

# Uni NEWS

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MARCH 2020



## MICHELE LEGGOTT

Moons and milestones



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Taking our expertise to Australian teachers in their hour of need

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### FRESH START

Dean of Engineering Nic Smith moves on but leaves an invigorated team behind

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Why creating policy based on the result of a referendum isn't a smart idea

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## DOCTOR LOVE

Starring in *The Bachelorette* this season is University of Auckland alumna Dr Lesina Nakhid-Schuster. Thirty-two-year-old Lesina graduated from Auckland Medical School in 2012 and was working full-time as a doctor in Auckland before becoming a locum in Australia in February 2019. The former St Dominic's College, Henderson, student returned to New Zealand in October and is now one of two bachelorettes starring in the TV2 show. As well as her medical training, she took an acting course at one point and has appeared as an extra in a few shows and ads.



## LAW TEAM IS TOP OF THE WORLD

For the second year in a row, Auckland Law School has triumphed at the world's largest mediation competition. The International Mediation Competition of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) was held in Paris last month, with teams from 66 universities competing in mock mediation sessions over six days. Our team of Susie McCluskey, Keeha Oh, Jacob Siermans and Madeleine Tilley, coached by Tunisia Napia and Rima Shenoy, beat Bucerius Law School from Germany in the final. Read more: [tinyurl.com/ICCwinners](http://tinyurl.com/ICCwinners)

## COLOURS OF THE RAINBOW

Staff and students created a vibrant and welcoming space at Big Gay Out in February. For the first time, the University's stall included an interactive element, with volunteers glittering and painting stall visitors. The time allowed for stall volunteers to better explain how the University supports Rainbow communities and also saw a record number of visitors at the tent. Join the LGBTQITakatāpui (Rainbow) Student and Staff Network on Yammer and visit [equity.auckland.ac.nz/rainbow](http://equity.auckland.ac.nz/rainbow) to connect with our Rainbow community. There is also a Rainbow Network that meets regularly. Email: [t.oneill@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:t.oneill@auckland.ac.nz).



## HONOURS FOR TOP KIWIS

The Kiwibank New Zealander of the Year Awards in February featured many semi-finalists and finalists with links to the University, including Professor Jane Harding, former Professor Bob Elliott, Lexie Matheson and Fady Mishriki. Jane and adjunct professor Peter Beck were finalists in the New Zealander of the Year, but missed out to actor Jennifer Ward-Lealand. The University also sponsored the Young New Zealander of the Year Award, won by Georgia Hale (pictured with VC Stuart McCutcheon) for bringing the sport of rugby league to communities.

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# CORONAVIRUS

This year Semester One began with the additional challenges posed by coronavirus (COVID-19). Despite the low risk in New Zealand, there are still complexities for staff as the campuses become busy again. The importance of health and hygiene is paramount and messages about handwashing and cleanliness are applicable to any flu or virus situation, as well as the common cold.

There have been some reported instances outside the campus of discrimination, such as towards people choosing to wear face masks. Any such behaviour goes against the University's principles of equity, care, compassion and hospitality to all, which are part of the Code of Conduct ([auckland.ac.nz/en/on-campus/life-on-campus/code-of-conduct.html](http://auckland.ac.nz/en/on-campus/life-on-campus/code-of-conduct.html)). Advice for all staff on how to deal with conversations around COVID-19 can be found on the intranet at [staff.auckland.ac.nz/coronavirus](http://staff.auckland.ac.nz/coronavirus). Other information can be found at [auckland.ac.nz/coronavirus](http://auckland.ac.nz/coronavirus). There's also an excellent chat-bot that answers questions in English and Mandarin through questions at [facebook.com/arkhealthdiscovery](http://facebook.com/arkhealthdiscovery).

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Professor Peter O'Connor. Photo: Elise Manahan

## COLLABORATION IN A CRISIS

Our experts created tools for Australian teachers following the bushfires.

**When Australian school teachers stepped into the classroom on the first day of the school year, they knew it needed to be a safe haven from the horror of the bushfires that had devastated so many communities in New South Wales and Victoria.**

Before the school term started, many teachers had gathered in Sydney to hear the expertise of University of Auckland arts educator Professor Peter O'Connor and Professor Carol Mutch.

Peter was approached by Australian academic colleagues to lead a project to help teachers when students returned to school during the ongoing bushfire crisis. He has previously worked with children in Christchurch following the earthquakes and terror attacks, and in Mexico City following earthquakes there. What resulted was a one-day gathering in January of 30 academic experts from arts, health, education and disaster recovery, from universities all over Australia and the University of Auckland.

"I talked to Carol, then to colleagues at the universities of Melbourne and Sydney, along with my friend who's the president of the National Alliance of Arts Educators in Australia," says Peter. "Within 24 hours we had half a dozen professors and artists, another colleague who runs the Arts Health Network in NSW. Within two days we had the best people in this area, in this part of the world, on the team."

The experts produced a set of resources and advice for teachers and posted it on the NSW Arts Health Network site. Teachers were directed to it for support as they returned to school.

"Universities are slow beasts, but for this to be at all meaningful, it had to be up and out for the first day back at school. And we did it," he says.

It features classroom activities for teachers

of children at all levels. "We named the initiative after the banksia flower that can regenerate after a crisis. It's a metaphor for our work: arts strengthening communities in the midst of disaster. It reminds us that natural regeneration is possible," says Peter.

"Schools have a role in helping children understand the world in which they live," he says. "Often in disasters, schools become the hubs by which everything operates so it's really important that you structure what you do on the first days back. For example, how you memorialise is a big question. If you lose a couple of kids in your school to a disaster, how do you manage that? Not talking about it is about the worst thing you can do ... it makes schools less than human."

He says first-year teachers may not have had any training in this area. "They end up with 30 five-year-olds thinking 'what the hell do I do'? If you're the adult with these children, they'll have a huge range of questions."

The Banksia Initiative met in Sydney, with a practical arts-based workshop on the second day for around 50 teachers. A webinar was held for those who couldn't attend the event. "I did the work I've done both in Christchurch and Mexico City after earthquakes and showed how you can do that with little ones. [Professor] Helen Cahill from the University of Melbourne covered how you could work with secondary school students.

"In Australia, after the Black Saturday bushfires in 2009, their Ministry of Education, and a range of other organisations, have been really proactive in developing tools for schools."

He says that's not the case in New Zealand. "Even though we've had the Christchurch earthquakes and a terror attack, in New Zealand we don't have anything like this in place for schools. There's the usual excellent advice about returning to normal. But how do you deal with the stories coming in? How do you acknowledge what's been happening in young people's lives?"

Carol has worked in five countries in post-disaster situations and agrees that students need school to be a place of safety and calm after the chaos in their lives. "They need familiarity and routine. They also need safe ways to begin

to make sense of the events. Speakers at the seminar gave ideas for using the arts, literature and drama as vehicles for emotional processing."

Peter says anger and fear were dominant emotions shown by the teachers attending the workshop. "I started the first workshop by just providing a space for people to talk about what's been happening. There's a real anger that this has happened. There's this whole climate change issue that their government refuses to acknowledge as well as anger over the way their government handled the crisis. So there was this huge outpouring of emotion.

"The teachers also talked about how scared they are ... this whole fire business and, you know, black sky, and choking on dust and smoke. And we talked about how important it is for teachers to talk about it as staff back at school too."

"It's important to look after yourself and those around you," Carol adds. "Teachers and principals tend to put their students, families and communities before their own needs and can become exhausted very quickly."

Peter says tertiary institutions training teachers need to think about how to ensure their graduates are equipped to deal with such crises. "There were lots of teacher educators who, after those two days in Sydney, said, 'I need to go back to my university and say 'when these events happen, we need the opportunity for staff to think about what it means for us, but also what it means for our students and our classes in the coming days'."

Carol says there are common messages for teachers and principals and a summary of these is on the Banksia Initiative website. She says since the seminar she has been contacted personally by teachers, to share stories or ask questions.

"This has highlighted the need for teachers, especially beginning teachers or teachers in remote locations, to be able to talk to someone, in person, about their concerns."

She says the advice sheets she prepared for Australian teachers have attracted global interest. "A teacher in Puerto Rico asked if she can translate them into Spanish and share with schools in her country after their recent earthquakes. This experience has highlighted that what we do is important and can make a difference to people's lives."

See: [artshealthnetwork.com.au/resources/](http://artshealthnetwork.com.au/resources/)  
Full story: [auckland.ac.nz/BanksiaInitiative](http://auckland.ac.nz/BanksiaInitiative)



Professor Carol Mutch, left.





BAS South Georgia whale team 2019

## WHALES MAKE A COMEBACK

**The critically endangered blue whale is increasingly looking like one of conservation's biggest success stories.**

In the first multi-year survey at South Georgia Island in the southwest Atlantic where hunting drove whales almost to extinction, an international team of scientists reports some whale populations may be close to full recovery while others show promising signs of a comeback.

University of Auckland whale researcher Dr Emma Carroll, who has co-led the survey with Dr Jen Jackson from the British Antarctic Survey (BAS), says the latest data from South Georgia shows protection of whales has worked.

"South Georgia has a similar latitude to New Zealand's sub-Antarctic islands and, as with our own populations of southern right whale near the sub-Antarctic Auckland Islands, we knew populations were increasing but these latest results are fantastic," she says. "It's also particularly significant because whales were slaughtered in their tens of thousands at South Georgia so to see them return in such numbers is just an absolute thrill."

Surveying humpback, blue and southern right whales, the researchers report humpbacks are now a common sight in coastal waters at South Georgia with 790 reported over 21 days of surveying this season. A preliminary estimate suggests more than 20,000 humpbacks are feeding there in summer before migrating to colder waters in the sub-Antarctic to breed.

The rare and critically endangered blue whale was sighted just once during the first year of the survey, in 2018. This year, blue whales were sighted or acoustically recorded 55 times.

"Continued protection and monitoring is required to see if this unprecedented number of blue whale sightings is a long-term trend, as we see in humpbacks," says Jen.

The southern right whale, or Tohorā, was regularly seen in 2018 but only rarely seen in 2019 and this season. Jen says that may be because they prefer to feed elsewhere but the data will be further analysed.

"What is clear is that protection from whaling has worked with densities of humpbacks, in particular, similar to those of a century ago."

## ASPIRATIONS FOR THE FUTURE AS CLOUD LIFTS

The dawn blessing to open the new Engineering Building was a special moment on many levels.

**When Dean of Engineering Nic Smith ends his six-year stint at the University this month, he will look back on many faculty achievements, but one has made him prouder than most. It came at the December opening of the new \$280m Engineering Building with a dawn blessing, the unveiling of a pou whenua (carved wooden post) and, significantly, a new haka.**

"The opportunity to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with my colleagues, to perform our haka and signal a new beginning for Engineering was special," says Nic. "It was a unique chance for us to articulate and celebrate the values and culture of our faculty community."

The haka – *Me Hoki Whakamuri Kia Anga Whakamua* – goes a long way towards healing the hurt inflicted more than 40 years ago, in an era when engineering students would perform a mock haka annually as part of their capping pranks, despite protests at the time.

Nic will take up a new role as Provost at Queensland University of Technology this month and says performing the new haka was a highlight of his time at Auckland.

"We were not only opening a new building, but also signalling what that building offers ... and the direction in which we want to go as a faculty."

The haka was created by staff with Tāpetā Wehi, co-founder of Te Wehi Haka and leader of the Haka Experience.

Nic says the issue of the mock haka has concerned him since he became Dean in 2013.

"One of the frustrating things is that while the haka story has been forgotten by many New Zealanders, it remains an important and challenging reminder for the Māori community of a time when the haka's unique ability to draw us together and collectively issue our clarion call was not always understood or respected.

"I sat next to a person on a plane back in Wellington fairly early on in my time as Dean. After I told him my job he said 'oh, yeah, yeah. You're the fellows who used to do that haka'.

"It is important that we acknowledge all our history. However, our haka legacy was stymying

## VAPE STUDY DISPROVES MEDIA HYPE

**A major study of youth smoking by ASH NZ and the University of Auckland shows that while some young people are experimenting with vaping, daily use of an e-cigarette occurs overwhelmingly in existing smokers.**

The annual survey of almost 30,000 Year 10 students (aged 14-15) is one of the largest dedicated youth tobacco surveys in the world. Since 2014 the survey has asked about the use of e-cigarettes or vapes. The new study found that in 2019, only 3.1 percent of Year 10 students vaped daily, while 37.3 percent have tried an e-cigarette, even just a puff, up from 20.8 percent in 2014.

More than 95 percent of students who smoked daily had tried vaping, compared to 25 percent of those who had never smoked tobacco. Although a quarter of those who have never smoked had tried at least a single puff of an e-cigarette, less than 1 percent (0.8 percent) were daily users.

Despite increases in experimentation, daily use remains low, especially for non-smokers.

Lead author, Associate Professor Dr Natalie Walker from the University, says: "Our findings are consistent with other national surveys and do not support the idea of a so-called youth vaping epidemic in Aotearoa New Zealand.

"Most importantly, our survey looks at daily use which is a far more reliable indicator of likely dependence on vaping, than weekly or monthly use. Despite increases in experimentation ... daily use remains low, especially for non-smokers.

"E-cigarettes might be displacing smoking for young people. Concerns about youth vaping should be weighed against the possibility that e-cigarettes could decrease the risk of smoking initiation and support smoking youth to quit."

Full story: [tinyurl.com/YouthVape](https://tinyurl.com/YouthVape)



Dean of Engineering Nic Smith, second from right, performing the new haka. Below: The Engineering team.

our efforts to move forward. So in the faculty we had a conversation about what was important for us. What did we want to represent? What was the common thing about us as a group we wanted to hold up and say, this is what we're about?"

Catherine Dunphy, Kaiārahi for the faculty, said the historic incident reflected what was happening in society at the time but the new haka represents the faculty's aspirations for the future.

"The only way to move ahead is to understand and acknowledge our history," she says.

Nic says the new haka is a rallying call for engineering to define its purpose.

"We are uniquely positioned as the Faculty of Engineering in the South Pacific, of relevance for our iwi community and all the people of Aotearoa New Zealand. There's still a lot of work to do but we have a number of absolutely fantastic young Māori staff who have joined the faculty over the past three years and are helping us move forward."

These include lecturer Dr Tumanako Fa'au, Professional Teaching Fellow Aimee Matiu and doctoral student Nona Taute who, with current students, led the haka at the blessing.

The haka's development is part of a greater strategic priority for the faculty. In 2018, Engineering began to look at ways to identify students who may not otherwise have chosen engineering as a subject. It ran a four-week camp called Genesis, taking in 20 Māori and Pacific students. "None had qualifications to get into engineering," says Nic. "Some didn't even have qualifications to get into university. At the beginning, we tested them and the average scores went from less than 30 percent to over 80 percent."

"Of the 20, we offered 15 places in engineering although five went to science. These are students who otherwise would never have come to university. Most of them are first in their family. It's a small number, but it's a significant number and one that we must continue to build on."

Nic says diversity among students and staff is improving. "Over the past six years the number of

engineering women students has risen from just over 20 percent to 30 percent now, a trend the faculty is determined to continue. Our biomedical programme has 60 percent female students.

"For staff it takes time. You have a staff group who span everything from people who were here as students during the haka era to people who are very new. Look at our younger staff. We are much more diverse in the faculty as a whole and we're better for it."

He acknowledges that engineering may still have an image problem.

"The reality is, engineering today is an enormously diverse discipline, meaning that while today's engineers have important technical skills, they're also creative people who can navigate uncertainty and rationalise complexity. For students today, as they consider a new problem, being able to ask the relevant new questions is increasingly just as important as answering existing questions.

"What gives me confidence is that it's exciting how quickly our students are developing these skills," says Nic. "They're diverse, talented and highly motivated to contribute to a better world in many new and emerging areas.

"They look at how we as a society respond to challenges. For example, consider autonomous vehicles. The question is not how to do it. The question is how do you introduce them and what are the ethics of a driverless vehicle having to decide between running someone over at a crossing or crashing and killing the occupants?"

"Or 3D printing. The question is not the technology. It's about what happens to the intellectual property. And what does it mean for the manufacturing sector? What can we now design that we couldn't make before?"

He says engineers have to play a leadership role and become more engaged with their wider community and other disciplines and types of expertise.

"Yes, we need people to deal with engineering challenges around climate change. But actually, we need people who have a wider perspective

and who understand how and why ideas and technologies are going to be adopted by society."

He says by being able to bring disparate communities of different skills together you can start to address some of the challenges. "A single engineer or even a huge group of engineers isn't going to solve climate change alone."

Nic says all universities need to work on their relevance to the local community.

"If you look at the changing demographics of Auckland, and New Zealand, if we are not relevant for our young people, if we're not relevant for Māori, if we are not relevant for our wider community, there is a huge risk that we're not going to be relevant as an institution."

Another goal is to engage more with a wide spectrum of industry.

"When I arrived, we had one of the poorest engagements with industry. But now I can point to many major corporate partners and relationships for supplying students, research, support, and equity programmes."

Nic looks back with pride on many of these things but his proudest moment came at the opening ceremony of the new building.

"I got an email afterwards from one of our staff who said 'I was there doing the haka in the 1970s when I was a student and I can't tell you how good it made me feel to now be part of a faculty that has given that story some closure.'"

■ Denise Montgomery

**Professor Gerard Rowe will be acting dean of the Faculty of Engineering.**







## SNAPSHOTS

### IN TIME

After more than three decades of having her poetry published, Michele Leggott has selected some of her best.

**Professor Michele Leggott sits at her dining table in Devonport with her nine poetry books displayed in front of her.**

"I love each of my nine books, they're like children. Any poet, any novelist, will tell you that each book is such a project. And at the end of it, you feel as if you've just given birth."

Nine collections of poetry, beginning with *Like This?* in 1988 through to 2017's *Vanishing Points*. Now there's *Mezzaluna*, selected poems covering 30 years of her work.

The book was first published earlier this year by Wesleyan University Press in Connecticut.

"They invited me to do a selected poems. It was a big deal. I said, 'That's great. I'd love to do it but talk to Auckland University Press (AUP) first.'"

AUP wasn't a hurdle but then came the real challenge. "Each book reflects a certain part of my life, not always autobiographical, but it does reflect what I was doing and what I was interested in. I've got a big thing for chronology, so I did wonder how I'd go about selecting the poems."

Our first New Zealand Poet Laureate (she hastens to add there were five Te Mata Poet Laureates before that) was then tasked with "choosing parts of her children".

"Worse than that, cutting them up and filleting them," she laughs.

Michele laughs a lot. She attributes her positivity to her mother.

"My mother was famously happy. You know, there'd be three kids fighting in the back seat of the car and my mother would turn around and roar, BE HAPPY! It would work because we'd all fall apart laughing. She was determined to be happy."

Michele also credits her mother with imbuing her with resilience, a characteristic she was required to draw on heavily as she started losing her sight. Around the time her son James was born, in 1985, she was diagnosed with a mild form of retinitis pigmentosa (RP) or night blindness. But in 1994, by which time she'd had another son, Robin, she was diagnosed with a more severe form of RP, which gradually destroys cells in the retina that are responsible for colour vision and fine focus.

"If I'm a strong person, mum is the reason. It's not that dad wasn't, but when we are talking about core resilience, my mother had it in buckets. If something was bad, she'd say 'Well, dear, lie down, have a little cry and then get up and make a cup of tea and keep going.'"

Her mother was also hugely supportive of her father, a builder and fledgling artist.

"Dad drew as a kid, but grew up during the Depression and left school at 15. His apprenticeship was as a joiner and cabinet maker so I know where I get my perfectionism from."

When her father was about 40, Michele's mother encouraged him to explore his creative streak. "She bought him some little oil paints for Christmas when I was about 10 and said, 'You're an artist. You know this. You need to give yourself some time to draw and paint. That gift in 1966

led to his decision to go to classes and began painting, first in oils then watercolours.

"Thank God she encouraged him," says Michele. "He was talented and it was a great experience for him."

He died aged just 55, in 1981. "But some of the best photos we have of my mum and dad were taken in the very last year of his life, up the mountain in Taranaki. It's summertime, there's a pohutukawa in the background and Dad has his sketchbook. They've taken a day off."

After her father died, her mother followed within 18 months. "It was just awful."

The years have softened the pain of their premature passing.

"And I am glad that my parents didn't have to know about me becoming blind. They died before either of them had to know that."

In Michele's book of poems *As Far as I Can See* (1999) she conveyed her sorrow at losing her sight and was still hopeful for a cure.

"My ophthalmologist is a world specialist in retinitis pigmentosa. I trust that if something comes along that looks fantastic, she would get hold of me. There might be a magic moment and I might get my eyesight back. But if you've lost a faculty in the way I have, you've got to learn how to live with it because if the magic bullet doesn't arrive until I'm 95, wouldn't that be annoying?"

"It's much better to deal with each stage of the decline as it happens and to figure out ways around it. That's why I'm happy to talk about it but I've never wanted to be pigeonholed as a 'blind writer' or a 'blind lecturer'. It's *part* of who I am. It's *part* of what I do."

She and husband Mark have lived in their Devonport home since 1986. It's a little big now that their sons are adults, one living overseas, but

it's familiar for Michele. She can remember the house layout from before she lost her sight.

"Fortunately, I also married an exceptionally tidy person. That's really good because if you're living with someone who can't see, things need to be in one place, you need to know where they are and that they haven't shifted.

"He's also a brilliant cook. As are my sons; Robin is a chef. Why would you not let the brilliant cooks cook? I've got such amazing support from family and people who can help me with the housework, cooking, whatever. I do take advantage of that because it means I'll have more energy and mental capacity for the things I like to do."

Which is to write, of course. Her creative output has earned her many awards and accolades including the Prime Minister's Award for Literary Achievement in Poetry, the New Zealand Order of Merit, the inaugural New Zealand Poet Laureateship in 2007, and being a Fellow of the Royal Society Te Apārangi – only the second poet to receive the honour.

For people who don't know her work, *Mezzaluna* is the perfect introduction. As poets are wont, the title has several layers of meaning. On the one level, a mezzaluna is a crescent-shaped kitchen implement for chopping herbs.

"Everything can be one thing, but it can be another. So the actual word mezzaluna is Italian meaning half moon. My son gave us a mezzaluna and the moment I heard that word I thought it was beautiful ... it's cool because it looks like a half-moon and poets are very keen on moons. Moons are all the way through my poetry."

While the lunar title came fairly easily, choosing the stars to make up the selected poems was more challenging. When she first sent her selection to Wesleyan, it was 500 pages and she was firmly directed to get it down to the 200 pages it is today. "I knew I wanted it to be chronological. I thought, okay, what do I want that person to feel coming to my work? I want them to feel the things I have been excited about ... the things that still jump out."

The task was made harder by not being able to see the shape of her poems on the page. In her earlier books, she's an exponent of the modernist tradition ... poems with long lines, long gaps and no punctuation.

"When I was a starting out, I liked to create really complex poems, because that's what modernist poets do. I think poets change over the years and you write differently at different times.

"I've had to write and read essays, punctuate and know how things are spelled correctly, especially as an editor. But with poetry, I'm not bound by those conventions.

"That was a decision I took a long time ago and you can see it happening through the collections,

there's less punctuation and more and more spacing. What it gives me is uncertainty ... the ability to stretch the language. I can decide whether or not to join fragment one with fragment two. And I can do it differently every time."

She acknowledges poetry can be difficult for some when there's no 'traditional' punctuation. But she hopes there's something in the words that hook a person in. "I don't care whether a person understands intellectually what's going on the first time they read it. That kind of absolute understanding comes after two or three readings. For me, a poem that's really working reaches out and grabs you because of something that's right there on the surface. It might be an amazing image or something in the rhythm, or something in the subject, something outrageous.

"It's the X-factor. The hook. And once the reader is giving you that kind of attention, they may look at what else there is in the poem that you want people to take notice of. That's when a poem starts to work in terms of the layers.

### ***'A poem that's really working reaches out and grabs you because of something that's right there on the surface.'***

It was actually the loss of her eyesight that precipitated the need to change the "shape" in which she wrote. "From 2012 I learned, painfully, how to work with audio software. But I couldn't make the screen reader read the lines that didn't have punctuation because screen readers are set up for normative punctuation.

"It was driving me mad because I could write the poems, leaving the gaps in my mind's eye. But when I came to read them back, the screen reader wouldn't give me the pauses that were the white spaces. I couldn't remember what I'd done at line one or see whether it was the same length. If I had been a software engineer, I would have tweaked that programme.

"Then I thought, okay, I'll write prose poetry. It will still have the rhythms that I want, and the screen reader will be able to read it."

She says that kind of issue is what she finds most frustrating about not being able to see.

"What I dislike about being blind is the tendency it has to put you in a situation of deficit. If you load yourself up with too much deficit, you're not going to be very functional and you're probably not going to be a pleasant person.

"I was appalled that I couldn't find a way out

of that corner the screen reader had put me into. But in the end it gave me a new way of writing – prose poetry."

Michele has a 0.5 workload and this year she is teaching a stage-three poetry-writing course and a postgraduate course called Opening the Archive. She's also researching the art and writing of Emily Cumming Harris. (See <https://emilycummingharris.blogs.auckland.ac.nz/>)

But you won't catch her 'dissecting' poetry with the class. "People like to say dissect and I say, 'dissection is usually dead bodies'. The metaphor is not a good one for poems. I call it close reading."

Even though recent poems are prose-like, rhythm is hugely important to her. Her poetry is renowned for its musicality.

"There's something very good about composing sentences by listening to them. I had to start doing it in 2012 when I finally had to stop magnifying the screen because it wasn't working any more. That switch into audio was one of the hardest things because I had to go right back to the beginning. I couldn't even open a Word file. It was devastating – I was teaching English and I couldn't edit. But you do it over and over and eventually, it starts to come.

"Then you realise how close writing poetry is to composing, where you're always listening for the music and putting words together because of the sound, not just the sense. In any culture in the world, if you go far enough back it's always been about a song. Think of nursery rhymes. There are the vestiges of it right there."

Is that why many poets adopt a sing-song voice when reading out loud?

"That happens. My voice will change when I start reading in public. I do hear it shift and I'm one of those poets who's quite happy for that to happen. I like that shift into the register that says, okay, 'this is poetry and you should listen up.'"

■ **On Spotify:** Listen to Michele read poems written in her 2009 Laureate year.

*Mezzaluna: Selected Poems*  
(Auckland University Press) RRP \$35



## WIN!

We have one copy of *Mezzaluna* to give away.

Email: [uninews@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:uninews@auckland.ac.nz) by 15 March.



# CBD OIL MAY HAVE **WIDER BENEFITS**

**A study of the first 400 local patients using medical cannabis suggests potential benefits beyond currently recognised uses.**

The study, a collaboration between the University and GP Dr Graham Gulbransen, who opened the first medical cannabis clinic in New Zealand, examined the records of 400 patients assessed for treatment at Graham's West Auckland clinic Cannabis Care.

Products containing cannabidiol (CBD oil), an active compound derived from the cannabis plant which does not give people a 'high', were

legalised for prescription by doctors in New Zealand in 2017. CBD is FDA-approved for the treatment of two childhood seizure disorders, but early evidence suggests it could also help treat anxiety and chronic pain, and may reduce psychotic symptoms of schizophrenia. Due to a lack of large-scale, controlled studies in humans, there are no prescribing guidelines.

The study found that CBD oil taken for four weeks significantly improved the self-reported quality of life most for patients living with non-cancer chronic pain and anxiety-related mental health conditions. Patients with cancer or neurological symptoms also experienced improvements, but to a lesser degree.

Professor Bruce Arroll, senior author of the study and head of the Department of General Practice and Primary Healthcare at the University, says while the study had limitations

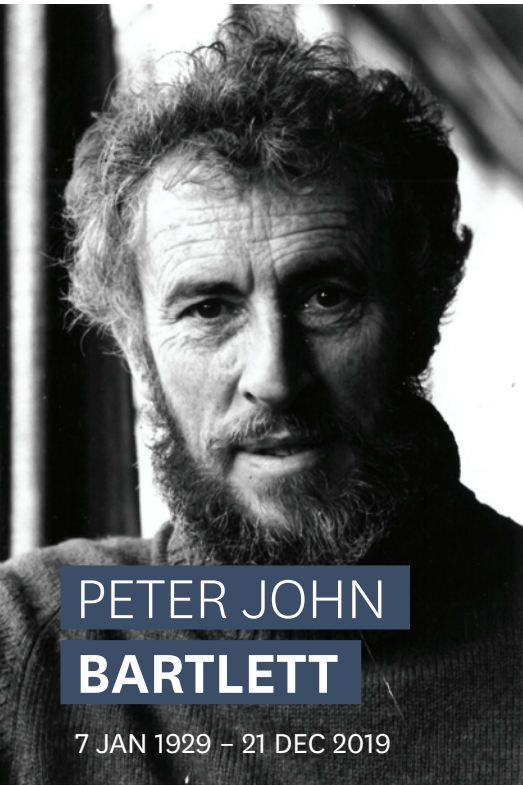


due to dropout and subjectivity, the findings underline a need for more research to "fully realise the therapeutic potential of medical cannabis".

"CBD is well-tolerated in most patients and can markedly ease symptoms in a range of hard-to-treat conditions ... there are people keen to access this and self-fund the medication."

**Read the full story: [tinyurl.com/UoAMedicalCannabisStudy](https://tinyurl.com/UoAMedicalCannabisStudy)**

## OBITUARY



**PETER JOHN**

**BARTLETT**

7 JAN 1929 – 21 DEC 2019

**Peter Bartlett, Harry Turbott and Bill Wilson were appointed as sessional staff to the School of Architecture in 1961, the year that the University of Auckland was established by the Universities Act.**

Peter had been a brilliant student during Vernon Brown's era and won several awards for his architectural designs. The city was very different then, with the University woven into its

fabric. The intellectual discourse of the "critic and conscience of society" was not restricted to the army sheds of the old School of Architecture. There was Harry's office, over the road in St Paul's Street and university staff Pud Middleton and John Goldwater were living on the other side of Blanford Park. Symonds Street was both a social occasion and a hotbed of gossip. In 1963, Bill set up the Auckland Architectural Association in the Wynyard Building, so debate could carry on after the Kiwi Hotel closed at 6pm.

A new Master of Architecture degree was introduced in 1962 and, in 1964, Peter was appointed to teach architectural history and theory. He completed a PhD at the School in 1979, focusing on the psychology of perception. Along the way, modernism had morphed into post-modernism and then swung back to neo-modernism. Peter preferred to talk about 'regional modernism' by which he meant 'the quest for a New Zealand vernacular'.

Peter had already been exploring these ideas when he was a student. He had helped James Garrett with the 1954 exhibition in the Auckland Art Gallery, mostly remembered now for popularising the *Man Alone* image, which hung in the Architecture Library for all of Peter's career, but disappeared when the library closed.

Peter had completed his BArch degree from the University of New Zealand in 1953 and then spent four years in Paris after being awarded a New Zealand Government Cultural Fund Bursary to study there. He designed Corbusier housing and community projects among Algerian and Tunisian immigrants in the north-east of Paris. Paddy Costello, first secretary at the Embassy, also arranged an introduction to Le Corbusier.

When Peter returned to New Zealand and

went into private practice, his competence and skill were immediately evident. He became an Associate of the Royal Institute of British Architecture in 1959.

His Newcomb House in Parnell won a bronze medal in 1968 as well as an enduring architecture award. In 1975, Peter and Ian George were awarded a NZIA National Award for the Auckland Grammar Centennial Hall. In 1977 Peter became Professor of Architectural Design and the new School of Architecture opened in 1978.

Over the years there were factions, frictions and fierce competition. Architects tend to have strong personalities. It has been said that "Peter was the glue. If he had not been there the place would probably have pulled itself apart".

One highlight of Peter's career was leading a team that won the Venice Prize for the best School of Architecture in the world, at the 1991 Venice Biennale.

Peter's human-centred architecture reflected his profound love of humankind, generosity of spirit and wild sense of humour. He retired and became emeritus professor in 1993 but kept a lively debate going for another 25 years. He also designed and built a holiday home at Lake Tarawera, with a studio for his artist wife Margaret Lawlor-Bartlett and room for the grandchildren. There, as at Auckland Grammar and in the School of Architecture and Planning building on campus, his ideas brought delight to younger generations.

Peter was a steady hand, always open to new ideas. He is survived by Margaret, sons Louis Pierre, Jeremy, Brendan and the late Nicky, daughters Alice and Kate, nine grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

■ **Tony Watkins, architect and retired senior lecturer, School of Architecture**



# MATHESON RUSSELL

Associate Professor Matheson Russell lectures in philosophy.

## Do people understand what philosophers do?

I don't think so. I didn't until I came to university and started taking philosophy courses. Some countries teach philosophy at high school but there's not much taught here in New Zealand.

## How do you introduce philosophy to students?

I explain that it's not some abstract ivory-tower thing. We're already immersed in philosophical questions which means we're all philosophers in some sense already. It's about thinking really well about the deepest questions we face. What is it to be a human being? What makes a life worth living? Are we in a post-truth age? Philosophy is not the only discipline that tries to address these questions but to come and study philosophy is to pick up some tools for thinking about those questions in a concerted way.

## You're a big fan of German philosopher Jürgen Habermas. Why is he important?

Habermas is one of the main figures in the 20th-century German tradition. When I started reading his work, I felt like it brought together a lot of themes I'm interested in and sympathetic to. Democracy for him is healthiest when it's surrounded by a dynamic public sphere where citizens air ideas, evaluate arguments and circulate information. He believes a healthy, functioning democracy is one where we have democratic institutions embedded within a broader engaged citizenry.

## Where does that happen?

Well it's sort of a tragic story for Habermas because we don't see very much of it. Just as journals and coffee houses were picking up pace in the 18th century and people were engaging in this sort of argumentation, those spaces became colonised or inundated by advertising, messaging from corporations and propaganda. That undermines the public sphere. A public sphere of communication and argumentation does still exist in some forms. The gold standard is in science when research papers are peer-reviewed. You present your reasoning and your evidence to a scientific community and they'll pick holes in it. It's actually a social process.

For the most part, science doesn't progress because of geniuses. It progresses because it's an organised collective activity where everyone's

*'We're all philosophers in some sense already.'*

contributing and criticising one another's work. Collectively we work out what's robust.

## You're interested in how we come to good policies. What do you think of referenda?

I don't know that referenda have much of a place. Do we expect that everyone just casts a vote in a referendum and the result of that is a good policy? There's a common perception that a referendum is the most democratic way to resolve controversial things because everyone gets a say. But developing good policy requires a carefully organised process of input from the right people. It requires critical reflection and discussion among people who represent different perspectives and bring different critical capacities to the question. Referenda give us a voice, yes, but I'd feel more confident in the decision if there was a more robust process.

## Or should we just let politicians decide?

Making important decisions relies on well-organised forums where the participants get a chance to go in deep on issues and get the right kind of input from experts, then come out with a set of robust recommendations. That's the kind of process that we'd hope our politicians would engage in, but they don't because they're doing ten other things at the same time. They're trying to campaign and appear in the news media and stay in touch with their constituents.

Complex policy questions, such as the cannabis and end-of-life laws, require dedicated concentration and we can do that with a citizens' assembly. If we were to redesign our system, maybe we could expect to be drafted into things like citizens' assemblies every so often to play our part, sort of like we do in juries.

## Does philosophy have an image issue?

Certainly, it has some baggage. It has a gender and Eurocentric bias. Philosophy is undergoing

upheaval at the moment where we are collectively trying to overcome some of these problematic biases. Some of the most creative and able contemporary philosophers are women and people of colour and they're really reshaping all fields of philosophy through their work.

## Does New Zealand have good philosophers?

Yes! Just as an example, in this department alone there is distinguished professor Stephen Davies, one of probably four or five leading philosophers in the philosophy of art. Professor John Bishop works in the philosophy of religion, and he's an internationally renowned thinker in that area. Professor Gillian Brock is a political philosopher whose work on global justice is at the top of her field. That's just a few.

## What brought you to New Zealand after you studied in Sydney?

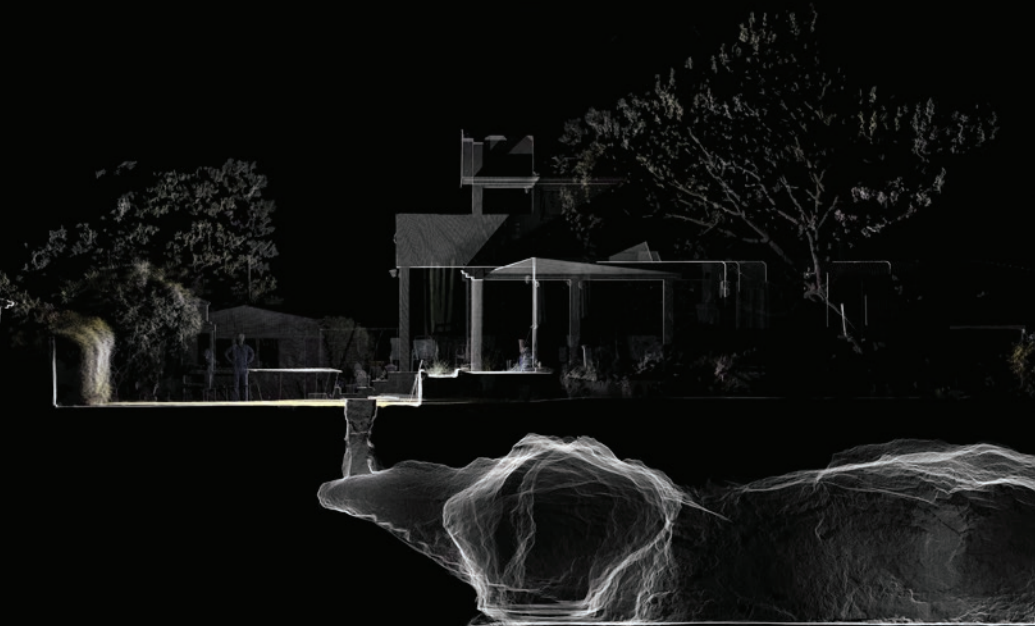
After my PhD I initially came here for six months to teach a couple of courses. At the end of the six months, the University advertised a permanent position, which I got. I was a little bit lucky because I was here and they saw that I wasn't crazy. That's a good threshold to clear.

## You've recently become an associate professor – what does that mean for you?

It's satisfying to be promoted but it doesn't change much of what I do here. Like a lot of academics, I have a bit of imposter syndrome. But now that I'm an associate professor, I feel like maybe I do know something about this. It brings a bit of confidence with it.

## What do you do in your spare time?

I have a two-year-old and a five-year-old so they keep me busy. I'm involved in climate activism as well; climate change is something I'm really concerned about and I'm on the board of 350 Aotearoa. I also play music – cello and guitar.



## EYES ON WHAT LIES BENEATH

**Chirag Jindal, artist and graduate of the University's School of Architecture and Planning, has been recognised with another award for his startling images that reveal the hidden lava caves beneath Auckland.**

As well as being artistic, Chirag's work is part-documentary journalism and part-cartography. In January he won one of two prestigious awards in the 162nd edition of the Royal Photographic Society's International Photography Exhibition – the Under 30s award. This was for his debut series of works, titled *Into the Underworld / Ngā Mahi Rarowhenua*, one of which was *Ambury Road, Mangere* (above).

The images capture the unseen world – the caves beneath our feet, sometimes beneath schools, our petrol stations and many backyards. The existence of these caves is not commonly known and often only discovered when someone wants to build over them. They might then fill them with construction rubble or concrete.

"Often, the growing infrastructure of the city has been prioritised over the caves," says Chirag.

If there is a surreal quality to the photographs, the world they capture is very real.

"They are not manipulated or doctored. It's a real landscape, one which was sometimes used as a burial site or hideaways by Māori, as mushroom farms by Pākehā or even as war shelters. There's a layered history to this landscape which has been left out of the narrative, because we couldn't see it, but a history we need to take care of."

*Into the Underworld* initially emerged out of Chirag's Masters of Architecture thesis, in which

he used a LiDAR (light detection and ranging) scanner to survey an ancient lava cave under Three Kings.

"The thesis gave me an opportunity to understand the technology and landscape, and this project that followed was about bringing it into the public forum," he says.

LiDAR is a surveying method used in archaeological research and criminal forensics. It uses light to collect millions of precisely measured points to translate the physical world into a 3D digital facsimile. LiDAR technology has become central to Chirag's art and research practice and he's working on a number of new projects in New Zealand, as well as Poland where he was awarded the 2019 Białystok Interphoto Grand Prix.

Selected from more than 1,370 entries from 62 countries, the exhibition at the Royal Photographic Society features the work of 43 international photographers. Spirituality, identity, inclusion and the environment are some of the themes explored this year.

Chirag says of his award: "As any other debut project, the work follows many long periods of experimenting, indecision and risk. But it's a privilege for it to be given this level of recognition and platform for outreach and exposure."

Chirag will be publishing a book about his project by 2021, and will be exhibiting the project at Berlin Art Week in September. The work will also exhibit at the Arsenale di Venezia this month as part of the 2020 Arte Laguna Exhibition.

**Read more:** [rps.org/opportunities/ipe-162/under-30s-award-winner/](https://rps.org/opportunities/ipe-162/under-30s-award-winner/)

**Chirag on YouTube:** [youtu.be/laK5Buk\\_KYM](https://youtu.be/laK5Buk_KYM)

## BOOKS



**Today in New Zealand History** (updated edition) David Green, Gareth Phipps, Steve Watters and alumnus Neill Atkinson, now chief historian at the Ministry for Culture

and Heritage, have compiled an updated version of their large-format local history book. Every date has an associated story and photo, taking in everything from a poll tax imposed on Chinese in New Zealand on 5 July, 1881, to the Greymouth beer boycott of 29 September, 1947. Includes photos from the archives and Alexander Turnbull Library.

**Neill Atkinson, David Green, Gareth Phipps, Steve Watters, Exisle Publishing, RRP \$40**

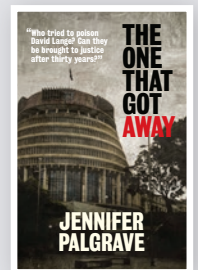
**WIN: We have one copy of *Today in New Zealand History* to give away. Email: [uninews@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:uninews@auckland.ac.nz) by 17 March.**



**AUP New Poets 6** An Auckland University Press collection of three new poets: Ben Kemp, Vanessa Crofskey and Chris Stewart. Kemp offers attentive readings of place and people; Crofskey's political

poetry takes the form of things like Post-It notes and shopping lists; and Chris Stewart has a "visceral take on the domestic".

**Edited Anna Jackson, AUP, RRP \$30**



**The One That Got Away**

Lois Cox and Hilary Lapsley have formed a new writing partnership under the pen name Jennifer Palgrave. Hilary works part time as a senior research fellow at the James Henare Māori Research Centre. *The One*

*That Got Away*, a political crime novel, is her first foray into fiction. The story centres on a foiled plot to assassinate David Lange. The protagonist Lauren Fraser is a former public servant easing into retirement. When her historian friend Ro stumbles across evidence of the plot, Lauren is drawn into the Beehive mystery.

**Jennifer Palgrave, Town Belt Press, RRP \$30**



## LET THERE BE LIGHT

**Master of Architecture student Youngi Kim has won third place and 1,000 euros (\$1,700) in the 2019 Drawing of the Year competition for his drawing (below), *The Void Between Light and Shadow*.**

Drawing of the Year is an international student competition run by Aarhus School of Architecture in Denmark. The theme this year was 'Post Human Metamorphosis' and the winners were selected from 124 entries from 45 countries.

Youngi's drawing was created as part of a taught studio course in the first year of his Master of Architecture.

"Working with others, I had the chance to explore ideas for a temporary structure for the New Zealand Festival of Arts in Wellington."

The artwork incorporates concepts of Māori cosmogony such as "the void, the darkness and the light," says Youngi. "This project dealt with

such cultural concepts and how they might be applied architecturally.

"The actual process of creating the drawing involved an abstract exercise, where we jumped between hand drawings, collages, models and photographs. Then, using this collection of elements, we created a hybrid analogue/digital work. This was a new way of working for me and it felt very freeing in a way, as the work came about organically."

The judges said: "The artwork draws our attention because of its pure composition, its mastering of light and shadow, and its way of addressing the theme in a poetic and authentic way."

Youngi says it was a spur of the moment decision to enter.

"So it came as a huge surprise when a couple of months later I received an email to say I'd won third place and then saw photos of my drawing exhibited on the other side of the world – in a place I'd never even set foot in before!"

To see the winners: <https://aarch.dk/en/the-winners-of-drawing-of-the-year-2019/>



## AUP TITLES IN OCKHAMS TOP 40

**Seven Auckland University Press titles have made the long list for the Ockham New Zealand Book Awards. The list was due to be whittled down from 40 to 16 on 4 March.**

The books are *Under Glass* by Gregory Kan, *Moth Hour* by Anne Kennedy, *How to Live* by Helen Rickerby and Sugar Magnolia Wilson's *Because a Woman's Heart Is a Needle*

*at the Bottom of the Ocean* (all poetry). In the illustrated non-fiction section: *Frances Hodgkins: European Journeys* by alumnae Mary Kisler and Catherine Hammond; *Funny As: The Story of New Zealand Comedy* by Paul Horan and Philip Matthews; and *Colin McCahon: There Is Only One Direction, Vol. 1 1919-1950*, by Peter Simpson.

### ACCOMMODATION AVAILABLE

#### **MOUNT EDEN ROOM TO LET, WEEKDAYS:**

Seeking a mature, clean, tidy person to rent unfurnished double bedroom, Monday to Fridays. You'll share a three-bedroom house with a couple and a small dog (Jack Russell/mini poodle cross). Shared bathroom, two toilets. Spacious courtyard in a quiet cul-de-sac street. Short walk to bus stops, supermarket, cafes/bars. Train stations nearby. No other pets allowed or smokers. Good off-street parking (will need a permit for all-day parking during week). \$275 a week available now. Email: [pamela.rlobo@gmail.com](mailto:pamela.rlobo@gmail.com)

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Classified ads will be moving online to the staff Yammer platform in the future. In the interim, please keep emailing [uninews@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:uninews@auckland.ac.nz) if you have an ad you wish to run.

## EVENTS

**WHAT** Nin Thomas Memorial Lecture: Professor Robert A Williams discusses: 'Why Do We Even Need a United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples?'

**WHEN** Thursday 12 March, 6-7pm

**WHERE** Building 801, 9 Eden Crescent, Stone Lecture Theatre, Level 3

**WHAT** All staff reception. Meet Vice-Chancellor Professor Dawn Freshwater.

**WHEN** Wednesday 18 March, 4.30pm

**WHERE** Pavilion, OGH.

**WHAT** Lecture: Professor Tracey McIntosh discusses Te Pūtake o Wheako Rau – Lived experience, incarceration and a politic of emancipation. See [nvite.com/universityofauckland/f5dc9](https://www.unitech.ac.nz/universityofauckland/f5dc9)

**WHEN** Thursday 19 March, 6-8pm

**WHERE** Waipapa Marae

**WHAT** Lecture: Justice Edwin Cameron discusses 'Constitutional Justice and the Rule of Law – South Africa's Quarter-Century of Democracy'

**WHEN** Wednesday 25 March, 6-7pm

**WHERE** Building 801, 9 Eden Crescent, Stone Lecture Theatre, Level 3

*‘Without reconciliation, there can be no fair and durable outcome and the same issues will be constantly re-litigated.’*



## TIME TO DO THE REAL MAHI

**Te Pae Tawhiti provides an opportunity for Māori and the Crown to reconcile after Wai 262, the Waitangi Tribunal claim concerning law and policy affecting Māori culture and identity, writes Jayden Houghton.**

Wai 262, lodged in 1991, was one of the largest and most complex in the Tribunal’s history. The Tribunal released its report on the claim in 2011.

Te Pae Tawhiti, proposed by the government in August 2019, is a work programme to address the Crown’s breaches of its Treaty guarantee to allow Māori to exercise tino rangatiratanga over our mātauranga Māori and taonga. Te Pae Tawhiti provides a significant opportunity for Māori and the Crown to develop laws, policies and frameworks to address these issues.

I think Māori ought to engage. The government seems to be acting in good faith. And, anyway, no government will be able to develop a fair and durable outcome without our imagination, agency and belief in the Treaty partnership. But Māori should engage cautiously.

For a few years now I have been monitoring the government’s response to the Wai 262 report by way of requests under the Official Information Act 1982. It might surprise you to learn that the government was working on a response to Wai 262 a decade ago. In 2010, the Office of the Attorney-General proposed a ministerial group, comprised of cabinet ministers from lead agencies, to lead a “whole of government” response to the report.

Compare this with Te Pae Tawhiti, in which the government proposes a Ministerial Oversight Group, comprised of cabinet ministers from lead agencies, to lead a “whole of government” response to the report.

The truth is that Te Pae Tawhiti is similar to numerous work programmes proposed to cabinet during the National Government. Unfortunately, internal memos, papers and stocktakes confirm that activities related to mātauranga Māori and taonga during that government were always ad hoc and never intended to be part of a “whole of government” response. The cost of the National Government ghosting Māori and postponing a work programme that was more or less in its present form a decade ago is yet to be calculated.

Unlike the National Government, the Labour-led government has committed to addressing these issues with its formal, public response to the Wai 262 claim. I think Māori Development Minister the Hon Nanaia Mahuta should be commended for progressing this mahi. The government at least appears willing to understand the issues and bold enough to take the first public steps towards a fair and durable outcome.

But Māori need to be cautious about the three-year election cycle and the potential for a new government to change the policy agenda. The name Te Pae Tawhiti may survive a change of government, but if you expect it to retain its mana you have not been paying attention.

It will be difficult to develop a fair and durable outcome on such a complex and contentious issue. But fair and durable the outcome must be. In presenting my vision for the government’s response at the Ngā Taonga Tuku Iho Conference on Māori Cultural and Intellectual Property Rights in 2018, I suggested that the Wai 262 aftermath is a cautionary tale about what happens when a proposal to address Māori-Crown issues fails to enable Māori and the Crown to reconcile: the government was reluctant to engage with the report; and most Māori were disillusioned by what we perceived to be a lost opportunity. In short, without reconciliation, there can be no fair and durable outcome and the same issues will be constantly re-litigated, as they are today.

It is worth remembering that the Wai 262 claimants did not want the Tribunal to propose its own frameworks for addressing the issues. The claimants only asked the Tribunal to make findings of fact that would establish the Crown’s Treaty breaches with respect to mātauranga Māori and taonga, and empower the Treaty partners to develop substantive and procedural frameworks together. But the Tribunal went ahead nonetheless. In a roundabout way, we are now at a point where Māori and the Crown can develop those frameworks together.

The substantive framework must enable Māori to exercise tino rangatiratanga – a degree of authority which incorporates a spectrum of rights and responsibilities from ownership and control, to co-ownership and co-management, to consultation – over our mātauranga Māori and taonga. Māori and the Crown will only reconcile if the full spectrum of tino rangatiratanga rights and responsibilities is available to Māori. It will not always be appropriate for Māori to claim ownership or control of mātauranga Māori or taonga. But in some cases this will be what the kaitiaki relationship requires.

The procedural framework must empower the Treaty partners to develop the substantive framework that enables them to reconcile. The government is presenting Te Pae Tawhiti as a Matike Mai-esque framework with separate Māori and Crown spheres that overlap. If the overlap represents only that the Crown will sometimes consult with Māori, Te Pae Tawhiti will surely fail. But if the overlap is a relational sphere in which the Treaty partners make decisions together, the frameworks could truly enable Māori and the Crown to reconcile in this space.

■ Jayden Houghton (Rereahu Maniapoto) is a lecturer in the Faculty of Law.

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