

AUTUMN-WINTER 2007

# Victorious

MAGAZINE FOR FRIENDS AND ALUMNI OF VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON



## Academic excellence

Antarctic drilling

Engineering at Victoria

Forty under 40

**Victoria**  
UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON  
*Te Whare Wānanga  
o te Ūpoko o te Ika a Māui*







# Italian showcase

Revolutionary new chairs designed and created by a Victoria researcher featured in one of the world's most prestigious furniture shows in Milan earlier this year.

Senior Lecturer, Tim Miller, from the School of Design, travelled to Italy to showcase his designs in a joint exhibition with David Trubridge at the Zona Tortona show during the Milan Furniture Week in April. About 60,000 visitors attended and almost 200 companies exhibited their latest collections.

Tim's CUT*form* designs, supported and patented by the University's commercialisation company, Victoria Link Ltd, use state-of-the-art laser technology to make a unique series of perforated cuts that ingeniously transform flat sheets of material into fluid three-dimensional forms.

The products are the result of a four-year research project at the University that has explored and extended the limits between material, digital technologies and manufacturing processes.

Tim says the Milan Furniture Fair is the most important international show and has been for several decades.

"It is the place where the top companies and the top designers exhibit their work. Designers we've shown the prototypes to in New Zealand have been gob-smacked by the unbelievable way a flat

sheet can be technologically transformed into a fluid form, and the response in Europe was equally enthusiastic."

The ability to transform two-dimensional sheets into beautiful three-dimensional forms pushes the boundaries of existing technology and design, he says.

"I believe that designers need to research and adopt new technologies and the use of lasers made me wonder whether it would be possible to create new shapes out of single sheets of material without having to join pieces together. The designs could be used in homes and office foyers while the stackable version would be ideal in conference venues."

Tim says the trip aimed to bring the designs to the attention of a company that would take out a licence and manufacture them internationally.

"Being at the show in Milan was an amazing experience with such amazing designs and talent on show. I made lots of contacts and I'm now following up on several promising leads."

Three CUT*form* products were exhibited at Milan: STRETCH*out*, a lounge seat created from a simple rectangular semi-rigid polypropylene sheet of plastic perforated and expanded into a fluid form that ergonomically conforms to the body; DRAW*in*, a chair version of the lounge seat that can be made either in stackable or non-stackable versions; and a stool called PULL*up*.

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Education Review

## From the Vice-Chancellor

The death in February of Victoria alumnus, Professor Alan MacDiarmid, was a great loss to New Zealand and the international science community. He made a major contribution to science and education and was an active supporter of the MacDiarmid Institute for Advanced Materials & Nanotechnology at Victoria, which was named after him. Alan never forgot his New Zealand roots and was preparing to travel to Wellington to speak at a conference when he died.

Alan graduated from Victoria with first-class honours in 1951, before winning a Fulbright Fellowship and completing a PhD at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1953. He received another PhD from the University of Cambridge in 1955. He was awarded the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 2000 for the discovery and development of conductive polymers, unique 'plastic' materials that can conduct electricity. He received an honorary Doctor of Science degree from Victoria in 1999 and was made a Member of the Order of New Zealand in 2001.

Alan's passing highlights the significance of research in universities and how it can change our lives and understanding of the world we live in. Victoria has recently established a \$2.7 million geochemistry laboratory in the School of Geography, Environment & Earth Sciences, and it is being used to better understand the origins of the solar system, New Zealand's super volcanoes and the prehistoric climate of New Zealand and Antarctica. The Tertiary Education Commission has also released the latest evaluation under the Performance-Based Research Fund and I will update alumni on the outcome in the next *Victorious*.

This investment and others Victoria is making in research and teaching is reflected in demand from students to study here. While international enrolments have, as expected, dropped, this has been outweighed by an exceptional rise in domestic students, compared with almost all other universities. Clearly, New Zealand students are increasingly seeing Victoria and Wellington as the destination of choice for tertiary study in a student-friendly city.

**Pat Walsh**  
Vice-Chancellor

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Cover Image: Dr Adele Whyte, pictured on Victoria's Te Herenga Waka Marae, won a National Māori Academic Excellence Award in March.





# Research & Innovation

Victoria's academic staff are leaders in their fields of research expertise. If you have a project that requires the skills and knowledge of our staff, contact Professor Charles Daugherty. E-mail: Charles.Daugherty@vuw.ac.nz Tel: +64-4-463 5572.



## Pacific genes

**The unethical methods used by bio-tech companies to obtain the genetic material of Pacific peoples have been revealed in a new book, *Pacific Genes and Life Patents*, co-edited by a Victoria researcher.**

Aroha Mead, Senior Lecturer in Māori Business in the Victoria Management School, says she has been concerned with the issue of the intellectual property of indigenous people for more than 20 years. The book brings together examples of how “drug companies have used the Pacific as a laboratory,” she says.

Case studies in the book, published by Call of the Earth Llamado de la Tierra and the United Nations University Institute of Advanced Studies, reveal how Cook Islanders nearly became part of an experiment to transplant pig cells into living humans as a treatment for diabetes.

Another story shows how the DNA of a tribe in Papua New Guinea can be bought on the internet for US\$216. The individuals and the communities concerned were unaware that their genetic material had been patented.

Aroha sees patents as a major part of the problem: “Patents are not a tool of humanitarian research. They are a tool of commerce and exclusive property rights and serve to give signals to others —stay away, they’re mine, I own them.”

She hopes the book will raise awareness of the issues and of the sensitivities involved. She advocates the establishment of a Regional Intellectual Property Office that would bring protection to the area, where lack of regulation is part of the problem.

On a positive note Aroha says the cases in the book “reflect on daily life” and show the power of “community activism”. She hopes that a clash between Western science and traditional cultures need not always be to the detriment of the Islanders.

Her book aims to help scientists work in an ethical and sensitive manner when seeking new areas for research.

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## Making life easier

**Signing up for tutorials and workshops in large courses can be a torturous and frustrating business for both students and staff. But the development by two Victoria staff of S-Cubed, a web-based student sign-up system, is taking the strain out of registration.**

The system, created by William Stenger and Dion Peszynski, from the School of Information Management, was initially used in the School, before being adopted by the Faculty of Commerce & Administration and rolled out across the University.

William says the University had been looking to develop a computer-based sign-up system for many years.

“The old way, with pieces of paper stuck on the wall, was open to lots of error. People crowded round the boards, names got crossed out and tutors had to manually enter all the information. This way is quicker, easier and very straightforward.”

Dion says the feedback has been very positive. “It’s user-friendly and has lots of useful features. Students like it because they can enrol online and can see if a course is full and be wait-listed if it is. Tutors like it because it gives them instant registration and a record of who’s doing what. Student numbers are rising all the time and the old system was simply not coping.”

The computer programme was entirely designed and developed by William and Dion, both former students of Victoria, and it took them just four weeks to implement. Their work has won them a Victoria University General Staff Award for Excellence.

William says S-Cubed is going from strength to strength. “Sixty-six courses are now using our system and we’ve recorded 25,000 student sign-ups. Training is available to anyone who wants it, and we’re here if they encounter any big problems. S-Cubed just helps everyone to get on with their courses instead of wasting time chasing pieces of paper.”

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**William (left) and Dion check out S-Cubed**



# The art of giving

Donation boxes at museums and art galleries are an increasingly common sight as these free-entry institutions attempt to recover some of their costs by urging the public to support their worthy activities.

But research by academics in Victoria's School of Economics & Finance is giving new insight into New Zealanders' philanthropy. Senior Lecturer, Dr John Randal, and former Lecturer, Dr Richard Martin, undertook several experiments using the transparent donation box in Wellington's City Gallery.

The researchers altered the mix of notes and coins and the amount of money in the box and used a camera above it to monitor individual donations. John says when there were more notes than coins in the box, individual donations tended to be larger.

"People appear to make bigger donations when they perceive others have made large donations. However, the number of people making donations dropped as the proportion of notes in the box was increased, so the total amount was similar. When there were more coins in the box, people were more likely to give but the average donation was lower. But when the box was always empty, the total was significantly less, which suggested that people saw the lack of donations as indicating that the norm was not to give."

In one experiment, donors were informed by signs that their behaviour was being analysed. One sign said "donations were being counted as a part of research into donation behaviour" while the other said individual behaviour "was being monitored and analysed for research purposes".

"While the counting sign had no effect on the likelihood of someone donating, the second sign with its indication that individuals were being monitored and that donors no longer had anonymity, did have a significant effect, particularly in the notes scenario, which impacted on both the likelihood to donate and donation size, especially among men.

"We're not entirely sure why this occurred but it's possible potential donors were put off by our overt manipulation of the contents, which they may have interpreted as artificial. Another possibility is that those who would've been prepared to give a small amount were put off because they considered their relatively small donation was being compared to others' more generous behaviour."



**John with the City Gallery donation box.**

John says the research, approved by the University's Ethics Committee, was designed to understand altruistic behaviour in a real life situation. "In the past, economists would have done these experiments in a laboratory situation, often using students as test subjects. But we could never be sure whether their knowledge that they were part of an experiment was changing their behaviour."

In a different approach, Adrian Slack, Teaching Fellow in the School and BERL economist, co-authored research on the amount New Zealanders give to charitable causes. It was funded by Philanthropy New Zealand ([www.giving.org.nz](http://www.giving.org.nz)).

"We're a relatively generous lot, giving about \$1.3 billion to charitable causes each year, which equates to about \$316 per person. To put that into perspective, it's about as much as we spend on takeaways each year."

New Zealanders' giving equates to 0.81 percent of GDP or national income, which compares favourably with Canada (0.46 percent), Australia (0.68 percent) and Britain (0.9 percent). Americans, however, gave almost 2.2 percent of GDP.

Most giving came from trusts and foundations (58 percent) followed by individuals (35 percent) and businesses (seven percent), although the research also found businesses gave almost twice as much again through their sponsorship of charities.

*"We're a relatively generous lot, giving about \$1.3 billion to charitable causes each year, which equates to about \$316 per person. To put that into perspective, it's about as much as we spend on takeaways each year."*

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## Persians today

It may be almost 2,500 years old, but Aeschylus' *Persians* remains as relevant today as it was when it was first performed.

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That's the view of Dr David Rosenbloom, Senior Lecturer in the School of Art History, Classics, & Religious Studies, whose book, *Aeschylus: Persians*,

challenges conventional readings of the oldest surviving Greek tragedy.

"*Persians* is a negative example of the rise and fall of an empire. At the time of the play's production in 472 BC, the Athenians were exacting tribute from city-states the Persians could no longer control. The play is as much a prophecy about the outcome of imperialism as it is a remembrance of the Persian defeat."

*Persians* dramatises the homecoming and lament of Xerxes, the Great King of Persia, after his crushing defeat at the battle of Salamis in 480 BC. As the heir to the largest empire at the time, Xerxes sought to avenge his father Darius' defeat by the Athenians at the Battle of Marathon in 490 BC by adding Greece to his empire.

David says he first read *Persians* about 20 years ago and became particularly interested in the play at the time of the first Gulf War, after spotting a number of parallels. Now, he says, it is becoming more relevant.

"One thing that struck me was the relationship between Xerxes and Darius—a son trying to finish what his father started and thereby surpass him—which could easily be applied to both Presidents Bush. *Persians* is simple and true enough that it can be applied to a variety of situations."

David's book comes just before an international conference on Greek Drama at Victoria. The conference, from 3-6 July and supported by the Greek Embassy, is the fourth to be held in Australasia. A professional production of Sophocles' well-known tragedy *Antigone* will be staged, with one performance especially for the conference delegates.



James and students  
Brigid Costello and  
Richard Keene building  
the set for *Twelfth Night*.

## Setting the scene

Tucked away behind the trees and bushes of Fairlie Tce in Kelburn lies Studio 77, Victoria's own fully equipped theatre for use by students on the Theatre Programme.

Studio 77 has had a million dollar revamp and to go with the new look, the appointment of a professional scenic designer as Theatre Technical Officer has re-energised the programme. James Davenport, fresh from Hawai'i, brings with him

a wealth of professional experience to help students bring their work to life.

"The students are hungry for it, they want to know how design can lift their productions, not just visually but also help in telling the story."

Currently working on the set for *Twelfth Night*, James has been both front and backstage. He was an actor and performer for more than 20 years. When he tired of treading the boards he decided he wanted to build them, and obtained a Master's degree before moving into professional set design. He has worked with theatre companies in Hawai'i and across the United States. He says his experience gives students both a practical and theoretical edge.

"We want students to have the tools that allow them to think critically about their artistic endeavours. It's important that they can apply the theory to the design and be able to bring academic vigour to the practical components of their programme."

James and his students are now able to use the newly built storeroom and workshop at the back of Studio 77. Front of house, the new foyer provides paying theatre goers with a proper entrance, says Event Co-ordinator, Lee Barry.

"Studio 77 is our laboratory where work happens. The students now have a more professional environment to work in with a professional designer to show them how to use the space to its maximum potential. The rest is up to them," Lee says.

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# Frozen in time

Layer by layer, the frozen continent has revealed one of its long lost secrets—a warmer past—to an international science team in which Victoria is playing a key role.

Project ANDRILL is a record breaking endeavour that has pulled rocks from deep inside the Earth beneath Antarctica's Ross Sea Ice Shelf to a depth of 1285m below the sea floor. The aim of the project is to reveal the state of the world's climate over the last few million years, and so give an insight into what could happen in the future.

The significance of the research was highlighted by the latest report from the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which pointed to significant impacts on the world's environment and economy from rising greenhouse gases. It predicted many low-lying areas flooding due to sea-level rise and increased storm intensities, displacing millions of people. Another key finding was that glaciers and snow cover are expected to decline, reducing water availability.

Associate Professor Tim Naish, Deputy Director of the Antarctic Research Centre at Victoria and ANDRILL co-chief scientist, says the Ross Sea Ice Shelf is the largest in the world.

"It's the size of France. It's an early warning system of climate change. We drilled the deepest geological hole in the ice to discover what happened millions of years ago and built up a sedimentary video-tape of the history of the ice."

The drill cores have shown some surprising details and have allowed Tim and his team to look back millions of years.

"They reveal that the ice sheet has advanced and retreated more than 50 times during the past five million years. Some of the disappearances of the ice shelf were probably during past eras when the planet was a few degrees warmer than it is today—like it is expected to be in the next 50 to 100 years."

Getting the core to the surface was no mean achievement and it took Alex Pyne, Victoria's drilling specialist and site manager, more than two months of solid drilling to reach the record depth.

"Drilling is an uncertain art and this is the first time we have drilled on an ice shelf and through 900m of water. We had good conditions but we also had pipes bent by the currents and the ice. We worked 24 hours a day bringing the samples to the surface so they could be examined daily by the scientists."

ANDRILL will continue to explore Antarctica's past climate later this year in the southern McMurdo Sound. The new site should build a picture from when the ice sheet formed 14 million years ago.



The ANDRILL base.

Tim (centre) shows visitors the Project ANDRILL base

*"...the ice sheet has advanced and retreated more than 50 times during the past five million years. Some of the disappearances of the ice shelf were probably during past eras when the planet was a few degrees warmer than it is today—like it is expected to be in the next 50 to 100 years."*



Tim hopes that together the two ANDRILL projects will build a unique and fundamental knowledge of an area that acts as "the Earth's thermostat".

ANDRILL is a \$43 million international collaboration involving scientists and staff from New Zealand, Germany, Italy and the United States.

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alleviating anxiety and to believe that someone is in control.”

Marc presented his research on conspiracy beliefs in New Zealand at the Annual Conference for the Society of Australasian Social Psychology in Brisbane in April. His presentation described four studies looking at the frequency of conspiracy beliefs in student and Wellingtonian general population samples, as well as some of the psychological factors that might explain conspiracy beliefs.

He also recently presented the TVNZ home-buying-and-selling series, *The School of Home Truths*, which screened in February, and in 2005 won a Victoria Teaching Excellence Award.

Conspiracy beliefs are a relatively seldom researched area of psychology, and are more common than most people realise, he says.

“Contrary to the popular stereotype, people who spend a lot of time thinking about the causes of things are more likely to believe in conspiracies. It’s not just an uninformed position for most of them.”

Previous studies into conspiracy beliefs have found that people who are less trusting of authority are more likely to believe conspiracies.

“Interestingly, theories about Elvis and theories about aliens statistically fit. People who believe that Elvis faked his own death are also likely to believe that governments are hiding evidence of alien visits to Earth.”

## Conspiracy theories

**The moon landings were staged. Elvis Presley faked his own death. The Rainbow Warrior was not bombed by French agents. These statements might seem implausible, but surveys of Victoria psychology students show that a number believe them to be true.**

Dr Marc Wilson, Senior Lecturer in the School of Psychology, says those who count themselves as more rational tend to stereotype conspiracy theories as minority beliefs, but this isn’t the case.

“Since 9/11 there has been a dramatic increase in the popularity of conspiracy beliefs about a range of world and local events. It tends to happen after major events—people like to find ways of

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## A Christian country?

**A Victoria researcher has played a key role in developing a national framework to guide New Zealanders’ understanding of their nation’s increasingly diverse religious makeup.**

Professor Paul Morris, from the School of Art History, Classics & Religious Studies, spearheaded the development of the first National Statement on Religious Diversity, endorsed at the National Interfaith Forum in Hamilton in February. Creating a statement was one of the New Zealand delegation’s recommendations on its return from an Asia-Pacific interfaith gathering held in Indonesia in December 2004.

“My original plan was to take an overseas model and adapt it, but I was unable to find one. Singapore’s Statement of Religious Harmony—which even exists as a fridge magnet—didn’t seem appropriate and so I developed some key principles for this country. With the Human Rights Commission’s assistance, a series of forums were held nationwide and more than 600 submissions were received on the draft statement.”

The statement has eight principles covering the relationship between the state and religions, the right to hold religious beliefs and be free from discrimination as well as media freedom, safety, education, co-operation and understanding.

While New Zealand has a history of religious tolerance—affirmed by Governor Hobson when the Treaty of Waitangi was signed in 1840—such a statement was increasingly needed, he says.

“While Christianity is our largest faith, Christians only account for 52 percent of all New Zealanders and the country’s religious makeup is changing radically. More than a third of people hold no religion and groups such as Hindus and Muslims, while still relatively small in number, grew significantly between 2001 and 2006.

“Issues such as the wearing of burqa in court, the desecration of Jewish headstones and the publication of the Mohammad cartoons show how vital it is to have an agreed statement to help us navigate our way through these issues.”

Paul’s involvement has proven fertile ground for ongoing research and he will be presenting the results of his work at two international conferences this year.

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# Mussel study a winner

**For most of us, greenshell mussels are delicious seafood, but for one Victoria PhD student, they were the key to winning a national award.**

Dr Adele Whyte, along with three other Victoria PhD graduates, was awarded a National Māori Academic Excellence Award in March for her research on environmental toxicology in the shellfish.

Adele, who is affiliated to Ngāti Kahungunu and Te Whakatohea, says receiving the award at Turangawaewae Marae, near Ngaruawahia, was an amazing experience.

“To be acknowledged in front of my peers, prestigious Māori community members, academics and my tūpuna [ancestors], and to know that I am part of a new ‘wave’ of talented Māori PhD students coming through in a wide range of subjects, was an indescribable feeling.

“I’m so grateful to have had the support of my husband Jason and my whānau, friends, fellow Awhina mentors, the Māori support group Mai ki Poneke, and colleagues.”

The awards were inaugurated in 2001 to celebrate Māori academic excellence. Also receiving awards were Dr Danna Challies (Ngāti Whatua, Tainui), who studied memory distortion, Dr Wally Penetito, a Senior Lecturer in the School of Education Studies (Ngāti Haua, Ngāti Tamatera, Ngāti Raukawa), for his work on developing the relationship between Māori and Pākehā, and in absentia Dr Wharehuia Hemara (Tūhoe), who studied the historical, social and philosophical aspects of Māori engagement with traditional and contemporary education.

Adele is a mentor for Te Ropu Āwhina Putaio, Victoria’s mentoring scheme for Māori and Pacific undergraduate science students, and says the experience has been a privilege.

“In my years as a mentor in the School of Biological Sciences I’ve seen a large growth in the number of Māori students doing Honours, Master’s and particularly PhD-level research in our School. I’m really excited to have been part of this growth and I know that in the future Victoria is going to have a strong presence at these awards.”

Pro Vice-Chancellor (Māori), Professor Piri Sciascia, says it was wonderful to see the graduates’ success recognised.

“It takes a special person to combine a commitment to fostering education in the Māori and Pacific communities with completing a PhD, and it’s those qualities that were recognised in the awards.”

Adele decided to study greenshell mussels for her PhD at the suggestion of her whānau in Hawke’s Bay who were concerned about pollution of kaimoana areas.

There’s similar concern in the Bay of Islands, with mercury and cadmium from geothermal sources present in the Waitangi River. Environmental Science and Research scientists were performing research in the area at the time, and Adele was invited to collaborate with the organisation.

She conducted laboratory tests, dosing ‘clean’ mussels with cadmium and mercury to see if certain proteins in the mussels were associated with heavy metal ‘stress’ and compared the results with mussels found in the field. Her tests included using fluorescent dyes to measure and compare the abundance of each protein. Using protein profiling and gene sequencing techniques, Adele found several unique markers of heavy metal toxicity that could be useful for environmental monitoring.

“However, in this case it turned out that all the individual metal measurements were below the standards set by the Food Safety Authority, making the mussels safe to eat. I’d have really liked to follow up these studies with research on other field study sites, different toxicants and different species—but maybe that can come later.”

*“...to know that I am part of a new ‘wave’ of talented Māori PhD students coming through in a wide range of subjects, was an indescribable feeling.”*



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# Politics & Policy

If you are interested in sharing your views or supporting Victoria on issues of tertiary education politics and policy, contact us. Email: [Tertiary-Policy@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:Tertiary-Policy@vuw.ac.nz) Tel: +64-4-463 5301.



## Victoria and the Tertiary Reforms

From Vice-Chancellor, Professor Pat Walsh

**Next year will bring substantial changes to the way Victoria, along with all universities in New Zealand, is funded, and to the ways that we plan and report on our Government-funded activities.**

Late last year the Minister for Tertiary Education, Dr Michael Cullen, released the 2007 to 2012 Tertiary Education Strategy, which included the priorities for 2008 to 2010. This highlighted that while the tertiary system as a whole had seen growth in participation, this had mainly been at lower levels, with participation in university level either staying the same, or in some cases, declining. Although a higher proportion of New Zealanders hold degrees than in 1998, Māori and Pasifika people have not enjoyed the same rate of increase. As well, compared with the rest of the OECD, we have relatively low rates of degree completions by age 25.

Amid obvious concerns that the existing system — with its emphasis on quantity rather than quality — has not supported different tertiary institutions in doing what they do best, the Government is introducing a system of three-year funding aimed at strengthening the distinctive contributions that universities and other institutions make to New Zealand's national economic and social goals. Across the tertiary sector, funding will be capped, presumably to avoid the proliferation of low level courses of dubious merit seen outside universities in recent years. In what is potentially a very welcome

move for Victoria, the three-year Investment Plan process is designed to support our research and provision of research-led undergraduate and postgraduate education of international quality.

In return for greater certainty of funding we will be expected to make a number of commitments. We will be expected to work with other universities and 'ensure an effective, high-quality network of university provision', to improve the success of Māori and Pasifika students, and to promote better understanding of the contribution that our research and teaching makes to economic growth and social development. We will need to demonstrate that we meet international benchmarks of quality and performance in what we do. None of this is unfamiliar to us, although the way we document our approaches and achievements may need greater emphasis.

We see considerable potential advantages in a system that recognises the distinctive contribution of universities, and helps to strengthen Victoria's already considerable achievements.

Shortly we will start discussing our Investment Plan with the Tertiary Education Commission. The plan will set out our intentions for the next three years, and the process is designed to provide funding for changes, improvements, or extensions in what we do. This will pose significant challenges. While three-year funding brings greater certainty for budgeting, with funding being capped, we can no longer rely on increases in student numbers above agreed levels to fund improvements in services and facilities for students and staff. We will also need to make choices between extending the influence of research and teaching in areas in which we are already exercising strong international leadership, or improving our performance in areas in which we are not, but should be.

I recently met with senior academic and administrative managers throughout the University and with staff on all four campuses, to outline some of the changes we will need to make to meet these new challenges. In an environment where funding is largely fixed, we need to take steps to reduce costs and improve revenue from other sources. We are initiating reviews of many of our academic and administrative processes as well as developing a new budgeting model. We are also making greater investment in our international recruitment activities. I am confident that these initiatives will place Victoria on a sound footing to deal with the new funding system. We have dedicated academic and general staff who are committed to continuing Victoria's proud tradition of delivering high-quality teaching and research. But it is essential to adapt to the new environment and do so on our terms, rather than allowing events to force them upon us.

*In what is potentially a very welcome move for Victoria, the three-year Investment Plan process is designed to support our research and our provision of research-led undergraduate and postgraduate education of international quality.*





# Learning @ Vic

If you are interested in finding out about the dynamic courses and qualifications offered by Victoria, contact our Course Advice team. Email: [Course-Advice@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:Course-Advice@vuw.ac.nz) Tel: 0800 VIC UNI.



**Robyn Langlands**

## A bright future

**Nine students have been awarded prestigious Bright Future Top Achiever Doctoral Scholarships worth almost \$1 million to study at Victoria or overseas. The scholarships recognise and reward New Zealand's best postgraduate students.**

One of six students to receive a Top Achiever Doctoral award to study at Victoria is Robyn Langlands, a student in the School of Psychology, who will research self-harm behaviours in adolescents and young adults.

Robyn says self-harm is a subject that has been under-researched in New Zealand. "This is a growing area which, anecdotally, we understand is increasing among young people. I want to find out why it happens and how it can be treated and build a picture of just how widespread the problem is in New Zealand."

Robyn's research will focus on young people already in clinical services who are getting treatment for mental health issues. The project will be intensive and she plans to talk to young adults and adolescents to discover their motivations for harming themselves. She's sure she will expose some of the popular misconceptions about this area of mental illness.

"The most common response to self-harm is that it is attention-seeking. Sometimes it is, but more

often that person needs help and trivialising their behaviour can make things worse. Another misconception is that people who hurt themselves are suicidal although this is often not the case. Self-harm can be a way of coping with suicidal thoughts."

Self-harm behaviour can vary in method and severity. It can range from pulling one's hair to cutting. Others burn or scald their body.

Robyn says winning the scholarship means she will be able to look in depth at a seldom studied and misunderstood behaviour.

"Ultimately I hope to find out what exactly is happening with people who self-harm. When we understand more about it, then we can look at effective ways of treating the behaviour and helping the young people involved."

In total the six Top Achiever Doctoral Scholarships are worth \$590,000. Bradley Anderson, a student in the School of Chemical & Physical Sciences, will investigate efficient new methods of converting petroleum and natural gas to valuable products using catalytic processes. Carl Benton, a student in the same School, will research and design a fully digital amplifier for audio applications, using a high-power switch-mode power supply; Gareth Prosser, a student in the School of Biological Sciences, will investigate the characterisation of novel bacterial enzymes that activate chemotherapeutic pro-drugs, whilst Lauren Christie, a student in the School of Architecture, will research how to communicate sustainability and create a culture for sustainable homes in New Zealand. Susan Liebich, a student in the School of History, Philosophy, Political Science & International Relations, will undertake research on book markets and reading culture in the British World and New Zealand from 1890 to the 1950s.

As well, three Victoria students received scholarships worth more than \$380,000 in total to study at overseas universities. Terence Green, who holds an MA from Victoria, will undertake research at Columbia University in the United States on the politics of evolution and how evolutionary theory changed political theory in Britain from 1850-1914. John Dennison, who holds a BA(Hons) from Victoria in English, will carry out research at St Andrew's University in Scotland on poetic redress and negotiations of political conflict in the poetry of Seamus Heaney. Anna Smaill, who holds an MA in Creative Writing from Victoria, will investigate self and impersonality in contemporary poetry at University College London.

*"This is a growing area which, anecdotally, we understand is increasing among young people. I want to find out why it happens and how it can be treated and build a picture of just how widespread the problem is in New Zealand."*

### Contact

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**Gabriel (left) and Fatma at work in the engineering laboratory**

hardware rather than one that involved going into a business and sorting out their computing needs.”

Gabriel Mambila (28), from the Congo, wants to follow his father into a career in software engineering. “There are more career options and the demand for graduates with computer engineering qualifications is growing in Africa.”

Fatma Al Shezawi (20), who received a scholarship from the Government of Oman to study in New Zealand, is also aiming to major in software engineering. “Software engineering is required back home. Also, I am so interested in it.”

Professor Warwick Clegg, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Information Technology), is not surprised by the high demand. “Electronic and computer-based systems contribute increasingly to our creativity, communications, entertainment and well-being, so the demand, both nationally and internationally, for high-quality engineering graduates is continuing to grow.

“Our four-year programme focuses on the design and implementation of real-world systems, and gives an essential grounding in business and management skills. As part of the degree students have a work placement in a relevant industry and this, along with a group project in the third year and an industry-driven project in the fourth year, gives real-life experience with practical aspects of engineering design and development.”

Warwick says the new degree will lead to a wide range of careers including electronics, robot design, systems development, hardware development, programming, systems management, and research.

## New degree, future opportunities

**Victoria’s new Bachelor of Engineering programme has proven a hit with students with more than 100 enrolled in its first offering—far more than expected.**

The degree programme replaces the Bachelor of Information Technology and Bachelor of Science (Technology) degrees and offers specialisations in computer system, electronic, network and software engineering.

### Contact

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Chris McKenzie (19), who plans to major in network engineering, says he enrolled in the programme because of its computing focus. “I wanted a degree programme that focused on the technical side and the



## Outward bound

**A chance to fulfil a long-held dream was Mahina-a-rangi Baker’s motivation for applying for a scholarship to attend an Outward Bound course, but what she got was more than she’d dreamed it would be.**

Mahina had wanted to do Outward Bound since high school. “Gaining the University’s Outward Bound Scholarship was incredibly exciting. I was

thrilled to finally be able to do something I had been longing to do for such a long time.”

The course, held in February, consisted of a range of physical and mental challenges. Based on the Anakiwa Campus in Marlborough, students went on outdoor activities lasting between one and three days and Mahina spent three weeks on tramping, sailing, kayaking, community service and solo bush trips.

“I’m usually a person who follows a tight schedule, and committing to going to Outward Bound was like giving in to the inner child that just wants to run without having its hand held. Having no idea what I was going to be doing the next day for three weeks was perhaps the fundamental challenge for me in the course.”

Mahina, who is studying toward a BA and BSc, believes the different learning styles she encountered will help her to improve her learning relationships with the students she tutors and mentors.

“I know I can give everything I have to being a good student, friend and human being. I’ve learnt that rather than wasting time, effort and happiness stressing about challenges further down the track, I can take each day’s challenges as they come and keep tomorrow’s battles from my mind, and enjoy taking pleasures in the small joys of everyday life.”

The Scholarships were established last year to raise the awareness of Outward Bound among Victoria’s students, highlighting it as a part of modern tertiary education.



## Windows of opportunity

Microsoft is one of those brands that most of us encounter every day. One Victoria student, however, is more familiar than most with it.

Matt Duignan, a Victoria student completing his PhD in computer science, is heading to Seattle in October to work full-time for the company.

“I was a visiting scholar at the Human Oriented Laboratory in Ottawa, Canada, when an email came around inviting students to apply for internships as ‘usability engineers’. I applied, flew to Seattle for a gruelling series of interviews, problem-solving tasks and presentations and was accepted.”

The three-month job involved working in the Microsoft Experience User Research team at a stage when Microsoft Vista was being tested. Groups of ordinary users performed various computing tasks in laboratories, observed by the team. From the study, Microsoft could gauge what users would have difficulty doing and take steps to make sure the program was easier to use.

An idea of Matt’s to make Vista’s new search functions more user-friendly was accepted and



appears in the finished programme. When Matt finished the internship, he was invited to join Microsoft full-time.

He says he likes the fact that it isn’t a stereotypical computer job. “What really attracted me to the role was the fact that there’s so much human contact—you’re constantly working with other people. It’s not about just sitting alone at a desk writing code.”

In the future, Matt’s keen to write software for creative professionals; his PhD is on software tools that can be used by people to compose music. But for now, he’s looking forward to the new opportunities in the United States.

“It’s an awesome opportunity to impact millions of people and their experience of the software.”

## Highly strung

The Tasman String Quartet, the resident graduate quartet in the New Zealand School of Music, has been awarded an unprecedented opportunity to study with one of the world’s premier quartets.

The group has been accepted for further study with the Takács Quartet, based at the University of Colorado in Boulder. Formed in 1975 in Hungary and based in Colorado since 1983, the Takács Quartet has won a string of international awards, and the Tasman String Quartet will begin a two-year course of study in August on full scholarship as the resident student ensemble.

Anna van der Zee, the quartet’s first violinist, says it is a dream come true. “To study with one of the world’s leading string quartets, the Takács Quartet, is an opportunity of a lifetime. Being the graduate string quartet in residence has helped us achieve our goals. We have been able to focus on our work and it has kick-started our career as a quartet.”

The four young musicians involved—Anna, James Andrewes, Miranda Wilson and Christiaan van der Zee—are not the only proof of the success of the Graduate String Quartet Residency. Last year’s quartet won the Royal Overseas League Scholarship to play and study in Britain. It’s the first programme of its kind to be offered



in New Zealand and is supervised by the New Zealand String Quartet (NZSQ).

Helene Pohl, of the NZSQ, says the idea is to offer mentoring to advanced music students.

“The programme is a jumping-off point for young professional string quartets. It offers them intensive lessons and an opportunity to focus completely on their advancement as a chamber group. So far the programme has succeeded beyond our wildest dreams. I’d like this initiative to spread the news about chamber music around the country. I dream of a string quartet in every town.”

The New Zealand School of Music is a centre of musical excellence established by Victoria and Massey universities in 2005.

From left, Miranda, James, Anna and Christiaan.

### Contact

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## Who's new?



### *Miriam Lips*

Professor Miriam Lips has been appointed as the inaugural Chair in E-Government at Victoria, one of the first such positions in the world. Miriam was previously a Research Fellow at Oxford University's Internet Institute and an Associate Professor in the Tilburg Institute for Law, Technology & Society at Tilburg University in The Netherlands. Miriam, who holds a PhD and Master of Public Administration degree from Erasmus University Rotterdam, holds leading roles on several major research projects for the European Commission, the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research and the British Economic & Social Research Council. In addition to e-government, Dr Lips' research and teaching interests include identity management, digital citizenship, personalisation, internet governance, regulation in the information society and public management. The Chair has been supported by the State Services Commission and Datacom, which are co-sponsoring the position through the Victoria University Foundation.



### *Brian Moloughney*

Professor Brian Moloughney joined Victoria this year as Head of the School of Asian & European Languages & Cultures. He completed his PhD at the Australian National University in Canberra before spending several years studying in China and then joining the University of Otago in 1993. Brian is an historian of China whose teaching and research stretch the boundaries of both the discipline and his chosen field. Recent publications, for instance, include an examination of the role of Asia in the colonial culture of the southern half of the South Island and a discussion of the world of the Australian novelist Brian Castro. The key focus of his work is on the late imperial-early republican period in China, with a particular concern for issues of historiography, narrative and auto/biographical writing. He is the President of the New Zealand Asian Studies Society and former editor of the *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies*.



### *Tony Smith*

Professor Tony Smith was appointed as Pro Vice-Chancellor (Government Relations) and Dean of Law in October 2006, having previously been Professor of Criminal Law and Public Law at the University of Cambridge and a Fellow of Gonville and Caius College. Tony obtained his LLM with First Class Honours from the University of Canterbury in 1972, and was admitted as a Barrister and Solicitor of the High Court in 1979. In 1990 he was admitted as Barrister (Middle Temple) in Britain and in 2000 as Honorary Bencher (Middle Temple). His Doctor of Laws was awarded by Cambridge on the basis of his published works. He has previously served as Chairman of Cambridge's Faculty of Law and Chairman of the Heads of the Association of University Law Schools. Tony has published extensively and his research interests include criminal law and justice, judicial development and codification, constitutional law and its overlap with criminal law, civil liberties and freedom of speech.



### *Christina Barton*

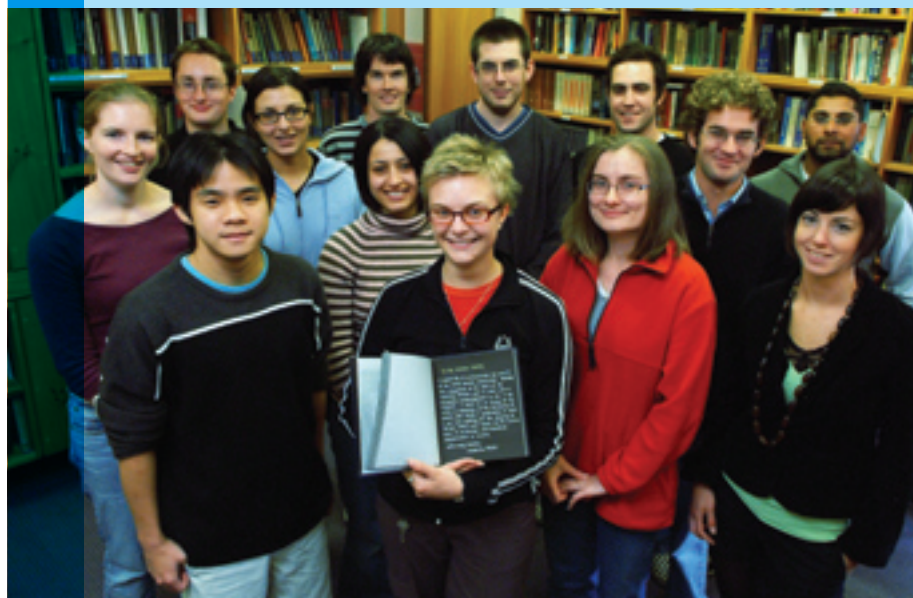
Christina Barton has been appointed as Director of the Adam Art Gallery, having previously been a Senior Lecturer and Art History programme director in the School of Art History, Classics & Religious Studies. Her teaching and research interests focus on contemporary New Zealand art, the critical frameworks of art, curatorial practice, contemporary art theory, and art history methodology. Since completing her MA in 1987 at the University of Auckland on the history of post-object art in New Zealand (1969-1979), she has had a productive career as a curator at the Auckland Art Gallery (1988-1992) and the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, (1992-1994). Since taking up her position at Victoria in 1995 she has remained active as a curator, maintaining strong networks with artists and institutions. She is sought after as an art writer and commentator, particularly on contemporary New Zealand art. In her new position, Christina will contribute to the Art History teaching programme and maintain her research activities.





# Gifting

If you are interested in supporting students and staff with a donation of funds, resources or time, we'd like to hear from you. For financial contributions contact the Victoria University of Wellington Foundation Executive Director, Tricia Walbridge. Email: [Tricia.Walbridge@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:Tricia.Walbridge@vuw.ac.nz) Tel: +64-4-463 5109.



## Lasting tribute

**While alumnus Gerry Gordon died 18 months ago, his generous support for Victoria's chemistry programme over many years will ensure he is long remembered by the University's postgraduate students.**

Gerry graduated with an MSc(Hons) in Inorganic Chemistry in 1965, and Emeritus Professor Neil Curtis says he retained a strong interest in the Chemistry programme, which is now part of the School of Chemical & Physical Sciences.

"He would always visit me when he was passing through town and was always interested in what was going on. Even when he left New Zealand, he continued to keep in touch."

Gerry spent several years working in the cement industry on the West Coast and in Australia before moving to Texas where he worked, and later bought a chemical admixtures company that evolved into Monex Resources Ltd.

Neil says Gerry was a leader in the use of fly ash as a cement additive. Fly ash is a fine dust created when coal is burnt in power stations or when clay is heated with coal to produce cement.

"These companies were required by environmental agencies to collect and dispose of the tonnes of ash they generated and they paid Gerry's company to take it off their hands. His company turned it into a cement additive that not only put to use a waste product, but also made the concrete stronger."

Professor Jim Johnston says Gerry believed his time at Victoria had been the key to his success.

"When the School was going through a difficult time in the late 90s, he offered to help and made a significant donation to the Victoria Foundation to allow for scholarships for postgraduate

chemistry students. He believed his time with us had helped make him a successful businessman and he wanted to give something back to his alma mater. He also wanted to raise the profile of chemistry and encourage students into postgraduate study."

The result was the Curtis-Gordon Scholarships, which Gerry insisted be also named after his mentor, Neil. Some 74 students have received them, with some receiving a number of grants over several years. One of the earliest recipients, Dr Lyndon West, co-discovered a potential anti-cancer agent, Peloruside A, which is undergoing pre-clinical trials in the United States.

With his death in February 2006 aged just 64, Gerry left a bequest in his Will that brings the endowed fund up to about \$800,000.

One scholarship recipient, PhD candidate Wendy Popplewell, says the support she's received has been invaluable.

"Certainly in my Honours year, the Curtis-Gordon Scholarship was my sole additional money apart from working as a demonstrator in the School and it paid for the vast majority of my fees. It was certainly a great help in getting through."

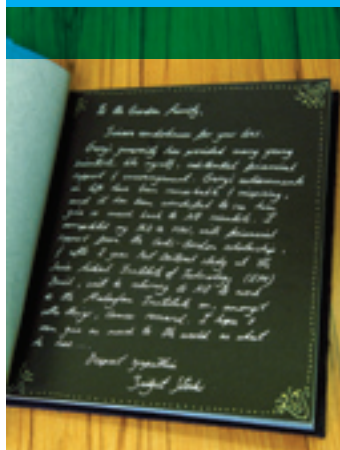
Wendy says she's also used the Scholarship to assist with her PhD research. "I'm investigating novel bioactive compounds in New Zealand marine red algae that could be used, for example, as anti-cancer or anti-bacterial agents, so I used the funds to buy scuba gear as we do our own sample collecting."

Gerry, and his wife Eileen, were very caring people, she says. "He was a lovely guy. I remember when he visited one time, he got as many recipients together as possible and took us for a cruise around Wellington Harbour in his launch. He was a really down-to-earth person."

As a mark of respect, Wendy organised a memorial book that was signed by most past and present scholarship recipients, some from all over the world, and sent to Eileen after Gerry's death.

**Top: Wendy, centre, and other scholarship recipients with the memorial book.**

**Top right and below: The memorial book.**



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## Tipping point

A major \$1.8 million feature film on climate change that aims to continue what Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth* started, is in production and will showcase Victoria's Antarctic Research Centre.

Simon Lamb (pictured), Lecturer in Earth Sciences at Oxford University, is at Victoria on a three-year Fellowship in Science Communication and will spend his time making the film, which has the working title *The Tipping Point*.

"We want to tell the story of the biggest problem facing the world today—global warming, through the eyes and voices of the scientists who know the situation best. The purpose of this film is to help

people understand the science underpinning climate change and explore what's likely to happen next."

Simon is working with renowned film-maker David Singleton of DOX Productions. They are currently raising funds for the film which they hope will be jointly financed in New Zealand and Britain.

Tricia Walbridge, Executive Director of the Victoria University Foundation, says the Foundation will help with the fundraising. "We would be keen to hear from a range of companies and individuals with environmental interests or concerns that want to be involved in what is likely to become a highly publicised project."

Simon says the collaboration between film makers and scientists from Victoria and Oxford universities, is unique.

"Having universities involved in a feature film is unusual but means we have blue-chip science underlining all that we do. When we head to Antarctica we'll be featuring the work of Tim Naish and Nancy Bertler, both staff in the Antarctic Research Centre."

Simon believes there's no time to lose as the problems can only get worse and that we are currently at a 'tipping point' where action is needed.

"These are big problems which need big solutions. But this won't be a message of doom and gloom it will be one of hope and optimism told by the people who are working hard to do something about it."

### Contact

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## It started with a good Kiwi vintage

An American couple from Portland, Oregon are the force and the funding behind five undergraduate scholarships at Victoria, and they have plans to provide a further five.

So how did Bob and Timi Morey who have never studied at Victoria, but love New Zealand, come to get involved? Bob says it all started with a bottle of New Zealand wine.

"I went to see an old friend in Las Vegas I hadn't seen for some 20 years and I took him a bottle of New Zealand's finest. We got talking about the country and he mentioned his connection with Glenn Schaeffer."

Glenn Schaeffer is the founder and benefactor of Victoria's International Institute of Modern Letters and he set a challenge gift for the Institute in 2000 with a deadline of December 2005. Enter Bob and Timi—by chance Bob happened to come across Glenn's Challenge online and he couldn't resist the gauntlet thrown down. Since then he and Timi, who divide their time between Portland and Napier in Hawke's Bay, have got more involved with Victoria.

"We are very impressed with what the University provides for the country and the community and we think it's a worthy cause. Our scholarships are based on achievement and needs. They can be in any discipline from literature to physics and beyond. Our contribution is to the education of a great country."

Tricia Walbridge, Executive Director of the Victoria University Foundation, says the importance of donors cannot be underestimated.

"The Foundation is indebted to people like Bob and Timi who appreciate where the University's need for private support is particularly great, such as scholarships for second-year students, and who also help us to secure other private donations by helping us meet the challenges set by these donors."

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# Alumni News

To keep in touch with University friends, meet new people and continue to participate in the stimulating intellectual and cultural life of Victoria, contact the Alumni Relations Office. Email: [Alumni@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:Alumni@vuw.ac.nz) Tel: +64-4-463 6700 [www.victoria.ac.nz/alumni](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/alumni)



## Watching rugby

With the next Rugby World Cup less than six months' away, a new book and website by Victoria alumnus Spiro Zavos will be top of the reading list for football aficionados.

Zavos, who holds a BA, MA and Diploma of Education from Victoria, has just launched his new book, *Watching the Rugby World* (Allen and Unwin), and a new website.

### Contact

[www.theroar.com.au](http://www.theroar.com.au)

"It's a sequel, in a sense, to *How To Watch A Game Of Rugby* which was published by Awa Press. This book is a memoir of my experiences of the tournament since 1987—when New Zealand last won the Cup—as well as examining the history of rugby in France."

A feature of the book is a detailed analysis of the major teams and their chances of winning the tournament. "I've presented the information in such a way that the reader can become a detective and find clues to solve the mystery of who is going to win."

Spiro, who lives in Sydney, says the sports website is published and edited by his two sons.

"There is a great deal of information and interesting opinion out in the community that never gets beyond the front room or the bar. We have provided a forum for this opinion. During the Cup I'll publish a blog, which is an experience I'm looking forward to."

Alumni in Sydney will have the opportunity to meet Spiro when he speaks at the Alumni Reunion Function on June 27.

Spiro says Ron Jarden was one of his favourite players to come from Victoria. "The sight of Jarden, chest puffed out, massive thighs pumping hard, racing directly at the sidelines and then turning the corner and speeding away for a try, was one of the great sights at Athletic Park in the 50s."

## Victoria Events

### Life after Vic E-News

Get the latest word on alumni news, events and activities at Victoria by subscribing to our new email newsletter, sent monthly to New Zealand resident alumni. Join online by updating your details in the *Life after Vic* box at [www.victoria.ac.nz/alumni](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/alumni) or email us on [alumni@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:alumni@vuw.ac.nz).

Alumni and Friends of the University are warmly invited to the following events.

### 2007 Life after Vic functions

Christchurch 20 June  
Sydney 27 June  
Melbourne 28 June  
Napier 19 July  
Hamilton 24 July  
Auckland 15 August  
Hong Kong 25 August  
Shanghai 26 August  
Beijing 27 August  
Germany 10 September  
New York 17 October

Life after Vic functions are an opportunity to meet with other alumni, friends and staff. It is also a great way to learn of current activity and future plans for the University.

For more information and to register for a function please visit the alumni website. The Christchurch, Napier, Hamilton and Auckland functions coincide with information evenings for new and prospective students, which follow the alumni function. Alumni wishing to introduce friends or family to the idea of studying at Victoria are welcome to bring guests to the function and then continue on to the information evening.

### Inaugural Lecture series

Victoria's newest professors are presenting a series of lectures throughout 2007. They are usually held on a Tuesday at 6pm. Forthcoming lectures include those from: Professor of New Zealand Studies, Richard Hill (10 July); Professor of Law, Gordon Anderson (7 August); Professor of Political Science, Elizabeth McLeay (18 September); Professor of Accountancy, Kevin Holmes (25 September); Professor of Education, Luanna Meyer (9 October); Professor of Theatre, David Carnegie (6 November).

## Annual Alumni Dinner and Distinguished Alumni Awards

### 11 October

Come and meet friends and lecturers from your time at Victoria. This black tie event will be held at the Town Hall, where last year we nearly reached our capacity of 500 alumni and friends. Who will be recognised in this year's Distinguished Alumni Awards? For more information visit the alumni website.

### Antarctic Study Tour

### February 2008

Professor Peter Barrett, Director of the Antarctic Research Centre, is leading a once-in-a-lifetime adventure and exciting study tour to the Antarctic peninsula in February 2008. A tour brochure with further details is available from the Centre for Continuing Education & Executive Development at [ceed@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:ceed@vuw.ac.nz)

### Contact

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[www.victoria.ac.nz/alumni](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/alumni)  
[www.victoria.ac.nz/events](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/events)

# Forty under 40

From Matthew Reweti-Gould, Alumni Relations Manager

The desired attributes of a Victoria graduate are leadership, creative and critical thinking, and communication skills. Victoria honours alumni and other friends of the University who display these qualities through honorary doctorates, Hunter Fellowships and our Distinguished Alumni Awards.

But what I noticed was that most alumni recognised in these ways are profiled later in their career and there are many graduates who are making their mark earlier. So instead of our regular Life after Vic column, where we highlight five graduates, I decided to select 40 Alumni Under 40.

The criteria for this list was broad and inclusive and I was looking for alumni who are influential or have the potential to influence. Nominations came from university staff, employers, colleagues and family members. For example, Elizabeth Hislop has just completed her degree. Yet one lecturer felt compelled to single her out. The list is not scientific and it is not definitive. If you believe there are other equally worthy alumni please contact the Alumni Relations Office and tell us. You can read more detailed profiles of many in this list on the alumni website: [www.victoria.ac.nz/alumni](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/alumni)

## Hinemoana Baker

DipMaori 1994, BA 1995, MA, 2003

Hinemoana is a poet, musician, writer and performer, and produced a radio series on Māori instruments with Richard Nunns for Concert FM.

## Angela Ballantyne BSc 2000

Angela has established an academic career in Bioethics. In 2007/08 she will be a visiting scholar at Yale University. Her current work is in ethical issues related to the procurement of human embryos and eggs for stem cell research.

## Claudia Batten BCA 1996, LLB(Hons) 1999

Claudia was part of the founding team of Massive Inc, the first video game advertising network. The Massive Network delivers real-time advertising in video games, enabling advertisers to access the 'Young Male' demographic who are increasingly difficult to target through traditional media. Massive was bought by Microsoft in May 2006.

## David Bennett LLB(Hons), BCA 1996

David is the National Party MP for Hamilton East, with particular interest in issues of education, economic and transport.

## Alexander Blades

BA 1993, LLB(Hons) 1994

Alexander is a merchant banker in New York with experience at prestigious law firms. He is also a director of the United States Friends of Victoria University of Wellington, the University's US charitable foundation.

## Sasha Calhoun BA, BA(Hons) 2001

Sasha is forging an academic career in linguistics at the University of Edinburgh. Her research has practical applications, such as speech synthesis and in the computational design of voice recognition systems. In September Sasha will be the visiting Ian Gordon Postdoctoral Fellow at Victoria.

## Catherine Chidgey

BA 1992, BA(Hons) 1993, BSc 1993, MA 1998



Professor Bill Manhire, Director of Victoria's International Institute of Modern Letters, compared Catherine's writing to musicians with perfect pitch. "Catherine Chidgey's novels have this quality on the page. Her sentences are made of words that sing." *The Listener*, also named Catherine as New Zealand's top novelist under 40. Her three novels, *In a Fishbone Church* (1998), *Golden Deeds* (2000), and *The Transformation* (2003) have garnered critical acclaim and popular success in New Zealand and overseas. She has received book awards, scholarships and fellowships, including the prestigious Prize in Modern Letters in 2002 and the 2005 Robert Burns Fellowship to assist with her forthcoming novel. She held the Meridian Energy Katherine Mansfield Memorial Fellowship to Menton, France, in 2001. Next year Catherine will take up the Rathcoola Residency in County Cork, Ireland.

## Ursula Cochran

BSc 1995, BSc(Hons) 1995, PhD 2002

Ursula, a paleo-ecologist and geologist with the Institute of Geological & Nuclear Sciences, drills into remnants of the past for a greater understanding of earthquakes and tsunamis.

## Matthew Duignan BA 2001, MSc 2006

Matthew is completing PhD in computer science. He interned at Microsoft in 2006, recommending changes to the Vista user interface. He will return to work at Microsoft in October.

## Mark Dossor BCA 1990

Managing partner and co-founder of Endeavour Capital, a New Zealand venture capital manager with investments across biotechnology, software and medical sectors.

## Ahmad Fadzli Yaakob BCA 2000



At 29, Fazley (as he is known) is a pop star, a movie star, a television host, a motivational speaker and a Vice-President/Executive Director in his home country Malaysia. He received his BCA from Victoria in 2000 and returned to Malaysia to work as an auditor. From there his business achievements grew swiftly, as Fazley organised a pop concert at Royal Albert Hall, worked overseeing the Malaysian general elections, and became a director of the Putra World Trade Centre convention and exhibition venue in Kuala Lumpur. As a pop star writing his own material, Fazley has been placed highly in numerous competitions in Malaysia and the wider region, and was even one of *EH* magazine's 'Top 20 Gorgeous People' in 2002.

## Adrian Hailwood BDES 1997

Adrian is a rising fashion designer. Opening stores across the country, wowing crowds at Air New Zealand Fashion Week, and gaining international exposure in London & LA.

## Elizabeth Hislop

BCA, BBMEDS, BCA(Hons) 2006

Liz is a recent honours graduate who describes Dai Gilbertson's Entrepreneurship and Innovation Paper as "a total experience full of Socratic debate". One lecturer says "watch this alumna".

## Darren Hughes BA 1999

Labour MP for Otaki. Policy interests are regional development, small business, and modern apprenticeships. Darren is New Zealand's youngest MP and Junior Government Whip.

## Brendan Jarvis BCA 2005

Account Manager for Wellington design agency Chrometoaster. Brendan is also involved in the areas of succession planning and Web 2.0.

## Kapka Kassabova MA 1998

Poet, novelist and travel writer. Kapka, a graduate of Victoria's MA in Creative Writing programme, is an award winner with an international perspective and versatility.

## Arama Kukutai BCA 1989, LLB 1994

Managing Director at Finistere Ventures LLC, a venture capital firm based in San Diego, and Arama was Regional Director of NZ Trade & Enterprise operations in North America. Arama is also a Director of PKW Inc, a Māori-owned agri-business and investment corporation.

## Simone Lanham BA 1993

and Geoff Sewell BCA 1993

Wife-and-husband directors of Incognito



Artists, which provides entertainment worldwide in the form of tenors, divas and dancers. Pop-opera band 'Amici Forever' was their creation—Geoff was a founding member and Simone a co-manager. Amici had two No 1 albums in NZ and sold over two million albums worldwide. Geoff is due to record a solo album with the NZSO this year.

### Matthew Mallett BCA 1993, LLB 1995

Partner, Russell McVeagh, specialising in mergers and acquisitions. Matthew has considerable experience in corporate re-organisations, cross-border acquisitions, disposals, joint ventures and strategic alliances and receiverships, and advises both public and private companies on all aspects of corporate, contract and securities law.

### Toby Manhire BA 1996, BA(Hons) 1997

Editor of *The Guardian* comment pages and Associate Editor of 'Comment is free', the newspaper's collective group blog. Also a Radio NZ Nine to Noon correspondent.

### Lisa Marriott BCA(Hons) 2005, MBA 2002

Lisa is a PhD candidate studying comparative historical study of the taxation of retirement income savings in Australia and New Zealand. In 2005 she received a SPEAR Postgraduate Scholarship Award.

### Christian McCabe BCA 2001

Co-owner of Matterhorn bar, recently named fifth best bar in the world by *Bartender* magazine and follows being named best bar in New Zealand in 2006. Christian is also a contributing writer to *NZ Bartender*, he provides flavour-consultation in the Fast Moving Consumer Goods industry and continues to do postgraduate study at Victoria.

### Cameron Mehlhopt BA 1998, BCA, BSc 2004 and Jamie Howell BA 1998



The testimonial page of StarNow.com reads like a nascent celebrity's dream: "Within a month of joining I have already appeared on two television programmes for the BBC and Granada." The website, created by Cameron (pictured, right) and Jamie from an idea they had on their OE, now has more than 500,000 models, actors and musicians, all browsing the thousands of available roles available. This makes StarNow.com the largest talent-broker in the British market, and they have expanded operations to the United States, Canada, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. In 2006, the company received a further boost when it entered Creative HQ, Wellington's business incubator, and is at the forefront of New Zealand businesses making use of the 'network effect' to profit from vibrant online communities.

### Jeremy Mihaka-Dyer MPM 2006

Chief Executive Officer of the Lake Taupo Primary Health Organisation since 2005 and Director of Primary Health Organisations of New Zealand.

### Kirikowhai Mikaere BCA, BSc 2003

Kirikowhai works for Statistics New Zealand and is involved in creating outputs from the latest census data that will aid informed development and decision-making by Māori.

### Craig Parnham BCA 1992, BCA(Hons) 1993

General Manager, Customer Experience, Telstra Consumer & Channels (Sydney). A leader in telecommunications, Craig's credits include British Telecom's "BT Fusion" hybrid broadband-mobile phone and the development and launch of a pan-European virtual mobile phone network. At present he is responsible for defining and implementing marketing strategies for a Telstra business unit that delivers over \$1.4 billion in annual revenues.

### Madeleine Pierard

BMUS 2005, BMUS(Hons) 2006

Mezzo-soprano, 2005 Lexus Song Quest winner. She is now studying at the Royal College of Music, London and secured two operatic roles for 2007. Madeleine will make a solo recording with the NZSO this year.

### Simon Power BA 1992, LLB 1994



Since entering Parliament as MP for Rangitikei in 1999, Simon has risen rapidly within the National Party and is now the fourth-ranked MP and the party's spokesman for Justice, Corrections and Commerce. He sits on the Law and Order, Commerce, and Privileges Select Committees, the latter as Chair. His experience on committees dates from his years at Victoria studying Politics and Law and as President of the Victoria University Law Students' Society for two years. After study he worked for the law firm Fitzherbert Rowe in his hometown Palmerston North, and for Kensington Swan in Auckland. Not surprisingly, his goal is to win the 2008 election and take a Cabinet post in a new National-led government.

### Steven Price BA 1992, LLB(Hons) 1992

Steven is a law lecturer, a media commentator and spokesperson for the Coalition for Open Government. Steven has also provided legal advice to Nicky Hager's books, *The Seeds of Distrust* and *The Hollow Men*.

### Lauren Quaintance BA 1995

Lauren has had a swift journey to the top of journalism since leaving Victoria. As well as completing a journalism qualification at



Columbia University, she worked for *The New Zealand Herald*, *North & South*, *Sunday Star Times*, *Britain's Sunday Times*, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, and as assistant editor of the (sydney) magazine. Along the way Lauren earned two Qantas Media Awards, and fellowships to Oxford and the US. She returned to New Zealand to be editor of Auckland's *Metro* magazine, fulfilling her career goal of editing a New Zealand current affairs magazine at just 33. In the future Lauren would like to use her skills to write a non-fiction book, but for now her priorities are returning an Auckland focus to *Metro* and attracting a new generation of readers.

### Sarah Reo BA 1995, LLB 1998 and Jason Fox BA 1994, LLB 1995

Co-founders of Cultureflow, a system for introducing beginners to Māori language, endorsed by the Māori Language Commission and in wide use through the public service.

### Fiona Rigby MLIS 2000

Fiona has led EPIC (Electronic Purchasing in Collaboration) a system that has enabled almost 200 New Zealand libraries to buy access to electronic resources that many would not have been able to afford on their own.

### Andrew Scott-Howman BCA 1991 LLB 1992

Partner at Bell Gully Wellington, expert in employment law. Andrew was recently appointed by the New Zealand Law Society to its Employment Law Committee.

### Carl Shuker MA 2003

Carl's novel *The Method Actors* was the first debut work to win the prestigious Prize in Modern Letters. His second novel, *The Lazy Boys*, was published in 2006 and he is now living in London working on third novel.

### Reweti Wiki BCA 2003

Deputy Executive Director of the Yurok Tribe, California, responsible for the tribal government's strategic direction.

### Nicola Willis BA, BA(Hons) 2003

Described by *The Dominion Post* "as the fast riser on the Key team". Since graduating Nicola has impressed and is now a senior adviser to the Leader of the Opposition, John Key.

### Mario Wynands BCA, BSc 1997

Co-founder of Sidhe Interactive, computer game developer with 65 staff and a multimillion dollar turnover. Co-founder and President of the New Zealand Game Developers Association, and past finalist in Ernst and Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award.



# Graduation

May's graduation saw more than 1,850 students graduate at six ceremonies. These successes included the conferment of 16 PhDs and two honorary doctorates.



## Children at play

**The German poet Schiller once wrote that “deep meaning lies often in childish play” and one Victoria student found this out for herself as she studied a group of children for her PhD research.**

Carly Butler, who graduated in May with a PhD in Psychology, spent a month in late 2003 at a Wellington primary school studying the children's interactions with one another.

“I acted in the classroom as a ‘helper’, and would watch the children from a distance. Sometimes I might play knucklebones—and I must have had my hair plaited a million times!”

The mother of a daughter at 18, Carly counts completing her PhD as one of her most significant accomplishments.

When she transcribed the recordings she made, a game called ‘Fairy Club’ emerged. This involved a group of children—mostly girls, but also some boys—who would spend lunchtimes together, with one child taking the role of the club's leader, or ‘teacher’ as she was known.

“The ‘teacher’ would send the kids off on different jobs. Some would do writing, some would do gardening, which was really just digging holes in the playground, and others would pull up certain plants because the milk in them was said to kill fairies.”

The ‘teacher’ also had helpers who could assist in ‘bossing the other children around’, and one boy took the role of the ‘witch’ who seemed to be there to challenge the authority of the ‘teacher’.

“I think what really struck me was the fact that the playground was the only place in these kids’ lives with no adult constraints, yet they seemed to really want to play with this model of authority and hierarchy.”

Carly thinks the club presented an opportunity for the children to experiment with social structures.

“After all, social structure is a fundamental part of our lives, and they were really just using the world as a tool for play.”

## The language of music

**Music is something that everyone relates to—but it's not often that it's the basis for a PhD thesis in management.**

Ralph Bathurst examined the relationship between composing, performing and listening to music and how organisations work, analysing the Auckland Philharmonia during a time of governance change. As a former orchestral musician, he wanted to integrate his experiences with organisational studies.

“An orchestra is a contradictory organisation—successful performance requires intense team work and creativity, as well as adherence to strict hierarchical management structures.”

The Auckland Philharmonia proved to be the perfect choice because of its co-operative governance structure, a structure that allowed the musicians themselves to take control of all aspects of their business, disrupting the on-stage system of chain-of-command with an off-stage egalitarianism.

To discover how this environment worked, Ralph conducted a study of the orchestra, attending concerts, management meetings, and spending time with the musicians in their rehearsal breaks. The research prompted him to develop a method that translates musical aesthetics into organisational research.

“When listening to music we experience a range of emotions and sensations. This initial stage of interaction, emotional attachment, soon leads us to question how the music is constructed—its form, harmonic structure and melodic themes. As a result our emotions become controlled by a more detached intellectual analysis known as ‘cognitive detachment’.

“Once you've studied the piece in detail, you can see the musical work in a new light and are able to use the information gained from analysing it to broaden your appreciation of the work. Hence what's called integrated synthesis, in which the listener's emotions are reawakened.”

Ralph used this aesthetic process to make sense of the language used by the musicians and business advisers as they tried to reach an agreement on the orchestra's structure. “It helped a lot in attending to the diverse ideas expressed by various stakeholder groups.”





## Honours awarded

From the film and television industry to the business of making and selling recreation vehicles, the two honorary doctorates awarded in the last six months recognise lifetimes of achievement.



Photography by Woolf

### John Barnett

**John Barnett received an honorary Doctor of Commerce degree for his contribution to New Zealand's film and television industry.**

He has been an independent producer since the mid-1970s and in the last 30 years has produced a host of television dramas, documentaries and feature films. Chief Executive of South Pacific Pictures since 1993, his output has ranged from comedies such as *Sione's Wedding* and *Middle Age Spread* and the animated hit, *Footrot Flats*, to dramas such as *Beyond Reasonable Doubt*, based on David Yallop's book that led to the enquiry that acquitted Arthur Allan Thomas of the Crewe murders, and New Zealand's longest-running soap opera, *Shortland Street*.

He produced the critically-acclaimed film, *Whale Rider*, adapted from the book of the same name by Victoria alumnus and fellow honorary doctorate recipient, Witi Ihimaera. In 2003, *Whale Rider* won numerous awards, including nine New Zealand Film & Television Awards, the audience awards at the Sundance Film Festival and San Francisco International Film Festival, and the British Academy of Film & Television Arts Children's Award for Best Feature Film.

John has been heavily involved in promoting New Zealand's film and television industry. The founder of the local industry magazine, *OnFilm*, he chaired the Independent Producers' & Directors' Guild from 1984 until 1988 and has served on the New Zealand Film Commission from 1989 to 1991 and again from 1998 to 2002, the Screen Production Industry Taskforce from 2002 until 2005 and, since 2005, the New Zealand Screen Council.

He has also looked to the industry's future needs and given exceptional support to Victoria University's International Institute of Modern Letters, leading the fundraising for the Michael Hirschfeld Directorship of Scriptwriting. The establishment of this position resulted in the introduction of the scriptwriting stream in the University's MA in Creative Writing. In November 2002, John was made the Screen Producers' & Directors' Association of New Zealand Industry Champion of the Year. Further recognition came in the following year with his appointment as an Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit.



### Wade Thompson

**Wade Thompson received an honorary Doctor of Commerce degree for his innovative management in developing the world's largest recreation vehicle (RV) company. The degree was awarded in absentia as he was unable to attend graduation.**

Wade graduated from Victoria with a Bachelor of Commerce in 1962 and a Master of Science in Retailing from New York University in 1965. In 1977 he bought Ohio-based Hi Lo Trailer Corporation and set about turning around its fortunes. In 1980, he and business partner Peter Orthwein founded Thor Industries by buying Airstream, the most renowned name in the RV industry. Despite its famous image, Airstream lost \$12 million in the year before its purchase but in its first year under Wade's management, it earned \$1 million—a \$13 million turnaround.

In 1984, Thor became a public company and, two years later was listed on the New York Stock Exchange. It is now the world's largest RV manufacturer and the United States' largest manufacturer of mid-sized buses, employing more than 9,000 people in 29 North American plants and generating sales of more than \$US3 billion.

Wade is a champion of shareholder rights and Thor Industries is a standard bearer for corporate integrity. The company operates from small New York offices while each of the company's divisions are encouraged to compete against each other, with the top managers down to many of the workers paid on their results rather than an hourly rate.

An active philanthropist and patron of the arts, Wade almost single-handedly led the efforts to save one of New York's most important landmarks, Park Avenue's Seventh Regiment Amory. He also founded the Drive Against Prostate Cancer campaign in 2000. Nearly 60,000 men have been given free screenings with an estimated 2,000 saved due to early detection.

In 2004, he agreed to participate and support the production of an educational documentary at Victoria featuring Thor Industries. *Open Road* has been shown to more than 1,800 Victoria students and to 10 business schools worldwide.



# Town & Gown

Take a look at the University's online database of varied and exciting events available to members of the University community at [www.victoria.ac.nz/events](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/events)



Te Whānau o Te Kura Māori kapa haka.

## Marae milestone

Both of Victoria's marae have now reached their 20-year milestones, with Akopai on the Karori Campus celebrating its anniversary in May.

The celebrations took place over a week of pōwhiri, speeches and gatherings and was described as a wonderful occasion by Rawiri Toia, Tumuaki (Head of School) of Te Kura Māori.

"It was fantastic to have the chance to bring together so many faces of Akopai's history, to see and hear the connections that so many have to the marae."

The establishment of a marae for the then Wellington College of Education was lobbied for from 1983 by Māori studies lecturers Amster Reedy, Keri Kaa, and Tipene O'Regan during the time of the late Principal Margaret Malcolm.

"Students insisted on the provision of a marae facility, seeing the availability of a marae as an acknowledgement of the Treaty of Waitangi and the College's commitment to it."

Many sites were discussed before deciding on its present place. Staff, students and community members provided many hours of voluntary work to help complete the building as it exists today.

The carvings were overseen by master carver, Clarence Takirirangi Smith, who was also the leader of the team that produced the carvings for Te Herenga Waka Marae on the Kelburn Campus.

The name for the marae, and the whare, Akopai, means to teach or learn well, Rawiri says.

It's used by a variety of groups, with the principal purpose to be a place of learning. As such, protocol is flexible depending on the preferences of who is using the whare and marae at a given time.

"Akopai is a place of strength for our staff and students, a place where we can all learn about our culture. We're looking forward to the next 20 years."



Simon Haxton

Phil and Jeremy Roundill and Matt Crop examine the new weed.

## BioBlitz breaks records

Ever considered spending the weekend looking for a new type of weed, mushroom or fish? That's exactly what 80 volunteers did one fine March weekend when they joined the Otari BioBlitz.

Led by Philip Garnock-Jones, Professor of Plant Science in the School of Biological Sciences, and the Science Director for the project, a collection of scientists and enthusiasts gathered at Wellington's

Otari Wilton's Bush to spend 24 hours discovering and listing as many species as possible. It may have been all in the name of science but it was also "heaps of fun" says Phil, and was part of a series of events to mark the reserve's centenary.

The team of scientists from Victoria and Massey universities as well as the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa and the Department of Conservation were not disappointed.

"We found a new type of mushroom, happily growing close to the Information Centre while another discovery was of a possible new species of cave weta. In the run up to the BioBlitz, I also found a tropical weed previously undiscovered in New Zealand. *Veronica javanica* is related to the native hebe, but we're not sure how it came to be at Otari.

"As well as new discoveries and the collation of valuable information for future use, the BioBlitz was also a great way of encouraging budding biologists. We were joined by some high school students who enthusiastically helped the team to compile information and the BioBlitz was a good way of raising the profile of taxonomy, the science of classification which is usually a pretty solitary activity."

Phil says the first BioBlitz at Otari Wilton's Bush was very successful. "The data collected held new records for the reserve and the analysis of the information will be an invaluable tool for the future management of the site."

### Contact

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# Pressing matters

Among its many treasures, Victoria boasts the oldest printing machine in New Zealand. The 1813 Stanhope iron press is one of only 16 left in the world and is the jewel in the crown of the Wai-te-ata Press.

In February the Wai-te-ata Press hosted the third Australasian Rare Book Summer School—a chance for experts and academics from across the region to get together and take part in intensive courses. It was also an opportunity for the Press to showcase its fine collection and expertise. Dr Sydney Shep, Senior Lecturer in Print & Book Culture and the Printer at the Wai-te-ata Press, says the Summer School was a chance to profile the Press and the University.

“We have the best equipped printery in the Southern Hemisphere. This was a chance to show how important Victoria is to books and printing. We ran four courses led by international experts and it was a big success enjoyed by all.”

One of the highlights of the Summer School was a course on printing on a hand press led by American fine press printer and printing historian, Gabriel Rummonds. Students had a chance to use the eighteen presses at Wai-te-ata, with the

highlight being the printing of a poem by Professor Bill Manhire, Director of Victoria’s International Institute of Modern Letters, chosen by Gabriel and handprinted by the students.

Sydney says that on the final day of the course, Bill helped print his poem.

“Bill has a particular interest in printing and has an affinity for the art but it was a unique experience. Printing is usually a pretty solitary process but having the writer with us—taking part in the printing of his work and then reading from the finished product—was a holistic and organic experience you don’t often get as a printer. In tribute to Bill, the ‘golden boy’, we printed the cover page in 22 carat gold leaf and it looked beautiful.”

The Wai-te-ata Press is a living museum where the presses are always available to be used by the wider community. Sydney encourages artists and designers to come see how printing used to be done, and have a go at producing some original work.

“We like our presses to be used and the process of hand printing is growing in popularity. The Summer School was inspiring, one student has already gone out bought his own press! Our enthusiasm for print and technology in all its forms is open to all.”

Bill gets to grips with the press.

## Contact

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# How would you like to be remembered?

For some of New Zealand's best and brightest, the only thing that stands in the way of their dreams is the lack of funds to make them real. By making a bequest to Victoria University, you can help to open those doors and allow these talented students to really excel.

You can choose to create a scholarship in a subject of your choice, direct it towards research or another specific project, or simply leave a gift to be shared in the future. Whichever you choose, it is a legacy that will be remembered forever.

If you'd like to know more about how to make a bequest to Victoria University, contact our Executive Director, Tricia Walbridge in confidence on 64 4 463 5109, via email at [vuw-foundation@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:vuw-foundation@vuw.ac.nz) or by mail at Victoria University Foundation, PO Box 600, Wellington, New Zealand.