claire Randall and Hayley Brown took out the competition with Syon Kapoor and Spencer Withers as finalists.



Callum Hackston (middle) and Seb Bernard with the winners' shield.

### Simpson Grierson Social Issues Moot

The Simpson Grierson Social Issues Moot brought together law students from Auckland, AUT and Waikato to argue contemporary social and policy questions. Written and sponsored by Simpson Grierson, this year's problem examined amendments to prisoners' voting rights and whether they constituted an unjustified limitation under the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990. Callum Hackston and Seb Bernard won the competition with Jelle Keizer and Sharon McGeough from Waikato as finalists.



### Stout Shield (Bell Gully Senior Moot)

The Stout Shield, sponsored by Bell Gully, remains the University's most prestigious mooting competition. This year's problem, written by Bell Gully, examined the assignability of fiduciary duties and equitable allowances in light of the UK Supreme Court's decision in *Rukhadze v Recovery Partners GP Ltd*. Saskia Wigman and Louisa Freiin von Fircks won the competition with Wigman also

named Best Oralist. Emma Austin-Mannes and Joseph Reddish were finalists. The winning team went on to represent Auckland at the NZLSA National Championship Moot.

Winners Saskia Wigman (left) and Louisa Freiin von Fircks.

### Bell Gully Junior Moot

The Bell Gully Junior Moot provides an introduction to appellate advocacy for newer law students. This year's problem, written



and sponsored by Bell Gully, examined defamation and privacy law through a dispute involving a drone photograph of a television actor on his apartment balcony. Maia Hunter and Lily Williams won the competition with Chloe Sim and Rebecca Huang as finalists.

Winners Lily Williams (left) and Maia Hunter.



Lady Deborah Chambers KC, winners Maya Menon and Danica Kane, Justice Graham Lang and Professor Mark Henaghan.

# In memoriam

## **Emeritus Professor Bruce Harris, former Dean of the University of Auckland Faculty of Law (1995–2000)**

Below is the eulogy delivered on behalf of the Law Faculty by Professor Janet McLean KC at the celebration of Emeritus Professor Bruce Victor Harris's life.

"We remember Professor Bruce Harris as a teacher, scholar, mentor and University leader. A graduate of Otago and Harvard Universities he went on to teach law at the University of Otago for 17 years and served there as dean before coming north to the University of Auckland. At Auckland he taught mainly public law joining Mike Taggart, Paul Rishworth and me on the public law team. He served as dean from 1995 to 2000. He remained at the University of Auckland until his retirement doing some of his best scholarly work.

"Bruce's teaching and research were characterised by many of the traits he exhibited as a person. He was clear, precise and direct. He tried to bring order to areas of law he considered messy, unprincipled and muddled. He disliked monarchy and forms of privilege. He was practical and doctrinal and wanted law to be coherent and accessible. He disliked theory – though he still had time for theorists. Mark Henaghan remembers being a student attending Bruce's first ever lecture on the *audi alteram partem* principle – the requirement to treat individuals fairly and impartially. He lived those principles as a lawyer, teacher and university leader.

"I was deputy dean to Bruce for some of his time as dean at the University. He strove to make the Law Faculty a collegial and inclusive place. Twenty-five years ago he encouraged us to learn te reo with the help of the redoubtable Nin Tomas, who later turned out to be part of his wider whānau. He encouraged us to be open-minded and to value everyone. He loved to say we are



Professor Bruce Harris (left) and Professor Peter Devonshire.



**"He was no pushover. His time in legal practice showed. He could ask the apparently benign question followed by the killer question especially of those in power."**

Professor Janet McLean KC

a broad church – to the amusement of our Jewish colleagues. One of those colleagues lately described him as a mensch – a person of integrity and honour. And so he was. Bruce was steady, steadfast, did not show anger even when sometimes seriously provoked and viewed his role as one of service.

"I remember his saying that members of the Law Faculty academic staff were like a stable of thoroughbreds – they needed careful looking after in order to perform at their best. Sometimes they could even be a bit skittish, he would say with a mischievous

twinkle! Those are stories for another day. What that meant in practical terms is he did not shy away from difficult conversations – when people missed out on promotion or received bad student feedback or did not get the teaching allocations they wanted. He responded to people as humans to be supported not chess pieces to be managed. He saw potential leadership in others – I remember his very early identification of Dr Amokura Kawharu, now president of the Law Commission, as someone who would go on to great things.

"He was no pushover. His time in legal practice showed. He could ask the apparently benign question followed by the killer question especially of those in power. He served on the University Council. He was quietly astute and never to be underestimated. He would sit at academic talks with his arms crossed and his face set – and you would hope you were not saying anything too stupid.

"Humble in his service to others, Bruce was himself a scholar of some international renown. His work on the sources of executive power – the third source was a term he coined – has been cited by the highest courts around the Commonwealth. This was ground-breaking and its practical significance continues to present itself in numerous contexts including the criminal law.

"His discovery of the third source would sometimes attract affectionate teasing. Caroline Foster tells a story of a Law School barbecue at which Bruce asked for a particular condiment on his sausages – to which some wag replied, 'There is no third sauce, Bruce'. He took it in good part.

"Bruce earned an LLD from the University of Otago for the outstanding quality of the body of his scholarly work. He has been rewarded too – as all committed teachers must be – by his best students going on to great things – Mark Henaghan, Hanna



Wilberg, Jane Norton, Ed Willis, Max Harris, Sam Bookman, Amokura Kawharu, Hamish McQueen, the late Vikki McCall, Nicola Wheen – to name just a few. Hanna, Ed, Sam and Max edited a collection of scholarly essays in a book in his honour – a real tribute to Bruce's lasting contributions to law and scholarship in Aotearoa New Zealand. In his retirement he completed his 2018 text *New Zealand Constitution: An Analysis in Terms of Principles*, which drew together some 50 years of scholarship and teaching into one insightful and authoritative tome.

"There has been an outpouring of tributes from public lawyers at Otago, Victoria and Auckland over the last few days and I have not been able to capture everything here. There will be opportunities to make further tribute. Our grief is of course nothing compared to that felt by Beth and the family. Nevertheless we feel the loss of a wonderful colleague and a wonderful man. He was conservative in a good way, quietly progressive, committed to making law known and accessible. Decent to his very core.

"We are grateful for his influence, example and friendship. He taught us much about dignity and integrity. Our hearts go out to Beth and the family.

"Kua hinga te tōtara o Te Waonui Ture a Tāne."

### A personal tribute by long-standing University colleague Emeritus Professor David Williams.



"I first met Bruce Harris in Oxford in 1982. We were both on sabbatical leave in Oxford and we met through our mutual friend Peter Skegg, then tutor in law at



Emeritus Professor David Williams at Bruce Harris's retirement dinner.

New College and later Bruce's colleague at the Otago Faculty of Law. Taking our research and study leave with an affiliation to one of the colleges in Oxford was something both Bruce and I repeated a number of times in our careers.

"At Bruce's funeral his love of rugby was mentioned more than once. It was that aspect of Bruce that induced him to invite me to travel with him to Cardiff in 1982. We went to watch a match between the New Zealand Māori XV and Wales. It was something of a big ask for me seeing that I had spent most of the previous year protesting against and being arrested numerous times for opposition to the Springbok rugby team's tour of New Zealand. Nevertheless he did persuade me to join him. We thoroughly enjoyed being in a packed Cardiff Arms Park to listen to a Welsh crowd singing and to watch a really good game of rugby in which the Welsh national team narrowly beat the Māori XV 25–19.

"Later in the 1980s I twice had occasion to be at gatherings of legal academics in Dunedin when Bruce was deputy to an ailing Professor PBA Sim who was the dean. Bruce was an exemplary administrator and host on both occasions and he took on the deanship after Professor Sim's death in 1988. Soon after that the University of Auckland appointed Bruce to a chair in our Faculty of Law and he served out his academic career with distinction in Auckland. Others writing in this issue of *Auckland Law* will elaborate on his many contributions here – including a five-year stint as dean – and his highly acclaimed public law scholarship. I would only wish to mention my thanks that it was Bruce as dean who enabled my return to the Auckland Law fold in 2000 – after some time in an academic wilderness during the 1990s.

"An anecdote I wish to include is a matter that was also mentioned more than once at his funeral. It relates to the photograph accompanying this obituary. There I am standing making some comments at the retirement dinner for Bruce at the Wine Chambers – perhaps an unlikely venue for a lifelong abstainer of the fruit of the vine – and Bruce and Beth are both smiling broadly. My comments causing the merriment when that photograph was taken concerned a late-in-life discovery of an aspect of his heritage that Bruce had not known about from within his own family. Bruce's mother died when he was young

and he was wanting to know something of his mother's ancestor who had lived in the Hokianga early in the 19th century. He visited the Hokianga Historical Society Museum and Archives Centre in Ōmāpere. There he asked a volunteer if he could look at any archive files that they might have about a Fergusson ancestor who had lived in Kohukohu on the north side of the Hokianga harbour. Yes, the volunteer said, here is a file on Fergusson, and if you want to look at it then you will want to look at archives about the Leaf family. No, said Bruce, but the volunteer insisted on being helpful. As a result, Bruce discovered that his Fergusson ancestor had married a Māori woman – a member of the Leaf whānau from Te Hikutu hapū located at Whirinaki in South Hokianga.

"In terms of statute law he was 'a person of the Māori race' being a descendant of a Māori person. More than that, it turned out he was related by whakapapa to his colleague Dr Nin Tomas – Te Rarawa – who was one of the staunchest supporters of kaupapa Māori policies and practices in law faculties. I have visited the grave of Bruce's Fergusson family in a beautiful hillside cemetery above Kohukohu township. The headstones there disclose many stories similar to Bruce's of Māori-Pākehā connections back in the day.

"Moe mai rā, Bruce. Rest in peace."

### Below are various tributes from colleagues at the faculty.



"Bruce started his academic career at Otago. I had the good fortune to be in his first law lecture when he returned from his LL.M at Harvard in 1975. It was a guest lecture in Professor John Smillie's administrative law class. Bruce lectured with great enthusiasm on the *audi alteram partem* rule – that no one should be judged without a fair hearing. It's a topic that sums up Bruce, who was a person of the highest integrity and fairness. Throughout the lecture Bruce cared deeply that we fully understood what he was talking about. That was the mark of all Bruce's teaching and publications.

"In 1994 Professor Michael Taggart, who was dean at Auckland Law School, attracted Bruce to Auckland. Bruce served with distinction as dean of our faculty from 1995 to 2000. He was held in high esteem as a dean for the tireless and generous

support he gave everyone. The faculty was in great heart when Bruce finished his time as dean.

"In his final year on the faculty in 2018 the culmination of Bruce's work in public law was published in *New Zealand Constitution: An Analysis in Terms of Principles*. A reviewer of the book describes it as 'reflecting [Bruce's] best features as a scholar. Its primary goal is to present an accessible account of New Zealand's opaque and evolving constitutional arrangements'. The reviewer goes on to say the book will stand the test of time because it 'democratises many of our fundamental constitutional principles'.

"The greatest tribute to an academic is to have a festschrift produced in their honour by colleagues and former students. The 2022 book entitled *Pragmatism, Principle and Power in Common Law Constitutional Systems: Essays in Honour of Bruce Harris* featured contributions from several members of both the Auckland and Otago faculties. Hanna Wilberg and Ed Willis were editors of the book along with Sam Bookman and Max Harris.

"Most important of all for Bruce is his family: his wife Beth and his children Nina, Giselle and Craig, as well as eight grandchildren all of whom will miss Bruce immensely. Rest in peace dear Bruce."

#### Professor Mark Henaghan



"The thing I most remember about Bruce was his kindness and human decency. He was a great employer.

"Bruce was the dean when I arrived at the Law Faculty from Sydney. When I first flew in to take up the position he came to the airport to pick me up and popped into my office once a week for months after that to check how I was settling in. I seem to remember he even coped – with grace and kindness – with me crying at one point over some of the frustrating aspects of trying to get set up in the University bureaucracy. I felt listened to and never judged by him. He did this for all his new appointees.

"A few years into my appointment I taught intellectual property for the first and last time and got some not very flattering SET evaluations. It was a mark of Bruce's decency and leadership that he came to give them to me in person so that we could chat about them and he could ensure I was not too devastated by them.

"Bernard Brown tells a very funny story about going into Bruce's office to try to get Bruce to commit to the faculty funding his academic regalia for graduation. Bruce apparently said 'we can't wear that!'.

"I grew to appreciate over time his deep and nuanced understanding of human nature.

"He was very good at recognising people's strengths and talents. I have come to realise this is not a skill everyone has.

"He was trustworthy, safe, emotionally intelligent and thoroughly decent."

#### Professor Julia Tolmie



"Bruce was the first lecturer I encountered when I started Law School in 1996.

"In his dean's welcome he gave us a firm talking-to about how we were only in Part I and weren't in Law School yet so needed to work hard that year. His public law lectures were fantastic – so clear. I can still vividly recall his animated recounting of the Kerr-Whitlam constitutional saga.

"I didn't have the good fortune of being his colleague for long but I valued getting to know him once I joined the faculty in 2016. He was very supportive to junior colleagues and did much for the health of the faculty more broadly far past his deanship."

#### Dr Jane Norton



"My favourite memory of Bruce is when we had offices next to each other at the Law School. I was hanging something on the wall and banging in a nail. I was pregnant. Bruce came rushing in thinking I was in premature labour and sending out an SOS. Much laughter followed."

#### Nina Khouri



"Bruce Harris hired me in 2000. I remember thinking at the outset that we had little in common and that my new way of teaching clashed with his old-fashioned ideas.

"I could not have misjudged him more. For the next 10 years Bruce was my steadfast colleague and friend. He never stopped encouraging me to do my best. He was one of the nicest men I ever met and one

of the very best colleagues. If he disagreed with you, he always did so with the utmost respect.

"I had more than 50 colleagues in my time at the University of Auckland. At an end-of-year party that also served as my 'leaving' dinner I only singled out three by name, but I went out of my way to heap praise on Bruce Harris and I could see by his face that he quietly appreciated every word. I said everything there that I've repeated here and now I'm especially happy I did. Bruce knew how I felt about him.

"This is particularly tough to write because I am just two months away from a return trip to New Zealand, my first since 2013, and I had hoped very much to see him.

"I wish I was as good a colleague to my junior colleagues as Bruce Harris was to me. I am not even close. Very few people are. But that's why I feel so compelled to write this, because Bruce Harris was an absolute mensch and I will forever cherish the many morning teas we spent together talking All Blacks rugby, law teaching and more. Thanks so much Bruce."

#### Peter Sankoff

## Associate Professor Jerry Elkind BA, JD, LL.M, LL.D

23 October 1939 – 29 August 2025

Retired Auckland Law School Associate Professor Jerome B (Jerry) Elkind died on 29 August 2025 aged 85.

Originally from the Bronx, New York, Elkind's parents were Russian immigrants who escaped persecution as Jews by immigrating to the US. After growing up in the shadow of World War II, Elkind graduated with a BA in sociology from Columbia University in 1961, a Juris Doctor degree from New York University School of Law in 1964, an LL.M from King's College London in 1971 and a Doctor of Laws from the University of Auckland in 1992. In the 1960s Elkind worked as a civil rights lawyer for the US Government, pursuing cases under the watershed US Civil Rights Act of 1960.

Elkind married his first wife, Peace Corps psychologist Gail Switzer, in 1965. A daughter, Lisa, was born in 1970 and second daughter Debbie in 1974.

The Elkind family came to New Zealand in 1972 when Jerry was hired to teach international and public and constitutional law at the University of Auckland. He taught at Auckland Law School for 25 years, retiring in 1997. Gail likewise taught psychology at the Auckland University School of Medicine. The couple eventually divorced and Gail died in 2005.

As noted by Associate Professor Bernard Brown in his retirement tribute to Elkind in the 1996–97 Auckland Law School *Eden Crescent Magazine*: "Jerry swiftly established a reputation beyond Australasia with books and articles on international law, including *Interim Protection: A Functional Approach*, and another work, *Non-Appearance before the International Court of Justice*, which was awarded the prestigious Prix Francis Lieber by the Institut de Droit International.

"He also published widely on constitutional law and *A Standard of Justice*, with Antony Shaw, was a significant contribution to the New Zealand Bill of Rights debate. In 1993 Jerry's law-literary endeavour was rewarded with the conferment of the degree of Doctor of Laws."

Brown described Elkind as "a ubiquitous conferee" who held visiting appointments at Columbia and at the University of Wyoming. He qualified as a barrister and solicitor in 1990.



Jerry Elkind and second wife Jean McDonald.



**"He may rate as his largest forensic achievement his submissions [on behalf of the Republic of Nauru] to the International Court of Justice in the Nuclear Weapons case."**

Associate Professor Bernard Brown

"He may rate as his largest forensic achievement his submissions [on behalf of the Republic of Nauru] to the International Court of Justice in the Nuclear Weapons case. Indeed Jerry has pointed with pride to some aspects of that Court's judgment that evidently take substance, tone ... and colour from his close-textured argument."

After retiring from Law School Elkind taught law at the University of Swaziland. When he returned to New Zealand he maintained an active interest in the work of the Auckland Ethnic Council and other local institutions.

In 2006 Elkind remarried and his second wife, Jean McDonald, survives him at age 98. They spent many happy years together, their final residence being a retirement home in Epsom.

In addition to daughters Lisa and Debbie Elkind is survived by Zachary and Jackson – his grandchildren from Lisa and her late husband Richard Gardiner, Elkind's friend of many years.

At a memorial on 20 September Elkind was remembered by his Law School colleagues for his passionate commitment to social justice, civil rights and international human rights law. Indeed in the 1970s he had an opinion column in the *New Zealand Herald* entitled "Elkind's Writ" in which he discussed current events from a legal perspective and advocated for a Bill of Rights to protect the civil and political rights of all New Zealanders.

Elkind will also be remembered for his love of classical music, his skill as an oboist, his passion for world travel and his musical performances in various Law School end-of-year revues. He was, most of all, a loving husband and devoted father and grandfather.

He will be deeply missed but his significant and enduring contributions to law and legal discourse remain.

Professor Scott Optican



# Philanthropy highlights

The Faculty of Law is grateful for the generous ongoing support of many donors that taken together makes a significant contribution to the ability of academic staff and students to achieve their research and academic goals.

Of special note are very generous gifts from the Freemasons Foundation, Sir Michael and Suzanne Borrin Foundation and The Jelas Foundation in support of a major conference in December 2025 to promote and provide for the further development and sustainability of the Alcohol and Other Drug Treatment (AODT) Court. The conference addresses a critical issue in society that causes immeasurable damage to families and communities. These donors' generosity enables the conference to bring together leading international and local stakeholders to showcase cutting-edge international research as well as the crucial contribution made by the AODT courts in New Zealand.

Sir Ted Thomas and family have made a significant contribution to the Faculty of Law Student Support Award Fund. We will be highlighting this fund to donors as an alternative to offering individual scholarships given its vital role in providing support for academically able students through temporary times of hardship. Although as rigorously managed as existing scholarships it enables a faster, efficient response in times of special need.

The Honourable Barry Paterson and Honourable Rod Hansen both made cornerstone gifts towards a new Law Faculty research initiative, the Maamaloa Pacific Legal Research Hub.



Donald Lawrie (Centre), Kesar Singh and team.

Law students representing the faculty at international events including the ICC Negotiation Competition held in Paris, the International Red Cross Moot in Hong Kong, the Jessup Moot finals in Washington DC and International Negotiation Competition finals in London in July have all benefitted from generous gifts from David Kidd that have enabled their participation in these prestigious contests.

Lady Deborah Chambers KC has renewed her ongoing support of the Justice Sir Robert Chambers Memorial Moot as have Kavita Deobhakta and family for the Judge Avinash Deobhakta Memorial Prize in Criminal Procedure. Law firms Mayne

Wetherell and Buddle Findlay both also contributed towards the maintenance of annual prizes in their names.

Among new donors we are delighted to acknowledge a significant contribution from Kesar Singh and his firm Indus Legal who along with Stephen Hunter KC and a number of other donors have made contributions to the Law Student Support Award Fund.

As in previous years special mention and thanks are due to Donna Mummery as a long-standing donor who has again made a significant gift to the New Zealand Centre for Environmental Law (NZCEL).

Several law firms have contributed to the activities and initiatives of the many student clubs and associations, notably Kayes Fletcher Walker and Meredith Connell, which have given funds to the Pacific Islands Law Students' Association.

Anonymous donations have also come from several sources. The loyalty of donors who have contributed regularly over the years as well of those who join this especially significant group of our supporters for the first time this year is deeply appreciated.



Justice Sir Robert Chambers Memorial Moot 2025. From left: Lady Deborah Chambers KC, Hon Justice Lang and Professor Mark Henaghan.

# Donor wall

Auckland Law School thanks all alumni and friends for their support, including the following who have given support over the past year:

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