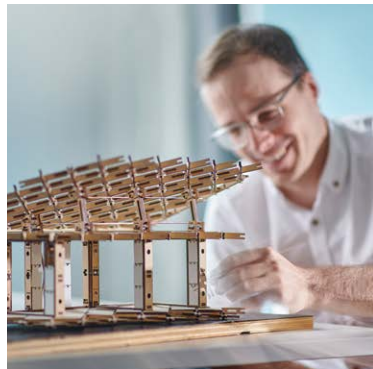




VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF
WELLINGTON
TE HERENGA WAKA

BRIEFING TO THE INCOMING MINISTER FOR TERTIARY EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Te Herenga Waka—
Victoria University of Wellington
December 2023





Congratulations on your appointment as the Minister responsible for tertiary education and skills in Aotearoa New Zealand.

As you assume your important role in overseeing this portfolio, this briefing is designed to introduce you to Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington, outline current challenges and opportunities in the tertiary education sector in our country and at our university, provide a high-level summary of our strategy and priorities, and introduce you to key members of university leadership.

We look forward to working with you and welcoming you to campus soon.

Nic Smith

Vice-Chancellor

nic.smith@vuw.ac.nz



STRATEGY AND PRIORITIES

Below is a summary of our strategy and priorities for Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington:

- Developing opportunities for a dynamic student experience—one that is unique to Te Herenga Waka
- Developing and creating knowledge and technologies as a success mechanism for Aotearoa New Zealand as we tackle the big issues as a nation
- Teaching relational and human skills alongside technical skills to produce graduates who are equipped to face complex and challenging contexts
- Building better and socially conscious futures by engaging diverse communities to support social inclusion
- Pushing the boundaries of knowledge generation and creation to respond to local and global issues
- Evolving our operating model to create more time and certainty for our staff to ensure we can move forward and focus on the core purpose of the University
- Continuing our work to improve our financial position with a focus on growing revenue, particularly through recruitment and retention of students. This continues to be important as it provides us with the ability to make choices about our long-term future free of the acute pressures that have driven recent change
- Forming our strategy for the future. This will be centred on advancing our reputation using our location and the undeniable expertise and excellence of our staff, leveraging people and place, and will enable us to articulate a purpose that supports a sense of belonging and a focus on the future for all members of our university.



FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY PROJECT 2023

This year, Te Herenga Waka undertook a programme of work focused on addressing a projected deficit of well over \$30 million in 2023 alone and ensuring the University's long-term financial sustainability.

A review of academic programmes and professional staffing levels was carried out early in the year, and proposed changes were consulted on from late June, with a pause in the process after the previous Labour Government announced additional funding for the tertiary sector. Te Herenga Waka's share of that money is \$12 million over two years.

Through a combination of the additional money from Government, philanthropic support being provided in 2024, and money freed up by reduced debt-servicing costs (due to repaying some debt using funds received from settling a long-standing insurance claim related to the Kaikoura earthquake), the University was able to put around \$6.8 million into retaining jobs and programmes that were originally proposed for disestablishment.

Along with further savings from voluntary redundancies, resignations, a small number of academic programme closures and compulsory redundancies, the University achieved its savings targets.

In the original proposal, the University expected a reduction of 233 fulltime equivalent staff (FTE) but, through the measures outlined above, the eventual reduction was just over 199 FTE.

Te Herenga Waka is now firmly focused on enrolling students for 2024 and being a strong, exciting, and financially sustainable institution in the future.



CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Below is a summary of some of the current challenges and opportunities we, and, in some cases, other tertiary institutions in Aotearoa New Zealand, are facing.



Most New Zealand universities are experiencing financial challenges. This has been highlighted throughout 2023. This shows the current funding model is not serving the country or university staff and students well, and we look forward to the funding review that was announced in July 2023. If the time frame for the review could be hastened, many in the sector would appreciate this.






The current funding model, which relies on the competitive pursuit of student numbers, means universities often offer the same courses, sometimes in the same location. For example, our university and Massey University's Wellington campus offer design as a subject—despite close proximity to each other. As universities grapple with financial challenges, they are also cutting the same courses, without there being a national discussion about the impact of those decisions for the prosperity of Aotearoa New Zealand and its people. There are interesting models used for CRIs that could be explored in a university context to facilitate collaboration where it is constructive.



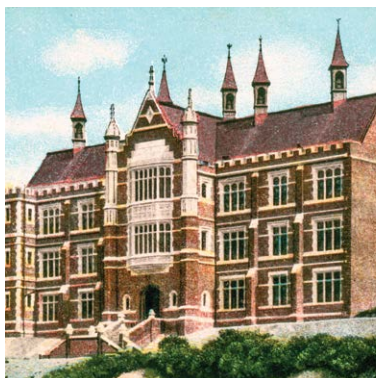
Removing discrepancies between fees charged at different universities should be a priority. Fees students pay for university tuition are based on 2004 rates, which have been indexed by percentages. Some universities have been severely disadvantaged by this Annual Maximum Fee Movement policy. For example, our university has been disadvantaged in humanities and social sciences fees to the tune of \$30 million since the introduction of the AMFM policy. We need to review and update the cost structure to ensure it reflects what it actually costs to educate a student in distinct areas that are important to the nation in 2023 and beyond.



Better collaboration is required between our universities in learning and teaching (we already collaborate well in research), and we need to build critical mass in individual disciplines as this benefits the whole country. [The collaborative delivery model being piloted by Victoria University of Wellington and the University of Otago](#) for teaching some language subjects has merit for wider application. It balances the costs and revenue between the two institutions, thereby minimising administrative overheads. This is a positive way of optimising the balance between competition and providing a broad range of options for students. This model is scalable in terms of adding institutions and subjects, is administratively simple, and maintains incentives for individual institutions to recruit their own students.

	<p>When it comes to specialist, professional degrees that require investment in expensive infrastructure (such as dentistry, design, heavy engineering, medicine, and veterinary science), there is no value to Aotearoa in these being taught at all universities. We also need to consider the distinctive strengths of particular institutions. Examples include Te Herenga Waka's unique advantages through being located adjacent to government and policymakers and Massey's long-standing strengths in agriculture and horticulture. Another is the focus that AUT has, and which Te Herenga Waka increasingly also has, on Pasifika students and supporting them to succeed in tertiary education. These areas should be funded explicitly and at a minimum critical mass.</p>
	<p>There is significant untapped potential and significant demand for work-integrated learning, where people complete a degree while also working. There has been considerable success in the teaching space in this area, with teaching assistants working in the classroom while being assisted to complete training. Building on our location and core strengths, connected to government, policy, the creative arts, and emerging start-ups, Te Herenga Waka is in a unique position to pilot degree-level apprenticeships that have been successfully deployed in the United Kingdom. In providing this professional development, we would be interested in working closely with the Leadership Development Centre, which is already active in this area. If successful, we would also explore the possibility of similar partnerships with private business and the start-up sector.</p>
	<p>There are several areas where universities could share resources and work cooperatively to improve efficiency and access. One is in library infrastructure—a universities library of New Zealand would make sense as it would ensure students and staff have access to an unparalleled range of information. Another is in the area of international student recruitment. The current model sees agents employed by all eight of our universities operating in the same markets at significant cost. This activity could be centralised and implemented on behalf of all universities, with students being enrolled based on their chosen areas of study and the distinctive strengths of individual institutions.</p>





ABOUT OUR UNIVERSITY



Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington was founded 126 years ago. The original Victoria College was established in late 1897, and teaching began two years later, with 115 students enrolled in the first year. In 2023, the University has more than 2,000 staff and more than 21,000 students, and has grown into a network of campuses, research centres, and institutes.

Victoria University of Wellington is a vital part of the capital city and the wider Wellington region. It is one of the two biggest employers in the Wellington region and contributes in excess of \$1 billion to the regional economy each year.

Our staff and students benefit from, and also create, partnerships and innovative opportunities that contribute to the city's identity, including its reputation as a hub for creativity and entrepreneurship.

Being a global-civic university means valuing and prioritising international interconnectedness and the University's international reputation and relevance, while also being committed to drive positive change in the social, cultural, and economic life of Wellington and its region.

Having Te Herenga Waka marae at its heart underpins the University's bicultural identity while also providing a welcoming place for the many cultures that form part of our community. The marae also provides the University's te reo Māori name, meaning 'the mooring of canoes'.

Our university ranks in the top 1 percent of the world's 18,000 universities for 18 subjects and in the top 2 percent overall. It is New Zealand's top-ranked university for intensity of high-quality research, according to the latest Performance-Based Research Fund evaluation—the only university to twice top the country's main measure of research excellence. That strength underlies the rigour of our teaching and engagement.

The University operates from several sites. The Kelburn campus is home to the faculties of Education; Engineering; Health; Humanities and Social Sciences; and Science as well as the Kelburn Library and the full range of student support and administration offices. Te Aro campus, in the central city, houses the Wellington Faculty of Architecture and Design Innovation. The Pipitea campus comprises the Faculty of Law and the Wellington School of Business and Government. Other facilities include the Coastal Ecology Laboratory, the Miramar Creative Centre in the city's film district, and the Gracefield Innovation Quarter, in Lower Hutt. The University also has premises in Auckland.

Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington adopted Te Tiriti o Waitangi Statute in February 2019, replacing the earlier Treaty of Waitangi statute. We were the first university in New Zealand to have a Treaty of Waitangi Statute and this new version further reinforces that commitment. The Tiriti Statute centres around eight principles that are drawn from Te Tiriti o Waitangi, New Zealand case law, Waitangi Tribunal reports, Crown policy documents, the University's governance documents, and mātauranga Māori.

The centrality of Te Herenga Waka marae links the university community to the ancestors of the land we are situated on and ties the University to the iwi of Aotearoa and to the wider Pacific. Symbolically, the marae are spaces where everyone—no matter where they are from—can 'hitch their canoe' and belong. Currently, the marae is temporarily closed as we build one of the world's most environmentally responsible hubs, the Living Pā. As a purpose-built living lab, the Living Pā will be an incubator for innovation and a place for multiple communities and disciplines to come together to discuss how we can build a more equitable, fair, and sustainable society.

OUR UNIVERSITY AT A GLANCE

OUR RANKINGS AND REPUTATION

We are in the top 2 percent of the world's 18,000 universities (QS World University Rankings)

We rank 85th out of 1,400 institutions globally and 12th for climate action in the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings

We are in the top 1 percent of the world's universities in 18 subjects (QS World University Rankings)

OUR RESEARCH IN 2022

\$88.3M

in external research income

73%

of our 2022 research outputs completed with external collaborators

56.8%

of our Scopus-indexed publications in the top 25% of journals

50

new invention disclosures

1,266

doctoral enrolments and

178

completions

OUR STAFF 2022

2,355

staff (full-time equivalent)

1,110

teaching and research staff

96%

of teachers were assessed by students as 'excellent', 'very good', or 'good'

OUR STUDENTS 2022

21,833

students (total headcount)

1,902

Māori student EFTS

1,045

Pasifika student EFTS

1,098

international full-fee EFTS
Top five countries: China (713), Viet Nam (210), Malaysia (168), India (120), and United States (94)

We awarded

4,369

qualifications in 2022

OUR 2022 PHILANTHROPIC HIGHLIGHTS

954

donors gave or pledged a total of \$1.3 million

485

alumni gave \$1.3 million

28

new funds were established, including 12 new scholarships

51%

percent of donors' support was allocated to student support, and 23 percent was allocated to research

\$24.2

invested in scholarships by the University

OUR PEOPLE

**The University Council is our governing body,
and the Vice-Chancellor is our chief executive.**

UNIVERSITY COUNCIL

The Council consists of 12 members:

- four are appointed by the Minister of Education
- eight are appointed by Council in accordance with its statutes
 - two of the eight members are staff members, another two are students, and the Vice-Chancellor is appointed *ex officio* for the length of their employment contract.

The composition of Council is determined by the [Education and Training Act 2020](#), [Council's Constitution](#) (gazetted on 24 September 2015), and the [Council Membership Statute](#) (PDF).

Our current council members are:



Chancellor John Allen



Pro-Chancellor
Hon. Maryan Street



Vice-Chancellor Professor
Nic Smith



Professor Richard Arnold
(staff representative)



Professor Brigitte
Bönisch-Brednich
(staff representative)



Jaistone Finau
(student representative)



Pania Gray (Ngāpuhi)



Alan Judge



David McLean



Kelly Mitchell
(Ngaati Maahanga)
(student representative)



Cath Nesus (Ngāti Porou)



James Te Puni (Ngāti Porou)

TE HIWA—OUR SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM

Members of Te Hiwa provide advice and recommendations to the Vice-Chancellor on matters affecting the University as a whole.

The Vice-Chancellor is the chairperson, with members providing executive leadership for their academic and professional portfolios.

Te Hiwa is made up of the following staff members:



Vice-Chancellor Professor
Nic Smith



Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Students)
Dr Logan Bannister



Director of People and Capability
Mark Daldorf



Deputy Vice-Chancellor
(Māori and Engagement)
Professor Rawinia Higgins
(Tūhoe)



Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)
Professor Margaret Hyland



Provost Professor
Bryony James



Chief Financial Officer
Les Montgomery



Chief Operating Officer
Tina Wakefield

- Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)—vacant.

SOME OF OUR STORIES

Could the next big earthquake **trigger more large shakes?**



It's no secret central New Zealand faces a rising risk of a massive earthquake. But what we don't yet know is whether the next big shake could set the scene for decades of more large quakes.

A major new research project, led by Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington, aims to find out.

“Central Aotearoa sits in a zone of complex faulting, known as the ‘transition zone’ because it marks the transition between our two largest plate boundary faults—the Hikurangi Subduction Zone and the Alpine Fault,” explains Associate Professor Jamie Howarth.

“There’s a high likelihood—a 75 percent chance—of a magnitude 8 earthquake on the Alpine Fault in the next 50 years. We think a shake of this size could significantly change the state of stress in the transition zone, potentially triggering decades of more large quakes.”

Jamie is co-leading the research project, together with Associate Professor Caroline Orchiston from the University of Otago.

Part of their work will involve digging into data on previous large quakes, using lake sediment records that reveal earthquake activity up to 10,000 years in the past.

“This data will help inform computer simulations of earthquake processes, dramatically improving our ability to forecast future quake sequences and understand the hazard they present to people and communities,” Jamie says.

These findings will also help inform decisions about how New Zealand can reduce the economic and social effects of major quakes, potentially saving billions of dollars.

The project brings together research expertise from several universities, as well as from GNS Science, NIWA, and consultancy Market Economics. It will also involve on-the-ground work with iwi and local communities on preparing for future major quakes.

Funding for the work is provided through the 2023 Endeavour Fund, administered by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment.

<https://people.wgtn.ac.nz/jamie.howarth>



An advocate for embracing opportunities

Simran Bechan, a fifth-year Pasifika law and commerce student from Fiji, has tried to say yes to every opportunity offered to her—both in and outside the classroom at Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington.

In her first year, she joined two of the University's leadership programmes, which led to her undertaking a number of volunteering activities. These included helping with the University's open day for future students, working with Wellington Women's Refuge and the Compassion Soup Kitchen, and taking part in Te Herenga Waka's annual tree-planting initiative in Wellington's Outer Green Belt in Ohariu Valley.

She says this helped her meet and connect with other like-minded people, and gave her confidence and a greater understanding of herself, as well as an opportunity to give back to society, and to share advice, tips, and tricks she has learnt throughout her studies.

"I encourage my friends at University to seek out as many opportunities as they can.

"I have always wanted to focus on developing my leadership skills during my time at university, and I know how beneficial my involvement has been for me personally and as I look to the future when I graduate."

Simran has joined a number of clubs and societies on campus and has found inspiration from her leadership roles with the Feminist Law Society and the Asian Law Students' Association.

She has also been elected president of the Pacific Island Commerce Students' Association for 2024.

"I am really passionate about being an advocate for our students—to raise concerns, uplift our mana and our voices, and to ultimately be a representative for Asians and Pacific Island peoples."

Throughout her full-time studies, Simran has juggled part-time work, internships both in Aotearoa New Zealand and in Geneva, Switzerland, and been a study mentor for other students.

She will undertake a summer clerkship at MinterEllisonRuddWatts and hopes to complete her undergraduate studies in mid-2024.

www.wgtn.ac.nz/students/student-life



Global mover and shaker **opening doors for rangatahi Māori**

Leading the world in innovative food production, Arama Kukutai (Ngāti Tipa, Waikato, Ngāti Maniapoto, Te Aupōuri, and Parihaka) is rewriting the rules of agriculture one indoor farm at a time.

Born and raised in the Waikato, the global agritech leader was this year named as one of Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington's Distinguished Alumni Award winners.

Arama says he was taught the importance of building a resilient food supply at a young age.

"My grandmother used to run the pā garden, and I have memories of digging up the lupins, which were used as an organic fertiliser.

"That always stuck with me and is what inspired me to expand my focus beyond a single farm to technology that can benefit lots of farms."

Arama started his career in finance at a time when Māori organisations were beginning to actively develop forestry, farming, and fishing assets. He became a co-founding partner at Finistere Ventures, a pioneering firm focused on the food and agriculture sector through which Arama first came into contact with Plenty.

He is now the chief executive officer at Plenty, an indoor vertical-farming technology company that has raised \$1 billion. On Plenty's farms, LED lights take the place of the sun and robots do the heavy lifting.

"That means strawberries all year round that are fresher, cheaper, and even eco-friendlier. Pesticide-free leafy greens grown in a month from seed to harvest. And all of this using only 5 percent of the water traditional farms do."

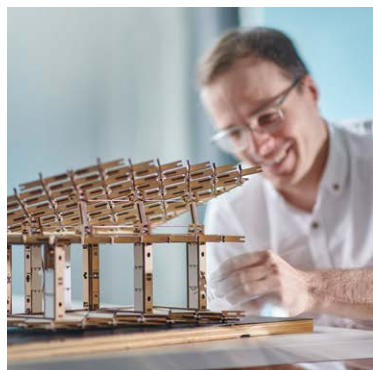
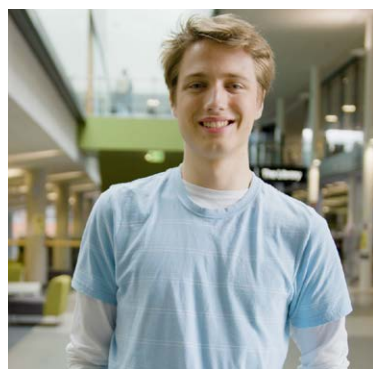
Arama says what's most important to him is being able to foster talent and help to grow the people around him.

This includes co-founding the non-profit organisation Te Ara Pōtiki, with the sole purpose of increasing the number of Māori science, technology, engineering, and maths (STEM) students and practitioners gaining experience with, and connections to, international start-ups.

It is his hope that by connecting Māori STEM students with Silicon Valley experience, he can help provide young people with access to global technology companies and the opportunity to build the type of partnerships he says Aotearoa so desperately needs.

"The power of networks is incredible, and I'd like others to have the same opportunities I had."

www.wgtn.ac.nz/distinguished-alumni-awards





**CAPITAL THINKING.
GLOBALLY MINDED.**
MAI I TE IHO KI TE PAE