

# CELEBRATING OUR DONORS' GENEROSITY

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The University of Auckland Annual Report to Donors



2020



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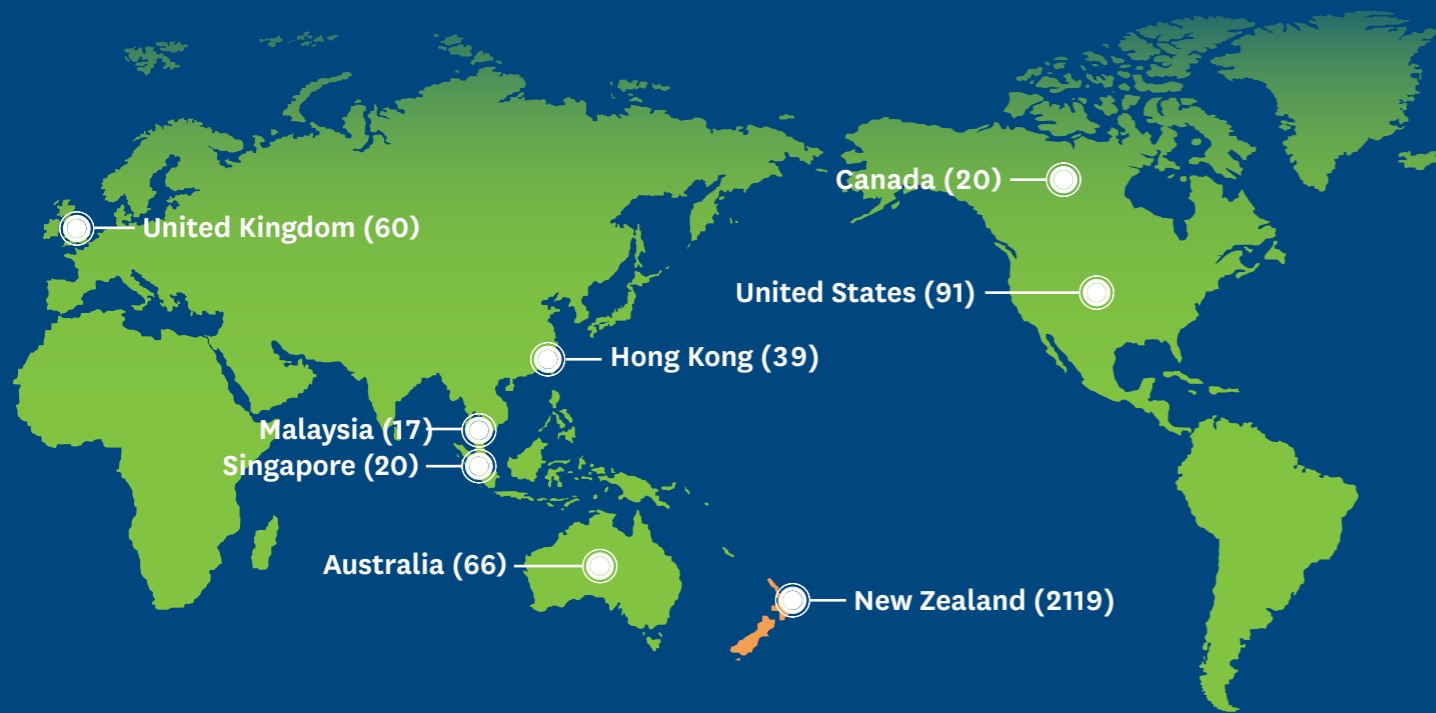
University of Auckland Foundation financial statements

# In 2020 ...

WE RECEIVED A TOTAL OF  
**\$44,076,271**

from donors large and small, in New Zealand and around the world, for research, for student initiatives and for many projects and positions across the University.

**THIS WAS RECEIVED FROM 2,302 GENEROUS DONORS, WHO MADE A TOTAL OF 4,898 GIFTS.**



SUPPORTERS FROM  
**36**

**COUNTRIES AROUND THE WORLD MADE DONATIONS IN 2020.**

The largest number of donations came from New Zealand, followed by the United States, Australia, the United Kingdom, Hong Kong, Singapore, Canada and Malaysia.

**3,287**  
 GIFTS FROM  
**1,157**  
 DONORS

were made through online giving,



contributing  
**\$430,000**  
 to the University's work in teaching and research.



**1,517**

**GIFTS WERE MADE BY STAFF AND FORMER STAFF IN 2020,**  
 up from 992 in 2019.

These gifts came from

**590**  
 DONORS

and contributed a total of  
**\$2,300,409**  
 The total includes a \$1.8 million gift from former staff member Peter Fehl and his wife Rae for the Aotearoa vision bus project.

**44%**  
 OF OUR  
**208,727**

**ALUMNI ENGAGED WITH US**  
 through communication, participation and giving.

OUR DONORS GAVE  
**\$19,249,229**



TO SUPPORT RESEARCH ACROSS THE UNIVERSITY.

A TOTAL OF  
**\$1,299,285**  
 was received to support  
**ACADEMIC CHAIRS AND FELLOWSHIPS.**



THE MEDIAN GIFT FOR 2020 WAS  
**\$75**

THE LARGEST NUMBER OF GIFTS IN 2020 WAS TO SUPPORT STUDENT PROJECTS AND SCHOLARSHIPS –  
**3,472**  
 IN TOTAL.

These gifts added up to  
**\$5,275,122**  
 for student support.

**867**

STUDENTS WERE AWARDED  
**\$4,466,735**  
 in donor-funded scholarships.



WE WELCOMED

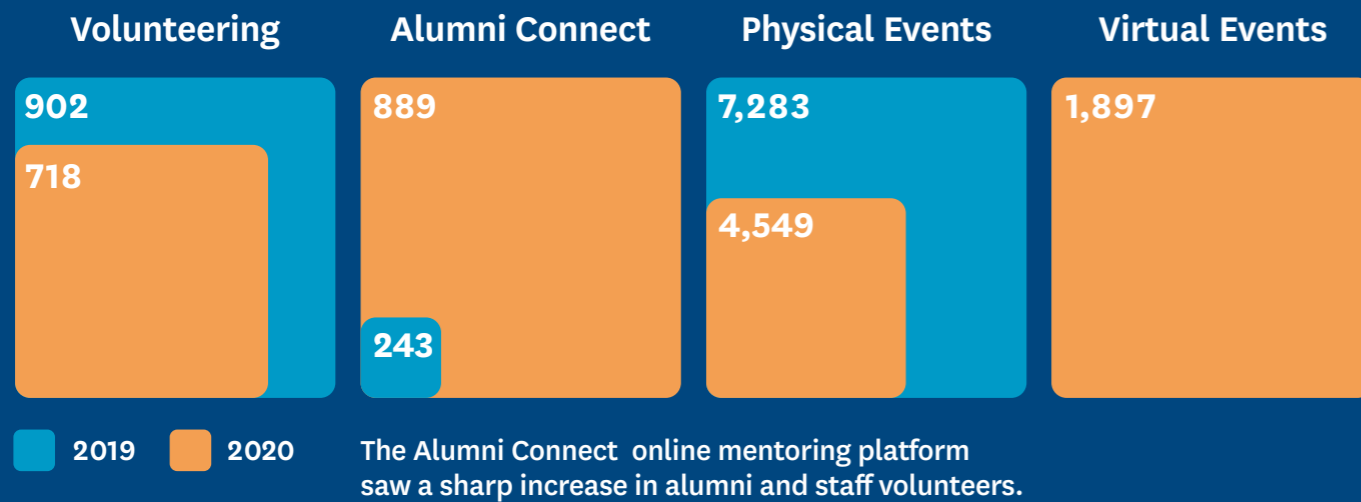
**38**  
 new members to our cumulative giving society,  
**THE CHANCELLOR'S CIRCLE:**

**1**  
 new member into the  
**SIR MAURICE O'RORKE SOCIETY**  
 which recognises giving of more than \$5 million,

**4**  
 new members into the  
**SIR GEORGE FOWLDS SOCIETY**  
 which recognises giving between \$1 million and \$5 million,

**33**  
 new members into the  
**SIR DOUGLAS ROBB SOCIETY**  
 which recognises giving between \$100,000 and \$1 million.

**THE WAYS ALUMNI ENGAGED WITH THE UNIVERSITY CHANGED IN 2020,**  
with many in-person events cancelled and virtual events taking their place.



**2,035**  
DONORS GAVE  
**4,388 GIFTS**  
to the total value of

**\$661,896**  
THROUGH THE  
ANNUAL GIVING  
PROGRAMME.

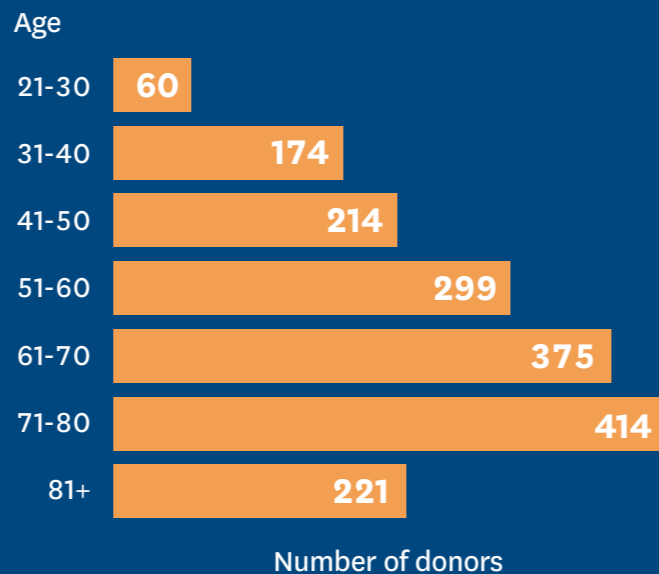
**335**  
DONORS GAVE  
**425 GIFTS**

**BY CHEQUE IN 2020,**  
the final full year of this way of giving  
due to major banks  
phasing out cheques in 2021.

**THERE WERE 18 GIFTS FROM  
LEGACY DONORS  
IN 2020.**

This generosity will have a long-lasting impact across the faculties of Engineering, Law, Medical and Health Sciences, Science, Creative Arts and Industries, the Liggins Institute, the Library and student scholarships.

The number of donors supporting the University  
**ROSE STEADILY WITH INCREASING  
AGE, FROM 21 TO 80**



**Outstanding support  
in uncertain times**

Thank you to everyone who so generously supported the University's mission in 2020 – the more than 2,300 donors who made nearly 5,000 gifts for research programmes, student initiatives and a variety of projects and positions. Because of your support, and the strong financial platform that we have built over many years, we were able to finish an exceptionally challenging year, achieving a total of over \$44 million through philanthropic donations.

We especially want to thank those philanthropic partners who increased their funding in 2020 to allow our researchers to apply their world-class expertise to a range of projects in response to Covid-19. Other major funders helped through time and budget extensions so that important work could continue as soon as researchers were able to return to campus following lockdowns.

Many of our largest donors in 2020 supported research into diseases and conditions that touch the lives of most of us. In particular, we acknowledge the contributions of the Auckland Medical Research Foundation, Cancer Society Auckland Northland, Cure Kids, the Fehl Trust and the Neurological Foundation of New Zealand.

Extraordinary legacy gifts were received from Brian Coote, for research at the Faculty of Law, and from Warwick Smith, to support research at Science and Engineering.

These philanthropic contributions are having a transformative impact on the University's ability to deliver excellence in research and teaching – a pursuit which is ultimately to the benefit of all.

Again, thank you to each and every one of you for your valued contribution in 2020.

**GEOFF RICKETTS CNZM**  
Chair, the University of Auckland Foundation

**PROFESSOR DAWN FRESHWATER**  
Vice-Chancellor, the University of Auckland

# The kindness of our donors

They say that a picture speaks a thousand words... Our 2020 infographics, on pages 4-6, show a year of generosity from around New Zealand and from countries across the world, a strong desire to support our students, and an appetite from alumni and friends for new ways of engaging. With the median gift in 2020 at \$75, we can see that the idea of many people grouping together to support a student or a project is a powerful motivator for our donors.

Our Annual Report reflects just some examples of the stories that made 2020 – personal accounts from students whose lives have been turned around by the kindness of our donors, innovative collaborations that are tackling disease while also growing the next generation of top researchers, new projects that will have a profound impact on our communities.

While some of these stories are of donor-funded initiatives that produce immediate benefits, others highlight the rewards that are reaped through long-standing partnerships with organisations and communities, coupled with the vision and backing

of our generous donors during the recent For All Our Futures Campaign.

Thank you to all our supporters – our 2020 donors, members of the Chancellor’s Circle cumulative giving society and the trustees who serve on our boards in New Zealand, the US and the UK.

Your generosity is making a difference in the lives of others now and will continue to impact on communities into the future.

**MARK BENTLEY**  
Director, Alumni Relations and Development



## Circle of philanthropy: the benefits we share

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern's visit to FMHS in March 2020

With a crisis, there often comes an opportunity to see more clearly how a system works. And 2020, a year like no other, has given a crucial example of this.

All students, staff and researchers from the Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences are aware of the donors’ generous gifts as a vital resource for sustaining and advancing the faculty’s world-class training and research.

Dean of the faculty, Professor John Fraser, is very clear on this: “The power of what we achieve cannot be done without our donors,” he says.

However, the sudden threat that arose from the worldwide spread of Covid-19 reminded us very strongly of the other essential component of the circle of philanthropy: that the faculty is able to step up when the community needs it to supply the specialised medical expertise that is called for.

“We’ve been involved at all levels with Covid-19,” says Professor Fraser, “because we have a very high level of expertise – in infectious diseases,

.....  
**“Our staff have volunteered many hours to help with essential services such as testing samples during the most critical periods of need.”**  
 .....

epidemiology, microbiology, immunology, all of which are vital for a crisis such as this.

“We’ve been able to give advice to officials around the best strategies to deal with the virus and its variants along with the best vaccines to use and advice about the safety and efficacy of vaccines; we’ve partnered with the Auckland hospitals to develop testing processes for Covid-19; and we’ve provided serological analyses to look at Covid-19 antibodies in people.

Our work has truly been of world class and huge benefit to the national cause of pandemic control. Though carried out to support the New Zealand efforts it has now been published and is internationally available.

“In addition, our staff have volunteered many hours to help with essential services such as testing samples during the most critical periods of need.

“I’m very proud of the part we’ve played in getting the country to where we are now.”

He adds that researchers in all the fields he mentioned, including his own (infectious diseases), have had reason to be grateful for the generous support of philanthropists over many years.

When the University’s Medical School was first established in 1968, its inaugural Dean, Professor Cecil Lewis, had “a very distinctive vision for the direction of the Medical School, which involved its relationship with the wider community,” says Professor Linda Bryder from the University’s Department of History.



Professor Cecil Lewis

Professor Lewis had the beliefs, very fresh and advanced for their time, that community health was integral to a medical school, that community connections needed to be strong, and that diversity should be a strong value both in the training the school provided and in the type of students it trained. This last he affirmed when, in 1971, he introduced a preferential place scheme for Māori and Pacific students.



Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences



THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND  
THIS PLAQUE COMMEMORATES THE  
OPENING OF THE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE  
BY HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN ON THE  
TWENTY FOURTH DAY OF MARCH 1970

From left, Her Majesty the Queen with University Chancellor Henry Cooper and the Dean of Medicine, Professor Cecil Lewis

Through the years these founding values and the relationships with the community have remained at the base of an astoundingly rapid advance in medical sciences at the University of Auckland.

**“The faculty’s research, in many fields, has transformed medical practice and saved countless lives.”**

After just over five decades, that same Medical School, set up with the goal of providing a world-class medical education, has now become the Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences, a vibrant centre of research and education in all the health disciplines, light, bright, spacious and well-

equipped, with purpose-built clinics, laboratories, study and communal spaces. Its students number more than 4,000 (up from 60 in that first year), studying in six Schools across the faculty: the Schools of Medicine, Population Health, Nursing, Pharmacy, Medical Sciences, and Optometry and Vision Science.

Largely owing to efforts by the Māori and Pacific Admissions Scheme (MAPAS) almost 20 percent of the faculty’s students are now of Māori or Pacific ethnicities.

The School of Medicine Foundation, which receives and administers the funds from the faculty’s philanthropic partners, has been renamed the Medical and Health Sciences Foundation, in recognition of the rich diversity of scholarship and research its donors now support.

And the faculty's research, in many fields, has transformed medical practice and saved countless lives – not only in our communities but in others worldwide.

Internationally respected research has abounded in the faculty, says Professor Fraser, who mentions just a few examples: in brain research, the world-changing discovery that brain cells have the power to regenerate; in child health, the development of new applications to assess the mental health status of adolescents; in cancer research, the advances in personalised medicine, which allow analysis of a patient's genomic information for the provision of tailor-made treatments. All of these, and many more, show the power of philanthropic partnerships.

**“The ultimate aim is to advance the community's health.”**

However, community support is also crucial in other ways, as shown in the work of Distinguished Professor Ian Reid, who heads the faculty's Department of Medicine. Professor Reid conducted, with his team, the first-ever

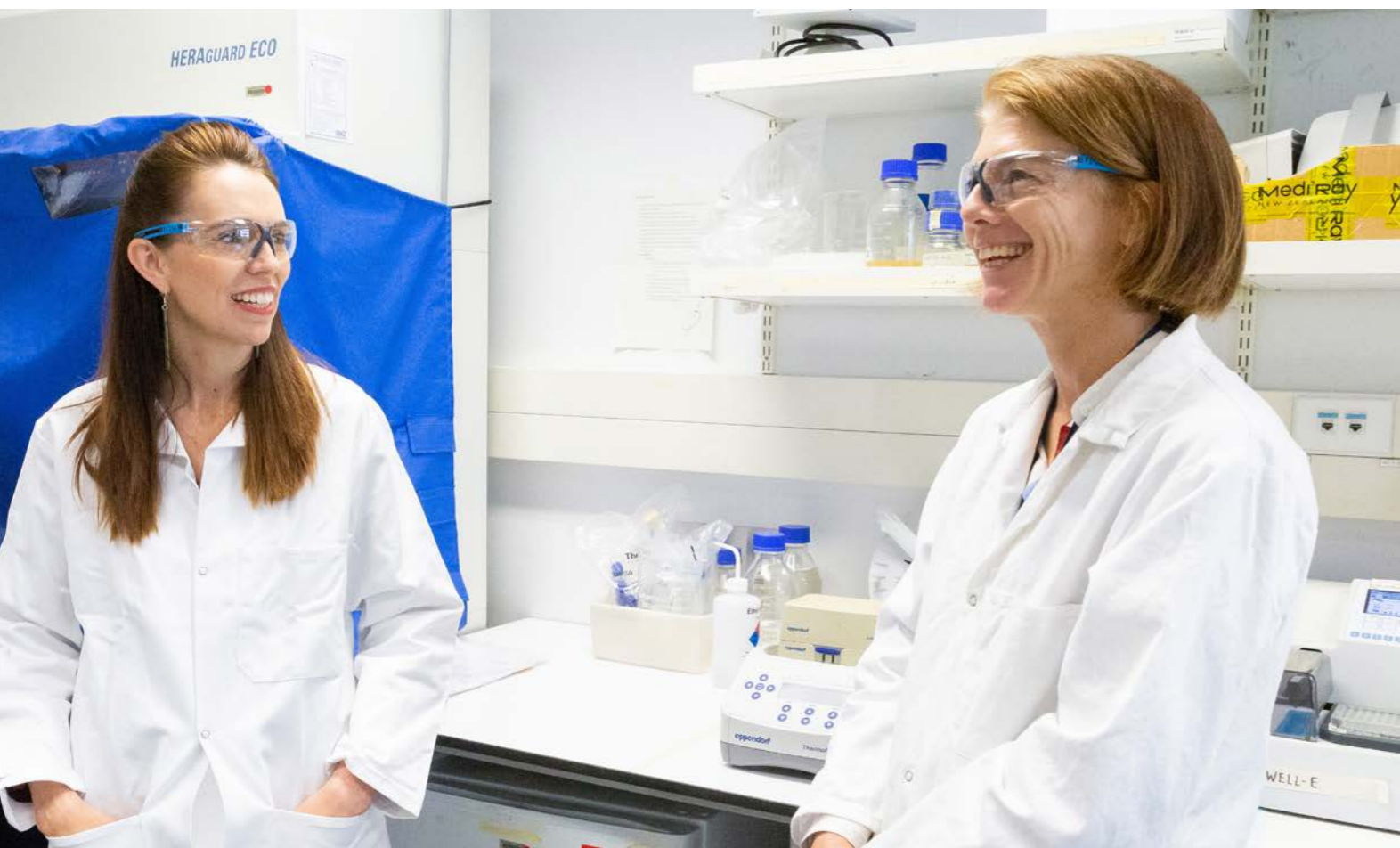
randomised controlled trials of bisphosphonates for osteoporosis, which later became the treatment of choice for that condition worldwide. He went on to show in more recent research that the same class of substances sustain bone health and help prevent bone fractures also in those with osteopenia, which is milder than osteoporosis but threatens bone health in a larger proportion of the population.

“For any of the many clinical trials now being held across the faculty, the public contribution is essential,” he says. “We depend on the commitment of the tens of thousands of New Zealanders who have been willing to take part.”

Another successful reciprocal cycle is seen in the University's thriving public clinics in disciplines such as Optometry and Audiology, which offer an essential service to the community while giving its students the immeasurable benefits of receiving world-class training in a real-world setting.

The power of these partnerships is in their shared purpose. The ultimate aim is to advance the community's health. And the final and wonderful message is: we are in this together. ■

*Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern with Associate Professor Dr Nikki Moreland*



*Back row, from left: Professional teaching fellow Renata Watene, digital solutions architect Andrew Cho, professional teaching fellow Veeran Morar. Front row, from left: Professor Steven Dakin, technical manager Adina Giurgiu, senior support engineer Sam Elias.*

## Vision bus gets the green light from generous benefactors

It's amazing where a conversation in a car can lead.

For Peter and Rae Fehl it led to a wonderfully generous act with the power to enhance many people's lives, both directly – through the gift of clearer vision – and indirectly, by supporting optometry training and enabling research.

Their conversation was inspired by an interview on RNZ's Nine to Noon with Professor Steven Dakin, Head of Optometry and Vision Science at the University of Auckland. One out of ten New Zealand children who need glasses do not have them, he explained, mainly because of a lack of screening, caused at base by a lack of funding. One solution, he suggested, was the launch of a fully equipped mobile clinic, to look at how vision testing can be taken to people who were unlikely (often because of cost) to arrange it for themselves.

“That interview blew us away,” says Peter Fehl. “We very much feel that there is inequality in this country, which means some can get services that others cannot.

We also feel strongly for children without good vision, who are likely to turn off learning as a result.”

Says Rae Fehl, “The interview was so captivating and so very interesting that we got to our destination and said ‘We think we might be able to do something about this.’”

The result, which Professor Dakin describes as “just wonderful” is that they decided to do just that. Thanks to their generous gift of \$1.8 million, spread over five years, the Aotearoa vision bus project is under way. The funding is being used to purchase a vehicle to be fitted with state-of-the-art clinical equipment. It will also support the appointment of an administrator, plus a full-time senior optometrist supervisor.

The bus, in addition to providing services to the community, will provide a platform for both training and for much-needed research. The research promises to reveal how mobile optometry services could support more equitable access to eye healthcare services across Aotearoa.



Dr Ben Lawrence (left) and Dr Michael Davis

## An unexpected collaboration

**A cancer patient's desire to donate her tumours to medical research has sparked a unique multi-disciplinary project that could potentially reshape the future of healthcare.**

"The ultimate aim of this project is to change the way we think about cancer evolution," says Dr Ben Lawrence, Head of Oncology at the Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences, who led the team of pathologists that removed 89 cancer spots from the patient's body within hours of her death.

The goal was to gene sequence each tumour and create a map showing how the cancer had spread and changed – a fundamental problem for cancer treatment worldwide. However the daunting prospect of assimilating many terabytes of complex genomic data using traditional two-dimensional techniques forced a rethink.

Having initially approached Dr Michael Davis at the School of Architecture and Planning with the idea of creating a video fly-through, Dr Lawrence accepted that the concept had no architectural

merit. "The medium that was originally proposed was not going to demonstrate the richness of the information or do the patient justice," says Dr Davis.

Describing it as akin to a 'Ford moment', when a farmer is offered a motor vehicle rather than a faster horse, Dr Davis says the idea of using augmented reality (AR) to illustrate the progression of the cancer was "like science fiction becoming science fact".

Using Microsoft HoloLens 2 visualisation technology, two or more people in different locations can discuss the multiple layers of digital information embedded within a 3D model of the patient's body. For Dr Lawrence, using AR creates a really intimate interaction that reminds him of his patient "so it's a quite vivid and emotional connection".

While medicine and architecture have historically shared a close relationship, the involvement of technology and coding experts from the Centre for e-Research made it a three-way collaboration. "What's fast becoming part of our mandate," says Dr Davis, "is how people interact with lots of data in space – developing a spatial interface for a very rich data environment."

PhD student Tamsin Robb is one of around 20 people involved in the project and says the AR model also creates a 'common language' that overcomes difficulties associated with cross-disciplinary conversations. "When we can come together with such a visual representation as an index to all this data, we can start to make connections that we could not make without that tool."

The initial focus was to produce a prototype AR application to enhance understanding of patient data, however a blueprint now exists to potentially develop interactive tools that could transform how clinicians and patients visualise and discuss their disease and treatment.

Given that health literacy is a big determinant of a patient's journey, Dr Lawrence says that the ability to pop on a headset and show 'before and after' CT scans will help people understand what they're dealing with "and that'll change their cancer journey".

The next phase of research has yet to be determined, but one possibility is to explore whether researchers from different countries could enter the model as avatars of themselves in order to interact with it – a potentially useful option in a post-Covid world where travel is restricted.

Currently funded by a \$150,000 grant from the Health Research Council, the project was kick-started by an anonymous financial donor who shares "the same mission" – to improve cancer outcomes for people. "The donor knows where our heart is," says Dr Lawrence, who adds that the research would not have been possible without philanthropic support because it was so creative and novel.

"The novelty of it was facilitated by having an understanding with our donor to think in new ways about old problems that have to be solved for us to improve cancer care." ■



Tamsin Robb

### 'Amazing' research opportunity

Being an integral part of a groundbreaking research project is the "most amazing opportunity", says PhD student Tamsin Robb.

As a molecular biologist investigating cancer evolution at the Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences, Tamsin analysed the genomic data from the cancer patient that fed into the augmented reality model.

Working with a "really cool team" to build a novel tool has opened her eyes to the collaborative nature of research – and could influence her career choice. "This project has done a great job of selling the academic career as a very innovative and exciting option."

The multi-disciplinary project has also provided inspiration for School of Architecture and Planning PhD student Gina Hochstein, who wants to research and write about the human body as an architectural concept within an augmented reality world. "The more we can straddle various faculties and disciplines, the richer the topic becomes."

One option is to investigate whether gender can somehow be layered into the augmented reality space. "We all inhabit architecture," says Gina, "and it opens up possibilities that I've never thought about."





Left to right: Beth Schuck, Jazpah Tata and Tom Collins

## Creating leaders for a fast-changing world

**If the 2021 cohort of Kupe Leadership Scholars is anything to go by, then New Zealand's future is in very safe hands.**

Kupe Leadership Scholars are among the University's most exceptional postgraduate students.

Up to 20 are selected each year from a range of disciplines, with the intention of building a community of future leaders across all sectors for the betterment of Aotearoa New Zealand.

Now in its third year, each scholarship is funded by an individual donor, and each recipient receives bespoke one-on-one mentoring from some of New Zealand's living national treasures.

When Beth Schuck was selected for the Feigin Kupe Leadership Scholarship, she was blown away when she learnt her mentor would be Distinguished Professor Sir Peter Gluckman, arguably New Zealand's most eminent scientist.

Beth, 20, is completing her Honours in Engineering with a research focus on transport emissions and how to better manage this contributor to climate change.

**“My experiences growing up in marginalised communities... sparked a desire and interest to want to see change in the way we teach, particularly in how we teach our own histories.” – JAZPAH TATA**

“I had hoped my mentor would broaden my thinking, and help me to understand the challenges around making significant societal change. Sir Peter is all of these things and more, his incredible mind and experiences are invaluable to me,” says Beth.

Her scholarship is funded by American businessman Stuart Feigin, who has sponsored a scholar each year since the programme began.

Connecting with the previous Feigin Kupe Scholars has provided further inspiration and mentorship for Beth.

“The Kupe Scholarship has had a huge impact on my life. Last year I was working three jobs while trying to manage my studies, hobbies and work,” she says.

“I simply wouldn't have been able to do my honours year without this support, not only financially, but also being surrounded by these incredible people.”

The Kupe Leadership Programme is named for the legendary Pacific explorer Kupe who, together with his wife, Kurumārōtini, is credited with discovering and naming Aotearoa.

Their sense of adventure and courage exemplifies the kind of spirit needed by leaders in today's uncertain and fast-changing world.

That spirit is certainly reflected in the Woolf Fisher Kupe Leadership Scholar for 2021 Jazpah Tata (Ngati-Ranginui), a mother of two young children who is completing her Masters in Education.

Jazpah grew up in Tauranga with her six siblings, mother and police officer father, moving frequently from school to school in rural areas often with high gang populations.

“My experiences growing up in marginalised communities, where racism and cultural misunderstanding was often the norm, sparked a desire and interest to want to see change in the way we teach, particularly in how we teach our own histories,” she says.



Pictured left to right are - Back row: Abigail Petrie, Lawrence Gao, Blair Corbett, Jazpah Tata, Connor McDowall, Thomas Lovelock, Amanda-Rose Sesio, Thomas Collins, Beth Schuck  
Front row: Emily-Jade Yee, Wednesday Davis, Mena Welford, Raksha Tiwari, Julia Budler, Pratibha Singh, Harvey Merton  
Not pictured: Jennifer Sarich

Her mentor is Hoana Pearson QSM, a leader and advocate for cultural responsiveness and inclusion in schools.

Like her mentor, Jazpah hopes to help address the well-documented achievement-disparity in New Zealand which disproportionately affects Māori and Pacific students.

“This programme constantly challenges me. I’ve found it so beneficial to learn from critical thinking and problem-solving leaders such as Hoana, as well as the passionate and idealistic scholars within the programme.”

Her scholarship, which is funded by the Woolf Fisher Trust, has allowed her to juggle the responsibilities of being an academic, as well as a wife and mother.

From influence in education, to building better environments to live in, the Kupe Scholars are set to contribute to a better, more inclusive New Zealand in multiple sectors.

Master of Architecture student Tom Collins is funded by the William Chick Trust, set up by the late architect William Chick to support younger generations of architects.

“I can trace my interest in architecture back to my childhood full of lego, Star Wars and building treehouses. However my first sublime memory of architecture was getting lost in the Christchurch Town Hall as a kid,” says Tom, 22.

His early fascination with building form and design has developed into a deep interest in the politics underpinning built environments and the crucial role of architects in demanding more democratic and liveable cities.

Tom says the scholarship has allowed him the immense privilege of time to explore ideas and to be able to invest in materials and drawing tools.

This creative freedom is enriched by the mentorship of Pip Cheshire, whom Tom describes as a sort of custodian for the discipline.

“Pip’s had a dazzling career of designing stunning residential architecture and city-defining civic architecture and master-planning,” Tom says.

“If there is one insight I’ve gained so far, it is that there is no one ‘correct’ way to lead, and the most meaningful ideas and discourses come from a multiplicity of diverse voices. A valuable learning is that behind almost any solitary leader figure is a lot of collaborative, less visible leadership.” – TOM COLLINS

“He’s always pushing architects to be more ambitious, critical and visionary. I’m excited to explore with Pip how to advocate for ideals in architecture without necessarily demonstrating them in a building first, such as through discourse or publications.”

Developing leadership is an important aspect of the programme. Scholars engage in leadership workshops throughout the year, drawing on the expertise of a range of professionals with diverse experience across the public, private and not-for-profit sectors.

“The programme has been a journey of meeting many different leaders and reflecting on their often extremely varied approaches to leadership,” Tom says.

“If there is one insight I’ve gained so far, it is that there is no one “correct” way to lead, and the most meaningful ideas and discourses come from a multiplicity of diverse voices. A valuable learning is that behind almost any solitary leader figure is a lot of collaborative, less visible leadership.”

There were 117 applications for Kupe Leadership Scholarships this year, and only 17 were awarded. ■



Law and Arts student Malia Fuamatu with her mother, Anne-Marie Tauiliili, at a reception for Seelye Scholars

## Reaching a hand back to help others up

Malia Fuamatu says she spent the first four years of high school struggling with motivation and came close to becoming “another dropout statistic”. In Year 13, when she eventually figured out what she wanted to do, her pastoral record was so “colourful” that she thought it would be difficult to find a teacher willing to endorse her application for any scholarship.

Fortunately, the deputy principal at her school, McAuley High School in Otahuhu, believed in her and endorsed her application for a Ralph and Eve Seelye Undergraduate Scholarship.

Now successfully immersed in her fourth year of studying for conjoint degrees in Law and Arts, Malia is deeply grateful for the scholarship, for the turning point that it created in her life and the resources that it provides so that she can accomplish her goals.

“Because of this support, my parents and grandparents did not have to spend nights

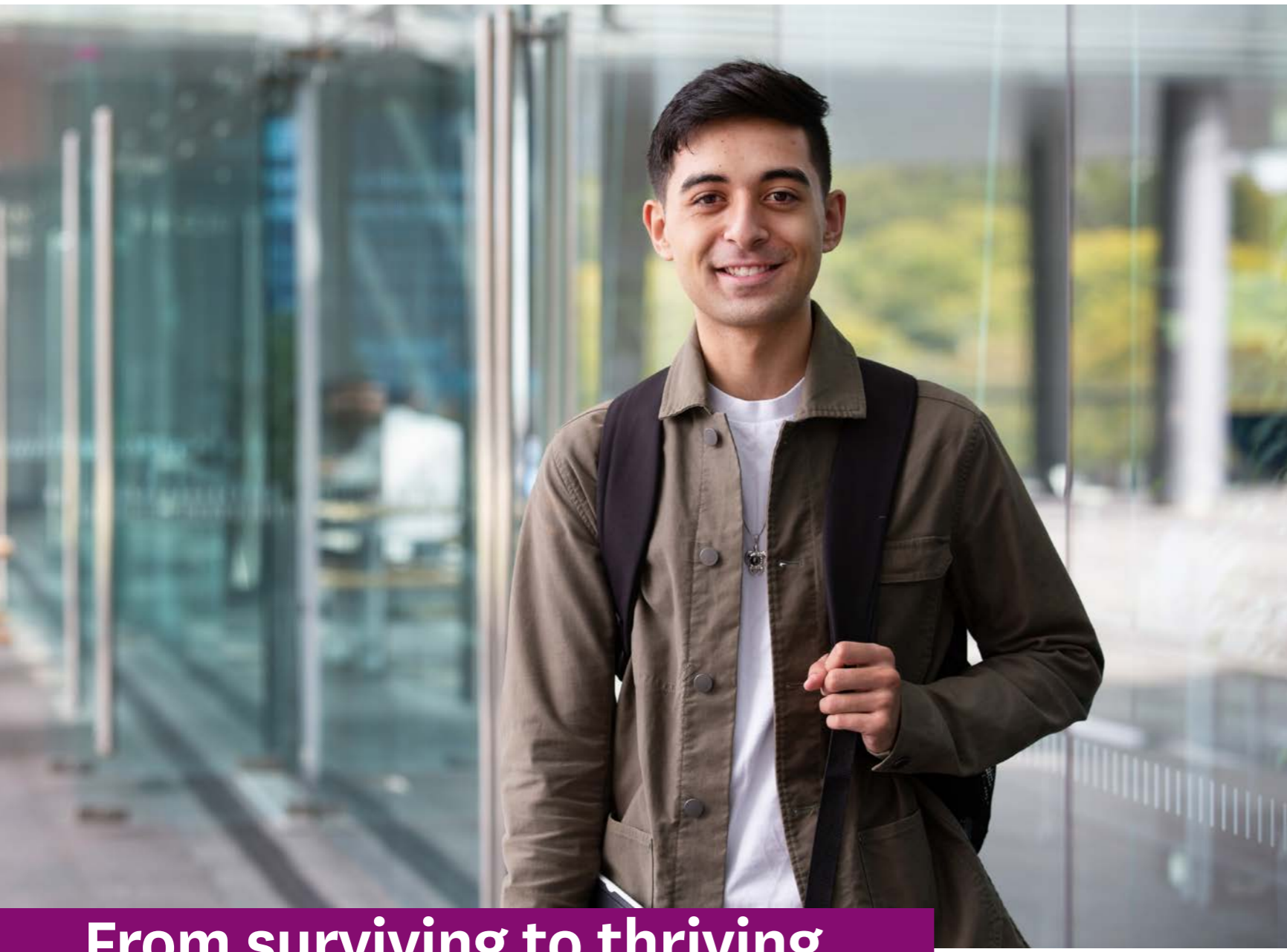
worrying about a laptop for me that I knew they could not afford. My mum doesn’t worry about my expensive textbooks, or my stationery or even my travel fees to get to university each day.”

She is determined to use the opportunity to help others in the future.

“It has motivated me to do better, to be better for our youth, especially our Māori and Pacific youth, who face adversity and struggle in an education system that was not made for them.

“The goal will always be to give back and to reach a hand back to help others up. Like the Ralph and Eve Charitable Trust has done and continues to do, I too am on my way to helping my community in any capacity that I can.”

Each year up to ten Year 13 students are awarded Ralph and Eve Seelye Undergraduate Scholarships, which provide funding of up to \$5,000 per year for the duration of a first undergraduate degree. ■



## From surviving to thriving

Growing up in a small town with limited job prospects, Demosson Metu knew pursuing a university education was his ticket to limitless opportunities.

As a Year 12 student the Tokoroa local felt that the university dream was so close, but upon further research, he realised paying for it would be impossible.

Devastated, he lost interest in school and didn't attempt to gain UE as a Year 13.

He then spent a year living at home. Unable to find work, he moved to Papakura to live with his aunt before finding a job at a supermarket.

.....  
**“It gives me a sense of security in case any emergencies come up.”**  
 .....

Two years into stocking shelves, Demosson knew he would rather be carving a meaningful career for himself.

“I thought ‘I don't want to work at a supermarket my whole life. This isn't the life I had planned’. So I wanted to try university and do something more with my life.”

Demosson then completed a Tertiary Foundation Certificate at the University of Auckland, which enables students who didn't gain UE a chance to learn the necessary skills for studying at a tertiary level.

Now in his first year of studying conjoint bachelors degrees in Arts and Commerce, Demosson will be the first in his family to gain a university qualification.

Thanks to the Alumni Scholarship for Tertiary Foundation Certificate Students, he was able to move from Papakura into an apartment in the city centre. The scholarship also alleviates his concerns about paying for basic needs.

“It gives me a sense of security in case any emergencies come up. When you're worried about financial concerns, you're not going to find it easy to focus on studying.”

.....  
**“I asked one of my lecturers why most people like her and me, who were raised in a harsh environment, cannot make it out of the cycle of poverty. She replied: ‘they are the rule, and we are the exception’.”**  
 .....

Demosson, who is of Dutch and Cook Island Māori heritage, says that growing up in an area where not many people complete tertiary study means that there are limited role models for students who need them most.

“I think a lot of people who grow up in situations similar to mine have this mindset that they can't do more for themselves. It's understandable because when you're raised in a certain environment where no one you know really goes on to do things, they just work at minimum wage jobs and are just surviving, you don't really picture much for yourself.”

“It's like you've got to have your own individual mindset, to swim against the current...you have to fuel your own fire to do it.”

The 21-year-old hopes that he will be an inspiration to his younger family members in



the future, who will be at high school once he graduates.

“I asked one of my lecturers why most people like her and me, who were raised in a harsh environment, cannot make it out of the cycle of poverty. She replied: ‘they are the rule, and we are the exception’.”

“I think about what she said often and I've concluded that a considerable influence is that many kids in these situations do not have anyone to look up to. I go to university to show my nieces and nephews that if they want to, they can go to university too.” ■



Dr Alicia Didsbury (left) and Professor Rod Dunbar

## Raising an army of cancer-killing cells

A new frontier of research currently opening in our labs offers new hope for New Zealanders suffering from cancer.

Around 470 alumni, staff and friends have helped to fuel this research by donating \$99,885 to the Immune Therapy Appeal, which launched in 2020.

Our researchers at the School of Biological Sciences want to drastically improve cancer outcomes for New Zealanders. They have uncovered a way to grow customised immune cells from a patient's blood that can directly attack and kill their cancer cells.

“Our generous supporters are helping to equip this world-class facility so it can be used for clinical trials.”

The immune cells are T-cells that can kill cancer cells without harming normal cells.

Led by Professor Rod Dunbar in the Faculty of Science, the team has developed new methods to grow T-cells that can recognise molecules found only in cancer cells.

“These molecules can be very different in different patients, so a personalised approach is necessary. The next step is to test these methods in clinical trials – which is why we sought support for the establishment of the Auckland Cell Therapy Facility. This facility incorporates a rigorously controlled environment optimised for keeping human cells healthy and will enable the team to grow T-cells safely before infusing them into patients.

“It’s wonderful that we are now developing a facility that will enable us to test our new techniques in clinical trials.”

“Our generous supporters are helping to equip this world-class facility so it can be used for clinical trials.”

Dr Alicia Didsbury is one of the scientists contributing to this lifesaving research. She says it is philanthropic backing that is making it all possible.

“It’s thanks to these generous supporters that we are able to develop new approaches to T-cell therapy without feeling constrained by conventional thinking. This enables us to rapidly develop our best ideas for curing cancer.

“The support we have received is amazing. Sometimes the work can seem painstakingly slow – especially with the disruption due to Covid-19 – but it’s also incredibly exciting. It’s wonderful that we are now developing a facility that will enable us to test our new techniques in clinical trials.”

Rod says the future is already brighter.

“I already tell my students with some confidence that cancer will be far less of a problem for their generation than it was for their parents’ generation. At the rate immune therapy is moving, more and more cancers will be brought under control over the next two decades. And this kind of cell therapy will be part of that control.”



Science Centre



Professor Justin O'Sullivan (left) and Professor Merryn Tawhai

## World-first approach to tackling lung disease

**A unique study combining expertise from two world-leading research institutes at the University of Auckland is set to improve diagnosis and treatment of New Zealand's fourth-leading cause of death – Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD).**

By combining genetic models that describe genetic variation from the Liggins Institute with computer models that show how the lungs work from the Auckland Bioengineering Institute (ABI), researchers have devised a new approach which will allow personalised treatment for each patient.

“Not only is COPD a leading cause of death for New Zealanders across the population but our Māori and Pacific people are being disproportionately affected,” says Professor Justin O’Sullivan of the Liggins Institute. “The genomic approach, when translated to general clinical practice, will contribute to addressing this inequity by enabling treatment of each patient to be informed by their particular genetic situation.”

There is an increasing body of scientific evidence that suggests an overlap between asthma and COPD, with some studies suggesting that they are a continuum of the same disease, explains Professor Merryn Tawhai of the ABI.

“We will undertake an integrative analysis of COPD that combines genetic and mathematical models of the physical structure and respiratory mechanics of respiration, to identify the developmental processes and genes that increase the risk of developing COPD.”

The new project is funded by the Dines Family Charitable Trust, which is committed to slowing the ‘brain drain’ by helping to keep the ‘best and brightest’ at home and by attracting them back to New Zealand.

Their recent support has funded research teams undertaking studies at ABI and Liggins into asthma modelling in children, into understanding gene regulation of Parkinson’s disease and into genetic markers of asthma. They have also funded the Genesis Programme in the Faculty of Engineering, which is designed to increase access to engineering for Māori and Pacific students, and a Clinical Research Fellowship at Manaaki Mānawa, the Centre for Heart Research. ■

## For the love of frogs and reptiles

In 2020 there were 18 generous gifts received from legacy donors, to support research and students across faculties and disciplines. One was from a US-based alumnus, Dr James Fawcett, who had a passion for herpetology – the study of amphibians and reptiles – and a special interest in the tuatara. His gift will support research into some of New Zealand’s unique species, many of them considered at risk.

“New Zealand has an extraordinary endemic herpetofauna, including the iconic tuatara, more than 110 lizard species (skinks and gecko) and less than a handful of frog species,” says Professor Allen Rodrigo, Head of the School of Biological Sciences.

“None are found anywhere else in the world, and most share unusual, distinctive features, such as live birth, resistance to low temperatures, low reproductive rates, small clutch sizes, and increased longevity. Sadly, about eighty percent of this fauna is currently regarded as threatened or at risk. Conservation efforts have focused on monitoring and translocations to islands, although the lack of herpetological research limits the effectiveness of these methods.”

James Fawcett earned his BSc in 1960 and MSc in 1964 at the University of Auckland, then relocated in 1965 to the US to study under renowned herpetologist Hobart M. Smith at the University of Illinois-Urbana. In 1968 he followed Dr Smith to the University of Colorado, where he completed a PhD in Zoology. Throughout his career he maintained an ongoing catalogue of literature citations of New Zealand amphibians and reptiles and had a special interest in the tuatara.

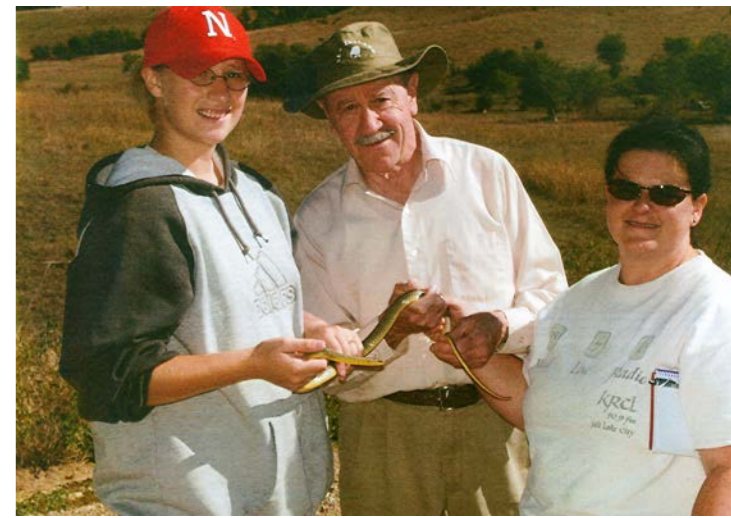
Professor Rodrigo says Dr Fawcett’s gift provides the University of Auckland with a wonderful opportunity to support further research on New Zealand’s herpetofauna, potentially contributing to improved conservation of this group.



Tuatara at Zealandia ecosanctuary Photo by Judi Lapsley Miller, sourced from Wikicommons

“Our students have been involved in a variety of research on our herpetofauna, including assessing the critical role that geckos play in pollination, evaluating the impact of habitat disturbance on lizards and understanding the gut microbes associated with gecko.”

This generous legacy gift from the late James Fawcett and his wife, Georgene, was for \$40,000 and was followed by a gift of the same value, to support research in Optometry and Vision Science. ■



Dr James Fawcett (centre) and herpetology students hold a blue racer snake while on a field trip to southeastern Nebraska in 2004.

# The Chancellor's Circle

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

## Special recognition for over \$50m

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“This year has been a really tough year for me and my family and your kind donation really helped me get through it.”

– Engineering student

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“This scholarship is a saving grace for my personal wellbeing and will allow me to be mentally and physically fit to stay focused on my studies.”

– Science student

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“Philanthropic funding has been critical to drive outcomes to where they are today.”

– Cancer researcher

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“I promise to use your support as a platform for me to succeed.”

– Engineering student

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“I’m the first in my family to attend university, and even before Covid-19 my family was struggling to make ends meet.”

– Science student

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Diane Snow

“The financial donors who make our work possible are aware of every step we take. They’re just as excited as we are about it.”

– Brain researcher

“Receiving a refugee scholarship not only relieved economic pressures of uni life but it demonstrated that the education of people like me matter.”

– Health Sciences student

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“Donors can be confident that their donations are not only beneficial to the project in front of them, but they amplify and ricochet around the ecosystem to help other projects.”

– Cancer researcher

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“Thanks to the support of the scholarship, I’ve been able to throw myself into my studies with energy, determination, and a confidence I didn’t know I had.”

– Arts student

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We are grateful to all our board members and trustees for their generous contributions throughout 2020 and beyond.

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# University of Auckland Foundation

## Endowment Investment Pool ('EIP') Report

2020 was, despite the disruption of the Covid-19 pandemic, a strong year for global equity markets and the EIP maintained a very satisfactory 10-year return.

### The EIP ...

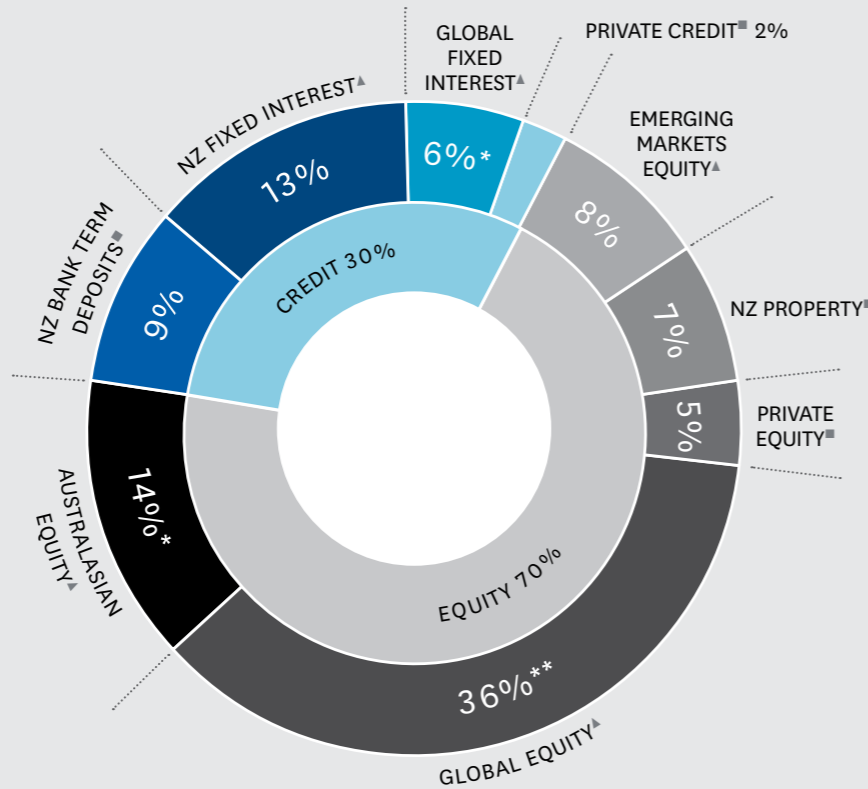
HAD A CLOSING BALANCE OF **\$251 million**

THE ONE-YEAR RETURN WAS **8.8% p.a.**

THE FIVE-YEAR RETURN WAS **9.3% p.a.**

THE TEN-YEAR RETURN WAS **9.3% p.a.**

THE EIP WAS INVESTED AS FOLLOWS:



- \* 100 percent currency hedged
- \*\* 50 percent currency hedged
- ▲ Publicly listed securities
- Privately held; unlisted securities

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

The EIP is managed economically by the Foundation. It charges no fees for the internal management of the bank term deposits. The total fees charged by external managers amount to no more than 0.75 percent per annum of the EIP's average monthly balance.

The EIP represents the bulk of the Group's equity; the balance is made up of its current use and specified investment pools and operating accounts.

# The University of Auckland Foundations

In 2020, the University of Auckland Foundation and School of Medicine Foundation (together, the "Group") received \$38.0 million in gifts, earned \$23.6 million on their investments and made distributions of \$29.8 million.

### Consolidated Summary Statement of Comprehensive Revenue and Expense For Year Ended 31 December 2020

	GROUP*	
	2020 \$,000	2019 \$,000
Gifts and Legacies	38,033	31,104
Investment Gain	23,632	34,907
Reversal of impairment loss on Entrepreneurial Challenge investment	402	-
Operating Expenses	(932)	(613)
Distributions and Grants	(29,772)	(31,489)
<b>Total Comprehensive Revenue and Expense for the Year</b>	<b>31,363</b>	<b>33,909</b>

### Consolidated Summary Statement of Changes in Equity For the Year Ended 31 December 2020

	2020 \$,000	2019 \$,000
Equity at the Beginning of the Year	257,496	223,587
Total Comprehensive Revenue and Expense	31,363	33,909
<b>Equity at the End of the Year</b>	<b>288,859</b>	<b>257,496</b>

### Consolidated Summary Statement of Financial Position As at 31 December 2020

	2020 \$,000	2019 \$,000
Current Assets	57,154	57,473
Non Current Assets	282,934	236,268
Current Liabilities	(51,229)	(36,245)
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>288,859</b>	<b>257,496</b>

Represented by:

<b>Equity at End of Year</b>	<b>288,859</b>	<b>257,496</b>
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\*University of Auckland Foundation and School of Medicine Foundation combined

These summary financial statements have been extracted from the Group's 2020 audited financial statements but are themselves unaudited. They are provided to give interested persons a succinct overview of the Group's financial performance. The full and audited financial statements (which give a more complete understanding of the financial performance, financial position and cash flows of the Group) are available online at "www.uoafoundation.org.nz" or may be requested in writing from Dr Richard Sorrenson, General Manager, Alumni Relations & Development, The University of Auckland, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142.



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