

WAIPAPA TAUMATA RAU UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND

Ingenio

ALUMNI MAGAZINE

AUTUMN 2022



BEYOND LOCKDOWN LEARNING

LESSONS FOR THE FUTURE

Behind the mask
Nurses reflect on the
impact of Covid-19

Top of their game
Celebrating 2022's
Distinguished Alumni

Melanie Smith
Māori CEO in London
paying it forward

BIG PICTURE



RED, RED WINE

In March, the workers of Goldie Estate on Waiheke Island picked and crushed the last grapes of the season, the cabernet sauvignon. Goldie Estate is a boutique vineyard and winery and home to the University of Auckland's Goldwater Wine Science Centre. The University offers a postgraduate programme in wine science. (See: auckland.ac.nz/UAO-Wine-Science)

Photo: Peter Rees Photography



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SUSTAINABLE

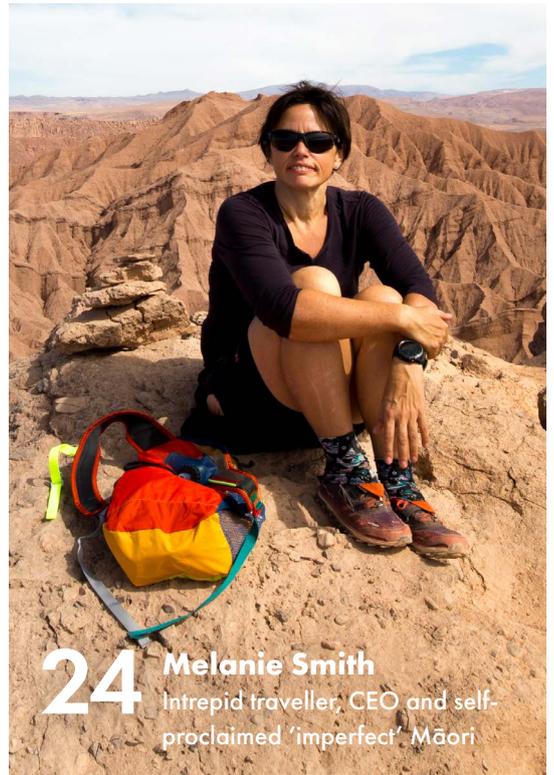
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Lessons for the future

Professor Gavin Brown and other educators discuss how lockdowns have changed schooling

Ingenio

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Editorial

CHANCE TO JAZZ UP OUR THINKING?



During the pandemic we have all sought coping mechanisms to deal with the angst and uncertainty affecting us. In my case, an unexpected avenue for escape was buying a second-hand turntable on which to finally start listening to my late parents' old jazz and classical LP collection which had been gathering dust in cardboard boxes for decades, waiting to be appreciated again. Lockdown afforded me the opportunity to finally do something about it: immersing myself for 20 minutes per side in the world of Billie Holiday, Benny Goodman and Béla Bartók (the latter, incidentally, really not my cup of tea). It provided much-needed distraction and temporary escape into a seemingly simpler and less stressful world. (There were also ABBA albums – we're a Swedish family, after all.)

But, as the pandemic transitions into what we hope will be a more manageable phase, my attention turns from seeking comfort in the past to gearing up for the challenges of the future. I started my role as Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Strategic Engagement) at the University of Auckland in November 2021. Although much of my focus in the first few months has been directed at contributing to our institutional Covid-19 response, I share with our students and staff a great appetite to think creatively and ambitiously about what comes next for the University and the communities it serves.

The reality is that few countries have had a pandemic experience quite like New Zealand's, and, arguably, few have the scope for more existential debates about the future character and underlying operating model of the nation post-Covid.

Having spent the past two years experiencing a reality in which we forgo some of the most familiar traits of globalisation – open borders, reliance on international trade, ready access to immigration and emigration and, in the case of universities, the enrolment of large numbers

of overseas students – it seems not only appropriate, but also entirely necessary, to do some collective soul-searching about the future.

As part of this process of reflection, there is no doubt that the University of Auckland will test and examine the values, ambitions and objectives articulated in its strategic plan, *Taumata Teitei*, against the realities of the post-Covid world.

Some of the operational changes that have been normalised by the pandemic will, no doubt, become a permanent feature of our University's day-to-day activities: the flexibility of hybrid teaching delivery, pragmatic approaches to staff working from home, and a wider range of offerings for international students who may want to access a University of Auckland education without leaving their countries of origin.

Perhaps most importantly, we are critiquing our contribution to the many varied communities that we serve and the broader process of national recovery. We are already planning a new initiative focused on enhancing the impact of our public policy and research outputs in areas of national challenge.

We will also start a conversation about how the University's values and culture resonate with our various constituents. This will ultimately extend to deliberation about how our branding and visual identity could be developed to best reflect the University's changing nature and the changes we see in our communities.

I look forward to involving our alumni and friends in these conversations and seeking your guidance and support in shaping our collective effort.

Exciting times are ahead for sure, but without question also challenging ones. For my part, I take some comfort from the knowledge that should I need it, I have some crackly Stravinsky on standby to distract me. Maybe you, too, have some old LPs to dust off?

Dr Erik Lithander

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Strategic Engagement)
Waipapa Taumata Rau University of Auckland



BEYOND LOCKDOWN LEARNING

Lessons for the future

Parents and caregivers have long been hailed as 'first teachers'. But the Covid-19 lockdowns meant that role took on a new meaning. So what impact have the lockdowns had on our children's education and, also, our teacher training? Owen Poland talks to education experts at the University of Auckland about lessons learned.



Covid-19 was never going to be kind to New Zealand's education sector, especially when it was already sliding down OECD rankings for literacy, maths and science and there was a lack of equity in terms of at-home and online learning.

But while there are concerns about the disruption caused by lockdowns, including the impact on mental health, academics within the Faculty of Education and Social Work also believe that the pandemic has created an opportunity to reimagine education – and the role of schools in society.

Carol Mutch is a professor of Critical Studies in the Faculty of Education and Social Work. Having closely studied children under stress from the Christchurch earthquakes to the Australian bushfires and Japan's tsunami, she says the pandemic has once again highlighted a social, economic and educational divide.

"While our best students are the best in the world, we also have this huge gap between those who do well and those who don't do well. What Covid-19 did was actually give us a really stark reminder of what that looks like."

The lack of technology and internet access for online learning is one thing, but Carol says many homes in lower socio-economic communities were "up against it" when they didn't even have the basics like pens and paper. She asks: "Why doesn't every child in the country have the opportunity to have what they're entitled to?"

Problems with home education were exacerbated by fundamental issues such as child poverty and poor housing and, as the pandemic progressed, Carol says those problems got worse and children disengaged.

"This is a long-term systemic problem, both in society and in the way that education is

funded, that needs a really big shake-up."

Mental health is another key issue, and she says children who started out with mild levels of trauma were coming back to school with a range of fears and anxiety.

"Teachers reported to me the level of mental health issues had gone up and there's no way that schools could, with the limited resources that they had, try to cope with all of those things."

In addition to being counsellors and social workers, principals and teachers were also feeding some families, which took a toll on their physical and mental health.

"I want to celebrate that schools stepped up. They absolutely did amazing things," says Carol. "But what schools started to tell me after two years of Covid is that 'we're exhausted, we can't take on much more of this role.'"

What's needed, she says, is more training and long-term support for teachers to deal with the issues rather than making it up on the spot.

"If we're going to use schools as the hubs of their communities, how do we make sure that they're well-resourced and not putting their staff at risk?"

However, the biggest lesson for Carol was that children and young people wanted to go back to school.

"School offered some stability and normality and a sense of regularity that gave their days the shape and purpose that some students missed when their home lives didn't allow for that."

INEQUITY A LEVELLER

As a former primary school teacher, mother of three and now lecturer at the Tai Tokerau Campus in Whangārei, Dr Maia Hetaraka knew how a crisis like Covid would play out in the Far North.

"When you're from a demographic or community where things are already tough, we know that in these types of situations things get tougher – they don't get easier."

One of the major challenges was online learning.

"We have communities here where kids live in homes that don't have power let alone an internet connection," says Maia, who is programme leader and acting director at Tai Tokerau Campus. "It isn't just a simple matter of 'now all go home and log on to your devices'."

In some cases, teachers distributed their own Computers on Wheels (COWs) and Chromebooks to needy families. And because the educational packs issued by the Ministry of Education took a long time to arrive, schools and their communities assembled their own work sheets and reading material.

"They would use the marae as a centre for the preparation, like a production line. It was a little factory inside the marae space to get packs ready for the kids."

"We have communities here where kids live in homes that don't have power let alone an internet connection."

– Dr Maia Hetaraka, programme leader, Tai Tokerau

A portrait of Dr Maia Hetaraka, a woman with dark hair pulled back, wearing a black graduation gown with a teal stole and a large, light-colored, carved pendant. She is smiling and looking slightly to the right. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with green foliage.

Dr Maia Hetaraka says Northland children were often disadvantaged by online learning.



“We have this huge gap between those who do well and those who don’t. What Covid-19 did was actually give us a really stark reminder of what that looks like.”

– Professor Carol Mutch, Faculty of Education and Social Work

There was also a strong focus on preparing children to stay healthy, keep their minds active and do some schoolwork at home.

“A lot of work from schools went into really trying to get children and students to focus on their own well-being, whereas perhaps in normal times we’re less likely to do that.”

Maia believes the crisis drew people together.

“People in some of our communities, who perhaps were a bit disconnected from the marae or from the hapū or iwi, actually pulled together.”

One thing she isn’t so concerned about is the impact on academic achievement.

“The gains that I hope we will see in our young people, in our student teachers, is that self-belief, that capacity to cope and look for solutions, to problem solve.

“They are all just as important as their formal academic results.”

WELL-BEING FOCUS

The importance of student well-being over academic achievement also resonates with Professor Peter O’Connor, director of the Centre for Arts and Social Transformation (CAST). He says teachers couldn’t simply go back to school after various lockdowns as if

nothing had happened. “You actually have to go back and work with the problems, the worries, the concerns and the issues.”

Those issues potentially included dealing with very sick kids and parents, and deaths in communities.

“The teacher in the room has an absolute responsibility to make sense of the world with children. That’s what teachers are supposed to do. Not just prepare them for the future, but help them to understand the world in which they live.”

To that end, Peter and the CAST team launched Te Rito Toi after the first lockdown in March 2020, as an online resource to help primary teachers address student well-being when they returned to classrooms.

“When we came back after lockdowns, we were the only country in the world where it was government policy in primary schools to return with a focus on mental health and well-being.”

Two years later, Te Rito Toi has been downloaded more than 400,000 times in 114 countries and with more than 60,000 teachers attending webinars on the resource.

“I’m hoping that when we look at what we learnt in schools, one of the things we learned was that a focus on well-being was the smartest

Professor Carol Mutch wants to know why every child in the country doesn’t have what they’re entitled to for their education.

Photo: Elise Manahan



Professor Peter O'Connor says teachers have a responsibility to make sense of the world with children. Photo: Elise Manahan

“We learned that a focus on well-being was the smartest thing you could do and the University was central to that thinking.”

– Professor Peter O'Connor, Centre for Arts and Social Transformation

- ◀ thing you could do and the University of Auckland was central to that thinking.”

The platform was developed within weeks at minimal cost with support from the Chartwell Trust and the John Kirwan Foundation, and Peter is also grateful for the backing from the NZ Principals Federation and the NZEI.

“The freedom that you have to work nimbly because you’re funded is extraordinary,” he says. “And you don’t have to wait for government policy change, you can lead government policy change.”

EXAMPLES OF RESILIENCE

Through her role as a course director for stage one and two teacher trainees at the faculty’s main Epsom campus, Dr Jacinta Oldehaver says there’s no denying the impact of lockdowns.

“Everyone was stressed. Let’s not beat

Dr Lisa Darragh is doing research into the efficacy of online literacy and maths programmes, many of which were relied on for lockdown learning. Photo: Elise Manahan



around the bush, we were stressed as well.”

Perhaps the biggest loss for student teachers was the live face-to-face teaching experiences.

“We’re trying to develop teachers who enter the workforce with empathy, perspective, critical thinking and who can understand relationality. That’s very difficult when your experiences are predominantly online because of the pandemic,” says Jacinta.

But she marvels at the resilience of many Pacific students who volunteered to be part of the vaccination programme while they studied.

“We had students, particularly in our South Auckland community, who were in charge of the vaccination centres and running big vaccination drives in their communities as well as caring for family and trying to stay well.”

Lecturers noticed that online engagement was often low and so their practices had to be modified to be more inclusive. There was also an upsurge in students seeking extensions during the August lockdown, which Jacinta says had to be granted to achieve equity.

“When we think about equity, it’s about how we make sure those equal opportunities are adjusted, modified and amplified to meet needs and to ensure that everyone is able to achieve.”

Despite a fall in student enrolments for initial teacher education in 2022, Jacinta believes it’ll take “quite a long time” to assess the impact of the disruption. She says first-year students are starting out with positive attitudes.

“They are there for the right reason; because they want to make a difference.”

It could also take years to fully understand the effect on academic achievement in Pacific communities, although Jacinta says the sheer number of people who have been infected by Covid could be “a telling factor”. The biggest issue is getting students to feel confident and safe enough to return to school.

“If they’re not there, obviously that’s going to have a big impact.”

ONLINE OFFERINGS EXPLODE

Not surprisingly, the pandemic triggered an increase in the use of online instructional programmes for literacy and maths where a host of brands gained popularity, including Education Perfect, Mathletics, Studyladder, Sumdog and MathsBuddy.

“We have this broadly public educational system where our education is free and then there are these mostly private corporations that have kind of snuck into our schools and sell their services to our students at quite considerable cost,” says Dr Lisa Darragh, who is now studying their efficacy through a Marsden Fast Start grant.

A pre-pandemic survey indicated that 79 percent of primary schools were using commercial programmes as part of what they described as a ‘balanced’ programme of rich



“We had students, particularly in our South Auckland community, who were in charge of the vaccination centres.”

– Dr Jacinta Oldehaver, lecturer, Faculty of Education and Social Work

quality learning experiences. But once Covid hit, Lisa says the marketing “amped up massively” as companies saw an opening to increase market share. “This pandemic has created an opportunity for online instructional programmes to gain even more of a foothold in mathematics education than they already had. I find that problematic.”

The research focus for Lisa is on the so-called ‘student learner identity’ – or the relationship that

“You could argue they may get more from the machine than the teacher, but that’s only a broken teacher-student relationship.”

– Dr Lisa Darragh, senior lecturer, Curriculum and Pedagogy, Faculty of Education and Social Work

students form with the subject of mathematics – which greatly affects their achievement and participation. “You could argue that they might get more from the machine than they get from the teacher, but that’s only a broken teacher-student relationship,” she says.

While there are positives like the Matific maths learning platform that’s been translated into te reo Māori, Lisa is concerned about the reward systems embedded in some programmes. She also worries about the use of hidden algorithms to assess performance rather than having face-to-face conversations between students and teachers.

For secondary students, one programme where the reward may come from simply passing NCEA is STEM Online (stemonline.auckland.ac.nz), developed by the University from philanthropic funding. It had huge pickup in 2021 and was free with no ads. It’s an interactive

teaching and learning resource specific to the New Zealand curriculum, aimed at assisting secondary students to complete NCEA external standards in STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and mathematics).

In 2021, user numbers more than doubled 2020, and it was used by about 12,000 students from around 40 percent of secondary schools.

But Lisa thinks schools still need to think about teachers’ roles. “I’m hoping my research will help schools to consider how much teaching and learning in mathematics they’re willing to give up to a machine.”

Professor John Morgan, head of Critical Studies in Education, has done a lot of work on curriculum change.

“Now is a good time for New Zealand to take a good look at the curriculum taught in schools – whether and how it is ‘fit for purpose’. Part of the reason for this is it’s unclear what the medium and long-term impacts of Covid-19 will be.”

DE-SCHOOLING NOT AN OPTION

Even with the best online resources, there are concerns over equitable internet access.

For Professor Gavin Brown, the success of ICT networked learning without the distraction of classrooms – or teachers – raises the spectre of a ‘dark future’ if post-pandemic societies decide to gradually de-school.

While de-schooling might “work well for the privileged in society” who have the resources at home, Gavin says it is fundamentally inequitable because technologies aren’t evenly distributed.

“It’s a different world for people who are struggling with two or three jobs.”

Given the evolution of humans as social beings, he says interacting with others helps with our thinking, emotions and physicality.

“There’s something about being human that requires us to live and interact with others that I fear a de-schooled society, using only computers, would deprive our children of.”

Dr Jacinta Oldehaver says it was difficult to train teachers to relate to children when lots of the initial teacher training has had to be done online.

Photo: Elise Manahan

◀ Rather than de-school, he says there's an opportunity to create a re-schooled society, making greater use of the huge investment in infrastructure.

"I have this magical idea that schools could be more connected to the community."

In essence, schools would become 'core social centres' where learning is integrated with employment, welfare and health services, much like West Auckland's Waipareira Trust where, Gavin says, "the whole community is the customer base rather than just kids between the ages of 13 and 18".

On the score of academic performance, Gavin isn't unduly worried about the potential impact of Covid on New Zealand's steadily declining international education rankings. As the director of the Qualitative Data Analysis and Research Unit in the Faculty of Education, he says rankings like the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) unfairly compare New Zealand with China. "That's like comparing red apples with rubber boots," he says. "There's a political agenda in PISA that is not based on good science. It's a business agenda."

Gavin is also concerned about the move to online exams for many NCEA external standards.

"NZQA can't demand that students do external exams on computers if we can't ensure that every kid has an equal and fair opportunity to practise and be prepared for that medium of assessment – and access to high-quality machinery with broadband."

Rather than blame teaching practices for poor academic outcomes, Gavin says there needs to be greater investment in a child's home experiences before they get to school.

"It's a whole different ball game in terms of investing in children's early life experiences.

And that's where your greatest bang for your buck is going to happen."

John Morgan adds that changes need to be made to improve outcomes by thinking outside the curriculum square.

"What we do know is that, even before the pandemic, many young people were sliding down the ladder of social mobility rather than climbing up it," he says. "The unknown quantity is how, globally, the next generations of children and young people will think about things. It may be a case of 'Ok Boomers, you did this, but that's not for us.'" ■

Professor Gavin Brown would like schools to become integrated with the community's social services.
Photo: Elise Manahan



Despite the challenges, second-year teacher Rori Baird wouldn't choose any other job.

Photo: Billy Wong



CHALLENGE FOR FIRST-YEAR TEACHERS

Rori Baird chose to become a teacher because she wanted to help people, much like her mother does as an emergency department nurse, "without seeing their blood and bones", she says. However her entry into the profession has been anything but plain sailing.

Being forced into lockdown during her final year of studies in 2020 meant that for some papers she hardly knew her lecturers and struggled without the in-person relationship.

"Not being able to bounce ideas off people was really hard."

Lockdowns also deprived her of five weeks of valuable placement time, and finding work was difficult. More than 30 job applications produced just three interviews and Rori considers herself "lucky" to be in her second year at a large Auckland primary school.

Faced with teaching online within weeks of starting out in 2021, she says it's been heart-breaking to watch some students struggle through a 30-minute Zoom session.

"They couldn't see their friends. They were stuck, maybe with their siblings who they didn't really like, or they weren't even online learning because they didn't have access to it."

The Omicron wave also brought fresh disruption in 2022 as students came and went through sickness or isolation. Rori says her Year 3 cohort has seen very little schooling.

"We're really teaching them the Year 2 way of doing stuff because they have no idea what a school year is like. You really feel for the kids who've never had a full year at school – and they're aged seven now."

She still has no regrets about her career choice. And looking back, she values the flexibility learnt from switching from online to in-person teaching.

"I could not imagine another job. I have never been more in love with teaching."

WHAT GENERATION GAP?

Writing a piece for the University of Auckland alumni magazine feels like my wheel has gone full circle.

I started as a journalist while doing my BA in history in the 1970s and proudly became the first female editor of *Craccum* in 1978. In those days, I'm dressed in my op-shop finery with a henna-ed curly perm, 20 fags a day habit and have a frantic drive to see/hear/do everything before it was too late.

The Who's immortal line "Hope I die before I get old" seemed to ring loud in the ears of my mates and me, but there's always been a need for the young to climb over, or even overthrow, what went before. Just as I no longer smoke or read Herman Hesse, I have changed, grown up, matured; I am not that girl with those desperate desires.

But we can all remember those feelings, and I am here writing this piece to say that I think we should call them to mind more often. In that way you can see more clearly the wide gulf between you and those who are currently sitting in those lecture halls, or turning up where you work to disrupt and demand. They can be phenomenally irritating, but wasn't I, with my black and white opinions. And you too?

Having spent the decades post-university working as a journalist in London, I have seen up-close how things have changed in my industry. When I started, we worshipped at the altar of the coolest kids, or the best writers, or the most charismatic photographers. I worked on such magazines as *Elle*, *Vogue*, *In Style*, as well as *The Guardian* and *Evening Standard*. The power of print, a symbol of old technology, faded before my eyes. By the time I exited from my last editor's chair – at *Psychologies*, a monthly co-owned by a French company – many of the glamorous iconic titles I'd worked on had ceased printing, and some had closed altogether.

All workplaces have been changed by the combination of digital advertising and the internet. One of the outcomes of that is the crumbling of hierarchies and the downplaying of experience. So the awe in which I held the

editors and writers I first met when I came to London is not felt by young journalists these days. The way to build your reputation is no longer by building up a body of work and channelling your idols, but by shooting multiple feel-good videos and pulling in the likes and follows on social media platforms.

The generation gap has escalated with all this change. Being over 50 can feel tantamount to finished when the next new thing out of Silicon Valley is all anyone wants to talk about. Veterans are shocked and often repelled by the upheaval and apparent reversal of their fortunes. As the relationship between young and old can seem unyielding, many feel swept aside and so avoid connecting with people much younger than them.

But it's my belief that both ends of the pole can flourish from spending more time together. If all you hear of young people is demands that you change your attitudes and language to fit their view of the world, lest you be 'on the wrong side of history', then you might feel repelled by their righteousness. But if you stop to consider your own youthful enthusiasms, and give up some of your time to listen to what things look like from their perspective, you might learn a little, even begin to change your stance.

I'd say the same to them: and I do. I don't profess to know everything, but by dint of my experience of life, I do have some knowledge to pass along. How I do that will affect how it is perceived. Who wants a blowhard rambling on about their past triumphs? How much better to meet people half-way, alluding to your opinions rather than bellowing them, asking what those who are not your age (and also your gender, ethnicity, political inclination, whatever else divides you) believe, rather than trying to carpet-bomb them first.

Some might say that's a return to the old-style civility I would have derided as phoney when I was younger, but now it seems so right. Especially when, in Ukraine, you can see where real chasms in belief and behaviour can get you.



Louise Chunn has a BA in History from the University of Auckland. She is the founder of therapist-matching service *Welldoing* and lives in London.



Louise Chunn was the first female editor of *Craccum*, in 1978.

This article reflects the opinion of the author and is not necessarily that of the University of Auckland.



Professor Shane Cronin sampling volcanic ash with Ma'ake Kolo'ofai from Tonga Geological Services. Photo: Folauhola Latuila

ADVENTURE SCIENTIST

Professor Shane Cronin was the first overseas volcanologist to visit Tonga after the January eruption and couldn't wait to get on the ground. By Anthony Doesburg

Volcanologist Shane Cronin first walked this earth in the area known as the Taupō Volcanic Zone. Yet despite the proximity of his home town to the geothermal wonderland of Rotorua and the active Tongariro, Ruapehu and Ngauruhoe volcanoes, engineering was the University of Auckland Professor of Volcanology's early calling.

But the pull to study earth sciences soon trumped engineering. That change of direction became significant this year with the vast eruption, on 15 January, of Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai, a volcanic island 65km north of Tongatapu, Tonga's main island.

The event not only sent shockwaves around the world – it was heard in Alaska and, helped by Cyclone Cody, its tsunami sank several boats at Tutukaka marina in the Bay of Islands – but also propelled Shane to prominence through scores of interviews with international media.

"I'm sometimes getting hassled by my students and colleagues about being a celebrity volcanologist, but I haven't had any bad responses yet," he says.

Shane is unsure whether his ultimate career choice can be attributed to his Taupō upbringing.

"Where I grew up was right on the east of the big volcano and I was very familiar with Tongariro, Ruapehu and Ngauruhoe – we did all the school trips to those volcanoes. I recall my parents talking about the threat of eruptions because there was unrest in the 1980s at Taupō.

"But when I went to uni, I was intending to do engineering. Then I was tempted by chemistry, which I did for a little while until I realised I was going to be stuck in a lab."

His taste for outside work had developed while doing horticulture jobs to help pay for his studies.

"What drew me to geology was the potential for a young fellow from central New Zealand to travel to far-flung locations and the chance to work outdoors. Earth science is in many ways the adventure science."

Speaking to *Ingenio* from Tonga, where he was the first overseas volcanologist to visit after the eruption, Shane is happy with the way his career is playing out. "I definitely made the right choice. I'm one of the few overseas scientists Tonga let through the door early, and I am helping coordinate the science response as well as being a point-person for New Zealand and international teams that want perishable information to improve tsunami and ash-fall models."

He says it's important to collect the ash samples early as they can get washed away. He has been running training days in the field with staff from Tonga Geological Services, covering survey techniques and deposit interpreting.

Shane did his undergraduate and PhD degrees at Massey University, graduating in earth sciences. His doctoral thesis was a study of volcanic and glacial deposits in the Tongariro River catchment that teased out the relationship between climatic change and volcanic activity.

"The way volcanoes erupt depends on such things as how much surface water there is and whether there is ice on top of the volcanoes."

He says both are important in shaping the hazards of New Zealand volcanoes.

"When there are big ice fields and lots of snow, we get a lot of lahars."

Even in the absence of an eruption, lahars can be lethal. In the 1953 Tangiwai disaster, a flash-flood of rock and ice from Mt Ruapehu's crater lake undermined a rail bridge, causing a derailment that killed 151 passengers on the Wellington to Auckland night express.

Shane's career changed direction when Mt Ruapehu erupted as his PhD was close to completion in 1995. Instead of geo-hydrology, which had been his interest, his focus moved to active volcanoes. This has led to work in several Pacific nations over the past 25 years, including three years in Fiji, and so many trips to Tonga that he forgets whether his present visit is his seventh or eighth.



Professor Shane Cronin overseeing surveying by Folauhola Latuila from Tonga Geological Services. Photo: Ma'ake Kolo'ofai

“What drew me to geology was the potential for a young fellow from central New Zealand to travel to far-flung locations and work outdoors. Earth science is in many ways the adventure science.” – Professor Shane Cronin, Faculty of Science

Pure science represents less than half of the work he does in the field. “In Tonga, the small team is getting information requests from Health, Agriculture, the Tonga Meteorological Service and other branches of government about the January eruption. We’re collecting information that’s applicable to ongoing scientific studies and also for future planning, such as where to relocate villages and how to better foresee and respond to the next event.”

Shane and the team even managed to snorkel close to the Hunga volcano in April, discovering that what used to be an island is now 200m deep.

Closer to home, Shane is also co-lead on a

research project until 2024, ‘Transitioning Taranaki to a Volcanic Future’, through the MBIE Endeavour Fund. It will look at what would happen if an eruption started and didn’t stop in the Taranaki region.

“The science is great as an academic exercise, but providing hazard assessments and impact studies that can be used to manage public safety, for instance, is far more satisfying than simply publishing a paper in a good journal.

“What I like about being at the University is that you get to do both.”

Stuff story: [tinyurl.com/Shane-snorkelling](https://www.stuff.co.nz/news/science/123456789) and watch [tinyurl.com/YouTube-SCronin](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=123456789)

EXCELLENCE IN THE RANKS

Auckland reinforces its place as New Zealand's leading university



The University has ranked sixth in the global Times Higher Education (THE) University Impact Rankings for 2022, up from ninth equal in 2021. The Impact Rankings show how universities around the world are working towards the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Retaining a position in the top ten reaffirms the University's strong commitment to the SDGs, many of which align with the strategic plan, *Taumata Teitei*.

This year, the University was placed in the world's top ten percent in all 17 SDGs of the 1,406 participating universities, with three SDGs in the top one percent and a further ten in the top five percent. Top ten scores were achieved in SDG2 Zero Hunger (4th); SDG15 Life on Land (4th); SDG3 Good Health and Well-being (10th) and SDG5 Gender Equality (10th). Notably, there was also a significant improvement in SDG9, Industry Innovation and Infrastructure, a highly competitive SDG usually dominated by

well-funded universities in the global north.

Vice-Chancellor Professor Dawn Freshwater says the result is outstanding.

"These rankings measure achievement and impact against targets that the world has collectively agreed are crucial for the future of our planet and societies, and demonstrate how very relevant universities can and should be.

"As our own strategy highlights, our contribution – at a local, national, and international level – should be about making the world a better place."

The success in the Impact Rankings comes on top of the news the University now has 12 subjects in the top 50 in the world, in the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) subject rankings announced in April. Psychology, linguistics, and accounting and finance all returned to the Top 50.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) Professor Jim Metson says that is particularly satisfying given the increasing competition and popularity of these subjects. "This excellent result highlights the international competitiveness of research across all of these disciplines. To have 12 subjects in the top 50 demonstrates the outstanding efforts of staff through one of the most challenging periods the University has faced."

Read more: auckland.ac.nz/2022-THE-impacts and auckland.ac.nz/subject-rankings

JULIE STOUT HONOURED

First woman to win the Gold Medal in Architecture

Architect Julie Stout was named Te Kāhui Whaihanga New Zealand Institute of Architects 2021 Gold Medallist in February. Julie is also an educator, activist, ambassador and professional

Gold medallist Julie Stout
Photo: Rebekah Robinson

teaching fellow in the masters programme at the School of Architecture and Planning. She is the first woman to receive the honour, the highest for architecture in New Zealand.

"I am sure that in the very near future, we will look back and say, 'Why did that take so long?' and that a woman architect winning the Gold Medal will not be unusual," Julie says.

The medal recognises Julie's unique and high-quality body of work, her generous contribution to the future of the profession through teaching, and her tireless advocacy for a better urban environment in Tāmaki Makaurau.

"Architecture has influenced my life, my loves, my work and my hopes for future generations in so many ways," she says.

The award recognises Julie's teaching contribution as well as practice.

Professor of Architecture Deidre Brown, Deputy Dean of Creative Arts and Industries, says Julie's work over 40 years has been influential for many, including herself.

"Julie was an inspiration when I was a student, a role model, and is doing the same for a new generation. She has made a tremendous contribution ... she has shaped our city and the way we engage with urban environments."

Watch a video about Julie at:
tinyurl.com/Julie-Stout-video



WINNING TRUST

Growing Up in New Zealand evolves with a new research director

Dr Sarah-Jane Paine (Ngāi Tūhoe) is the new research director of Growing Up in NZ (GUINZ), the largest contemporary longitudinal study of child development in New Zealand, tracking the lives of 6,000 children and their families over 21 years. The study has produced many reports, papers and policy briefs, contributing to a growing body of knowledge on what helps to improve childhood health and well-being.

Sarah-Jane has been involved with GUINZ since 2018 and is a kaupapa Māori epidemiologist. She says a kaupapa Māori approach has benefits for everyone in the study as it focuses on strong, trusting relationships and engagement with research participants. "With this study, like all longitudinal studies, we're asking a lot of families. Their level of altruism is so high to be involved for 21 years. They're heroes. So we need to do as much as we can to value that generosity and make the process seamless, efficient and easy for them."

Profile: auckland.ac.nz/GUINZ-SJPaine

Recent GUINZ news: growingup.co.nz/news



Dr Sarah-Jane Paine is the new research director of Aotearoa New Zealand's biggest longitudinal study, Growing Up in New Zealand.

BIONIC BEAT

Revolutionary pacemaker can reverse heart failure

A revolutionary pacemaker that re-establishes the heart's naturally variable beat will be trialled in New Zealand heart patients this year.

"Currently, all pacemakers pace the heart metronomically, which means a very steady, even pace," says Professor Julian Paton, lead researcher and director of Manaaki Mānawa, the Centre for Heart Research at the University of Auckland. "But when you record the heart rate in a healthy individual, it is constantly on the move." Manaaki Mānawa has led the research and the results have been published in the journal *Basic Research in Cardiology*.

Twelve years ago, Julian was in a group of scientists who investigated the function of heartbeat variability. They made a mathematical model that predicted it saved energy. That made them question why a metronomic heartbeat was used in heart-failure patients. All cardiovascular disease patients lose heart-rate variability, which is an early sign that something is going wrong.

"We decided we would put the heart rate

variability back into animals with heart failure and see if it did anything good," says Julian.

Following positive signals in rats, the latest published research was on a large animal model of heart failure, performed by Dr Julia Shanks and Dr Rohit Ramchandra.

"We believe we have now found a way to reverse heart failure," Rohit says.

Research fellow Julia explains: "There's nothing really on the market that will cure heart failure. All the drugs do is make you feel better. They don't address the issue that you have damaged tissue that's not contracting as efficiently as it was. Our new pacemaker brings back this variability, which of course is natural; in a way you could call it 'nature's pacemaker'."

The study was funded by the Health Research Council and the trial will be supported by Ceryx Medical which owns the IP on the unique electronics within the bionic pacemaker.

Full story: auckland.ac.nz/heart-monitor

MORE NEWS & RESEARCH

Keep up to date with University news auckland.ac.nz/all-UOA-news-stories

Professor Julian Paton is the director of Manaaki Mānawa, the Centre for Heart Research at the University.





ALUMNI START-UP KAMI IN TOP 100

Education technology firm Kami honoured by *Time* magazine

L-R: Kami founders Jordan Thoms, Hengjie Wang, Alliv Samson and Bob Drummond.

EdTech company Kami has been named by *Time* magazine in the world's top 100 most influential companies of 2022, listed in the 'leaders' category alongside the likes of Spotify, Sony and Airbnb.

Kami's software was invented in 2012 by three University of Auckland students as a way to collaborate on their study notes. They developed their idea through the Velocity \$100k Challenge run by the Business School's Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (CIE). Following success in the competition, the team behind Kami evolved their product to create a cloud-based platform that allows educators and students to annotate, view, edit and collaborate on digital documents from anywhere, transforming the way educators interact with their students. *Time* notes that, "During the pandemic, education-technology firm Kami – which lets teachers share learning resources, conduct virtual classes, provide feedback and more – offered its products for free to 32 million teachers and students in 180 countries, despite having no other revenue source. That move paid off as districts made decisions later on about how to spend their money. Deloitte named Kami New Zealand's fastest-growing business in 2021 with a nearly 1,200 percent revenue increase."

CIE director Darsel Keane says: "Kami's technical brilliance is matched by their exceptional customer service and authenticity in community building. The solution they have created for educators is having a global impact, while their head office is in New Zealand, creating jobs that benefit our local community."

MORE NEWS & RESEARCH

Keep up to date with University news auckland.ac.nz/all-ua-news-stories

Trimble Technology Labs have been set up in 16 countries.

HIGH-TECH LAB

Gift provides a multi-disciplinary boost on campus

Trimble Inc, a US-based global technology company, has a goal to create a future-focused workforce that will transform the engineering, architecture, design, arts and business sectors.

To that end, it has funded specialist Trimble Technology Labs in universities all over the world. Now the University of Auckland is one of those, after a gift agreement was signed.

It's the largest single gift in kind ever received by the University, and sees the establishment

of New Zealand's first Trimble Technology Lab (TTL), a space that will occupy four interconnected areas within the Engineering School on Symonds Street. The Auckland facility is one of 28 TTLs in 16 countries.

Trimble Inc is providing the Auckland lab with cutting-edge software and hardware to create significant new research and learning activities – with the goal of preparing a next-generation workforce. The lab will be fitted out to reflect the key programmes on offer. The opportunities reach beyond engineering to benefit students in architecture, computer science, anthropology and beyond – for example, the high-speed 3D scanner could be used to scan ruins and create 3D models of ancient construction methods. The technology will be accessible for the whole university and the TTL will be ready to go in Semester Two.

The gift agreement with Trimble is for an initial five years with the option of a five-year extension, to allow time for a deeper engagement in terms of knowledge exchanges, internships and partnerships with TTLs worldwide. Trimble Inc has a market value of around US\$20 billion and employs more than 11,500 people in 40 countries, including New Zealand.



GIFT TO BRIGHTEN FUTURES

A remarkable couple with 'uncommon courage' have left a legacy to help improve the lives of people like them, with movement disorders. By Margo White

When Carlo Fiorentino died in 2021, he left an estate worth \$1 million to the Auckland Bioengineering Institute (ABI). The legacy, the first bequest made to the ABI, will support the research of Professor Thor Besier and his team in the Musculoskeletal Modelling Group at the ABI, aiming to improve the lives of people with movement disorders such as cerebral palsy. Both Carlo and his wife Julie Thornley, who died in 2019, were born with cerebral palsy.

The condition is caused by damage to parts of the brain before, during and after childbirth, and affects a person's ability to control movement. The lesions that cause the disease are static, yet people with the condition typically walk in ways to compensate for their abnormal muscle activity. This leads to abnormal bone and muscle development in the lower limbs, which further affects movement.

Thor and his team have for several decades been developing computational models of the musculoskeletal system based on the laws of physiology and physics. "If we can better understand this system, which includes hundreds of muscles, bones and tissues, and how it adapts and responds to how people move, the better we're placed to prevent disease progression," Thor says.

Carlo heard Thor talking about his research on RNZ and got in touch with him.

"Carlo was excited to hear about what we were doing, so we met at his house, had a cup of tea and chatted about his life and the challenges he and Julie faced growing up in New Zealand.

"Our attitudes towards disability have changed a lot over the past few decades, and our research has accelerated our understanding of the neurological and musculoskeletal consequences of cerebral palsy, but there is still much to be understood."

Carlo was keen to hear how the ABI research might make a real difference.

"So I invited him to visit and meet our team to learn more about what we were doing. He particularly enjoyed the enthusiasm of the early career researchers and postgraduate students who want to make a difference for people such as himself."

Carlo was born in Nelson in 1949, and Julie in Wellington in 1953. Jane Carrigan, their friend



and disability advocate for more than a decade, and the executor of their will, says the couple lived their lives "with courage, dignity and joy" even though in their later years, "they were almost completely dependent on the care of third parties".

They had met as teenagers at the Pukeora Home for Disabled in Hawke's Bay, a place they enjoyed, but Pukeora was for young people and there came a time when they had to leave.

"That was the 60s when it was common for young people with a disability to end up in geriatric hospitals or aged care," says Jane. "They were terrified of that."

Their futures were made brighter by the opening of Laura Fergusson Trust residential facilities in Auckland in 1970, where people were encouraged to live as independently as possible. Carlo spent several months at the Palmerston North Hospital Rehabilitation Unit to get himself sufficiently independent to qualify for Laura Fergusson and he was accepted in 1972. It was another three years before Julie was able to join him.

Once accepted into the Laura Fergusson Trust, Julie enrolled in a Zoology paper at the University of Auckland.

"She passed, but with no tangible support it was just too difficult for her to continue and, much to her distress, she had to pull out," says Jane.

Carlo worked for a construction company as a calculator operator and Julie as a newspaper sub editor. They stayed at the Laura Fergusson Trust residence until the late 1980s when they bought a home nearby. They married in 2012.

Julie passed away before hearing of Thor's research. "But with her love of science and her great empathy for children, Carlo was confident she would approve of leaving their estate to the ABI," says Jane.

Their bequest, from the sale of their home, will establish and support the Carlo and Julie Fiorentino PhD Scholarship in Movement Disorder at the ABI.

An old photo of Carlo Fiorentino and Julie Thornley, who met as teenagers and married in 2012. They both had cerebral palsy.

"Carlo was excited to hear about what we're doing."

– Professor Thor Besier, Auckland Bioengineering Institute



Research

—
Professor John Fraser,
Dr Ries Langley and senior
research fellow Dr Fiona
Radcliff outline their research
to the Prime Minister.

Targeting a superbug

A vaccine against staphylococcal infection could be a life saver

Scientists at the University of Auckland are harnessing mRNA vaccine technology developed for Covid-19 to conquer a common superbug.

Dr Ries Langley saw the impact of the superbug when his one-year-old son's knee swelled up, turning hot and red. The boy couldn't put any weight on his leg. It was the start of a horrible month in hospital. Ries' son had osteomyelitis, a bone infection caused, in his

case, by *Staphylococcus aureus*, commonly known as *S. aureus*, *Staph aureus* or just "staph".

Ries, a senior research fellow in the School of Medicine, had already spent years studying staph. Today, his son is a healthy teenager, but the event sparked further research.

As co-principal investigator of a team led by Professor John Fraser, Dean of the Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences, Ries is working on a project to develop an mRNA vaccine for staph. The project is funded by Wellcome Leap, within the R3: RNA Readiness and Response programme, which has connected the Auckland team with a global consortium of teams working on various dimensions of mRNA technology.

"We have some of the highest rates of staphylococcal infection in the developed world. It's particularly prevalent in Māori and Pacific populations," says Ries. "This makes it a health equity issue."

"A successful vaccine could keep people out of hospital, shorten their time in hospital or potentially save their lives," says senior research fellow Dr Fiona Radcliff, the project's other co-principal investigator.

Without the massive financial resources poured into Covid-19 vaccines, the team know the vaccine will take some years to develop, but believes its vaccine will be ready for human clinical trials within a few years.

Full story: auckland.ac.nz/superbug-vaccine

TURNING MASKS INTO WATER

Two innovative processes have been developed to recycle or miraculously get rid of old PPE

Dr Yvonne Anderson (Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences) and Associate Professor Saeid Baroutian (Engineering) have come up with two innovative solutions to stop personal protective equipment (PPE) swamping

—
Associate Professor Saeid
Baroutian has found a way
to turn PPE into water.

the planet. Yvonne is leading a project that disinfects PPE so it can be reused or recycled safely. It's a mobile solution that can be shipped to areas where there are PPE shortages.

Meanwhile, Saeid has developed a process to turn non-recyclable PPE into water and vinegar.

Shredded masks, gowns, gloves and plastic safety glasses go into a machine where hot, pressurised water and compressed air are applied. Water and acetic acid are the end-products. The PPE-to-liquid process is carried out at 300°C and takes about an hour in a small prototype machine in a laboratory in the Faculty of Engineering. Gaseous by-products from the process are oxygen and low concentrations of carbon dioxide that can be safely discharged.

"This is a clean, chemical-free solution that will be a game changer internationally," says Saeid, from the Department of Chemical and Materials Engineering.

The process was developed at the University in collaboration with the Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences and the universities of Otago and Waterloo (Canada).

Read more: auckland.ac.nz/PPE-recycling
and auckland.ac.nz/PPE-disinfect

Watch the news story: tinyurl.com/TVNZ-PPE



RHEUMATIC FEVER: LET'S STAMP IT OUT

Three Auckland researchers are leading a \$10m project to stamp out the deadly disease

A new research project aims to end rheumatic fever. It's named 'Rapua te mea ngaro ka tau', and the principal investigator, Associate Professor Nikki Moreland, has brought together a team that includes Dr Rachel Webb (Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences) and Dr Anneka Anderson, a medical anthropologist.

Rheumatic fever is a tricky disease. If a sore throat is caused by *Streptococcus A* bacteria, it can trigger the immune system, in a susceptible person, to go haywire. Affected children can experience swollen and sore joints, fatigue and fever. A simple test can pick up a *Strep A* infection, but sore throats and sore joints can often be left undiagnosed. Treatment is at least a decade-long and an arduous course of monthly injections of long-acting penicillin. Each year, children and young people fall through the cracks and face severe and, in some cases, life-threatening illness. There are issues in prevention, with rheumatic fever, poverty and inequity inextricably linked.

The Aotearoa New Zealand project is



partnering with an Australian project on a similar mission. With Ministry of Health funding of \$10m, the researchers are mapping a battle against the infectious disease on three fronts: enhanced surveillance of *Strep A* infections; expanded infrastructure for laboratory assessment of vaccines; and clinical development of vaccines. They will build the most comprehensive map of *Strep A* disease the country has had. Part of their work will be to identify the most common *Strep A* strains circulating in the country, and they will use Nikki's database in her laboratory at FMHS to inform the suitability of a vaccine for our country, in partnership with the parallel effort in Australia. The project runs until 2024, by which time the researchers plan to be readying for a clinical trial of a vaccine candidate.

Feature story about the project is in 'Mātātaki The Challenge': auckland.ac.nz/rheumatic-feature

L-R: Dr Rachel Webb, Associate Professor Nikki Moreland and Dr Anneka Anderson are collaborating on research into rheumatic fever. Photo: Billy Wong

MORE RESEARCH

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Screens affecting eye health

Dr Alex Müntz's research shows screentime guidelines are vital

Dr Alex Müntz from the School of Ophthalmology says lockdown learning in the pandemic has raised questions about how much screentime is too much.

While research has consistently shown that extended screen use is linked to dry-eye disease in adults, Alex says studies have revealed it's also becoming common in younger people.

He says the problem with handheld devices is that the content is interactive, and people scroll and engage. "That affects blinking because when you're focusing up close, you blink less." It's the lack of blinking that can cause dry eye.

He first observed the incidence of dry eye in a study of more than 450 young attendees at a 2019 Auckland gaming convention, but the problem is more widespread than intensely focusing on games, especially with children now learning and socialising online.



Forcing yourself to blink can be an effective remedy. Alex and his team have undertaken studies that get people with dry eye to do blinking exercises. "Every 20 minutes you gently shut your eyes, open, shut, squeeze and open. It's a bit of an investment, but after a month of doing it, people reported much better symptoms and we saw better clinical signs."

Heavy screen use is also associated with myopia (short-sightedness). Alex is part of a multidisciplinary group of clinicians, scientists and educators collaborating to help develop evidence-based guidelines relating to screen use in children. He says teachers and caregivers need New Zealand information based on research.

More: auckland.ac.nz/screentime-research

Dr Alex Müntz from the School of Ophthalmology says heavy screen use is having an impact and guidelines are needed. Photo: Elise Manahan



Riley Elliott: shark PR guy

Danelle Clayton meets **Riley Elliott**, an unconventional marine scientist doing his bit to change our perception of sharks.

Shark Man, aka Dr Riley Elliott, is a scientist who is at his best either diving in the ocean tagging sharks, or in front of a camera educating the public about the unfairly maligned creatures.

Riley isn't your typical PhD graduate. One way he shares his knowledge of his specialist subject is to front the reality TV show *Shark Academy*. It puts eight aspiring shark experts through a series of challenges to win a coveted place on Riley's research team (you can watch it on Discovery Channel or on ThreeNow).

"It's more of a 'docu-series' than reality TV," Riley says, adding that, as long as it helps to educate the public about shark conservation, he isn't bothered by the label.

"I'm not a traditional academic who's largely office-based and is focused on journal publications. I want to utilise the biggest platforms of communication there are to improve how people perceive sharks."

The 36-year-old has 10,000 dives under his belt and has hosted multiple television shows since completing his doctorate at the University of Auckland's Institute of Marine Science. His doctorate is being published in a leading marine journal.

He has also authored books and magazine articles, is an in-demand public speaker and a regular guest on news and talk shows across the US, Australia and New Zealand.

"Basically, I'm trying to help people understand that sharks are incredibly important and should be respected."

Growing up surfing in Raglan and on the Coromandel, Riley was always drawn to the ocean. He initially studied dolphins, completing an honours degree in Zoology and masters with distinction in Marine Science at the University of Otago.

But a harmless shark encounter during a dive in the Fiordland Sounds changed his research focus.

"I was scared, and it made me think about why we are so frightened of these creatures.

"We should fear sharks, I'm not trying to sugar coat that fact. But once we understand them better, I hope we can react to that fear rationally rather than emotionally.

"Sharks have been around longer than dinosaurs and trees. They are incredibly important to our marine ecosystems yet their populations have declined by 70 percent in the past 50 years, and a lot of that is down to fear and misinformation," Riley says.

His ground-breaking doctorate produced the first in-depth understanding of blue sharks in the South Pacific. It heavily influenced a ban on shark finning in New Zealand waters, estimated to save 150,000 sharks a year from slaughter.

Completed at Leigh Marine Laboratory under the supervision of Professor John Montgomery and Associate Professor Craig Radford, it involved satellite tagging blue sharks to define migratory and behaviour patterns.

"Prior to 2014, New Zealand was a major exporter of shark fins to Asia and a lot of people don't know that," Riley says.

"Many of the sharks we tagged would simply disappear. They were being caught and finned for shark fin soup. It was devastating, both emotionally and financially."

Riley's subsequent campaign to ban shark finning made him realise the power of



Riley Elliott swimming with a mako shark near Coromandel, to learn more about mako behaviour. Photo: Amber Jones

“We should fear sharks, I’m not trying to sugar coat that fact. But once we understand them better, I hope we can react to that fear rationally rather than emotionally.”

– Dr Riley Elliott, marine scientist



communicating evidence-based knowledge combined with modern media.

“Thousands of blue sharks are still swimming in the ocean because of the communication of this science to the New Zealand public.

“You can critique my methods, but as long as the correct information is getting out there and I’m helping to protect these incredible creatures, it doesn’t faze me. The results speak for themselves.”

This past summer, Riley has been filming mako sharks in the waters off Tauranga’s coast for the Discovery Channel’s long-running *Shark Week*.

“It has been a chance to showcase New Zealand and the magnificent mako shark to the world. Because they live so far offshore, we

actually don’t know very much about them. It’s crucial that we continue to share our knowledge of the importance of these animals, or we may lose them.”



Opposite page: Riley eye-to-eye with a blue shark. Photo: Amber Jones
Left: shooting for the Discovery Channel.
Above: Riley Elliott aka Shark Man is serious about protecting sharks. Photo: Emma Casagrande



KEEPING IT REAL

—
Melanie Smith likes nothing better than connecting with people at all levels of the Ocado Retail business. Photo: Jake Darling

Melanie Smith breaks the mould. It's rare to find a female chief executive in London, particularly one who is Māori. And while the straight-talking BCom/LLB alumna knows she's a role model whose skills would be valued in Aotearoa, her wanderlust is winning. *By Denise Montgomery*

During the peak of the Delta outbreak in the UK in 2020, you might have found alumna Melanie (Mel) Smith, CEO of Ocado Retail, an innovative online UK supermarket, sleeping in her beat-up van in an Ocado warehouse carpark. She wanted to be up on site early to help her team.

"Yes, I did sleep in the van. I really like chatting with our delivery drivers, too. They're such good people, so I actually enjoyed it."

Established in 2000 as the UK's first online grocery store, Ocado doesn't have physical stores – just massive warehouses with thousands of robots bringing food to human packers for delivery.

Aside from the chat, Mel wanted to be at the coalface to support delivery continuity to Ocado Retail's fast-growing database of online shoppers.

Then there was the time she arrived for an appointment in her panel van with a mattress in the back. "I had a meeting with a manager, so parked in the VIP space. Someone asked, 'Are you sure you are in the right place?'"

She was. "I'm really sorry," she said. "I'm your VIP."

You can tell it gave her joy.

Mel tells entertaining tales quickly. She's the one you want to sit next to at dinner parties.

There are no affectations adopted from living in London for 20 years.

She's inspirational in many ways – female CEOs in the UK are rare. She's also Māori (Ngāpuhi).

So how did she get such a job?

Let's go back. Mel was at Howick College when her parents, Francie and Dennis, moved to Kawakawa in Northland. "I went up north for six days, then told them I was going home."

She headed back to Howick College, staying with friends. "I was lucky. I had great teachers at Howick such as Judy O'Reilly, who I'm still in contact with. My parents were big on education – my dad was a crazy entrepreneur with a lot of drive. Even though he wasn't an academic, he was smart. My mum is incredibly disciplined."

Mel completed a conjoint BCom/LLB at the University of Auckland, graduating in 1997, and then a MBA at the Kellogg School of Management in Illinois while she was working at global management consultant McKinsey & Company, where she ended up a partner. More recently, she was managing director at Smith Hebert, a boutique advisory and investment firm focused on the consumer goods sector. She has had many influential jobs and worked as a consultant.

“I’m always going to do what I think is right, because I’d rather get fired for doing what I think is right than what someone told me to do that I felt was wrong.”

– Melanie Smith, chief executive officer, Ocado Retail, UK

“I came out of retirement in 2017 to work as strategy director at M&S to run their bank and help them figure out what to do when they were looking to acquire Ocado Group’s retail operation, which they now half own. I was a key person in that negotiation.

“I sat in front of these incredibly posh people for six months, negotiating to buy half the business off them, which was a terrifying experience. I just problem-solved my way through it.”

Once the deal was done, Mel wondered who would lead Ocado Retail. “My investment banker said, ‘You should go for the job’.”

Mel thought that wouldn’t be possible.

“He said, ‘Well, they won’t give it to you if you don’t ask for it’. I wondered if I would even make a good CEO. He handed me a list of all the CEOs in the UK. I decided I could.”

He’s now her chief financial officer.

Mel had to wait nine months before her appointment was confirmed and also had to bite her tongue in the second interview when someone said, “Well, you seem like a smart girl”.

She started the role in August 2019 and the UK went into lockdown in March 2020. She worked every single day of 2020 until Boxing Day, visiting warehouses, communicating with delivery drivers and connecting with government ministers. She was made a CBE in the UK 2021 New Year’s Honours, for services to retail and the food-supply chains during Covid. She was also an inaugural recipient of a special recognition award from the UK Friends of the University of Auckland.

But if she thought 2020 was hard, 2021 was harder. “Trading through a crisis was easier. Everyone lived on adrenalin. But in 2021 we had Brexit, supply-chain challenges and didn’t have enough labour. We also had a fire in a warehouse.

“Personally, it was super crappy. I was going through early menopause and was exhausted and feeling crazy. I finally got on hormone replacement therapy and started to feel better. Then my dad died suddenly. I didn’t get to his funeral because I was stuck in MIQ; I had to watch it on Zoom. Then I got back from New Zealand, and my husband Stephane was diagnosed with prostate cancer. He had surgery and is fine now. And one of our two cats died. Yip, 2021 sucked.”

But that was then, this is 2022. She’s back on track – healthy, enthusiastic, energetic and ready for whatever the next challenge is, and for more travel.

In 2019, Mel ticked off what had become an obsessive goal – to visit every UN country in the world, defined as the 193 UN member nations. She added another four locations for good measure – Taiwan, Kosovo, Palestine and the Vatican.

“It would have driven me nuts if I’d been stranded on 192 countries before lockdown!”

Her preferred way to see places is to hike, with Stephane, with a friend or alone.

“This year I’m taking Stephane hiking in the Hindu Kush in Pakistan. We’re also going on a road trip from Baghdad to Basra in Iraq. As well, I’m walking across Bosnia and I’m taking

Mel Smith has visited almost 200 countries. Clockwise from bottom left: Mel in Aotearoa, on the Cascade Saddle; Mel in Lahore with female students; Mel in Sierre Leone; with Afghan students in Kabul, before the Taliban took over; Mel and husband Stephane in the Faroe Islands; hiking in the Atacama, Chile. See her travel blog: onlymyfootprints.com





Reilly Polaschek

The 2021 scholarship recipient was Reilly Polaschek (Ngāi Te Rangi, Ngāi Rangiwewehi) who completes her Bachelor of Commerce/Bachelor of Laws (honours) conjoint degree in Semester One 2022. Reilly says the scholarship has been a massive help. “It allowed me to cut down on hours at my part-time jobs over the past 12 months of my degree. That’s meant I’ve been able to pour more energy into my academic commitments and extra-curriculars. I’m so grateful for Melanie’s support.”

She says Mel has given her useful guidance to ensure she makes a meaningful contribution to the Māori community.

“She reminded me of the importance of leading by example, mentoring and bringing others up with you.”

In the past year, Reilly has been working as a graduation teaching assistant and professional teaching fellow at the Law School. She has also worked for Genesis Energy’s social media team and for McKinsey & Company as a business analyst intern. In August, she’s moving to Sydney for a graduate role at McKinsey, the same company for which Mel worked for many years.

“I feel an obligation to all the people who supported me and believe it’s important to help the next generation.”

– Mel Smith, alumna and chief executive officer of Ocado Retail, United Kingdom

▶ Stephane to the island of Socotra, off Yemen. These are his holidays!”

The wanderlust can be a challenge.

“I can’t take more than a week at a time, and I go away with a satellite device. I was away in 2021 when I got a satellite text in the mountains saying, ‘One of your warehouses is on fire’.

“So I’m texting the CFO and giving him the coordinates of the nearest road so someone could come and pick me up and drive me to the airport.”

Truth is, even though she loves her job, Mel doesn’t have to work at all.

“I don’t need a lot of money. I don’t have kids. I happily live on very little and could live in my van for the rest of my life.

“Most of my colleagues in the UK have kids in private schools and bills to pay and that feels like a much more stressful existence than mine. If I lost my job tomorrow, I’d be fine.”

She says that brings freedom.

“I’m always going to do what I think is right. I’d rather get fired for doing what I think is right than doing what someone told me to do that I felt was wrong.”

Ocado is an organisation that attracts a diverse range of people, and she says it helps to be Māori in this regard, and gives her the opportunity to be a role model for Indigenous women in business.

“Ocado Retail has an inclusive environment. It doesn’t matter if you’re the posh kid who went to Eton or a refugee from Afghanistan, I want you to feel you can be yourself, because that will enable you to do your best work. I say to people to ‘bring your best self’. ‘But if your best self is a racist, homophobic dickhead, then don’t bring that one’,” she laughs.

Mel and Stephane enjoy the theatre and dance and Mel is on the board of dance theatre Sadler’s Wells, another inroad to improving diversity outside work.

“What I like about Sadler’s is they are trying to bring diversity into their productions so it’s not just lots of posh white ballet dancers. I know the CEO and we have a regular ‘fight’ because when I first got on the board, I said, ‘Maybe you should think about putting on a Māori dance performance’, and he laughed out loud. I said, ‘What? We have African, Jamaican, people from Senegal. I’m not having you laughing!’ I’m still working on him.”

She’s a woman of influence and wants other young Māori women to be the same.

“I hope this comes across OK, but I meet all

these talented young Māori women who say, ‘I’m going to work in Māori business’.

“And I say, ‘Well, that’s noble, but why don’t you want to be the CEO of Google? Or Microsoft? Why are you capping your aspirations? I would like you to go and run the world, so get out there.’”

She’s hoping to help make that happen by funding the Mokaraka Māori Women in Business Scholarship through the Business School. But ‘snowflakes’ best not apply. And she isn’t big on shirkers.

“I’m pretty ruthless. You have to get good grades. You also have to earn your own money because I’m earning money to give you money, so I expect you to have a job during the year.

“I feel an obligation to all the people who supported me – and believe it’s important to help the next generation. But if you take money off me, one of the criteria is you have to pay it forward at some point ... if you can.”

Mel knows the University is a great place to build connections for life. Through Te Rākau Ture, the Māori Law Students’ Association, she made lifelong friendships.

“Te Rākau Ture crew are there if I need them, to this day. I am godmother to the youngest of Amokura Kawharu, who is president of the Law Commission. I’m good friends with Khyllie Quince, Dean of the AUT Law School – she’s amazing, she’s fierce. And also Teanau Tuiono, a Green Party MP from Palmerston North. They helped me through uni.”

Artworks by Tracey Tawhiao, also a Law School alumna, are on the walls of her London home.

Mel says although she is connected to Aotearoa New Zealand, there are gaps.

“When I came to London, my reo wasn’t great. I’ve learned, but I’m not fantastic. My knowledge of tikanga isn’t great, either.

“But 99 percent of my whānau over here, Ngāti Rānana (the London tribe) say, ‘Don’t you worry about that. You’re doing your own thing and you look after us and it’s okay’. I’m not the perfect Māori and no one expects me to be the perfect Maori.”

The imperfect Māori isn’t planning to come home soon, even though she acknowledges that might be expected of her.

“I know I would be a better role model at home, but half of me thinks I’m not really a role model. I’m just someone who gets up and goes to work every day.” ■

Behind the masks

Emergency nurses Natalie Anderson, Wendy Sundgren and Bridget Venning from the School of Nursing reflect on the challenges of nursing in Covid times.

Covid-19 has changed the face of emergency nursing forever. While nurses are grateful for a ready supply of personal protective equipment and improvements in infection control procedures, it has created barriers to more than just the virus. Our faces – essential tools for connection, communication and reassurance – are now obscured by masks and eye protection. We miss friendly smiles, subtle facial expressions, low voices, and lip reading.

Voices are raised now. Voices of distress and outrage in response to long waits, uncertainty, isolation and separation from family. Voices of bewilderment and frustration associated with hearing impairment or confusion of the elderly, or a young child's fear of the masked face.

Behind the mask, there is a lot more to our story. While we appreciate the sentiment of being marked as the heroes and angels of this global pandemic, these labels fail to recognise what we do or how we got here. Contrary to popular belief, few nurses feel a 'calling', and none is born with superpowers. Expert nurses are the product of years of professional development and skill acquisition. Collectively, we three authors have accrued 46 years' nursing experience and nine university degrees. This hard-gained expertise has helped us minimise the substantive risks posed to our patients, colleagues and country over the past two years. Frustratingly, the judgement required to navigate this level of complex, high-stakes decision making often goes unrecognised.

One size doesn't fit all. Mask-wearing policies often can't be enforced with intoxicated, confused and distressed patients. Visitor restrictions require expert negotiation, considering the essential role of whānau as caregivers, interpreters and sources of patient history. In the past, patients have been cared for within the Emergency Department, though sometimes in chairs and corridor spaces.

As Omicron surged in Auckland, we had to determine which patients could be safely managed outside in a tent, building overhang or even in their car. Concepts of utilitarianism and



Opinion

distributive justice inform our everyday practice in these extraordinary times.

Our friends and whānau express their gratitude and sympathy and sometimes ask us what is hardest about emergency nursing during a pandemic. They assume the added challenges to our inherently chaotic work environment weigh the heaviest on our minds. In fact, what is hardest is our concern for the future of our profession. The pandemic has disrupted the education, support and career progression of nurses. An 'all hands to the pump' deployment to clinical areas seemed reasonable at the outset of the pandemic. However, it has evolved into years-long deprioritisation of nursing research, quality projects, education, and other professional development. We are concerned that Covid-19 will have a long-lasting adverse impact on nursing well-being and workforce development, as seen overseas.

During this pandemic, there has been a lot of talk of beds and health system capacity, but without sufficient nursing staff, there is no care in healthcare. Fortunately, the mindset of an emergency nurse is to crack on and get the job done. Covid-19 has not changed this. Around the country, many emergency departments were short of nursing staff before this pandemic hit.

At the height of community spread, staff burnout and sickness affected all emergency care staff, including our orderly, phlebotomy, cleaning, clerical and medical colleagues. The surge capacity of our health system is highly dependent on the goodwill of nurses. We are proud to be nurses and proud of our colleagues' resilience and adaptability in the face of unrelenting pressure and constant change, but a significant investment in our future nursing workforce is desperately needed.

Senior lecturer Dr Natalie Anderson and professional teaching fellows Wendy Sundgren and Bridget Venning have part-time clinical positions at emergency departments in the Auckland region.

Natalie Anderson, one of the authors, says the pandemic has disrupted nurses' education, support and career progression. Photo: Elise Manahan

“The mindset of an emergency nurse is to crack on and get the job done. Covid-19 has not changed this.”

This article reflects the opinion of the authors and is not necessarily that of their employers.

**Distinguished
Alumni
Awards**

This year, the University of Auckland recognises the achievements of four alumni and one young alumnus. They're all exceptional leaders in their fields, changing communities for the better. The annual Taumata Distinguished Alumni Awards ceremony will be held in person on 11 June and livestreamed.

NGARIMU BLAIR BA 1998

Ngarimu Blair is an influential Māori leader who has spent more than two decades advancing iwi issues in Tāmaki Makaurau. He is deputy chair of the Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei Trust and has played a big role in the success of Whai Rawa, its commercial arm. He has spearheaded many art and urban design projects highlighting Māori history in Auckland and has been heavily involved with hapū housing projects in the city. His story: tinyurl.com/etangata-Ngarimu



FEPULEA'I MARGIE APA

BCom 1995, MPA (Exec) Well. 2020
Fepulea'i Margie Apa will be the chief executive of Health New Zealand, the government's new national health organisation that starts in July. She has more than two decades of health-sector leadership, as CEO of Counties Manukau District Health Board (CMDHB) and as CMDHB's director of population health and strategy. She was the first Samoan to lead a DHB.



NIGEL LATTA

ONZM, BSc Otago 1988, MSc Otago 1990, MPhil 1995, PGDipClinPsych 1995
Nigel Latta is a clinical psychologist, author and TV host. He specialises in forensic psychology and family therapy and has written many best-selling books to help parents with children, including *Raising Teenagers: A Practical Guide for Parents*. In 2012, he was made an Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit for services to psychology.



**YOUNG ALUMNUS OF THE YEAR
SUDHVIR SINGH**

BMedSc (Hons) 2011, MBChB 2012, MSc LSE 2021, MA Chicago 2021
Dr Sudhvir Singh is a physician and public health leader who focuses on addressing climate change and health inequalities. Through his work, he strives to create conditions that give all people the opportunity to lead healthy lives on a stable planet. He is technical officer for Healthier Populations at the World Health Organisation. As well as his medical qualifications, Sudhvir has an MA in Public Policy from the University of Chicago.

MAUREEN LANDER

MNZM, BFA 1987, BA 1989, MFA 1993, DocFA 2002
Dr Maureen Lander is a weaver, academic and multi-media installation artist. **Profile on opposite page.**

Read full profiles of all Distinguished Alumni at auckland.ac.nz/DAAs.

Make a nomination for 2023's Distinguished Alumni Awards at auckland.ac.nz/daa

WEAVING MAGIC

Linda Tyler talks to weaver and teacher **Maureen Lander**, one of our distinguished alumni in 2022.

Artist Dr Maureen Lander has been back on campus in 2022, creating an installation artwork for the atrium of Engineering Building 405. The *Pou Iho* is a collaboration with eight students from Engineering, Architecture and Fine Arts and was commissioned by the University Art Collection.

“Collaborative art-making has persisted in my practice,” says Maureen, who turns 80 this year. “I’ve worked this way with these students to complete this big project. Our work is inspired by Mere Toka’s tukutuku panels, which I first saw in the Old Choral Hall when I began at the University 40 years ago.”

Maureen has been named a distinguished alumna, after around 40 years as a trailblazing multi-media installation artist, weaver and academic. She has exhibited all over the globe and was the first Māori to receive a Doctorate of Fine Arts, from Elam in 2002. She also won a Te Tohu Toi Ururangi award from Te Waka Toi, for academic excellence.

Maureen was born in Rawene, Northland, (Te Hikutu/Ngāpuhi, Te Roroa) and grew up in Te Karaka, inland from Gisborne, in the 1950s. She trained as a primary school teacher in Wellington and taught until the early 1980s when she returned to study, first as an adult student at Aorere College, then at the University of Auckland. She was the only one of six siblings to go to university, although her father had a Bachelor of Arts from the University – so her becoming a distinguished alumna is special.

“In his old age, I was able to bring Dad back for a visit. He prided himself on being able to pick winners, racehorses mainly, but I don’t think he would have picked this! He’d be very happy.

“I first went to the University to attend Dr Ranginui Walker’s continuing education classes on Māori society before I plucked up courage to enrol in Māori Studies for a BA in 1982. I was accepted for Elam in 1983 and started my Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA), eventually completing my BA in Māori Studies and Anthropology in 1989.

“In effect, I created my own informal conjoint degree, combining Māori Studies with Fine Arts.”

She worked in the Anthropology Department as a photographer, then did a Master of Fine Arts, graduating in 1993 before becoming an academic.



“I underpinned my art-making with research into Māori society and material culture, which was quite unusual in the 1980s. There were no Māori art or art history lecturers on staff then, but luckily the timing was right and I had the opportunity to work on the tukutuku for the meeting house, Tāne-nui-a-rangi, under the supervision of master carver Dr Pakaariki Harrison and his wife, Hinemoa.

“In the early 90s, Māori material culture specialist Dante Bonica and I used to take our students to their marae at Kennedy Bay for intensive wānanga, before we got our own workshop, Rua te Whaihangā.”

Maureen first became aware of the beauty of muka – prepared fibre of flax *Phormium tenax* – for art-making when she saw a korowai by Dame Rangimārie Hetet in Waikato Museum in the late 1970s. When Dame Rangimārie and her daughter Diggeress Te Kanawa set up Te Ōhāki Māori Village and Crafts Centre in Waitomo in 1982, Maureen learned cloak-making skills there. She taught Māori fibre arts for 15 years, completing her doctorate while teaching full-time, then retiring five years later in 2007.

Her guide, *Techniques for the Preparation of Flax Fibre by Traditional Māori Methods* (1984) is in Special Collections in the University Library. She has contributed to many publications and has also created groundbreaking work for landmark exhibitions such as *Pasifika Styles* at the University of Cambridge’s Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. Her artist’s installation at the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford in 2002, *Mrs Cook’s Kete*, was a collaboration with former Elam sculpture lecturer Christine Hellyar.

“The University was a big part of my life from my early 40s as a student until I retired from academia at 65. It still plays a role in my life.

“A lot has changed, but most of my favourite places are still there.” ■

Dr Maureen Lander in front of Mere Toka’s tukutuku panels, which are now in the ClockTower.
Photo: Billy Wong

“A lot has changed, but most of my favourite places are still there.”

– Dr Maureen Lander, multi-media artist

READ MORE

Maureen on campus:
[auckland.ac.nz/
maureen-lander](https://auckland.ac.nz/maureen-lander)

CAN WE EVER SOLVE OUR HOUSING CRISIS?

Three experts connected with the University explore the question.

What do you think? Have your say.
Facebook: UoAAlumni
Twitter: @AucklandAlumni
Email: ingenio@auckland.ac.nz

The writers' views reflect personal opinions and may not be those of the University of Auckland.



DREAMS AND REALITIES OF THIS MŌREAREA

Fred Astle

Ka taea e tātou e whakatika te mōrearea o te whare? When we ask if we can ever solve the housing crisis in Aotearoa, we need to know the word mōrearea. In short, it means the situation is “bloody alarming and equally dangerous on numerous levels”.

Comprehensive emergency strategies are required, policy that is bold and multi-faceted – the housing equivalent of our approach to the pandemic. The word whakatika means ‘fixing up’, so to rectify the mōrearea or the alarming problem, in this context, means removing the barriers to the Kiwi dream of owning that choice house with a nice yard to mow, or being able to rent a good roof over our heads.

The key player in this crisis is central government and, depending on who you’re talking to, you’ll get different answers on its thinking. Some smart economists might say ongoing rising house prices are not sustainable and banks must restrict lending, particularly to first-home buyers with smaller deposits. And, of course, they just did.

A better option could be the government’s Progressive Home Ownership Scheme, where banks and lenders become part of the solution rather than part of the problem.

Talk to those involved in social housing and you’ll hear about people pushed into near poverty through high rents, cost of living rises, unemployment or low skills. They are people who need emergency housing to transition into a long-term home.

But if community housing providers are the ambulance at the bottom of the cliff, here’s a question from the people they support: “Is the top of the cliff, that ‘Kiwi dream’, actually a reality, or is emergency housing really my lot?”

First-home buyers struggling to save will also be asking questions, such as: “Will house prices increase so much that our dream remains just that, a dream?”

If so, what’s clear is there is a need for more housing stock to meet the homelessness crisis, and more Māori providers to guide the homeless to their options. Housing is a human right and we need to alleviate this aspect of the housing crisis.

Future hope will mean doubling down on strategies and policies that work for first-home buyers and community housing providers and allow everyone to live in a healthy home. We must stay the course on all fronts.

Fred Astle (Tainui) is an honorary lecturer in the School of Medicine, director of Kaupapa Māori at the STaR Centre and head of Māori Development and Education at Visionwest Waka Whakakitenga



NEED TO GO BACK TO THE FUTURE

Dr Michael Rehm

National's deputy leader Nicola Willis emphatically proclaimed that her party "believes that New Zealand can once again be a place where hardworking, aspirational, everyday people can see a path to home ownership". It is difficult to imagine any politician who would not support this ideal. The broad concept of homeownership has been a cornerstone of Western public policy in many countries for generations.

Prior to the wholesale market liberalisation of the early 1980s, the New Zealand government was a primary source of mortgage finance. Trading banks were minnows, however, and represented a mere seven percent of new mortgages in the 1960s. At the time, government loans featured subsidised interest rates and worked in tandem with family benefit capitalisation to provide first-home buyers their equity deposit.

Mortgage finance plays a dominant role in the housing market. When the housing sky was falling at the dawn of Covid, the government and Reserve Bank leapt to the rescue and house prices subsequently exploded.

However, when the revamped Credit Contracts and Consumer Finance Act (CCFA) came into force in December 2021, it restricted mortgage credit and began to strangle the housing market. After a few months, the CCFA was being reviewed and will likely be castrated to prop up unaffordable house prices that defy fundamentals.

Finance is housing's puppet strings, so why does society permit foreign-owned banks to run the show? Why do we condone the siphoning of billions of dollars of easy profit each year from the economy?

Our society needs to make a choice. We must either embrace homes as sacred places where ordinary people can afford a stake in this country, or continue to regard homes as speculative investments for those able to play the market. We cannot have it both ways.

If home ownership is deemed a sacred social good, we must go back to the future and directly support owner occupants, not just first-home buyers, through subsidised government loans floated at, or near, the Official Cash Rate. Loans should be affordably pegged to borrower income, to a maximum of three times the income. Ideally, that same income multiplier would serve as a threshold for lender recourse in case of default and would apply to all mortgages. Banks may bleat, but society would heal.

Dr Michael Rehm is a senior lecturer in property at the University of Auckland Business School.



ECONOMIC SYSTEM IS FAULTY

Dr Elham Bahmanteymouri

My precise answer to the question of whether we can ever solve the housing crisis is no. There is a direct and clear explanation for my view: what I describe as "commodification of the problem", a concept derived from my research and work experience with the housing and property market. The commodification of the problem is a hegemonic approach rooted in the capitalist culture. It has shaped a particular lifestyle as "normal". The concept is not limited to the housing and property market, but it has a clear function there.

We use the shortage of affordable housing as an opportunity to create 'surplus value' and 'surplus enjoyment'. Surplus value (See tinyurl.com/about-surplus-value) is a destabilising drive prevalent in a capitalist ideology that commands enjoyment beyond mere satisfaction. The best example is consumerism.

Policymakers and politicians claim they wish to solve the housing market problem. They have established a capitalist mechanism including economic and institutional tools and activities, e.g., budget packages and financial resources, new institutions, educational and research programmes and committees, as well as laws, regulations and policies (such as changing interest rates). But these don't cure the problem. Instead, the capitalist mechanisms hide the origin and root causes – specifically systemic problems within the neoliberal capitalist economy.

An analysis of the policies that have emerged over the past 40 years shows that the issue of unaffordable housing has become a source of surpluses and the capitalist mechanism's logic of existence, specifically from the institutional point of view. Flows of capital create inflation (a bubble) in the housing sector and, inappropriately, the neoliberal economy considers inflation, specifically in the housing sector, as wealth and an asset.

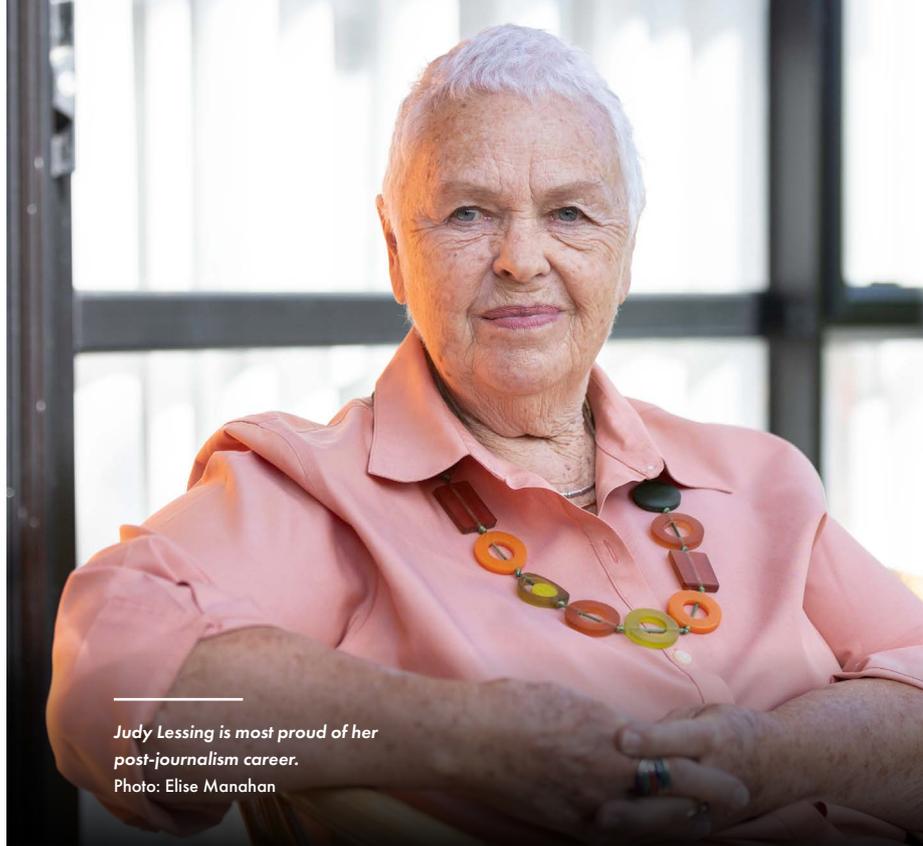
Fundamentally, deregulation and demonising planning as the cause of unaffordability is a neoliberal approach first suggested by Friedrich von Hayek, the ideologue of neoliberalism. Using a Keynesian logic, I see the whole system of the economy as faulty – wealth is created based on its non-productive activities (bubbles) instead of real products (affordable housing). The measure of success for this system is gauged by surpluses (value and enjoyment) gained from the problem of lack of affordable housing. This capitalist mechanism is designed to commodify and sustain the problem. Until that changes, the problem won't be solved.

Dr Elham Bahmanteymouri is a senior lecturer in urban planning in the School of Architecture and Planning.

"Why does society permit foreign-owned banks to run the show?"

A VOICE FOR RADIO

Donna Chisholm meets alumna **Judy Lessing**, a broadcasting voice from 'back in the day'.



Judy Lessing is most proud of her post-journalism career.

Photo: Elise Mandhan

“Every time New Zealand ministers came up to the UN, I’d be expected to interview them.”

– Golden Graduate
Judy Lessing

GOLDEN GRADUATES

Our Golden Graduates are those who graduated from the University of Auckland 50 or more years ago, along with graduates aged 70 and over.

Judy Lessing spent most of her life in journalism on the radio and now she is on Zoom probably praying for a return to the old days. The internet fails – twice – before we reconnect, finally, on WhatsApp. She’s a terribly good sport about the fact our interview has now stretched over two hours. It is fortunate she is trapped in isolation in a Rotorua hotel and has nothing better to do.

Judy, 82, making her first visit back since before the pandemic, is on day three in MIQ. The meals are making her long for airline food, but the staff are “very sweet and trying their best. They wear yellow plastic stuff and blue gloves, and the visor things. It’s the whole nervous works – you’d think they were going to take your appendix out.”

The crystal clarity of Judy’s diction is startlingly familiar. As Radio New Zealand’s New York-based correspondent for nearly 25 years from 1975, Judy has a voice – honed by a British elocution coach in Auckland from the age of seven because her Australian parents didn’t want her growing up with a Kiwi accent – that’s been heard by tens of thousands of people over hundreds of hours. She used to think those lessons were a waste of time. “Then I realised they gave me a career.”

Judy began that career with the then NZ Broadcasting Service in the early 1960s after graduating from the University of Auckland with a BA in history, returning to complete an MA after a year as IXN’s shopping reporter in Whangārei.

Following stints as a news reporter and current affairs host on IYA where she ran a three-hour show, *Feminine Viewpoint*, Judy moved to the US in 1971 after meeting her future husband when he

visited New Zealand on a cultural tour lecturing on American theatre. As a founder of the Mercury Theatre, Judy describes their match as “magical”.

One of the first stories she covered was the right-to-die case of Karen Ann Quinlan, who had lapsed into a vegetative state at 21 after overdosing on drugs and alcohol. However, not every story was so compelling. “Every time New Zealand ministers came up to the UN, I’d be expected to interview them. It was hard work because, most of the time, they weren’t making news.”

Although she is best known as a foreign correspondent, Judy is even prouder of her post-journalism career. She joined four United Nations peacekeeping missions as a public information officer. The first was in East Timor in 1999; then as chief of radio in Sierra Leone, before Liberia, and a mission to Ethiopia and Eritrea. She was awarded the MNZM for her work in East Timor, where she and other UN staff had to be evacuated when violence erupted after the independence referendum in 1999.

When I speak to her, Judy is wearing bright red spectacles and a green T-shirt emblazoned with “Make America Rake Again” from Pennsylvania’s Four Seasons Total Landscaping company. This was the inadvertent site of an infamous news conference by Donald Trump’s lawyer Rudy Giuliani. It was certainly not New York’s luxury Four Seasons hotel.

The US will recover from Trump’s presidency, but his impact was “disastrous”, says Judy, who now lives in Brooklyn. An international tennis umpire, Judy often officiated at the US Open, where Trump was a regular spectator.

Have they met?

“God, no. One has standards.”

TIPS ... TO REDUCE FOOD WASTE

By forming new habits, you can reduce your food bill, cut down on waste to landfill and restore nutrients to the soil. Mark Neal has seven starters.

Mark Neal, pictured at his home worm farm, is a Waste Minimisation Specialist for Property Services at the University.



1 Plan meals and write a shopping list
By planning meals for the week and writing a list before you do your groceries, you'll reduce food waste because you shouldn't be buying anything that's not in the plan. Try cooking several meals that use the same ingredient. For instance, think of two or three ways to use a cooked chicken, or plan to roast a whole pumpkin and then use it for soups and salads.

2 Shop at a local market
Shopping at a local farmers' market means you're more likely to buy produce picked recently. It will be fresher than produce stored in a supermarket's cold stores, so will last longer. It's also likely to be tastier than supermarket produce picked before ripening (especially if coming from offshore) and which may be artificially ripened. Shopping local means you're buying in season and supporting a local supplier.

3 Store it well
Not all fruit and vegetables like being stored in the fridge but, in general, vegetables will last longer in the fridge vegetable bin. Although some produce will keep longer in the fridge, some nutrients will be lost. Tired of throwing out avocados? You may have seen a simple food hack online: store whole avocados immersed in a bowl of water in the fridge, to make them last.

For dry food, buy it from bulk bins and store in airtight, reusable containers. This will reduce unnecessary packaging and lengthen its life.

4 'Best before' vs 'use by' dates
'Best before' is the date the produce is at its best, but this can be confusing and lead to food being thrown out unnecessarily. As long as the best-before date isn't too far in the distant past, it can still be used. A 'use by' date is more imperative and used for perishables such as meat and fish. If you're running close to this date, just put it in the freezer.

5 Get inventive with your cooking
We all have favourite meals we can cook on auto-pilot. But try being a bit inventive, using new ingredients that are in season or readily available. Search recipes on the internet by googling the ingredients you have to hand or use a recipe site where you input your ingredients and a recipe will be suggested. And, because we often learn best by watching, tap into the knowledge of a friend or family member who loves to cook.

6 Compost
Composting organic food scraps is one of the most effective ways to reduce waste going to landfill, and to return nutrients to the soil. There are plenty of options for those willing to make a positive change (and not all involve worms). It shouldn't be hard to find free composting workshops and advice on a composting system to suit your needs, such as through the Compost Collective (compostcollective.org.nz), which offers free composting workshops. For general information, try compostfoundation.org or the internationalcompostalliance.com.

If composting isn't your thing, why not send your food scraps elsewhere? Share Waste (sharewaste.com) is a global initiative to find other people to compost your scraps.

Or there's the Bokashi method, which ferments kitchen scraps, including meat, into a soil builder. Bokashi is great for anyone living in an apartment as it is done in a small bucket and can be kept inside. Find info at planetnatural.com.

7 Grow your own food
In my experience, this is one of the best ways to reduce food waste. The time and effort it takes to grow a seed into something that feeds you gives you a connection to what you are eating. Personally, it puts me off wasting what I have toiled to keep alive.

You don't even need a lot of space. Some things, such as micro-greens and herbs, can be grown inside and don't even need a garden. Start with something easy – tomatoes in summer and spinach or kale in autumn/winter. Not only will you reduce your food bill, but you'll also find the food tastes a lot better when you've grown it yourself. Use the compost you've created and your plants will love you for it. Most cities have community gardens where you can volunteer or attend workshops to learn more.

More New Zealand information on reducing food waste at: lovefoodhatewaste.co.nz

AROUND THE GLOBE

Ingenio connects with three alumni exploring interesting careers in different parts of the globe. By Anthony Doesburg

MIA AYOUB *El Gouna, Egypt*



Mia Ayoub catches air at her kitesurfing school in Egypt.

“I’d never have imagined I’d run my own kitesurfing school.”

If travel broadens the mind, it can also create career-path detours. Mia Ayoub set off for a planned year’s OE after completing a business and economics degree and a postgraduate diploma in management at the University of Auckland.

A decade on, she still hasn’t kicked off the marketing career she envisaged for herself in which, dressed in “a killer suit and heels”, she would be occupying a desk in a high-rise office building. Instead, work is running kitesurfing school Kite Tribe, started with her sister Sophie on the Red Sea shore, and her usual attire is shorts, T-shirt and jandals.

Mia has become stranded in El Gouna, a

resort town about 500km from Cairo. The town, built in the late 1980s by Egyptian billionaire Samih Sawiris, is 25km from Hurghada, a city of about 250,000 people and with an international airport.

It’s hardly by chance that she has ended up in Egypt, which is the country of her birth. But the kitesurfing venture is a more surprising turn for someone who declares herself not into sport.

That changed when she befriended a community of kitesurfing instructors, and eventually developed the skills to teach the sport herself. In 2017, she and Sophie, three years her junior and recently departed from the business, started Kite Tribe.

“I did initially enter the Business School because I wanted to have my own business one day, even though I didn’t know what that might be at the time. I would never in a million years have imagined I’d run my own kitesurfing school,” Mia says.

She also runs a small shop that sells artisanal ceramics and handicrafts made in Egypt, part of a family business started by her grandfather more than 50 years ago.

When Covid-19 struck, Egypt remained comparatively free of the restrictions widespread in the West, so Mia was content to stay put rather than return to New Zealand.

Besides family and friends, she misses the green, though.

“The desert landscape here is so different from New Zealand’s lush bush.”

Her advice to anyone contemplating a similar venture is to know your strengths and weaknesses.

“Admit your weaknesses and understand when it’s time to get others with different skill sets onboard,” she says.

MARK BARBOZA

Toronto, Canada

When a pandemic strikes, most people hunker down. Some pick up a guitar.

That's what Mark Barboza, an information systems and accounting graduate of the University of Auckland, now resident in Toronto, did. Mark, a director at management consultancy PwC, hadn't played guitar before, but after immersing himself in the live-music scene during his first few months in Canada's largest city, he decided to give it a try.

"One of the best decisions I made when the pandemic was declared was to go out and buy a guitar," says Mark. "It's given me something to channel my spare time into and has become a real passion."

Mark, who graduated in 2010, has spent 12 years at PwC, having also had a stint with the firm in Singapore.

"My role is to help financial institutions be operationally resilient. This means advising them on what is critical, and then helping them prepare for and withstand different forms of disruption, be it a cyber attack, technology outage or disruption to people and premises." It's a key regulatory area of focus in North America. Banking regulators believe that harm



Mark Barboza ice skating on a frozen lake, with Toronto in the background.

could be brought to customers and the financial markets if financial institutions can't continue to deliver what is critical and therefore erode customer confidence if they can't access their money following, for example, a ransomware attack.

Mark came to New Zealand from Dubai in his early teens and his job has taken him to Australia, Japan, Brazil and Chile. However, he always had his sights set on North America.

"I wanted to test myself in a bigger market and the opportunity with PwC in Toronto was the right place at the right time."

A family connection in the country, proximity to the US and Canada's embrace of emerging technologies such as AI were all drawcards.

A couple of years in, though, his new-found guitar prowess is one of his proudest accomplishments. "To have gone from zero to being able to play 20 to 30 songs fills me with a lot of happiness and joy."

"I wanted to test myself in a bigger market."

JUDY HARDING

Senegal, Africa

Covid-19 has left most Kiwis firmly grounded in Aotearoa New Zealand for the past two years, but it hasn't stopped Judy Harding from plying the seas off West Africa aboard a hospital ship.

Judy, a 2001 graduate of the University of Auckland's Faculty of Education Tai Tokerau Campus in Whangārei, joined the *Africa Mercy* in September 2021 as a grade three teacher.

"From September until this January, we were docked firstly at Las Palmas, Gran Canaria, then Granadilla, Tenerife, in the Canary Islands, before finally sailing to Dakar, Senegal," Judy says.

In Dakar, the 152m ship, which has five operating theatres and 80 patient beds, resumed a mission interrupted in 2020 when Covid hit.

"The ship had to leave quickly before all the patients had received their surgery. So the return of the *Africa Mercy* has been long-awaited.

"The main surgeries being performed right now are maxillofacial and women's health. The first patient was a 27-year-old who had their cleft palate repaired.

Those who had appointments 22 months ago are the first to be treated."

Judy, who after graduation taught at Dargaville Primary School for nearly two decades, has just two pupils at present.

"The students we teach are the children of the crew – mainly managers and surgeons who make a long-term commitment.

"I'm a volunteer, as are about 95 percent of the crew. In fact, we pay a token fee for our food and board."

As well as providing surgical care, the Mercy Ships Christian organisation aims to build medical capacity in sub-Saharan Africa and run food programmes.

"We are here for ten months, so I hope to learn a lot about the people and culture of Senegal," Judy says.

"The people are so friendly. Being part of the organisation for two years I will have personal time off, during which I hope to see more of Africa."

The experience, Judy says, is the fulfilment of a 15-year goal.

"Don't give up on a dream because the time is not quite right yet."

"I'm a volunteer, as are about 95 percent of the crew."

Judy Harding and her ship the *Africa Mercy*.





Robin Allison says two lecturers at the School of Architecture nurtured her sustainability leanings.
Photo: Elise Manahan

PERSEVERANCE PAYS OFF

Geraldine Johns meets architecture alumna **Robin Allison** whose long road to develop a 32-home eco-community has been documented in a book.

“We weren’t exceptional people. We had inner conviction – and we persevered.”

– Robin Allison, co-creator, Earthsong Eco-Neighbourhood

It is one thing to dream about leading a good and sustainable community life; another thing altogether to deliver on that vision.

So how, asks Robin Allison, did a group of “ordinary, extraordinary people” develop a 32-home eco-neighbourhood from a compelling idea?

The answer lies in her book *Cohousing for Life*, which, as the subtitle indicates, is a practical and personal story of Earthsong Eco-Neighbourhood – a Ranui, west Auckland, development that combines sustainable design with cooperative community.

This is Robin’s story, forged in 1995 and finalised 13 years later. It is from the 1.2-hectare site that she is talking today. The village is fully occupied and flourishing, the sun is shining and the trees are in fruit. Her older son, his wife and their two children live just across the back hedge.

“It’s the perfect reward for all those years of effort,” she says.

Earthsong is more than her home: it is intrinsic to who she is. The University of Auckland alumna says she certainly didn’t follow the standard career path of the architectural degree she completed in 1986, “but my degree was pivotal in the success of Earthsong”.

The book is as much a practical how-to as it is a deeply personal memoir, with elements of peril and jeopardy befitting a novel. Earthsong was never easy: money worries, challenging

human dynamics, bureaucratic nightmares, construction challenges, legal tussles, builders going bust.

And then there was the personal toll in the form of family crises, relationship break-ups and repeated emotional strains that, on occasions, took her to the brink.

But Robin’s resolve remained throughout.

“It always felt like what I was meant to be doing,” she says. “Even at the darkest moments, it was like: ‘there’s no bloody way I’m going to let this go’. I wasn’t going to be beaten.”

And nor was she. *Cohousing for Life* meticulously documents the demands and requirements of embarking on such a development and shines a torch for others thinking about sustainable housing. It’s also unflinchingly truthful about the pitfalls of such projects.

Earthsong was built before Auckland became a supercity – when Ranui was in eco-friendly Waitākere City with a supportive council, headed by then-mayor Sir Bob Harvey (who describes the book as a “triumph”).

Could it be done now?

“I think it is a very difficult time to be doing any development. We chose Waitākere City because we felt they were, at least in principle, very supportive.”

These days, she suggests, if another group wanted to embark on a similar project, high-density co-housing could be the answer “or you could go even further out than we did”.

Robin, now 67, gives particular credit to two of her lecturers at the School of Architecture, Graham Stevens and Graeme Robertson. Their efforts nurtured Robin’s true leanings: Graham Stevens as the only lecturer teaching about sustainability at the time and Graeme Robertson who very much encouraged her back into that focus.

People who move into cohousing communities often find they are happier living closer to their neighbours than they expected to be, because attention has been paid to both privacy and interaction, Robin notes in her book.

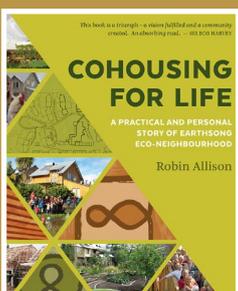
“Absolutely. Many feel like they’ve come home for the first time. We have diverse inter-generational age groups, and that’s what makes it so rich and so helpful.”

Six years ago, she realised she finally had the time to write her book.

“When I started approaching publishers, the message was, ‘this is two books: a memoir and a how-to. I came back with: ‘it’s both’.”

The story, she says, “is the juice that gives energy to the ‘how’”.

“You could read the book and think, ‘I don’t have what it takes, because these were exceptional people. But we weren’t exceptional people. We had inner conviction – and we persevered.’”



Cohousing for Life can be bought from robinallison.co.nz

BUILT TO LAST

The University Art Collection has more than 1,700 items across five campuses and 90 percent of the collection is on display at all times. **Linda Tyler** showcases another of her favourite pieces from it.

As climate change begins to bite, violent storms frequently bring down power lines to the area in rural South Auckland where I live. That can mean days without electricity for water pumps and fridges and no internet connection, either. When the power is out, I drive to the conveniently located University of Auckland's South Auckland Campus Te Papa Ako o Tai Tonga in Manukau. It has become a haven for me, and I am always the only Palagi there.

This campus has some of the University's best art on display, including works by Art History and Fine Arts graduate Ane Tonga (now Curator, Pacific at Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki) and my favourite artwork, Serene Timoteo's *When you've grown up in Auckland your fine mats look like this* (2014) embroidery on plastic matting, which was acquired for the University collection in 2015.

That was the year that Serene was completing her BA in Pacific Studies in Anthropology and Sociology, having graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Elam in 2014. In 2015, she exhibited one of her mats at Window, a contemporary art exhibition space in the foyer of the University's General Library, a black plastic mat with white diamond patterns from the store Look Sharp, over which she had embroidered backward-slanting bold capital letters in yellow satin ribbon with magenta and chartreuse shadows, graffiti style. "You Weren't Built to Be Build Ups" it read, with its top and bottom finished with baby pink loops. In urban slang, a build up is when you do something you said you'd never do, disappointing others. That work was accompanied by a text that read:

*You weren't built to give up
You weren't built to not finish the race
You weren't built to not get back up
You weren't built to cut corners
You weren't built to accept failure
You weren't built to stay down*



Her message here was encouragement to other Pacific students. As she wrote at the time, "You weren't built to be build ups, but you were built for a purpose and you were built to last."

When you've grown up in Auckland your fine mats look like this is a jokey acknowledgement that her materials aren't the pandanus of 'ie tōga (Samoan fine mats) and koloa (Tongan fine mats). Here she has found a brown plastic mat that looks like the fine mats but isn't, perhaps pointing to how Pacific diaspora might feel when estranged from their culture. With a nod to tivaevae (Cook Islands embroidery) where flowers are appliquéd onto surfaces, she has applied her satin ribbons to form alternating green and blue letters spelling out BRADA, slang for brother or friend. Above that row, BFN in yellow with blue shadows (pronounced beef'n) stands for Big for Nothing, meaning someone who is physically large, but not much use on the sports field, or else is all talk and no action.

Serene is now Serene Hodgman, married to Blues prop Alex Hodgman, and has trained as a teacher. She continues to create art, exhibiting at Masterworks in Auckland. In her 2021 exhibition of the *Pua Series*, the plastic mats were still in use, but the words had gone, replaced with a riot of colourful flowers, repeating across the whole surface in symmetrical patterns.

"When you've grown up in Auckland your fine mats look like this", Serene Hodgman (née Timoteo), 2014, plastic mat and ribbon, the University of Auckland Art Collection.



Linda Tyler holds the David and Corina Silich Associate Professorship in Museums and Cultural Heritage.

University of Auckland Art Collection

See 1,200 of 1,700 works at artcollection.auckland.ac.nz

Serene's artwork: artcollection.auckland.ac.nz/record/605477



Watch more about the collection:
artcollection.auckland.ac.nz/video/



Crystal-clear love

Writer **Rosetta Allan** says a Creative New Zealand grant gave her the self-belief to keep writing. She and husband James tell Janet McAllister the grant also motivated the couple to help other writers, so they set up the Crystal Arts Trust, funding a scholarship and a writing prize.

What's the secret to a long marriage? Rosetta and James Allan – married 37 years – give different answers when they're asked this at parties.

James first gives a jokey soundbite worthy of his multi-award-winning advertising career: "Don't complicate your relationship with love!"

And then, more seriously: "When was the last time you took your wife to a hotel and you were lovers?"

He recommends, among all the hard work, kids and business responsibilities, you say,

"We're going to run away and be lovers," on a regular basis.

"Yes, we've always done that," confirms Rosetta. But her answer to the question is not the same.

"There is no secret to a long marriage," she says. "But we really do have a terrific love story. People would ask how we met, and I said, 'James, I need to write this down.'"

And so she did. We can now all read about how this warm, candid couple met at a squalid boarding house in Napier in the early 1980s and escaped to marry at ages 19 and 21 – and about what's happened since – in *Crazy Love*, Rosetta's

James and Rosetta Allan have a terrific love story and a love affair with the arts.
Photo: Elise Manahan

“We really do have a terrific love story. People would ask how we met, and I said, ‘James, I need to write this down.’” – Rosetta Allan, author and philanthropist

autobiographical third novel. *Crazy Love* was going to be all about the Robert Muldoon years, but ended up being all about romance. And loyalty. And heartbreak. A key section is based on a long manic period James experienced ten years ago due to then-undiagnosed bipolar disorder. For Rosetta, it was painfully isolating.

“I felt very alone because I didn’t understand what it was and I didn’t think anybody else would understand,” she says. “You’re too embarrassed to keep reaching out ... so your world shrinks.”

She poured her heart out in a diary, which she rediscovered years later and used as source material for *Crazy Love*’s “snappier” fictional diary.

“At the time, I didn’t think it was funny because I was too sad. [But] some of the things that he was doing were laugh-out-loud moments,” she says.

When James read Rosetta’s real diary, his first reaction was, “Nah, it’s fiction, there’s no way I would have done that!” He had no recollection of his actions.

“If that was me, then what a prick!” His voice breaks a little. “But I’m not a prick. But I did that! Well, you’re caught in that weird circle, aren’t you?”

When Rosetta asked James whether he would be comfortable if she let people know the novel is based on real life, he “went into a tailspin”.

“To be honest, it took me a few days to get my head around it,” he says.

“But it’s about separating the behaviour from the person because that’s not who I am. People who know me love me, I love my friends, I love my family, grandchildren, colleagues. But when this disorder just wants to rock up and play havoc, it’s horrible. So Rosetta deserves a medal. Good on you, Rosetta, for not giving up.”

The episode was a long time ago now. James now manages his disorder holistically with Rosetta’s help. And for Rosetta, acknowledging the real-life detail wasn’t hard.

“I feel people assess our marriage anyway so that doesn’t feel new,” she says. “It doesn’t bother me. I know what I want, I know what it is, what I need from it and what I choose.”

She chooses her Jimmy.

In the end, they went public in the hope it helps others facing mental distress – and since the novel’s launch (on the eve of the August lockdown), many people have contacted them both to say it has done just that.

“It has done an amazing job of touching hearts,” says James.

Rosetta’s own story is also remarkable.

Expelled at the end of fifth form, she dropped out of school as a result of an unstable, disruptive home life. “I was a ward of the state, and you’re out on your own pretty quickly”.

Four decades later, she’s a successful, award-winning author of three novels and two poetry collections, with a Bachelor of Arts and a Master of Creative Writing from the University of Auckland under her belt. She loved studying: “The masters programme builds community, it’s just wonderful.”

She describes course director Associate Professor Paula Morris as a “powerhouse”.

“She’s so supportive of what I call her ‘chickies’ – she really does take them under her wing, and advocate for our work.”

Those published from Rosetta’s 2017 cohort include poet Heidi North and novelists Sonya Wilson, Amy McDaid, Pip McKay, Michael Wilson and international bestseller Rose Carlyle.

Rosetta herself had already published before joining the masters programme.

As Rosetta supports James, James also champions Rosetta. The way Rosetta tells it, James cajoled a well-known agent to look at her first prose manuscript – one can only imagine the agent’s delight when it turned out to be one of those rare things: well-written and sellable.

Purgatory is based on a story from Rosetta’s family tree: the 1865 murders of the Finnegans in Ōtāhuhu. Then came *The Unreliable People*, set mostly in Russia, for which Rosetta spent an “exciting and terrifying” gothic-winter residency at the Museum for Non-Conformist Art in St Petersburg.

She received \$24,000 from Creative New Zealand for the residency and James marvels that the grant “changed Rosetta’s life, encouraged her, validated her, gave her faith to go out”.

This helped plant the idea of what is now the Crystal Arts Trust, which generously funds both a \$5,000 scholarship and a \$10,000 prize for the University of Auckland Master of Creative Writing, and this year sponsored the Ockham New Zealand Best First Book prizes.

The Crystal Arts Trust is a manifestation of the couple’s passion for the arts and, out of love, is named after Rosetta’s late dog Crystal – “my little heart”. Crystal’s skull sits in pride of place on Rosetta’s dark-stained wooden shelf, above where she does much of her writing.

Novel number four is on its way. James believes “as a team, one plus one is not two. You take James and Rosetta – one plus one is ten. It’s exponential what we can do together.” ■

Poetic tiff

There’s one art the couple apparently disagree on.

“Poetry sucks,” says James cheerfully, while poet Rosetta cackles at him. New Zealand poets who have had an impact on Rosetta include Tusiata Avia, Hone Tūwhare, Tracey Slaughter, and Tayi Tibble.

“They all write with a raw honesty that just plugs in the power.”

And then there’s Sam Hunt. Says James: “I always loved Sam Hunt until the three of us were in the Leigh bar one night and Sam Hunt spent half an hour trying to chat up my wife!”

Rosetta: “I loved it! Sam was reciting poetry and holding my hand, I didn’t want to leave.”

Jealousy aside, James’ mimicry of a Sam Hunt performance is superb.

Complex histories

Tess Redgrave talks to **Lucy Mackintosh**, whose PhD evolved into a book in which she explores the history behind key geographical features in Auckland.

“The landscapes in this book resist a singular story about Auckland.”

– Dr Lucy Mackintosh, author and historian

What might Auckland’s history look like if it is followed from the ground up rather than from a bird’s eye view? This question goes to the heart of Lucy Mackintosh’s book *Shifting Grounds: Deep Histories of Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland*.

Drawing on geography, archaeology, mātauranga Māori, botany and material culture as well as written sources, Lucy has dug deep, like an archivist, into moments in the histories of three iconic Auckland places – the Ōtuataua Stonefields Historic Reserve at Ihumātao, Pukekawa/Auckland Domain and Maungakiekie/One Tree Hill.

“These places tell multi-faceted and nuanced stories that are important to know alongside the more familiar histories of the city,” says Lucy.

For example, at the Auckland Domain, the story of the volcanic crater rim’s Māori name Pukekawa, “the hill of bitter memories”, reveals it is a place to commemorate those who died during the intertribal musket wars of the 1820s and 30s.

The story of the Pōtatau Te Wherowhero (later, the first Māori King) living in a specially built cottage in the Domain in the 1840s, with Ngāti Toa leader Te Rauparaha as a guest, adds another unexpected narrative to this iconic Auckland landmark. So, too, does the story of the Ah Chee family’s flourishing market gardens at its boundary from the late 19th century.

At Ihumātao, the site of 2019 protests, Lucy explores how the Mission Station and Ōtuataua Stonefields once operated as a “hybrid place”. Missionaries, Māori led by rangatira Epiha Pūitini, and local settlers lived cooperatively from 1846 until forced evictions at the start of the 1863 New Zealand Wars.

The remnants of an old olive grove on the slopes of Maungakiekie tell another nuanced story, that not all Pākehā settlers were attempting “to duplicate a British landscape in the new colony”.

The author explains: “The landscapes in this book resist a singular story about Auckland. Instead, they open up its histories, making room for presences and absences, as well as voices and silences ...”

Lucy graduated from the University in 1994 with a masters (honours) in history. Her interest then was in the emerging field of environmental history and her dissertation was on the pollution of the Tarawera River after the opening of



Dr Lucy Mackintosh is curator of history at the Auckland War Memorial Museum.

the Tasman Pulp and Paper Mill. It was after university that she began to learn about Auckland history while working as a historical and museum consultant for local and central government agencies.

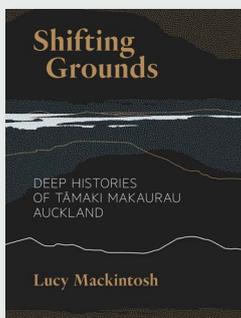
“The histories I came across were very different from the ones I had learnt at university or read about in books. They were layered, deep, complex and often unresolved. They had shaped local communities and wider Auckland, yet they were invisible in published histories of the city.”

After two years in Connecticut working as a public historian and researching Māori collections in the Peabody Essex Museum in Massachusetts, Lucy returned to Auckland.

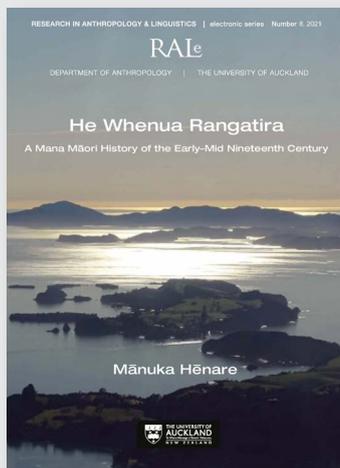
In 2013, she enrolled in a PhD, focusing on the city’s history, with supervisors Professor Caroline Daley and Distinguished Professor Dame Anne Salmond. *Shifting Grounds* grew from that.

As curator of history at Auckland War Memorial Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira since 2017, Lucy is responsible for “collecting things, and the stories that come with them”, and that goes some way to explaining her focus. The work of British social scientist and geographer Doreen Massey, who describes places as “open, undetermined and porous”, has been an influence, as have the voices of New Zealand historians such as Nēpia Mahuika, who writes that our cities “were, and still are, colonial sites built on the bones and warmth of earlier Māori histories and settlements”.

Walking across and through the places she describes in this book has been an important process. Lucy has guided people to sites so they can have the same experience, particularly in the Domain, and says she is happy to continue doing this, “telling history from the ground up”.



Shifting Grounds: Deep Histories of Tāmaki Makaurau, Auckland, Bridget Williams Books (Hardback, \$60), was short-listed for the Ockham Book Awards Illustrated Non-Fiction Award in 2022.



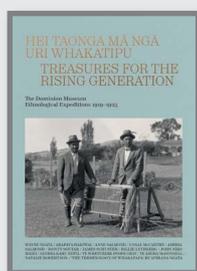
He Whenua Rangatira: A Mana Māori History of the Early-Mid Nineteenth Century

Associate Professor Mānuka Hēnare was a respected kaumātua and mentor to many at the University and beyond. He had more than four decades' research and consultancy experience in Māori and Indigenous business enterprise and development, and was an expert witness for the Waitangi Tribunal. Mānuka taught Māori business and economic history, strategy and management of tribal enterprises until February 2020. He died in January 2021. Friends and

colleagues Dr Amber Nicholson (now at AUT), Dr Billie Lythberg (Business School) and Distinguished Professor Dame Anne Salmond (Arts) have edited Mānuka's PhD into a book, a project he'd been working on for years. A soft launch held online was attended by around 85, including Mānuka's wife Diane and their children, but a physical launch will follow once Covid levels allow. (Video: tinyurl.com/Manuka-Henare-launch). A PDF of the book can be downloaded from the University's

Research in Anthropology and Linguistics electronic series at: tinyurl.com/Henare-book.

Billie and Dame Anne are also among the editors and authors of *Hei Taonga Māngā Uri Whakatipu: Treasures for the Rising Generation*, a fascinating insight into the Dominion Museum Ethnological Expeditions of 1919 to 1923. More: auckland.ac.nz/hei-taonga Eds, Billie Lythberg and Anne Salmond, Te Papa Press, \$75

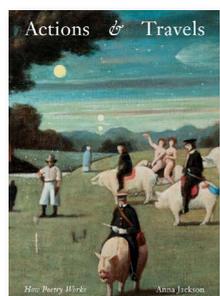


House & Contents

Poetry and paintings by acclaimed poet and Arts alumnus Gregory O'Brien. *House & Contents* is a meditation on earthquakes and uncertainties, parents and hats, and much more.

Gregory O'Brien, Auckland University Press, \$30

WIN: We have two copies to give away. Email: ingenio@auckland.ac.nz by 1 July with House & Contents in subject line.

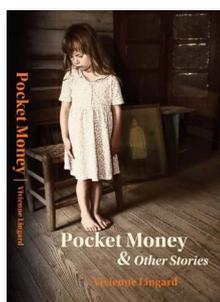


Actions & Travels: How Poetry Works

Alumna Anna Jackson is a poet, scholar and editor of six collections through AUP. This book is an introduction to how poetry works, through 100 poems and Anna has created an accompanying reading list at annajackson.nz.

Anna Jackson, Auckland University Press, \$35

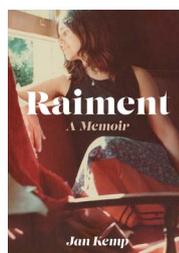
WIN: We have two copies to give away. Email: ingenio@auckland.ac.nz by 1 July with Actions & Travels in subject line.



Pocket Money & Other Stories

A short story collection by creative writing alumna Vivienne Lingard. It shines light on human character, conveying microcosms of everyday life, but with a sting in the tail. An example: an academic and his wife are on holiday in Rome. He has a secret to reveal, but as he has yet to discover, so does his wife. The book is released on 1 June.

Vivienne Lingard, Artistry Publishing, \$38



Raiment: A Memoir

Alumna Jan Kemp (MNZM) has a Master of Arts and was a poet in Auckland in the 1970s, one of few female poets to be admitted into the all-male poet club. In 1979, she was in the 'gang of four'

with Alistair Te Ariki Campbell, Sam Hunt and Hone Tūwhare. Jan lives in Germany and *Raiment* is an insight into the 1970s Auckland literary scene and her part in it as a young poet.

Kim Hill interview: tinyurl.com/RNZ-Jan-Kemp
Jan Kemp, Massey University Press, hardback \$35

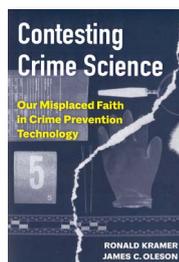


Tūnui | Comet

Alumnus and former staff member Dr Robert Sullivan (Ngāpuhi /Kāi Tahu) is the author of several books of poetry including *Star Waka* (AUP, 1999). This is his first collection in more than a

decade. Guided by Māui and Tāwhirimātea, Moana Jackson and Freddie Mercury, Robert walks the reader from K Road council flats to Kaka Point, encountering ancestors along the way.

Robert Sullivan, AUP, \$20

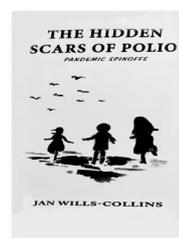


Contesting Crime Science: Our Misplaced Faith in Crime Prevention Technology

Dr Ronald Kramer and Associate Professor James Oleson (Criminology) critique Western society's overreliance on technology to

deter and solve crime.

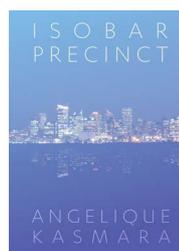
Ronald Kramer and James C. Oleson, University of California Press, \$46



The Hidden Scars of Polio

Alumna Jan Wills-Collins' memoir is about how polio was halted in New Zealand. Jan is a polio survivor and retired nurse.

Jan Wills, scarsofpolio@gmail.com, \$20



Isobar Precinct

The debut novel of Angeliqe Kasmara (Master of Creative Writing). It's about a woman with a tattoo studio on Karangahape Road who believes she has witnessed a murder in Symonds Street

Cemetery. She then uncovers information about a mysterious drug trial targeting vulnerable people.

Angeliqe Kasmara, The Cuba Press, \$37

CONNECTION POINTS



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We are looking for Auckland-based professional women to mentor female business and law students for He Ira Wahine, the Women's Mentoring Programme, which runs from March to October at the Business and Law schools. You can make a real difference by sharing knowledge with young women who will soon enter the workforce. Pictured above are Janné Mildenhall (mentor) and Liya Jose (mentee) on the 2021 programme at the Business School. Find out more at alumni.auckland.ac.nz/wmp.



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As you're one of our University of Auckland alumni, you can receive discounted movie vouchers through cinematickets.co.nz. Vouchers can be used at all Event cinemas New Zealand-wide plus Rialto Cinema Newmarket. Discount prices: adult \$14.50, child/senior \$11.50 (minimum purchase two tickets). Details at auckland.ac.nz/benefits



VIEW

RAISING THE BAR AT HOME

Raising the Bar Home Edition kicked off in April and runs until 1 June, with six engaging educational online talks by some of the University's top academics. Tune in live at home or catch up on recordings of previous talks at auckland.ac.nz/rtb. And, for Auckland-based alumni, don't miss out on the in-person event planned for **Tuesday 2 August**.

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Tools to help you grow in the new world of work

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Connect & Develop is an ongoing series of online talks from alumni who are experts in their field, offering advice on how to grow in the new world of work. Topics include building resilience, understanding bias and coaching yourself and others. View recordings of our April talks and sign up for webinars later in the year at auckland.ac.nz/connect-and-develop.



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MENTOR

ALUMNI CONNECT

Hundreds of students want career insights from alumni like you. Sharing your words of wisdom can benefit students who are starting out on their careers or are making future study decisions. A 30-minute chat or even a quick encouraging message can make all the difference. Head to auckland.ac.nz/alumni-connect for more information on how to be part of our online mentoring programme.



JOIN

READ AND DISCUSS

The Virtual Book Club links readers across the University community through a private online forum where all members can connect with one another and discuss up to five books a year. Immerse yourself in the written word, enjoy lively debate with fellow book lovers and get inspired by new book recommendations. *The Book of Longings* by Sue Monk Kidd is the next book to be read, from 26 May to 28 July. There's a 15 percent discount on the book if it's purchased through the University bookshop, ubiq. To find out more about the Virtual Book Club and sign up, go to auckland.ac.nz/bookclub.



MEET UP

WE'RE FLYING IN

It's been a while, but we are finally travelling overseas to host alumni events and reconnect with our global alumni. If you live in Melbourne, Sydney, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Los Angeles or San Francisco, please ensure your contact details are up-to-date so we can invite you to an event in your city.

See: alumni.auckland.ac.nz/update



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