

SHARING INFORMATION ON PROGRESS REPORT 2023

LOCALLY GROUNDED LEADERSHIP FOR GLOBAL TRANSFORMATION

AT A CAPITAL CITY BUSINESS SCHOOL

A WORD FROM THE DEAN

Welcome to the Wellington School of Business and Government's fourth report on our progress in meeting the United Nations' six Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME).

In the two years since our last update, Aotearoa New Zealand has really felt the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. While the country has managed to emerge in much better shape than many others, the necessary but seemingly endless lockdowns have challenged us here at Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington, having a very disruptive impact on the way we deliver our courses and on the University's bottom line. That said, we have managed to negotiate those challenges, adapt to them, and implement changes to ensure disruptions are kept to a minimum.

We are proud that the Wellington School of Business and Government (WSBG) is one of only a small group of business schools worldwide to be accredited by the world's most highly recognised international business school accreditation bodies. We appreciate the enormous value offered by a sustainable approach and mindset, and the many benefits that flow from it. This is why we are committed to making a positive social, cultural, and environmental impact through our research, teaching, and thought leadership.

We became a signatory to PRME in 2014 and, in the years since, we have significantly developed our commitment to the six principles and the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Wellington School of Business and Government is proud to share that our university was ranked in the top 60 in the world in 2023 by Times Higher Education for our university-wide contributions and commitment to the SDGs. The Times Higher Education University Impact Rankings measure how 1,591 universities worldwide are contributing to the goals.

Victoria University of Wellington is ranked an impressive fifty-eighth overall. We are ranked seventh globally for our contribution to, and performance towards, achieving SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions; fourteenth globally for SDG 15: Life on Land; and sixteenth globally for SDG 11: Sustainable Cities. It is certainly encouraging to have this high-profile recognition for our work, but our commitment and contributions to sustainability have been guiding principles in the University's strategic plans for many years. We have been championing a sustainable future through our teaching, research, community engagement, and operations. For instance, across WSBG we have seen strong contributions to public debate about sustainability-related topics through opinion pieces and podcasts.



One of our most notable developments over the past two years has been the considerable work undertaken related to SDG 13: Climate Action by the University in its operations and governance, as well as in WSBG's research and contributions to public debate.

The School, and the University as a whole, have also made strong contributions to the goals of SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities. From our financial support of students affected by devastating cyclone and flooding events and our research into alternative patent systems that remove race- and gender-based barriers, through to providing a forum to assist Pasifika youth to turn their ideas into business ventures, we are focused on helping to ensure no one is left behind.

Our contributions to public awareness of Indigenous approaches to sustainability are growing rapidly, with a range of research being conducted that questions the dominance of Western methodologies. Highlighting and celebrating Indigenous knowledge in this context further strengthens WSBG's commitment to the SDGs.

Ours is a school not just of business but of government too—we take pride in developing leaders who appreciate that important interplay and the influence the people and activities in these realms can have on wider society. Furthermore, we place a high value on educating students not just to do well but also to do good, and we are encouraged by our students' desire to engage in learning that enhances the social, cultural, environmental, and economic wellbeing of the world around us. It is the understanding of this interplay and the potential to guide positive change that allows our students to have a meaningful impact on the SDGs.

Our continued commitment to PRME supports our students in developing the skills to create a more ethical and sustainable future, and we are proud to embed these values in our teaching, learning, research, and leadership.

I hope you enjoy reading about how we enact these principles.

Professor Jane Bryson

Dean

Wellington School of Business and Government

WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR

The Wellington School of Business and Government (WSBG) is proud to present our fourth Sharing Information on Progress (SIP) report, which celebrates the sustainability and ethics-related initiatives, achievements, and impact of our staff and students across teaching, research, engagement, and leadership.

The Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME)—a United Nations-supported initiative—has more than 880 business-school signatories organised into 16 global chapters. The PRME seeks to equip today's business school students with the skills needed to be future leaders who balance environmental, social, cultural, and economic wellbeing goals.

As the chair of the PRME steering committee at WSBG, I am proud of what we have achieved despite the ongoing challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and its legislation-related protests at our campus. In addition to the highlights noted by our dean, Professor Jane Bryson, I am particularly excited about the successful launch of the new minor in Business Ethics and Sustainability Management in collaboration with Professor Karin Lasthuizen, the Brian Picot Chair in Ethical Leadership—Aritahi, and the launch of the minor's new core course entitled MGMT 211 Sustainability and the SDGs in Business. Both have had a significant increase in enrolments in the two years that they have been offered.

Additionally, the launch of our two-metre high and seven-metre long Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) graffiti wall was incredibly well received. Designed as a focal point and canvas for critical debate about the SDGs and our progress on them, this initiative attracted more than 300 comments and commitments from students, staff, and external stakeholders in the three months it was displayed. Among the many interesting, thought-provoking, spirited, and critical comments was a theme that will resonate throughout the Asia-Pacific region and beyond: Indigenous rights. Although comments relating to Indigenous rights were made in the context of many of the SDGs, an anonymous contributor embraced the format and style of the SDGs by proposing a new goal entitled SDG 18: Indigenous Rights. We are grateful for this critical addition, which forms a strong theme in WSBG's teaching, research, leadership, and engagement, and I have incorporated SDG 18: Indigenous Rights into the report as part of our approach to mapping our initiatives and achievements against relevant SDGs.



Casting back to our last SIP report, published in August 2021, we have made excellent progress on the objectives we set out to achieve.

OBJECTIVE 1

Launch the minor in Business Ethics and Sustainable Management to engage students more deeply with sustainability, ethical leadership, and the SDGs in a business context

Driven by a collaborative initiative by myself and Professor Karin Lasthuizen, the Brian Picot Chair in Ethical Leadership—Aritahi, the new Bachelor of Commerce minor in Business Ethics and Sustainability Management was successfully launched in 2022 as outlined under Principle 3: Method. One year on, enrolments in the minor have increased by nearly 70 percent.

OBJECTIVE 2

Design a new course, Sustainability and the Sustainable Development Goals in Business, in close consultation with students, which will form part of the core of the new Business Ethics and Sustainable Management minor

The new course, MGMT 211 Sustainability and the SDGs in Business, was developed in consultation with Ako in Action students, who added a valuable student voice to the course, and launched in 2022. The course appears to have identified a gap in our offering that is valued by students as it attracted 80 enrolments in 2022, increasing to more than 100 in 2023.

OBJECTIVE 3

Build on the success of the WSBG Funded Chairs Speaker Series on the SDGs by inviting research students working with WSBG's nine funded Chairs to share their cutting-edge research projects

Although WSBG is passionate about sharing the cutting-edge sustainability and ethics-related research work undertaken by our postgraduate students, capacity constraints have resulted in these types of public seminars needing to be scheduled for a time when more capacity to support them is available.

OBJECTIVE 4:

Contribute to Victoria University of Wellington's initiatives to achieve the goal of net carbon neutrality by 2030

The refurbishment of WSBG's Rutherford House was completed in 2022, allowing for significant improvements in energy efficiency. Additionally, ongoing staff resourcing to engage in effective online teaching, research, and meetings aided the reduction in the need to travel. Finally, as illustrated throughout this report, research conducted at WSBG contributes to lowering of greenhouse gas emissions at large, as well as in the context of the University.

OBJECTIVE 5

Provide support for existing sustainability and ethics-focused initiatives by student clubs and groups as well as by other parts of the University

Both the University and WSBG value student initiatives on sustainability and ethics-related topics and support them in a range of ways. In a WSBG context, this includes academics speaking at student-organised panel discussions such as the VicCom x Beta Alpha Psi x CAANZ Sustainability Evening in 2022, as well as providing funding to support students in their excellent initiatives.

OBJECTIVE 6

Partner with the Institute of Business Ethics for its New Zealand Ethics at Work Survey 2021

The Brian Picot Chair in Ethical Leadership was the Aotearoa New Zealand National Partner for the global 2021 Ethics at Work Survey. This important survey of 10,000 employees in 13 countries is conducted by the United Kingdom Institute of Business Ethics and provides crucial data and insights into employees' views on workplace ethics. Through the Brian Picot Chair in Ethical Leadership, WSBG facilitated surveys with 750 employees across different industries and sectors in New Zealand.

OBJECTIVE 7

Encourage all WSBG staff to take their annual Volunteering Day to contribute to the realisation of the SDGs and Agenda 2030

Staff across the University and WSBG are invited to participate in the University's annual tree-planting initiative, which is described under Principle 5: Partnership. School staff are reminded through internal communications that as part of their entitlement to one paid volunteering day a year, they are also able to engage in other types of volunteering through community groups or Volunteer Wellington.

OBJECTIVE 8

Foster critical debate about the SDGs as a global road map towards a more sustainable future

The SDGs are part of many courses across the University, and critiquing the SDGs as a global road map, as well as critiquing individual goals, is an important part of engaging with the SDGs at WSBG. For instance, as highlighted under Principle 3: Methods, students in the new MGMT 211 Sustainability and the SDGs in Business course work collaboratively in critically examining the SDGs to explore not just the strengths but also the weaknesses and flaws of the SDGs as a global road map.

OBJECTIVE 9

Continue to be innovative in how we foster learning and collaborate in identifying what should be the focus of our students' learning

Led by our associate deans, WSBG launched a high-level review of not just what we teach in the Bachelor of Commerce (BCom) but also how we teach. This comprehensive review was launched in 2022 to ensure that our offerings and pedagogical

approach remain relevant and impactful in a rapidly changing world. Dr Allan Sylvester, associate dean (students), is leading the BCom refresh, while Professor Karen Smith, associate dean (learning and teaching), is leading the review of how we teach.

OBJECTIVE 10

Encourage WSBG researchers to engage with the SDGs more explicitly when developing new research projects

While it is encouraging to see that sustainability and ethics-related research is increasing across the faculty, as illustrated in the sizeable bibliography at the end of the report, the explicit mention of SDGs in research planning and publication remains challenging. This challenge is not unique to WSBG and will ultimately need wider support from the University to increase the visibility of how our research contributes to the SDGs.

As the chair of the PRME@WSBG Steering Committee, I want to thank all the current and former committee members for their insight, guidance, passion, and support of PRME at WSBG, with a particular thank you to Professor Girol Karacaoglu, who has been a champion for sustainability and a member of the steering committee since its inception in 2017. I extend a warm welcome to Andrew Wilks, director of sustainability at Victoria University of Wellington, who joined the committee in early 2023. The current committee members are Andrew Wilks (director, sustainability), Professor John Randal (Vice-Chancellor's Office), Professor Karen Smith (associate dean (learning and teaching)), Professor Karin Lasthuizen (Brian Picot Chair in Ethical Leadership), Laurie Foon (deputy mayor of Wellington), and Stevie Shipman (2023 president of the Victoria University of Wellington Commerce Students' Society, VicCom).

This year's PRME report is our largest SIP report yet and I hope that you will enjoy learning about all the great and impactful teaching, research, leadership, and engagement taking place at the Wellington School of Business and Government and Victoria University of Wellington more broadly.

Associate Professor Christian Schott
Chair of the PRME@WSBG Steering Committee



Members of the steering committee in February 2023. From left, Associate Professor Christian Schott, Kaya Selby (2023 VicCom vice-president), Professor Karen Smith, Stevie Shipman, Professor John Randal, and Andrew Wilks, with Professor Karin Lasthuizen on Zoom

PRINCIPLE 1 WHĀINGA—PURPOSE

We will support our students to be kaitiaki (stewards) and generators of sustainable value for business, government, and society at large, while working for an inclusive and sustainable future.



CULTIVATING PUBLIC DEBATE ABOUT THE SDGS

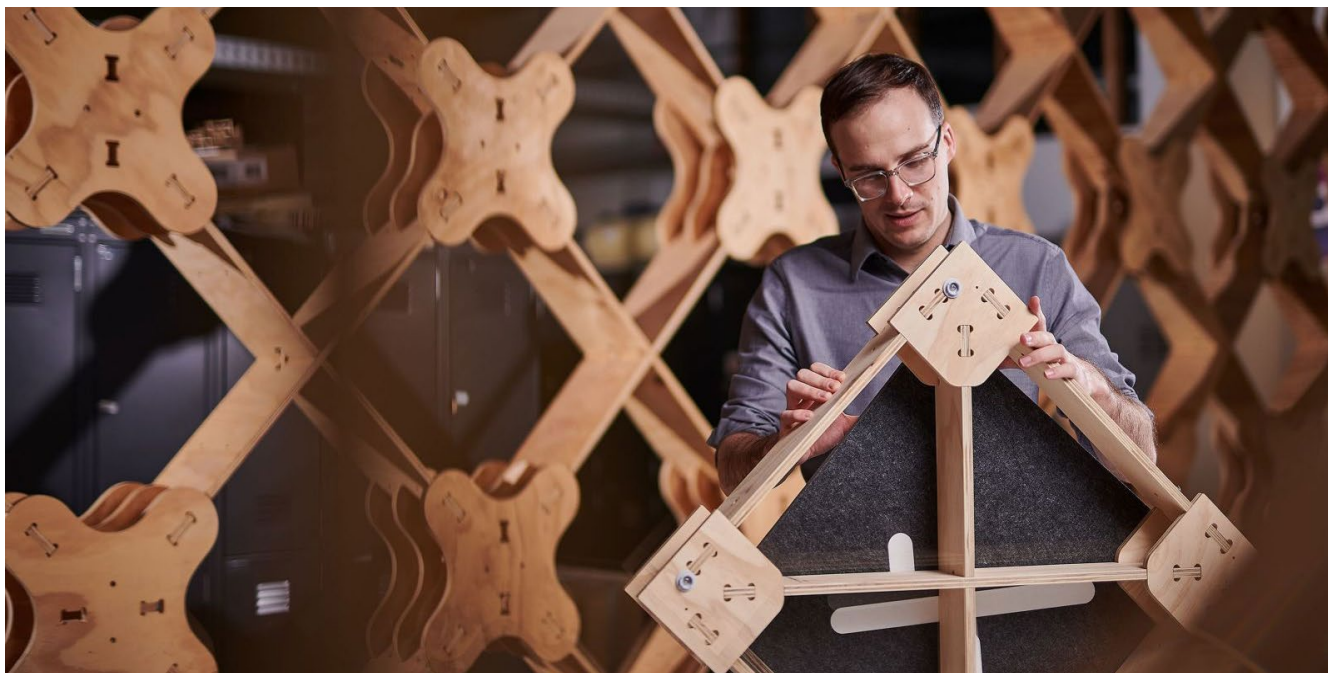
A graffiti wall designed to engage Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington students and staff with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was unveiled at the Wellington School of Business and Government (WSBG) in March 2023.

The graffiti wall was the brainchild of WSBG's Principles of Responsible Management Education (PRME) steering committee, and aimed to trigger kōrero (conversation) about the importance of sustainability and the associated issues it raised in teaching, research, and engagement.

The wall built on the success of a similar initiative in 2018, which attracted hundreds of comments from the University community. This time around, the graffiti wall used both English and te reo Māori and attracted double the comments.

Informal events to mark the launch of the wall provided the opportunity for staff and students to think about the SDGs, with many hundreds sharing their thoughts, reading comments, and discussing what each SDG represented to them.





PhD candidate Ged Finch with his sustainable XFrame building solution.



UNIVERSITY OFFICIAL NOMINATOR FOR PRESTIGIOUS ENVIRONMENTAL PRIZE

As a leader in sustainability, Victoria University of Wellington was proud to be one of three official nominators in Aotearoa New Zealand for an esteemed international environmental award.

The Earthshot Prize, which aims to find and grow the solutions that will repair our planet this decade, is awarded by the Royal Foundation of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge.

Every year until 2030, the Earthshot Prize Council will award UK£1 million each to five breakthrough solutions across five categories to:

- ▶ protect and restore nature
- ▶ clean our air
- ▶ revive our oceans
- ▶ build a waste-free world
- ▶ fix our climate.

The five prizes are awarded to projects that highlight human ingenuity, drive change, and inspire collective action, and may be awarded to individuals, teams, or collaborations in any field.

With many innovative solutions being developed at Victoria University of Wellington and its wider community, the University narrowed down the field to announce Sea Forest Ltd, Humble Bee Bio, and XFrame as its 2023 nominees.

The reusable building frame system XFrame is made from clip-together wooden parts that can be assembled to create strong, self-braced, and load-bearing walls or frames of any size. XFrame originated in Master of Architecture thesis research by Ged Finch, currently a PhD in Architecture candidate, and aims to reduce building industry waste by facilitating end-of-life recovery and reuse of construction materials.

Sea Forest Ltd is researching and producing seaweed-based stock feed supplements that can reduce greenhouse gases emitted by ruminant livestock.

Humble Bee Bio uses a genetic recipe from a bee to create novel biomaterials that can replace some plastics, but which are safe to use and biodegradable. Director of the University's Te Kāuru—Ferrier Research Institute Professor Richard Furneaux and Professor Phil Lester from Te Kura Mātauranga Koiora—the School of Biological Sciences have worked with Humble Bee Bio to research the potential of this product.



NEW DEGREE DEVELOPS SKILLS FOR SUSTAINABLE GLOBAL ECONOMY

A new degree focused on equipping students for work in an inclusive and sustainable global economy was launched by Victoria University of Wellington in 2023.

The Bachelor of Global Studies is an intercultural, multidisciplinary degree that provides students with the skills to work with people from a variety of backgrounds and industries towards the goal of solving complex problems and leading positive change. A focus of the degree is to develop graduates who will go on to work towards creating economic inclusivity and sustainability on an international scale.

The new degree draws on academic strengths from across the University, including Development Studies, Earth Sciences, History, Modern Languages, Philosophy, Politics and International Relations, and Social Policy and Administration.

The Wellington School of Business and Government (WSBG) is contributing a number of courses, with many WSBG students opting to take Global Studies as a double major in conjunction with their Commerce degree.

“Students will enhance their abilities to work effectively with people from a range of backgrounds,” said Associate Professor Sally Hill, associate dean of academic programmes in Te Wāhanga Aronui—the Wellington Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences.

“They will be able to work across disciplinary areas to bring information, people, and perspectives together and formulate solutions to some of the thorny issues facing the world.”

The flexible nature of the degree means that students can adapt it to suit their own areas of interest and specialisation.

“As well as the core skills needed to work with people from different backgrounds and disciplines, students can explore areas of specialisation and tailor their degree based on their specific interests and future career aspirations,” said Associate Professor Hill.

The University’s particular areas of expertise—along with its location in Aotearoa’s capital—means it enjoys long-standing relationships with government and non-government sectors, the diplomatic community, and international organisations.

Victoria University of Wellington is ranked in the top 100 universities in the world in the 2023 QS World University Rankings by Subject for key areas of Global Studies: Development Studies, Geography, Law, and Politics and International Relations. Earth sciences, history, modern languages, philosophy, social policy and administration, and sociology programmes all rank in the top 1.5 percent globally.



UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY SUPPORTS CYCLONE-IMPACTED STUDENTS

Victoria University of Wellington’s community rallied to provide financial support for students who were affected by a devastating cyclone and flooding.

Severe Tropical Cyclone Gabrielle ravaged parts of the North Island of New Zealand in early February 2023, causing 11 deaths, the displacement of thousands of people, and an estimated \$13.5 billion worth of damage to homes, businesses, and infrastructure. The worst-affected parts of the country included Hawke’s Bay, Gisborne, Coromandel, Auckland, and Northland.

In January 2023, Auckland also experienced catastrophic flash floods after record rainfall—it was reported that an entire summer’s worth of rain fell within one day. Thousands of homes were flooded, and multiple slips threatened or destroyed buildings across the city. Four people died, and thousands were forced to evacuate their homes.

With Trimester 1 not set to get underway until the end of February 2023, the timing of the floods and cyclone meant many of the University’s students were still on their summer break in the impacted regions.

Pūtea Āwhina, the University’s Student Hardship Fund, received a significant number of applications for support from students who had been caught up in the weather events and had their belongings damaged. Generous donations from university staff to the fund meant a total of \$13,000 was able to be distributed to those affected.

One hundred percent of the money raised in the Cyclone Gabrielle appeal was given to students who needed to repair or replace laptops, clothing, and other damaged items, as well as to recuperate savings spent in the aftermath of the flood that had been intended for their studies.

“Donations to these funds are deeply impactful, as they can mean the difference between a student being able to continue their studies or dropping out due to financial hardship,” said Jessica Ye, 2023 president of the Victoria University of Wellington Students’ Association—Te Aka Tauria.

PRINCIPLE 2

WHANONGA—VALUES

We will design our academic activities, curricula, organisational practices, and leadership practices to value te Tiriti o Waitangi (constitutional foundation of Aotearoa New Zealand), kaitiakitanga (stewardship), and global social responsibility as portrayed in international initiatives such as the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals and the United Nations Global Compact.



UNIVERSITY'S LEADERSHIP IN SUSTAINABILITY HIGHLIGHTED

The ongoing efforts of Victoria University of Wellington to be more sustainable across its day-to-day operations were highlighted by a widely read New Zealand news website.

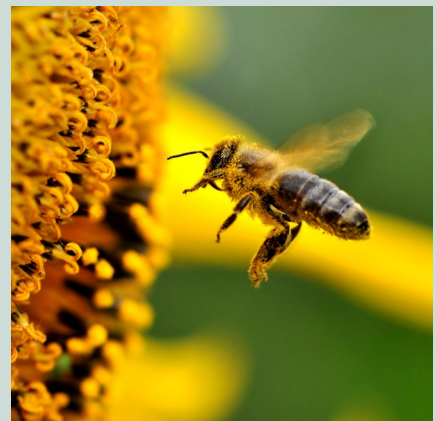
A feature article on [Stuff](#) in April 2022 showcased the positive environmental changes the University's community was making, as part of a series on sustainability leadership called 'Kiwis on the right side'.

The article said the University's Sustainability team had driven initiatives such as a reusable coffee mug exchange system, the installation of a worm farm, the planting of native flora around campus, and on-campus bees that were kept by a team from the Wellington Faculty of Science at the main campus in Kelburn. It also mentioned the University's goal of planting 100,000 trees by 2030, the 'green impact' sustainability challenge, and the shift to getting milk delivered in glass bottles.

The story featured sustainability engagement coordinator Andrea Marsden, who said that in the face of climate change, it was necessary to make drastic changes now.

"Institutionally, suddenly, we've got to change the way people do things, because the environment's changed around them," she said. "I think a lot of millennials are realising their expectations haven't been met by the government. But we're also getting a lot of staff around that [older] age group that are really, really engaged because they're suddenly thinking, 'I thought we'd be a lot further along than we are.'"

She told *Stuff* the key to successfully implementing positive change was to strike a balance between education and managing climate change anxiety—"keeping everything kind of light and fun and easy, but without trivialising it too much".





UNIVERSITY BACKS FREE PUBLIC TRANSPORT CAMPAIGN

A student-led campaign that aimed to address issues around both poverty and transport emissions gained the backing of Victoria University of Wellington.

In June 2022, we became the first university to join the Aotearoa Collective for Public Transport Equity to support its Free Fares campaign, which called for free public transport for students, under-25s, Community Services Card holders, and Total Mobility Card holders and their carers.



Andrew Wilks

The campaign followed the nationwide implementation of half-price fares in March 2022, which significantly increased public transport use. In its 2022 Budget, the Government provided funding to continue half-price fares until 31 August 2022, and permanently for those who held Community Services Cards.

“Budget 2022 saw positive action but didn’t go far enough,” said Victoria University of Wellington Students’ Association—Te Aka Tauira campaigns officer and Aotearoa Collective coordinator Hana Pilkinton-Ching.

“We supported Victoria University of Wellington’s students’ association in their successful campaign for discounted public transport for students in greater Wellington. We were thrilled when Greater Wellington [Regional Council] introduced that 25 percent discount—it made a difference for our students. We are very happy to further this by supporting the nationwide Free Fares campaign now,” said the University’s sustainability director, Andrew Wilks.

The University aims to achieve a goal of net zero carbon by 2030 and reducing the environmental costs of transport plays a part in this.

“If students can get to campus without the barrier of transport cost, it is good for everyone. It allows students to live in a place that is affordable for them while enabling them to travel to study. And using public transport as a first choice can form a habit of low-carbon transport for life,” Mr Wilks said.



Associate Professor Christian Schott

WSBG ACADEMIC APPOINTED JUDGE FOR 'OSCARS OF EDUCATION'

A Victoria University of Wellington academic was selected to be a judge for the prestigious international education awards dubbed the 'Oscars of Education'.

Dr Christian Schott, associate professor in Tourism Management at the Wellington School of Business and Government, was appointed as a finalist judge for the Wharton–QS Reimagine Education Awards in 2021. These awards celebrate the best innovations in teaching and learning, and attract top educators, consultants, investors, and technology companies from around the world.

Associate Professor Schott was one of 66 highly experienced finalist judges selected from 521 candidates from 45 countries and territories.

"I feel very privileged to be appointed into this select finalist group alongside people from Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, Australian National University, edX, Facebook, and IBM Research," he said.

This was not Associate Professor Schott's first involvement with the awards—his role as judge of sustainability-focused innovations came after winning the Gold Award for Sustainability in 2020. He was recognised for leading the development of a [virtual-reality experience](#) that lets students learn about cultures and sustainability challenges around the world.

The project was driven by the desire to make learning enjoyable and the need to help students develop critical and creative thinking to address the pressing challenges of sustainability and climate change faced by communities around the world.

The Reimagine Education Awards offer overall winners US\$50,000 in funding, and global visibility for their work.



Jacinta Gulasekharam

MAKING MEANINGFUL CHANGE TO ADDRESS PERIOD POVERTY

A graduate of Victoria University of Wellington has drawn on the problem-solving skills she learnt while studying to establish a social enterprise that is making a significant impact.

Jacinta Gulasekharam, who graduated in 2016 with a Bachelor of Commerce majoring in Public Policy and Economics, co-founded Dignity NZ, which provided period products for all people without access.

In [an article](#) for the University's website, she outlined her story and the steps she took to become a social entrepreneur.

"I've always seen the parliamentary system as a place to create change for people and I wanted to study for a degree that could provide me with great core business skills and effective ways of looking at solving super-wicked problems," she wrote.

After graduating, she attended the Victoria Entrepreneur Bootcamp organised by the university-associated [Wellington UniVentures](#) (then VicLink) with her flatmate, Miranda Hitchings, where the pair created Dignity.

Ms Gulasekharam then launched the Positive Periods campaign, which aimed to make period products available for free in all schools. After she presented a petition to Parliament in 2019, the idea was adopted by the Government and was rolled out nationwide.

"Dignity now has 104 corporate companies supporting their employees to have free access to products in the bathroom and we've given 40,000 products to community groups, support organisations, and schools across Aotearoa," she said.

Ms Gulasekharam went on to work at PwC. She was a 2021 Wellbeing Impact Award winner, a Women of Influence Young Leader 2019 finalist, and a finalist for Young New Zealander of the Year 2022. She said it was crucial for people to say yes to the opportunities they came across.

"Everyone has the power for great things, and if at first you don't succeed, adjust your sails and never give up."



From left, Luke Sinclair, Professor Stephen Cummings, Kendall Bristow

UNIVERSITY SUPPORTS AWARD FOR SUSTAINABLE INNOVATION

An award recognising the innovative thinking behind a company making electric motorcycles was sponsored by Victoria University of Wellington.

Before a crowd of 800 guests at the Wellington Gold Awards dinner in July 2022, Professor Stephen Cummings, the associate dean (international and accreditation) at the Wellington School of Business and Government and co-director of the University's innovation space, the Atom—Te Kahu o Te Ao, presented the University-sponsored New Thinking Award to Luke Sinclair and Kendall Bristow, founders of e-motorbike company FTN Motion.

Professor Cummings said the pair demonstrated the kind of innovation that was key to the New Thinking Award, launching a business that was relevant and impactful to the local community. He said they were selected for their commitment to sustainability and their innovation in meeting that goal by creating a sustainable product that provided an alternative to the car, thereby further reducing congestion on our roads.

"FTN Motion bikes are beautiful, world-leading products that reflect the heart and soul of where they were designed and built: Wellington. They are truly reflective of a future that we can all be proud of."

Mr Sinclair said the win was a complete surprise. "We are incredibly honoured and humbled to receive this award, and our entire team feels proud to be recognised for its work. Kendall and I relocated specially to Wellington to build the business, and the city has welcomed us every step of the way."

Professor Cummings said the University had a long history of encouraging new thinking. "We are increasing our efforts to support our communities to turn that new thinking into new ventures. Luke and Kendall are great inspiration for the [student entrepreneurs](#) we support at our innovation space, The Atom."



TURNING COFFEE GREEN

An initiative at Victoria University of Wellington has saved thousands of single-use coffee cups from ending up in landfill each week.

In February 2022, the University stopped using disposable cups at all cafés on campus. Staff and students wanting their daily fix then had the choice of using their own reusable cups, making time to drink their coffee at the café in a ceramic cup, or borrowing a cup from the University's cup library system, Auraki (which in Māori has the double meaning of 'to return' and 'to urge').

"The customers of our campus cafés use thousands of disposable cups each week. By trialling a phase-out of disposable cups, and offering and encouraging alternatives, the University aims to make it easier for staff and students to support sustainable coffee habits," said director of sustainability Andrew Wilks.

The University's sustainability team established the Auraki system in 2020. Each café had a supply of mugs that students and staff could choose to have their drink order in. They could then take the mug anywhere on campus and return it later to one of the many drop-off points around campus.

"We're taking this step because it's the right thing to do and because our staff feel better championing reusables than handing out throwaway cups. New Zealanders send hundreds of millions of disposable cups to landfill every year, and we want to help show everyone how easy it can be to change that," said Jessica Godfrey, general manager of Vic Books café.

The initiative is part of the University's wider efforts to reduce waste and emissions as it works towards its commitments to net zero carbon by 2030.



WINTER CLOTHING DRIVE WARMS WELLINGTON STUDENTS

On the first official day of winter 2023, Victoria University of Wellington students were invited to collect clothes to help keep them warm during the colder Wellington months.

‘Koha for Coats’ was a sustainable, student-led initiative that gave students the opportunity to give a small donation and pick up some good quality warm clothing donated by university staff. Among the jackets, jumpers, shoes, and beanies were other helpful items such as blankets and hot water bottles. Money raised through the optional koha (donation) was given to the Wellington City Mission.

The team at the University’s Te Ratonga Penapena Pūtea—Student Finance said it had been hearing first-hand from students about the challenges they were facing as a result of the cost-of-living crisis.

“Our team wanted to help. We know that purchasing a quality jacket or pair of shoes can significantly impact students’ cashflow and can be a financial stressor this time of year. We wanted to run an event that would make an immediate, tangible difference to students’ day-to-day lives. Thanks to the overwhelming generosity from staff donations, we were able to run a really positive, successful event,” said Paige Jarman, the team’s manager.

The event, which was a partnership between Student Finance and the Victoria University of Wellington Students’ Association—Te Aka Taura (VUWSA), also provided an opportunity to educate students about what the Student Finance team does and how it can help, and to share some financial literacy knowledge.

“Collaborating with VUWSA to run this event made sense because they are also on the front line and know the struggles students are facing,” Ms Jarman said.

Following the success of the event, plans were made to run more clothing drives in the future.

PRINCIPLE 3

TUKANGA—METHOD

We will create and use educational approaches, frameworks, materials, processes, and environments that enable effective learning experiences and encourage responsible hautūtanga (leadership).



NEW SUSTAINABILITY AND ETHICS MINOR SHOWS DESIRE TO 'DO GOOD'

A new sustainability and ethics-focused minor option for students at Victoria University of Wellington has proved popular.

The minor, Business Ethics and Sustainability Management, was launched in 2022 after wide consultation showed an increased demand for study options that went beyond adding individual sustainability or ethics courses to existing majors.

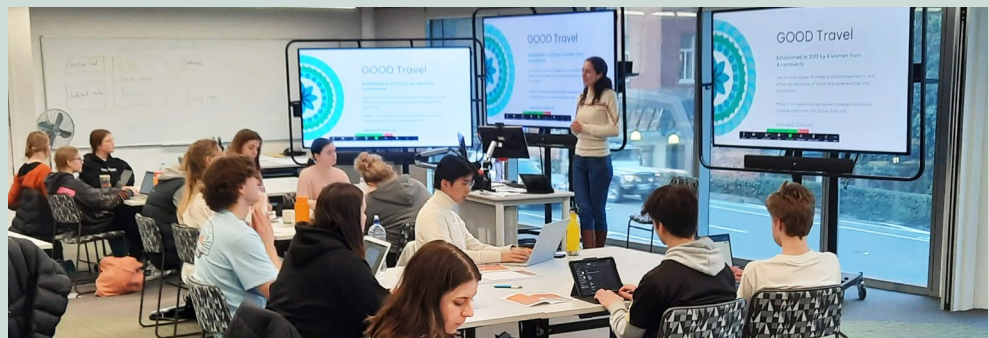
The minor is closely aligned with the Wellington School of Business and Government's strategic initiatives linked to PRME, and the values and purpose of the Brian Picot Chair in Ethical Leadership—Aritahi.

"The Wellington School of Business and Government places high value on educating students not just to do well but also to do good. The strong interest expressed by our students to have recognition for completing a package of these courses shows a desire to engage in learning that enhances social, environmental, and economic wellbeing," said the Brian Picot Chair in Ethical Leadership, Professor Karin Lasthuizen.

The minor was designed for students from across the University's faculties in recognition of the importance of business ethics and sustainability management not just to business students but also those enrolled in architecture, design, humanities, law, and science.

The minor comprises two core courses: MGMT 210 Ethical Leadership and MGMT 211 Sustainability and the SDGs in Business. These are in addition to seven elective courses from Accounting, Information Management, Management, Public Policy, and Tourism Management.

The new minor has proven popular, with enrolments from across the University increasing by nearly 70 percent from 2022 to 2023. Equally, the core course MGMT 211 Sustainability and the SDGs in Business has been in healthy demand since its launch in 2022, with 2023 enrolments significantly higher than the previous year.





Associate Professor Christian Schott



FUNDING FOR VIRTUAL REALITY SUSTAINABILITY LEARNING TOOL

A team at the Wellington School of Business and Government was awarded funding to further develop an innovative virtual reality (VR) learning tool.

The team, led by associate professor in Tourism Management Christian Schott, received more than \$68,000 in funding in December 2021 from the Latin America Centre of Asia-Pacific Excellence (Latin America CAPE) to refine and improve access to the learning tool.

First developed in 2019, the VR experiential learning tool gives school students the chance to explore one of the world's most significant heritage sites without having to travel there in person. It allows users to take a virtual tour of Machu Picchu Pueblo in Peru, and was developed using VR gaming software.

"The funding will be spent refining the current learning tool based on research conducted over the past two years," said Associate Professor Schott.

The [improved learning tool](#) will be developed for use on not only Windows and Mac computers but also on Chromebooks, reducing the barriers to accessing this [award-winning learning experience](#). The more accessible version will also provide an opportunity to conduct research with a broader range of school students across Aotearoa.

The Latin America CAPE, which also invested in the initial prototype, recognised the revised and more accessible web-based version's potential to foster a stronger connection between Aotearoa and Latin America.

"The mission of the Latin America CAPE is to bring New Zealand closer to Latin America; in the education sector, this means bringing Latin America into classrooms," said director Dr Matthew O'Meagher.

"With there being an increasing global need to focus on sustainability, we want the tool to transport as many New Zealand school students to Machu Picchu as possible and encourage them to engage in important conversations."



Professor Karin Lasthuizen

NEW BOOK ON ETHICAL LEADERSHIP

A practical guide to ethical management for leaders in government and business was co-authored by a Wellington School of Business and Government academic.

Experts in ethics and sustainability Professor Karin Lasthuizen and James Bushell, founder of sustainable business consultancy MOTIF, launched their book *Human Good* in February 2022.

Charting the individual ethical journeys of a range of leaders and organisations from across Aotearoa, the book was written to provide practical tools to help people implement ethical decision-making in their business operations.

The book was pitched as a field guide to ethical leadership, to remind people to ask themselves why they were making the decisions they made and what impact those choices had on the world.

"With *Human Good*, our aim was to humanise ethics. It's a reminder that there are very real, fallible people behind the organisations," said Professor Lasthuizen.

"People are uncertain about the future and the direction to take, and how to determine the best actions. It can be a difficult and challenging journey. It can also be rewarding, courageous, and inspiring, and it can change the world around us."

The book included interviews and articles on ethics from the likes of former director-general of health Sir Ashley Bloomfield and companies including Air New Zealand, the Chia Sisters, the Financial Markets Authority, and L'Oréal.

The University's then-Vice-Chancellor, Professor Grant Guilford, said the book provided an ethical roadmap for a changing world.

"At Te Herenga Waka, we are guided by a set of core ethical values that align closely with the principles of ethical leadership. This book provides a way of driving sustainable change and creating a culture that is driven by wellbeing, integrity, and transparency. I applaud everyone who has been involved in producing this important resource."



Image: Stantial's Studio



UNIVERSITY INVESTS IN SUSTAINABLE MARAE REDEVELOPMENT



Victoria University of Wellington confirmed its financial commitment to developing its marae precinct into a Living Pā that will be one of the world's most environmentally responsible buildings.

The redevelopment will see the existing Te Herenga Waka marae transformed into a hub where people will be empowered to work, teach, and learn sustainably in a building that meets the most rigorous standards in the world, the [Living Building Challenge](#) principles.

Work on the site began in 2021, and the new complex is expected to be completed in 2024.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Māori) Professor Rawinia Higgins said the building would function as a kind of living lab where students and staff alike could learn about sustainability. It would provide a habitat for wildlife, recycle the water used in the building, meet 105 percent of its own energy requirements by using solar power, and sequester more carbon than the building produced.

She said the Living Pā was a very exciting project for the University as a whole. "An investment in the Living Pā is an investment in our people—Māori and non-Māori, students, staff, and our wider external communities.

"It will allow for staff and students to come together from across the whole university, to be able to apply their disciplinary backgrounds with mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge). It becomes almost like a bridge to bring people together and embrace our university identity around being Te Herenga Waka."



INNOVATIVE TEACHING METHODS INTEGRATE SDGS



Academics at the Wellington School of Business and Government introduced some significant teaching innovations to improve how the UN SDGs were incorporated into course content.

Dr Yinka Moses, a senior lecturer at the School of Accounting and Commercial Law, teaches advanced management accounting tools and techniques and decided to develop

a guest speakers' series as well as sustainability panel sessions to bridge theory and SDG-related learning and perspectives from practitioners.

The guest speakers' series featured a presentation from Mark Saunders, who has a wealth of experience in public sector and not-for-profit organisational change management in New Zealand. "Mark's lecture explored good public governance and accountability, which is pervasive across the SDGs, with particular relevance to SDG 16 [Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions]," said Dr Moses. "His lecture emphasised the importance of Indigenous perspectives in responsible government, particularly the public sector's obligations to te Tiriti as a fundamental cornerstone to transparent, ethical leadership." Dr Moses said the sustainability panel sessions featured practitioners from a range of organisations.

As a core part of the Master of Public Policy programme, Associate Professor Amanda Wolf from the School of Government had her class simulate being policy analysts at the hypothetical New Zealand Food Policy Research Institute, looking specifically at SDG 12.3: By 2030, halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses.

Dr Wolf plans to add SDG 2: Food security to the course content in future. "With about half our students from Southeast Asia and the Pacific, these are topics with tremendous relevance and opportunities for peer-to-peer learning."



Dr Yinka Moses



Associate Professor Amanda Wolf



Professor Stephen Cummings (right) with the Advanced Entrepreneurship students at the Université de la Polynésie Française.



TAKING INNOVATION EXPERTISE TO THE PACIFIC

A group of Master's students in Tahiti got the opportunity to take an advanced innovation course run by a Wellington School of Business and Government academic.

The co-director of The Atom—Te Kahu o Te Ao Innovation Space, Professor Stephen Cummings, travelled to Papeete, French Polynesia, in March 2023 to teach a course from the Atom's Accelerator programme to Master's students at the Université de la Polynésie Française (UPF).

On the two-week intensive course, based on the MGMT 351 Advanced Entrepreneurship module offered by the Wellington School of Business and Government (WSBG), the UPF students worked in groups to develop launch-ready ideas for new businesses related to the Nārua partnership of Pacific-oriented universities.

Professor Cummings said the trip to Tahiti was a great experience and an excellent way to share WSBG's expertise in the field of innovation education.

"All the students' business ideas had a focus on sustainability and aimed to promote educational exchanges for students in the South Pacific region who might normally aim to go on exchange to Northern Hemisphere universities," he said.

"During the course, students engaged in creative ideation, validation analysis, and testing of their ideas through market research, business modelling, prototyping, and pitching their ideas to prospective investors."

The aim of the course was for students to take the subject knowledge they had been learning in their other courses and combine it with the knowledge of other group members to go through the process of creating a venture, Professor Cummings said.

PRINCIPLE 4

RANGAHAU—RESEARCH

We will engage in conceptual and empirical research that advances our understanding about the role, dynamics, and impact of organisations, governments, and communities in the creation of sustainable social, cultural, environmental, and economic value.



PATENT RESEARCHER WINS TOP FELLOWSHIP

A Wellington School of Business and Government researcher looking into reimagining patent systems to remove existing barriers was awarded a prestigious fellowship worth \$800,000.

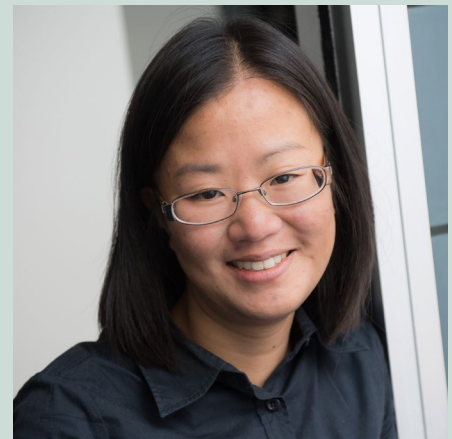
Four of the 11 Rutherford Discovery Fellowships awarded in 2021 by Royal Society Te Apārangi went to researchers from the University.

Associate Professor Jessica Lai from the School of Accounting and Commercial Law was recognised for her research into what defines a patentable invention and who benefits from it.

While popular opinion presented patents as drivers of innovation that enrich us all, her research suggested that the patent system was far from neutral, with Western males of privilege making preferential gains. Associate Professor Lai's research explored how the patent system reinforced existing power structures, particularly in terms of race and gender, and analysed three case studies of patents related to mānuka products, female contraceptives, and COVID-19 vaccines. Aiming for a knowledge governance system that was fair for all peoples of Aotearoa, her research has encouraged discussion around alternatives to the current patent system.

Vice-Provost (Research) Professor Margaret Hyland said, "At Te Herenga Waka, we place strong emphasis on research that can help address real-world issues and look to develop innovative solutions for the future. We're extremely pleased to have this work supported and recognised for the potential impact it will have."

Aimed at supporting early- to mid-career researchers to build and consolidate their research careers in Aotearoa, the Rutherford Discovery Fellowship scheme receives funding from the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment and awards \$800,000 over five years to each research fellow.



Associate Professor Jessica Lai



Professor Stephen Cummings



Professor Todd Bridgman



NOVEL THINKING ON SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT RECOGNISED

Two academics from the Wellington School of Business and Government were shortlisted for a prestigious international award for their research on innovation and sustainable management.

Professors Todd Bridgman and Stephen Cummings made the shortlist for the Thinkers50 Breakthrough Award in 2021. The award celebrated thinkers whose radical ideas and insights had the potential to change how people thought about business and management.

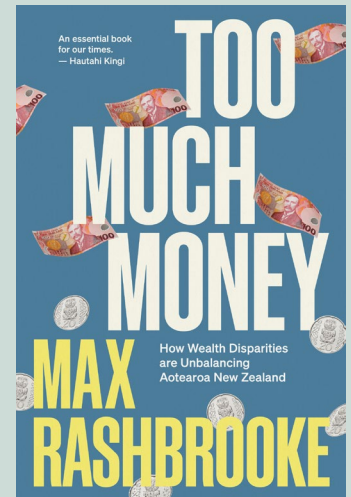
The pair was recognised for their co-authored books, *The Past, Present and Future of Sustainable Management* and *A Very Short, Fairly Interesting and Reasonably Cheap Book About Management Theory*.

“People generally don’t associate historians with promoting new thinking, so we’re really surprised and pleased to be nominated for such a prestigious award for ‘breakthrough ideas,’” they said.

Their research investigated how conventional histories could limit innovation, and revealed the often overlooked origin story of management science.

“Our new history of management science uncovered how it grew out of the conservation movement’s mission to curb social and environmental exploitation by big business in the first decade of the twentieth century. The history of management written in the mid-twentieth century covered these tracks and the connection to conservation was forgotten.

“The ‘breakthrough idea’ is that sustainable management isn’t new. It’s a first principle, and managers should see social and environmental goods rather than economic goods as their ultimate aims.”



HOW IS WEALTH INEQUALITY CHANGING NEW ZEALAND?

A groundbreaking new book exploring the far-reaching impact of the wealth divide on Aotearoa was published by a Wellington School of Business and Government researcher.

Max Rashbrooke from the Institute for Governance and Policy Studies released his latest book [*Too Much Money: How Wealth Disparities are Unbalancing Aotearoa New Zealand*](#) in November 2021.

“It’s a book about how there are huge inequalities between rich and poor, but it’s also about all the things that increasingly wealth buys: better housing, better access to schooling, university entrance for your kids, all kinds of privileges and power,” he said. “I think those things are really dividing New Zealand and threatening the return of a class society.”

He said the book was the first time historical data on inequality had been brought together. “It tells you that inequality is political—it’s not inevitable. It increases and decreases according to politics, which also means that it’s solvable.”

He said the book also proposed a number of solutions to inequality that would address the huge differences in opportunities and help create a genuinely egalitarian society.

“These include creating a kids’ KiwiSaver scheme so that all children, no matter how poor they are, hit adulthood with the beginnings of a proper asset base,” Mr Rashbrooke said.

He also proposed a crackdown on political donations, which was a way people translated wealth into influence, and examined the need for a tax on wealth.

“People are open to a discussion about how we can have a more egalitarian society, and that is what the book is ultimately aiming to support.”



Professor Samuel Becher



Professor Ilan Noy

SHOULD CLIMATE RISK DISCLOSURES GO FURTHER?

A move to introduce mandatory climate-related risk disclosures has been touted as a way to ensure large firms and powerful financial institutions are more aware of their impact on the environment. But does it go far enough to curb climate change?

This was the topic of a media article by two Wellington School of Business and Government academics—Professor Ilan Noy, the Chair in the Economics of Disasters and Climate Change, and Commercial Law professor Samuel Becher—which was published on Australasian news and research website *The Conversation* in October 2022.

The pair said the catastrophic consequences of climate change—such as biodiversity loss, droughts, floods, heatwaves, rising sea levels, and wildfires—all had adverse implications for economic development, financial stability, and social cohesion.

“For example, consider the potential exposure of a bank to climate risks. Home loans may not be recoverable if houses become uninhabitable because of rising seas. Other homes may become uninsurable because of increasing flood risks,” they wrote.

“Likewise, agricultural loans may become riskier because of the increasing intensity of droughts. All of these risks are important not only to the bank’s profitability but also to the homeowners, farmers, and manufacturers who borrowed money from that bank.”

Professor Noy and Professor Becher said the rationale behind the proposal was to help firms have more climate-resilient strategies and smooth the transition to a net-zero economy.

“But the proposed framework regards only investors, lenders, and other creditors as primary users. The definition does not include employees, customers, or the public. This narrow definition represents a missed opportunity,” they said.

“In New Zealand and elsewhere, governments should adopt as wide a target audience as is feasible for climate-related disclosures. Otherwise, we risk undermining the promise of disclosures to mitigate climate change and contribute to a more climate-resilient future economy.”





Associate Professor Spencer Lilley

EMPOWERING INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE

A Wellington School of Business and Government academic, who has been examining how Indigenous materials in libraries, museums, and archive collections were managed, was awarded a prestigious Marsden grant in 2022.

Associate Professor Spencer Lilley from the School of Information Management obtained the grant for his project 'Empowering Indigenous knowledge: Decolonisation and indigenisation of gallery, library, archival, museum and record (GLAMR) institutions'.

His research uncovered that Indigenous materials were often inappropriately managed, or incorrectly identified, by these institutions.

Professor Lilley, who is of Māori, Sāmoan, and British descent, said that there had always been a lot of unknowns around museum pieces, such as where the artefacts were gathered and to whom they once belonged.

He said libraries, museums, and archival institutions were looking for guidance on this issue, but they had been looking to the wrong people—namely, themselves—in the hope of finding the right answers. He believed they must find their own local Māori communities and ask them what they wanted.

His project was about getting to understand how it got this way and what the best way forward would be. "For some institutions it will be indigenisation, and for others it might be decolonisation."

Professor Lilley said the Marsden grant would allow him to follow up on a lifetime's work in this area, which included 23 years of service in libraries before becoming an academic.



HOW TO REBUILD AFTER CYCLONE GABRIELLE

Questions about whether to rebuild following the devastation of Cyclone Gabrielle were raised by a Wellington School of Business and Government researcher in a story published by a leading British news website.

Northern parts of Aotearoa were ravaged by flooding when Cyclone Gabrielle struck in February 2023. Eleven people were killed, thousands were displaced from their homes, and an estimated \$13.5 billion worth of damage was wrought on homes, businesses, and infrastructure.

A story on *The Guardian's* website examined the decisions the New Zealand Government was facing about how to rebuild—or whether to even rebuild at all, with the knowledge the climate crisis would bring more storms, floods, and extreme weather in the years to come.

Professor Ilan Noy, Chair in the Economics of Disasters and Climate Change, said some tough calls would need to be made before people started to repair and rebuild.

"As painful as it is, it's much less painful in this kind of situation where your house has already been destroyed [to be] told, 'We think it's not viable for you to remain there.' It's less painful to do that than to take someone who has a beautiful house and no damage to tell them, 'You know what? The science is suggesting that this is no longer safe.'"

He said the response in Christchurch, where communities were forced to retreat from the city's 'red zone' after the 2011 earthquake, could serve as a model for the areas affected by Cyclone Gabrielle.

"It's painful to ask people to leave, especially from areas that, perhaps, they've lived in for a very long time, maybe generations," Professor Noy said. "But we live in a world that is changing. We cannot ignore the fact that the climate is changing and we need to adjust our societies to those changes."



Erin Roxburgh

MĀORI RESEARCH A CHANCE TO GIVE BACK TO COMMUNITY

A Wellington School of Business and Government researcher's PhD on Māori governance, including marae and iwi entities, has been a chance for her to contribute to that knowledge base and to give back to her own community.

Lecturer Erin Roxburgh is completing a PhD on Māori governance and organisational theory, one of the first of its kind. She is conducting her research while lecturing at the School of Management.

"I am using multimodal analysis, which means my study is focused on how people within the organisations interact. I voice-recorded more than 30 hours of footage from governance meetings as part of my research. I looked at three different Māori organisations: a marae committee, an iwi entity, and a healthcare NGO [non-governmental organisation]," she said.

She was inspired to study at PhD level in order to give back to her community. "I wanted to be a contributor to the growing knowledge base on Māori organisational theory, as a Māori researcher."

Ms Roxburgh said that having completed both Honours and Master's qualifications at the University, it had been difficult sometimes to access much academic work about Māori organisations. "Having the ability to contribute to this is a real driver."

It was important to her to study Māori organisations in a standalone way, rather than comparing them to other models. "I think there is a lot of conversation which compares and contrasts Māori business and Western business, or which benchmarks Māori ways of doing things against Western models to make it more palatable. I want my research to be an exploration of Māori governance in its own domain."

Ms Roxburgh said one of the high points of her research journey was working with her marae, Tinātoka, in Ruatoria.



Dr Barbara Allen

COMMENTARY EXAMINES ETHICS OF PUBLIC SERVICE

An article by two Wellington School of Business and Government academics examined the truth behind the reputation of Aotearoa's public service for being transparent and free from corruption.

Written by Dr Barbara Allen, a senior lecturer in Public Management, and then-PhD candidate James Gluck, the December 2021 [article](#) was published on Australasian news and research website *The Conversation*.

It asked whether New Zealanders could have full confidence in the ethics of the public service, especially at a time when government agencies were engaged in urgent and large-scale procurement processes to combat COVID-19.

The researchers cited examples that included a report from the Office of the Auditor-General critical of the Ministry of Health's contract for saliva testing, complaints over how the same ministry procured software to handle vaccination records, and the public housing agency Kāinga Ora's inclusion of now-Labour MP Arena Williams in a sponsored media story.

"These cases raise questions about the rigour of ethical procedures and about whether individuals can, or should, speak up, even if the wider organisation or agency has signed off on a course of action," they wrote.

They said the cases showed patterns of behaviour that should be of public concern, but stronger institutions and rules could not be the only solution.

"Individuals in government (and business, for that matter) must also embrace the principles of transparency and anti-corruption," the pair wrote.

"Understanding how poor practice becomes embedded or normalised in organisational operations needs further study. During a global pandemic, when the State enjoys greatly expanded powers, this is arguably more urgent than ever."





WHAT NEW ZEALAND'S CLIMATE POLICY CAN TEACH THE WORLD

New Zealand's continued focus on reducing methane emissions risked a slow-down on work to reduce carbon dioxide, but its policies on agricultural emissions were world-leading, according to researchers at the Wellington School of Business and Government.



Dr Adrian Macey

Dr Adrian Macey from the Institute for Governance and Policy Studies teamed up with climate change professor Dave Frame on a media piece published on the [Newsroom](#) website.

"The argument is that because methane is very potent in the short term, reducing it now will give us a big hit on warming, or that it somehow buys time for reducing carbon dioxide (CO₂)," they wrote.

"However, CO₂ dominates not only the overall level of warming but also the speed of warming. Early methane reductions can, at best, shave a few tenths of a degree off peak warming and slow the rate of warming a little.

"There is a real risk that focusing on methane will mean we take our foot off the accelerator of CO₂ reductions, which is where New Zealand has a pretty poor record."

They said one reason for attention being given to short-lived gases might be that dealing with steep CO₂ reduction was just too hard.

New Zealand was unique in making a distinction between long-lived and short-lived gases in its emissions policies and in having a target to reduce agricultural methane, they said.

"New Zealand has a distinctive emissions portfolio, a distinctive climate target, and has progressed further down the track of dealing with agricultural methane emissions than anyone else," Dr Macey and Professor Frame wrote.

"We should hold our nerve and keep going. We should communicate better to other countries about what we are doing, why we are doing it, and how it makes for good climate policy."



CLEAR PLAN NEEDED TO ACHIEVE CIRCULAR ECONOMY

New Zealand's Government planned to switch to a circular economy in order to cut waste and emissions, but it had no clear path for achieving this, according to a researcher at the Wellington School of Business and Government.

In an [article](#) in October 2021, when public consultation got underway on the Government's emissions-reduction plan, Hannah Blumhardt from the Institute for Governance and Policy Studies made the point that the plan to address the dual crises by embracing a circular economy lacked strategy.

"The resulting muddle is watering down the potential of a circular economy to bring lasting change," she wrote. "The Government's plans for circularity are fragmented, contradictory, and uncoordinated. They fail to confront the business-as-usual drivers of the linear economy or to enhance collaboration."

Ms Blumhardt said New Zealand needed a dedicated Crown agency to champion a low-waste, low-emissions circular economy that covered everything from resource extraction to product disposal.

"In a circular economy, products are built to last and designed for repair. Organics are composted to replenish soils. Business models favour sharing over individual ownership and reuse over single use," she said.

"This seismic shift in economic direction demands coordination across sectors, strong leadership, and a shared understanding of the circular model. The Government must collaborate with those already practising circularity and reconfigure the rules to wind down linear practices."

She said the problem with the proposal wasn't a lack of good ideas.

"But these ideas aren't properly filtered or organised, important elements and key partners are missing, and nobody's in the driver's seat."



Hannah Blumhardt

PRINCIPLE 5

MAHI TAHI— PARTNERSHIP

We will interact with members of society, policymakers, and managers of organisations to extend our knowledge and help develop joint responses to the challenges of meeting our social, cultural, economic, and environmental responsibilities.



RECOGNITION FOR TREE-PLANTING PROJECT

A reforestation project that has brought together Victoria University of Wellington's community was recognised with a prestigious award.

Growing Our Future is an ongoing partnership between the University and Wellington City Council, who have committed to reforesting an 11-hectare block of land in Ohariu Valley in Wellington's outer Green Belt.

The tree-planting project won a highly commended award in the 'Powerful Partnerships' category of the Green Gown Awards Australasia in November 2022.

"We are enormously proud of the Growing our Future project, which wouldn't have been possible without our partnership with the council," said then-Acting Vice-Chancellor Jennifer Windsor. "We're fortunate to be able to give back to our city in this way, and it is wonderful to see current staff, students, and alumni working together to restore Wellington's biodiversity."

Wellington Mayor Tory Whanau congratulated the University on the award. "Wellington City Council is proud to partner with the University on this innovative project to restore the ecological values of the outer Green Belt and help reduce the city's climate impact. This partnership is a great example of how we can work together to engage everyone in achieving our goal of a net zero carbon capital by 2050."

As well as helping towards zero carbon goals through carbon sequestration, Growing Our Future strengthened the connection between the University and its home in Wellington. The tree-planting project not only provided volunteer opportunities for the community but it also generated applied teaching and research opportunities and enhanced the biodiversity of the Wellington region.

The native trees were expected to form a canopy over 80 percent of the land within seven to eight years and contribute to the creation of an ecological corridor for native birds and other species.





SERIOUS QUESTIONS RAISED OVER DAIRYING'S IMPACT ON FRESHWATER

The large amount of water required to produce a single litre of milk in New Zealand was called into question in a thought-provoking article by a Wellington School of Business and Government researcher.

In an in-depth analysis of New Zealand's dairy industry for *The Conversation* website, Dr Mike Joy, a senior researcher at the Institute for Governance and Policy Studies, said it took 11,000 litres of water to produce one litre of milk in the Canterbury region.

In his research, Dr Joy was able to comprehensively quantify the nitrate 'grey water' footprint of milk production in Canterbury. 'Grey water' referred to the volume of water needed to dilute the pollutants produced so that the receiving water remained above water quality standards.

He said dairy farming at current levels of intensity was clearly unsustainable in New Zealand.

"To maintain that level of production and have healthy water would require either 12 times more rainfall in the region or a 12-fold reduction in cows."

Dr Joy said extensive dairy farming in Canterbury was already leading to significant pollution of the region's groundwater, much of which was used for drinking water.

"Current practices also threaten the market perception of the sustainability of New Zealand's dairy industry and its products. The 'grass-fed' marketing line overlooks the huge amounts of fossil-fuel-derived fertiliser used to make the extra grass that supports New Zealand's very high animal stock rates."

The article, which was shared more than 2,600 times on social media, called for curbs on the use of synthetic nitrogen fertilisers, which had helped dramatically increase nitrate levels and water pollution in New Zealand.

"It is clear that water is becoming a defining political and economic issue. Changing attitudes to its quality and accessibility depends on accurate information, including how water is used to dilute agricultural waste."



Jess Reiher

ENCOURAGING PASIFIKA IN BUSINESS

A passion for business and community advocacy has been the driving force behind a Wellington School of Business and Government (WSBG) student.

Jess Reiher, who is of I-Kiribati and Māori (Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairoa) descent, was the central representative for the Ministry for Pacific Peoples' youth advisory group, Kau Tūlī, and one of the young people supported to develop and lead their own initiatives to support Pacific youth.

She created the Pacific Youth in Business event, which was held in 2021. A group of Year 11, 12, and 13 students from schools in the wider Wellington region gathered to hear from Pacific leaders in business, develop their own business ideas, and pitch their ideas to the group.

The aim, she said, was to help Pasifika youth realise that a career in business was a viable option. She realised how important this was after discovering how low the rates of business ownership and entrepreneurship were among Pacific people in Aotearoa.

"Young Pasifika people have really good business brains. The event was about giving Pasifika youth the opportunity to unlock their idea development and business development skills, which a lot of them do have but just haven't had the opportunity to use."

Despite the challenges of studying through COVID-19 lockdowns and then battling a heart condition, Ms Reiher excelled throughout her degree. She was awarded a Te Tina a Rehua award in both 2021 and 2022 for the highest-achieving Māori student at WSBG. She was also on the list of WSBG Excellence Award winners as a top graduate in the Information Systems and Management majors.

She graduated with a Bachelor of Commerce in May 2023, and was invited to give the graduating speech at the WSBG ceremony.



Associate Professor Christian Schott (standing right) sharing his research alongside Emerita Professor Pauline Sheldon (left) at the workshop in Tahiti.



SHARING NEW ZEALAND'S SUSTAINABLE TOURISM EXPERIENCE WITH PACIFIC NEIGHBOURS

A Wellington School of Business and Government academic shared his expertise on sustainable and regenerative approaches to tourism at an international research workshop in French Polynesia.

Associate Professor Christian Schott from the School of Management was invited by the Centre d'Études sur le Tourisme en Océanie-Pacifique (CETOP) at the University of French Polynesia to present his research at the high-profile workshop entitled 'Rethinking tourism and development in French Polynesia after the pandemic'.

The workshop, which brought together sustainable tourism experts from Australia, France, the United States, and Aotearoa, took place in Papeete in October 2022. It focused on collaboration between sustainable tourism experts, tourism operators from around French Polynesia, and the French Polynesian public sector.

The workshop was well attended by large and small private sector representatives, leaders of social enterprises, and senior leaders from the French Polynesian government, Tahiti Tourisme, and several government ministries.

A particular focus of the workshop was to provide feedback on French Polynesia's draft Tourism Development Strategy Fāri'ira'a Manihini 2022–2027, as part of refocusing towards sustainable and community-focused tourism.

In his presentation, Associate Professor Schott shared his research on Aotearoa's journey towards regenerative approaches to tourism as well as key building blocks of such an approach.

He spoke alongside Emeritus Professor Pauline Sheldon from the University of Hawai'i, who shared learning from Hawai'i's sustainable tourism journey and the need to amplify Indigenous voices in tourism management and marketing.

Associate Professor Schott is due to return to the University of French Polynesia in late 2023 to teach a Master's course on sustainable destination management.

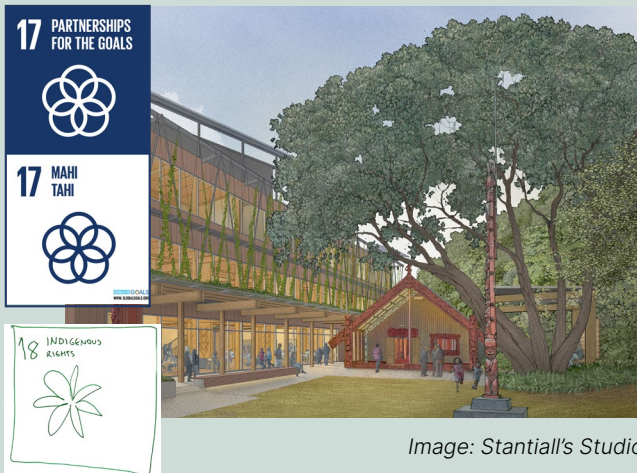


Image: Stantiall's Studio

SUSTAINABILITY PODCAST LOOKS AT PARTNERSHIPS AND THE LIVING PĀ

The role of **partnerships in sustainability projects** and the new Living Pā redevelopment were delved into in a podcast produced by Victoria University of Wellington in 2023.

As part of a series of podcasts on sustainability issues, Dr Sarah-Jane O'Connor from the University's Centre for Science in Society was joined by the University's sustainability director Andrew Wilks and Rhonda Thomson from the office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Māori).

Mr Wilks said challenges in sustainability were complex and required people with different perspectives to come together to be able to address them. "I view the role of partnerships as being how we can expand our impact much wider than just for the little immediate team around us."

He lauded the growth of enrolments in sustainability-focused courses, but noted that New Zealand's "clean, green image" was a still common but increasingly inaccurate portrayal of the country.

"We're becoming more and more urbanised and more and more divorced from all the good that nature provides us. There's still plenty of work for us to do here in Aotearoa to make sure that we are looking after the natural environment as we should be," he said.

Ms Thomson said the Living Pā "will talk to our values and our principles, and who we want to be as a people".

"It is important we have spaces where we can come together and think critically about things like what does it mean to be mana whenua [local Indigenous authority], tangata whenua [Indigenous 'people of the land']," she said. "When our students experience the Living Pā and the wharehau [Māori meeting house], they will know, because of what is modelled, that their mana [esteem, status] emanates from the land. When they look after it, they can rightly say they are a person of mana and a person of the land."



UNIVERSITY PARTNERS FOR SUSTAINABLE ENERGY SOLUTIONS

Victoria University of Wellington received co-funding from the State Sector Decarbonisation Fund for two projects that will reduce the University's carbon emissions by more than 2,100 tonnes by 2033.

Announced in May 2023, the fund—which is administered by the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority—provided \$125,000 towards the cost of LED lighting on campus, which will reduce the University's emissions by around 670 tonnes over the next 10 years.

The fund also provided \$112,000 to replace a gas boiler system with a low-emissions alternative. This change will reduce the University's carbon emissions by around 1,487 tonnes over the next decade.

"This is part of our long-standing process to reduce the carbon emissions produced by our buildings," said David Stevenson, the University's Property Services director. "We have changed to LED lighting throughout all common areas of the University and several buildings thus far, and are working to convert our gas boilers to other, more efficient low-carbon options as they come to the end of their operational life."

"This is part of the Property Services team's commitment to the pillars underpinning sustainable development and our institution's wider commitment to sustainability and wellbeing."

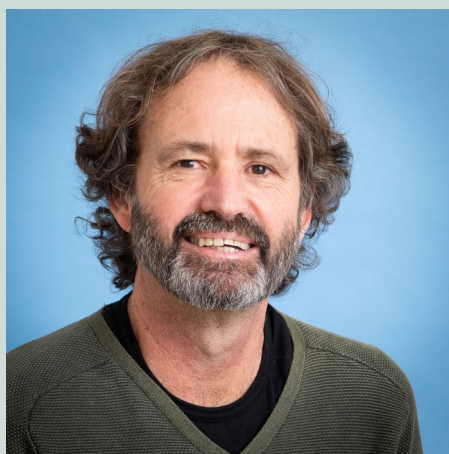
Both projects were co-funded by the University as part of its dedication towards its Zero Carbon Plan, and had the additional benefit of helping reduce operating costs.

In announcing the funding, New Zealand's Minister for Climate Change James Shaw said it was important for universities to lead by example. "The burning of fossil fuels—coal, oil, and gas—is the primary cause of climate change. Ensuring our places of learning and our hospitals kick this habit is the obvious choice."

PRINCIPLE 6

WHAKAWHITINGA— DIALOGUE

We will facilitate and support dialogue, wānanga (sharing and reflection), and debate among educators, students, mana whenua (Indigenous groups with historic and territorial rights over land), business, government, consumers, media, civil society organisations, and other interested groups and stakeholders on critical issues related to global social responsibility, ethics, and sustainability.



Dr Mike Joy



CALL FOR FARMERS TO BE PAID TO STOP DAIRYING

An environmental researcher from the Wellington School of Business and Government made a bold call for the Government to pay farmers to put an end to dairying for the sake of the environment.

Speaking at an environmental conference in August 2021, freshwater ecologist and senior research fellow Dr Mike Joy said dairy farmers should be gifted a one-off \$12 billion payment to convert to industries with a lower carbon footprint.

He said New Zealanders were “delusional” about the levels of environmental degradation caused by dairying, and that the scale of change required would be massive.

He outlined stark figures showing use of synthetic nitrogen (which is derived from fossil fuels) on farms had increased by 1,300 percent since 1990. Dr Joy also said that Canterbury’s Selwyn and Ashburton rivers had the third and fourth highest annual flux of nitrogen in the world, only behind the Yangtze and Yellow rivers in China.

The only way to turn the tide would be to pay farmers in high-risk areas such as Canterbury to stop dairying, he said. “Pay the \$12 billion and get the cows off there.”

Dr Joy referred to clean-ups in Rotorua and Lake Taupō as examples of effective solutions to the impacts of intensive dairying. Farmers had been paid \$40 million (\$400 per kilogram of nitrogen) in the Lake Rotorua catchment to stop dairying, which saved 100 tonnes of nitrogen from entering the lake, he said.

“Why not the rest of the country?”



PODCAST SHINES LIGHT ON A MORE SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY THROUGH INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE



A podcast produced by Victoria University of Wellington has encouraged the public to think about how a circular economy could meet people's needs without producing waste or pollution.

In an episode of the University's sustainability-focused podcast series, host Sarah-Jane O'Connor from the Centre for Science in Society spoke to two researchers from the Wellington School of Business and Government about how society might move away from existing economic systems to less polluting and wasteful ones.

Hannah Blumhardt from the Institute for Governance and Policy Studies and Dr Ben Walker, a senior lecturer in Organisational Behaviour in the School of Management, discussed a move towards a circular economy and how it might draw on the [ideas of mātauranga Māori](#).

"Every year, without fail, issues related to waste or plastic pollution are in the top 10 issues that concern New Zealanders. The linear way of doing things is so normalised that I think we don't question it, or almost it's like we believe that wastefulness is inevitable," Ms Blumhardt said. "I would like to see less emphasis on businesses needing to change and more emphasis on government showing some leadership and recalibrating the rules of the game."

Dr Walker explained how tikanga Māori already used many of the ideas behind circular economies and did so in a multidimensional way, taking the environment and the community into consideration.

"I am trying to get the next generation of business managers to think about the objectives of their businesses in different ways. They don't all necessarily have to come back to the financial bottom line—there are other bottom lines that consider environmental impact," he said. "For instance, the quadruple bottom line gets at the idea that businesses shouldn't only be judged on their financial performance but also on their social, cultural, and environmental impact."



Dr Ben Walker



Dr Julia Talbot-Jones

PLUMBING THE MURKY DEPTHS OF NEW ZEALAND'S WATER QUALITY

Aotearoa's narrative around the quality of its freshwater came under the spotlight in a podcast produced by Victoria University of Wellington.

Dr Julia Talbot-Jones, a senior lecturer in the School of Government at the Wellington School of Business and Government and expert in environmental economics, was invited to be part of the discussion. The episode was part of a series that focused on issues around sustainability.

Along with host Sarah-Jane O'Connor from the Centre for Science in Society and fellow panellist Sarah Monod de Froideville from the University's Criminology programme, Dr Talbot-Jones discussed the ways climate change and industry-related threats, such as milk production, were contributing to the [decline in water quality](#) around Aotearoa.

The panel agreed it was essential for New Zealanders to come together to face these threats.

The Government's Three Waters reforms, which brought together management of drinking, storm, and wastewater, were intended to help fix the country's water woes. "I think the process for that hasn't brought communities along with it, and you need to, if you are taking back decision-making authority," said Dr Talbot-Jones.

While the idea of co-governance had been a sticking point for many around Three Waters, she said the model had precedent in the way the Whanganui River has been managed since it was declared a legal person.

She believed reform was needed for how Aotearoa managed its freshwater to safeguard the health of people and the environment.

"New Zealanders are largely aware of the state of our freshwater. But cleaning it up will be costly, and finding solutions is costly," said Dr Talbot-Jones. "Nobody wants to bear that cost, and that's where the problem lies."



Professor George Loewenstein

RENOWNED BEHAVIOURAL ECONOMIST HOSTED IN WELLINGTON

An influential international expert in behavioural economics came to Victoria University of Wellington in February 2023 to deliver a thought-provoking lecture.

Professor George Loewenstein holds a dual professorship in economics and psychology at Carnegie Mellon University in Pennsylvania, United States. He was one of the pioneers of the field of behavioural economics and a founder of neuroeconomics. His research focuses on applications of psychology to economics and applications of economics to psychology.

In the lecture, hosted by the School of Economics and Finance at the Wellington School of Business and Government, Professor Loewenstein delved into how the principles of behavioural economics could better inform policymaking.

He said behavioural scientists had focused too much on trying to solve some of society's biggest problems by changing individual behaviour, instead of addressing systemic or structural issues.

Professor Loewenstein argued that relying solely on individuals to make the right decisions—or nudging them in the right direction—was often ineffective in achieving optimal policy outcomes in areas such as climate change, health, or retirement savings.

Using the example of climate change, he said the impact of individual-level interventions to try to reduce carbon emissions (such as nudges, small incentives, or creating an awareness of social norms) paled in comparison to the impact that societal or systemic-level interventions (such as a carbon tax) could have on climate change.

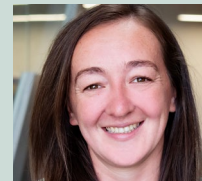
He said focusing on individual-level change could actually backfire by drawing attention away from the value-creating support and interventions that were required at a systemic level.



Professor Cummings



Dr Pirini



Erin Roxburgh



Dr Walker

PUTTING THE COMMUNITY BACK INTO BUSINESS THROUGH INDIGENOUS WISDOM

An article about the benefits offered by Māori business models, written by researchers at the Wellington School of Business and Government, said there was a lot to be learnt from te ao Māori's (Māori world view) innovative and sustainable ways of thinking.

In an [opinion piece](#) published on Australasian news and research website *The Conversation*, the four academics wrote that Māori businesses could teach the wider community to manage and grow organisations in a sustainable way.

Dr Ben Walker, Erin Roxburgh, Dr Jesse Pirini, and Professor Stephen Cummings wrote that a common feature of Māori organisations was their focus on judging success on many criteria, not just financial ones.

"Māori organisations almost always put community, environmental, and cultural impacts at the centre of what they do. But that is not to say that Māori businesses don't care about conventional measures of success. In fact, the Māori economy may be the fastest growing part of the New Zealand economy in purely financial terms," they said.

"But whereas conventional companies prioritise profit, for Māori (and indeed Indigenous businesses around the world), making money is usually seen as a stepping stone to more valued destinations: community wellbeing, a political voice, and environmental sustainability."

The researchers said Māori organisations also tended to take a multigenerational, whakapapa-focused perspective spanning over decades, or even centuries, when making important decisions, whereas a typical corporation was more focused on quarterly or annual financial results.

The article also examined the way Māori businesses placed their communities at the centre of how they were managed. The writers said board members of Māori organisations were often democratically elected by the people they served, which led to greater diversity in representation.



Professor Lisa Marriott

MAKING TAX FAIRER

With the issue of tax raising its head in the lead-up to New Zealand's 2023 general election, a Wellington School of Business and Government academic asked what needed to be done to make the country's tax system fair.

In an opinion piece published on Australasian news and research website *The Conversation*, Taxation professor Lisa Marriott analysed a range of proposals to make the tax system fairer.

Some of those ideas included reducing income tax rates and increasing the goods and services tax (GST).

"A GST could be considered fair, as everyone who buys the same good or service pays the same amount of tax," wrote Professor Marriott. "But a GST cannot take into account ability to pay. Higher income earners generally pay more GST overall, as they can afford to buy more goods and services. However, they pay less GST as a proportion of their income."

She said increasing GST would have the greatest impact on those who had the least income, especially at a time of high inflation.

Professor Marriott also examined the idea of a wealth tax, which included capital gains, inheritance, or land taxes. "As the top 10 percent of New Zealand households hold around 50 percent of New Zealand's household net worth, there is a strong argument that taxing some of this wealth is fair."

She said greater investment in debt collection, including recouping missing tax payments from people who were self-employed, was another way of increasing fairness in the tax system.

Professor Marriott said whatever anyone's perspective was on what a fair tax system looked like, it would undoubtedly be a 2023 election-year issue.



INTERNATIONAL ONLINE FORUM HIGHLIGHTS ROLE OF UNIVERSITIES IN CLIMATE CHANGE

An online forum discussing the response of capital-city universities to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was co-hosted by Victoria University of Wellington in 2021.

The University partnered with UNICA, an institutional network of universities from the capitals of Europe, to host the webinar series.

Focusing on the response of capital-city universities across Europe and the

Asia-Pacific region to the SDGs, speakers from around the world discussed what actions the academics at their respective institutions were prioritising, and exchanged experiences and good practices relating to the implementation of sustainability strategies.

The webinar examined the collective responsibility of universities to address the climate crisis, pointing out the key role they played in supporting decision makers, and helping society to make a just transition to a low-carbon future through developing and sharing knowledge, skills, and research. It also emphasised the important job universities had of equipping the next generation of leaders with the knowledge, skills, and values needed to address the climate crisis.

It highlighted how universities were taking a leading role in addressing the climate crisis, demonstrating how collaborations across regions in research, internationalisation, and learning and teaching were making a positive impact.

The webinar aimed to foster peer learning around the major issue of climate change, and participating universities identified areas of potential focus for collaboration in research, teaching, and internationalisation.



Max Rashbrooke

IS NEGATIVE NET WEALTH A PROBLEM?

More than 300,000 New Zealanders owed more money than their assets were worth, and a university researcher has asked whether this was a problem.

Max Rashbrooke, research associate at the Institute for Governance and Policy Studies (IGPS) at the Wellington School of Business and Government, wrote in an [opinion article](#) for *The Conversation* that there were differing views on the issue.

“For some, indebtedness indicates a precarious situation—often described as being ‘underwater’—in which a person is unable to match their expenses to their income. For others, it represents investment: a temporary borrowing in order to be able to earn more in future.”

Citing IGPS research based on Household Economic Survey figures, he said negative net wealth was large and growing, but the problems of indebtedness might not be as great as they appeared.

He pointed out that the major forms of debt—mortgages and student loans—were both backed, at least in theory, by assets: housing in the case of mortgages, and ‘human capital’ (marketable skills and education) in the case of student loans.

But he said there were still reasons to be concerned—house prices might fall, and not all degrees led to high incomes or guaranteed employment.

Mr Rashbrooke also noted that negative net wealth was not evenly distributed.

“Of the 363,000 individuals in that situation, 195,000 are women, against 168,000 men. Just 8.1 percent of people of European descent are indebted, compared to 11.5 percent of Asian New Zealanders, 13.3 percent of Māori, and 14.5 percent of Pasifika,” he said.

“Negative net wealth, then, is part of the much larger story of economic inequality—one that is now centre stage in political debates, in New Zealand as elsewhere.”

ACCOUNTING FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE



A conference promoting the role that the teaching of accounting played in enabling a more sustainable society was organised and hosted by the Wellington School of Business and Government.

The School of Accounting and Commercial Law hosted the twenty-first Australasian Centre for Social and Environmental Accounting Research (A-CSEAR) Conference and Emerging Scholars’ Colloquium in December 2022. The CSEAR is an international membership-based network that aims to mobilise accounting scholarship to enable a more sustainable society. The Australasian division, A-CSEAR, strove to foster a supportive and inclusive community of emerging and established scholars investigating the social and environmental aspects of accounting theory and practice.

The conference was co-convened by WSBG’s Dr Sendirella George and Dr Yinka Moses, and provided an international forum to showcase research on the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals and foster interdisciplinary research in accounting.

The theme of the conference was ‘democratising accounting’. Plenary speakers from Australia and the United Kingdom spoke about social accounting, interdisciplinary business collaborations, and the interface between organisations and the natural environment.

The Emerging Scholar’s Colloquium was a one-day event that gave emerging scholars working in the social and environmental accounting space the opportunity to present and discuss their research progress.

During the conference, the A-CSEAR Hall of Fame Award was presented to Professor Judy Brown from WSBG’s School of Accounting and Commercial Law. Professor Brown was recognised for her extensive research and policy-related work on accounting and accountability practices in politically contentious areas such as labour relations and sustainability, and her strong commitment to interdisciplinary research.



Professor Judy Brown



Dr Luke Chu

SHOULD LOW-PERFORMING STUDENTS HAVE LOAN ACCESS CUT OFF?

Amid a growing debate around the value of student loans and the long-term impact of debt for those entering the workforce, a Wellington School of Business and Government academic said low-performing students benefited in the longer term by retaining access to student loans.

Yu-Wei Luke Chu, a senior lecturer in Economics, wrote an [opinion piece](#) for Australasian news website *The Conversation*. In it, he discussed his research into the effects of access to student loans on university re-enrolment, graduation, and earnings for those students who struggled academically.

To continue qualifying for a loan in New Zealand, students must pass at least 50 percent of their classes after two years of study. Around 10 percent of students failed this requirement and were considered low-performing students. As part of his research, Dr Chu followed a small subset of students whose grades were around the 50 percent cut-off.

Three quarters of students just below the 50 percent threshold—that is, without access to a student loan—struggled to find other funding and were not able to re-enrol in study without loan access.

Those over the threshold—those who had loan access—were about 60 percentage points more likely to graduate than those without. Dr Chu also found that this group of students went on to earn more in the longer term.

“Considering the lifelong benefits of higher education, there is an argument to be made that low-performing students should retain student loan access, even if they are struggling to pass,” Dr Chu wrote.

“Ensuring students access the loan scheme is an effective way to guarantee access to tertiary study and, consequently, economic potential in the long run, regardless of grades.”



Associate Professor Valentina Dinica

VIDEO HIGHLIGHTS IMPORTANCE OF NEW ZEALAND'S PROTECTED AREAS

A video produced by Victoria University of Wellington took an in-depth look at the role of New Zealand's network of protected areas.

Hosted by the University's director of sustainability, Andrew Wilks, the [video](#) showcased the expertise of Wellington School of Business and Government academic Associate Professor Valentina Dinica, who is an expert in governance for sustainable development and nature-based tourism.

She explained the role of protected areas in New Zealand, which included its network of national parks and reserves.

“They play an important role because the 1992 convention on biological diversity, which New Zealand has signed, obliges countries to use protected areas as policy instruments for the protection of nature biodiversity, such as forest ecosystems.”

With 32 percent of New Zealand's total territory designated as protected land, the country was held up as an example to others.

“But if you raise the veil on this number, you can see the protection is not adequate,” Associate Professor Dinica said. “For each ecosystem type, we should protect at least 20 percent so that it can persist in the future, ensuring the genetic diversity and ecological processes are sustained. So right now we can say New Zealand protects 30 percent of its land, but it's not 30 percent of all its various ecosystems. It has 90 to 100 percent of some, and 0 to 2 percent of others.”

She said certain ecosystems, such as mountainous beech forests, were over-represented in New Zealand's protected areas, while other ecosystems, such as wetlands, were often outside those areas.

She and Mr Wilks also took a field trip to Zealandia Te Māra a Tāne ecosanctuary in Wellington to investigate how everyone could make more of an effort to preserve a wider range of ecosystems in New Zealand.



Associate Professor Jonathan Barrett

COULD A TEMPORARY LEVY HELP PAY FOR CYCLONE DAMAGE?

Following the devastation wrought on northern parts of New Zealand in 2023 by Cyclone Gabrielle, a Wellington School of Business and Government academic proposed a solution to how the country could pay for recovery.

Jonathan Barrett, an associate professor in Taxation, said in an [opinion article](#) published on *The Conversation* that with an estimated bill of NZ\$13 billion, the Government would have to choose carefully between borrowing or raising taxes.

“The first option is predicted to stoke inflation. The second is politically challenging in an election year when the Opposition is offering tax cuts.”

He said the most relevant precedent for New Zealand was the flood levy raised by the Australian government in 2011 to help pay for the devastating floods in Queensland.

“For one year only, taxpayers with an annual income between A\$50,000 and A\$100,000 paid an extra 0.5 percent levy, while those earning over A\$100,000 paid an additional 1 percent. Taxpayers living in the affected areas were exempt from the levy, which was designed to raise A\$1.8 billion,” he wrote.

“In my view, the Queensland levy provides an appropriate template for partly funding infrastructure repatriation after the catastrophe of Cyclone Gabrielle. A flood levy on higher earners would make a significant contribution to recovery funds and would send a message of solidarity: we are all in this together.”

Associate Professor Barrett said that regardless of what the Government decided, in the years ahead New Zealand needed to debate how taxes might alleviate the harm suffered by people and businesses after natural disasters, fund remediation, and reduce carbon emissions.



Associate Professor Martien Lubberink

EXTREME HEAT A DANGER TO BUSINESS

A Wellington School of Business and Government academic warned that business performance would suffer as record-breaking heatwaves became increasingly common.

In August 2022, Martien Lubberink, an associate professor of Economics, along with colleagues from the universities of Otago and California, wrote an [opinion article](#) published on *The Conversation* arguing that businesses would need to work harder to better manage extreme heat risk.

“It is becoming clearer that extreme heat can have devastating and costly effects. People are dying, energy grids are struggling to cope, transport is disrupted, and severe drought is straining agriculture and water reserves,” they wrote.

They said that while media reports highlighted the toll on workers and businesses, there was little empirical evidence on the financial hit to businesses. So how much of an impact did extreme heat have on business profitability?

Citing their own research focused on the European Union and the United Kingdom, the academics found those countries were forced to burn more fossil fuel to cool overheated populations when it was hot.

They found that businesses did suffer financially around a heat spell, with wide-ranging effects.

“For the average business in our sample, these impacts translate into an annualised loss of sales of about 0.63 percent and a profit margin decrease of approximately 0.16 percent for a one degree increase in temperature above a critical level of about 25°C,” they wrote. “Aggregated for all firms in our sample, UK and EU businesses lose almost US\$614 million (NZ\$975 million) in annual sales for every additional degree of excessive temperature.”

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FUTURE OBJECTIVES

Over the coming two years, we will foster increased critical engagement of our staff, students, and external stakeholders with sustainability, ethics, climate change, and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. We are driven by a commitment to continuous improvement and a passion for fostering impactful research, thought-leading engagement, and the development of responsible leaders.

In this spirit, we will enact the six PRME principles with a locally grounded framing: Whāinga—Purpose, Whanonga—Values, Tukanga—Method, Rangahau—Research, Mahi Tahi—Partnership, and Whakawhitinga—Dialogue in pursuit of the following objectives:

- explore opportunities for wider integration of PRME and the chair of the PRME steering committee into the leadership of the Wellington School of Business and Government
- expand the PRME steering committee with greater representation by students and external stakeholders
- invite and foster critical public debate about sustainability, ethics, and the SDGs through an Indigenous lens
- promote and support the embedding of more sustainability and ethics content in the WSBG curriculum through:
 - supporting curriculum development such as the Bachelor of Commerce with sustainability and ethics content
 - championing sustainability and ethics, and their associated values, in the implementation of the WSBG Learning and Teaching Framework.



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