

# LIVING UP TO OUR ASPIRATIONS



As 2024 came to a close, Ngā Mokopuna, our new Living Building that houses our marae complex, officially opened and we welcomed a thousand people from our community to celebrate with us.

It was a moving event at dawn, not least because of what this new cultural landmark represents to this University and to our city. Ngā Mokopuna is a trailblazer, the first building of its kind in the capital and certainly the first to endeavour to undertake such a massive sustainability challenge in an urban landscape such as ours. This is also the latest chapter of the origin story of our marae, the first in Aotearoa to be housed within a university.

Ngā Mokopuna speaks to our aspirations for Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington—a bicultural institution, founded on Te Tiriti, that fosters community, connection and collaboration. It brings our new strategic plan 2024–2026 to life in a very tangible way. It is an example of how we intend to move forward as we build, create and think about our work.

This intent and direction are captured in our new strategy which will guide the University's efforts to build on our distinctive location within Aotearoa's political and cultural capital—our turangawaewae—and demonstrate the tremendous value of integrating mātauranga Māori in our activity across all disciplines.

We are creating a community and an environment that students are excited to join—one that prioritises improving their experience and offers a distinct education that prepares them for life and sets them apart from their peers. At the heart of this work is our commitment to empowering staff through a high-trust culture. This environment encourages bold and creative thinking, with a willingness to embrace high-risk, high-reward activities in research and the pursuit of meaningful kaupapa.

Leveraging our unique location in this remarkable city, we have strengthened our identity as a civic university. Our global excellence is enriched by our local relevance—working alongside Wellington's schools, start-up communities, and civic institutions to forge connections that benefit both our University and the wider city.

As we reflect on the year behind us, it is clear that the University has made significant progress. We have achieved real momentum heading into 2025, with early signs suggesting improved enrolment, remarkable research accomplishments, and a deepening of partnerships across the city. These successes are a testament to the collective effort of our staff, students, and wider community.

While we acknowledge the ongoing challenges facing the sector, we are optimistic about what lies ahead. With the foundation we have built in 2024, we are well-positioned to make 2025 a year of continued growth, innovation, and impact. Together, we will harness the opportunities before us to further strengthen Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington as a place of learning, discovery, and connection that inspires the next generation.

Te Herenga Waka, He Herenga Tangata, He Herenga Kaupapa.

**Professor Nic Smith**  
Vice-Chancellor