

SPRING 2009

Victorious

MAGAZINE FOR FRIENDS AND ALUMNI OF VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

**Selling Te Papa to
the world**

Beyond prison bars

Language in the workplace



Harnessing Wellington's wind

Wellington has a less than flattering reputation for its wind, but the capital's breezy conditions are perfect for Victoria University researchers investigating the possibility of commercialising micro wind turbines.

Dr Chris Bumby, Foundation for Research, Science and Technology (FRST) Post Doctoral Research Fellow, says three micro turbines will eventually be erected on the roof of the Kelburn Campus' Laby Building to assess how much electrical power these rooftop turbines generate as a function of the incident wind speed.

"All three turbines should be in place by September. Our aim is to quantify how much power these very small turbines (less than 1.8m diameter and 1kW peak power) can generate in a Wellington rooftop setting."

Potentially, says Chris, such micro turbines could be mounted upon residential house rooftops and connected to the national grid. When the turbine generates more energy than a household is using, that excess energy could be exported into the national grid to be used by someone else.

The year-long study, a joint project with Meridian Energy subsidiary Right House, will focus on turbine performance in high wind conditions, as well as noise and vibration issues.

"We want to see how the power generation efficiency of the turbine changes when you place the turbine on a gusty roof and connect it to the electrical grid as opposed to a conventional battery charger."

Ultimately, the electronics module that enables the micro turbines to be connected to the grid could be commercialised for domestic use.

Chris says Wellington is an ideal location in which to trial the micro turbines, because it is one of the windiest cities in the world.

"The consistent wind speeds in Wellington make this a good city to study the possibility of maximising energy generation at high wind speeds."

Because the project is still in the early stages, data is not readily available but Chris is confident the project will yield interesting research.

"Micro turbine wind generators are not new technology, but the concept of using them in a grid-tied residential setting is novel and controversial. A key problem in many European cities is the lack of wind at house rooftop height, but Wellington has rather a lot of wind."

Along with Right House, which supplied the turbines and cabling, the project has received financial support from the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (EECA) and the Royal Society. Kent Hogan, the Head of Physics at Onslow College, has been awarded a Royal Society Teaching Fellowship to work full-time on the project for 12 months.



Chris Bumby (right) and Kent Hogan in front of their experimental micro wind turbine on the Laby Building rooftop

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From the Vice-Chancellor

So far this year I have hosted six alumni functions, including our third Distinguished Alumni Award dinner—photos of which you can see on page 14. I have met with alumni at functions in Malaysia, Singapore, New York, Berlin and London earlier this year.

At these functions I like to share some of the achievements of our students and academics. As you will read in this issue of *Victorious*, the work of Victoria University's academics and students is making a difference to people's lives. From research into different prison systems, or finding cures for gouty arthritis or strawberry birthmarks, to the world-class exhibitions at the Adam Art Gallery, Victoria plays a vital role in New Zealand's economic, social and cultural life.

We strive to provide the highest quality education to our students, even in the face of the current unstable economic climate. However, like all households, businesses and organisations, Victoria is looking at the best way to manage its resources in difficult financial times. I am grateful to our many stakeholders and alumni who support us with their time and money, allowing us to continue facilitating our students' skills in leadership, communication and critical and creative thinking.

We want as many people as possible to benefit from a university education, and later this year we will begin an ongoing process to encourage alumni to give back to Victoria in a way that is meaningful to them. This could be supporting scholarships for students in financial need, or making an untied gift to the Victoria Trust Fund, enabling us to take advantage of new strategic opportunities as they arise.

We are always looking at how we can improve the overall experience of our students. Our new Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic Penny Boumelha is leading the development of Victoria's Equity Strategy and you can read more about this on page 10.

Victoria is a research-led university with an international focus. Our role is vital to the economy as we turn out ground-breaking research and prepare New Zealand's next generation of skilled workers—and that is just what we will continue to do.

Professor Pat Walsh, Vice-Chancellor

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Understanding gouty arthritis



Willy-John Martin always knew he'd end up making a difference to other people's lives.

But the recent PhD graduate didn't imagine it would involve spending five years studying gouty arthritis, a particularly painful form of inflammatory arthritis that is three times more widespread in Māori and Pacific Island men than any other ethnic group in New Zealand.

"My passion is Māori health, which eventually led me to research this area that is such a big issue for Māori men," says Willy-John.

His research aimed to provide a clear model of the cellular events that occur during acute gout in humans.

"I wanted to gain a better understanding of the inflammatory processes that give rise to this incredibly painful disease," he says.

Originally from Hamilton, Willy-John first came to Victoria in 2002 to complete his Master of Science.

In 2004, he started his PhD in cellular biology at the Malaghan Institute of Medical Research, an independent research facility on Victoria's Kelburn Campus that undertakes research into cancer, asthma, arthritis, multiple sclerosis and infectious diseases.

"That's when I started my research into the role of macrophages (inflammatory cells) in gouty arthritis, which is caused when crystals called monosodium urate or MSU form in the joints. The acute form of gout is associated with sudden painful inflammatory episodes characterised by a large infiltration of

neutrophils (a type of white blood cell). Other inflammatory cells—monocytes and macrophages—are also recognised to be important, although the exact roles of monocytes and macrophages in gout need to be clarified."

Willy-John says he looked at how the inflammatory cells of the body turn on and off, and interact with each other during the development of acute gout.

"The results provide a clearer model of these cellular-based events in humans than previously achieved because of a lack of vivo-based studies."

Willy-John hopes to continue research into other health-related areas that interest Māori.

"Gout is just one disease in a group of related diseases termed 'Metabolic Syndrome' that are emerging as a major health concern. Type II diabetes and cardiovascular disease are also members of this group and are of interest to me in future research."

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Lecturing in Iran



Isolation is just one of the common features shared by New Zealand and Iran, says Victoria University Architecture lecturer and Wellington architect Sam Kebbell.

"We are isolated geographically and they are isolated politically. We have an empathy with each other."

Earlier this year, Sam was invited to be part of an international lecture programme aimed at bringing progressive architects to Iran from around the world.

A partner in architecture firm KebbellDaish, Sam delivered three lectures to contemporary architects about his company's work and strategies.

"They're not being taught contemporary architecture, so discussion about these issues is missing in Iranian society. They were really hungry for information."

Sam's lectures focused on the role architecture plays in demonstrating and affecting cultural values.

"All architecture is inevitably an expression of cultural values. Any building literally gives form to what is important, and not important, to its makers. It does this through the way it is

organised, the way it looks and the way it is made. Architecture must be produced, critiqued and understood at that level."

Sam, who completed his Master's at Harvard University, said he learnt a great deal about the issues facing progressive architects in a country with very different cultural conditions from our own.

"Being engaged with international cultural debate is essential for them to keep abreast of contemporary issues and trends."

Sam joins a roll-call of international architects in the lecture series, including well-known architects Atelier Bow-Wow from Japan, Spanish architect and educator Vincente Guallart, and former Harvard professor Nader Tehrani.

He says frank and open discussions of the type he experienced during his two-week trip to Iran are the key to producing good architecture.

"More discussion means more criticism and, ultimately, better buildings. If New Zealanders knew as much about architecture as they did about sport, we would have some of the greatest cities in the world."

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Minding your language in the workplace

Photo: TU MAI magazine

What makes an effective leader?

According to Professor Janet Holmes, it's a mixture of communication skills, humour and, in the New Zealand context, culturally appropriate language and actions.

The findings are part of a three-year study by Victoria University's Language in the Workplace team that focused on understanding what drives different styles of leadership in the workplace, particularly the language of leadership in Māori and Pākehā organisations.

Project Director Janet Holmes says the research, which was funded by a Marsden Grant and involved four Māori research assistants, as well as Māori advisers, highlighted the importance of communication skills for good leadership in New Zealand.

"This cross-cultural comparison looks at how ethnicity and culture influence people's use of language and patterns of interaction at work, as well as their leadership style, by analysing and comparing the language used by effective Māori and Pākehā leaders in different workplaces."

Four organisations were used as case studies—two oriented to creative media-type outputs, the other two oriented to knowledge work and negotiation. One in each industry was defined as having Māori goals, working for Māori people with tikanga (traditional customs and values) playing a key role in everyday operations.

Janet says while most previous research focused on surveys or reported data, this study took a different approach, recording and analysing the daily communication processes and strategies used by leaders.

"Staff volunteers agreed to carry a digital recorder and record everyday conversations for two weeks. There was no surreptitious recording; permission was sought from everyone involved."

Janet says the resulting data showed interesting similarities based on ethnicity and sector.

"Interactions in the two Māori organisations, for example, indicated an awareness of the importance of humility, and a tendency to emphasise the group over the individual. Additionally, interactions in the

organisations whose core business involved negotiation and consultation displayed a striking sense of equality among team members, compared with the two organisations whose work was more geared towards producing outputs."

The analysis also identified and demonstrated the importance of co-leadership, where the role of chair was often shared and different managers took responsibility for clarifying, developing or elaborating the organisation's vision and long-term goals on different occasions.

"The inclusion of Māori workplaces provided a basis for further enriching the notion of co-leadership by exploring how 'cultural leadership' plays an influential role in these organisations."

The research suggested another aspect of effective leadership is making use of strategic humour to achieve workplace goals, sometimes to emphasise solidarity and 'mateship' and at other times to soften directives or critical comment.

"The research in Māori workplaces shows that certain types of humour offer attractive strategies for leadership in ways well-suited to Māori values. Self-deprecating humour, for example, is highly compatible with humility, or whakaiti."

Janet says workplace meetings provided many examples of subtly different patterns of interaction.

"In Māori culture when someone is speaking, there is often a low level of murmuring, indicating not boredom or inattention, as it might in the Pākehā context, but rather engagement, as people express their reactions to what the speaker is saying. In one Māori organisation, a recently appointed Pākehā complained that staff weren't listening attentively when he presented his report, until a colleague explained to him that Māori rules of speaking prevailed in that particular workplace."

Janet says the team's research had sparked considerable international interest and the findings will be published next year by Oxford University Press in a book entitled *Leadership, Discourse and Ethnicity*.

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Language Learning Centre scoops award

Victoria University's state-of-the-art Language Learning Centre (LLC) has taken top honours in the prestigious International Association for Language Learning Technology (IALLT) Showcase Award 2009.

Edith Paillat, the Centre's Language Technology Specialist, says the LLC beat out several other global entries with a 10-minute video documentary that showcased innovative applications in language learning and teaching. "It's a great honour to be internationally recognised in this way," says Edith.

"I believe the judges were impressed with our facilities and resources, and our use of emerging language technology to support the teaching and learning of numerous languages at Victoria, including New Zealand Sign Language."

IALLT is a global body that keeps language teachers and administrators up to date on language technology advances and environments around the world.

The LLC's winning video provides a tour of the language centre with narration by staff members and includes participation by users. As a result of the win, it will be distributed on DVD as an example of good practice to educational institutions interested in establishing or refurbishing a language centre.

According to Michelle Brown of SANS Oceania, vendor of the language lab software featured in the video, the LLC sets the standard for the creative use of technology in language learning.

"We are delighted that Edith has been recognised for her hard work in providing so many creative options for language teachers at Victoria University," says Michelle.

The LLC features two state-of-the-art classrooms for language teaching and self-access spaces for language practice, satellite viewing and quiet study.

"The LLC certainly anticipates remaining central to the student language learning experience and we strive to facilitate their learning process as best as we can by offering computer training and support to language teaching staff," says Edith.

To view the Language Learning Centre's award-winning video, visit www.victoria.ac.nz/llc/showcase/showcase2.html

Laying down the law



Tony Angelo had no intention of becoming a lawyer.

Instead the professor, who recently notched up 40 years with Victoria's legal faculty, had his heart set on becoming an interpreter.

"My first love was languages. But a career adviser told me there was no money in it and if I wanted to support a family, then I should study a commercial subject, like law."

And so he did, starting as a lecturer on December 20 1967 and moving up the ranks to Professor. He has also served as Dean (1991-94) and Deputy Dean (1999-2001).

Tony, who was recently honoured in Victoria's April 2009 *Law Review* for his 40-year contribution, still teaches Comparative Law and is currently conducting research into the reform of Niue's legal system and Mauritius' private international law, which he originally helped to overhaul in the 1970's.

"Understanding and explaining the legal aspirations of Mauritius and small Pacific states and territories is a particular passion of mine, and I have been honoured to have played a part in this process."

Although Tony is characteristically humble about his achievements, in 2004 he was recognised by the French academic community who awarded him the prestigious Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Palmes Académiques, an order originally created by Napoleon to honour eminent members of the University of Paris.

Not surprisingly, Tony has witnessed many changes during his 40-year tenure.

"The Law Faculty was much smaller when I started, with around 12 or so staff, but probably the biggest change has been in technology—I can remember doing class handouts on the Gestetner machine, which was messy and the machine would often overheat, so you'd have to wait. The arrival of photocopiers was a terrific advance in preparing teaching materials."

People might be surprised at Tony's other passion—ballet!

"I used to dance with the New Zealand Ballet Company and taught ballet for many years. It was a wonderful outlet and I still love going to the ballet."

Tony has no intention of retiring any time soon and says he's looking forward to more of the same for the next 40 years.

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Building method could save lives



Andrew Charleson and a colleague cutting tyre straps by hand



The adobe structure with tyre straps, being lowered down onto the shaking table



One of the free-standing strap-reinforced walls after undergoing severe horizontal movements

Millions of lives could be saved thanks to an innovative technique for reinforcing adobe brick homes against earthquakes designed by a Victoria University academic.

Currently, millions of homes, in particular across the Middle East, the American Southwest and Latin America, are made from adobe brick—a mixture of sand, clay and straw. They are often built by everyday locals, with no strict building codes to comply with. Many of these homes are reduced to rubble during earthquakes.

Associate Professor Andrew Charleson from the School of Architecture visited Peru for two months over the summer break to refine his work on strengthening adobe houses. His secret: used tyres. Rubber straps are spiral cut from used tyre treads and threaded through drilled holes in the brickwork to prevent buildings caving in during an earthquake.

A Peruvian university was the logical place to do testing as local researchers had already conducted more than 30 years' research on adobe structures and have their own shaking table, which simulates earthquakes.

They had already tested on the table an adobe house with no reinforcement, offering Andrew a reference point for comparison and saving considerable time and expense.

Andrew and his team built a similar adobe structure using tyre strap reinforcing and tested it on the shaking table. Although the building eventually cracked, the structure remained intact.

"I was thrilled that more than three years off-and-on spent refining the system paid off," says Andrew.

"It can't prevent damage to these buildings, but it can save lives and prevent injuries."

An essential part of Andrew's work was to find and build with waste material that would cost

little or no money. Used tyres were found to be sufficiently robust.

Used tyres ordinarily become landfill and don't break down. In New Zealand, around four million tyres are disposed of each year, at a cost of more than \$5 per tyre.

"We could send these used tyres already machine-cut to developing countries for around the same price," says Andrew.

Andrew has started to discuss the possibilities of making this happen, by meeting both with leaders in the tyre industry and with non-government organisations that would be able to help with implementation and instruction.

His next projects will be to determine the maximum house size for which this technology is appropriate and to write a building construction manual.

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A portrait of Professor Charles Daugherty, a middle-aged man with short brown hair and round glasses. He is wearing a light-colored trench coat over a dark sweater and a white collared shirt. A brown scarf is draped around his neck. He is looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

Beyond prison bars

Imagine a prison where the inmates prepare their own food, where there is a solarium or where tropical fish in large glass tanks are looked after. Or one where there is even a car park for prisoners.

Professor John Pratt from the School of Social and Cultural Studies and Victoria University's only James Cook Research Fellow for 2009 says conditions in Scandinavian prisons would be unimaginable in New Zealand.

John's research explores why this is the case, and what we can learn from the Scandinavian system.

He was motivated to research the area by what he calls a period of 'penal excess' in Anglo countries like New Zealand over the past 10 years.

"In this period crime has generally gone down, or stabilised, yet our prison population has nearly doubled, at colossal expense. Four new prisons were built by the last government at a cost of a billion dollars and this government is planning to build a new prison as well."

Meanwhile prison conditions are deteriorating, and likely to continue to do so in the foreseeable future. Current plans include 'double bunking' in cells built for one person and cells made out of shipping containers.

He says such conditions are a striking contrast to the prisons he visited in 2006 and 2008–9 when his research took him to Finland, Norway and Sweden. The study involved visits to 16 prisons and discussions with academics, policymakers, criminal justice practitioners, politicians, judges and prisoners.

Working in the Scandinavian winter—with temperatures sometimes dropping to minus 30 degrees—John encountered an entirely different penal system, which prompted his article 'Scandinavian Exceptionalism in an Era of Penal Excess'. The article saw him awarded the 2009 Radzinowicz Prize by the editors of the prestigious *British Journal of Criminology* for an article that has, in their opinion, made the greatest contribution to the development of criminology in 2008.

"In Scandinavia you have much lower rates of imprisonment and conditions that are impossible to imagine in this country. Essentially going to prison is recognised as punishment in itself—you don't need all the other deprivations and indignities that are heaped on you in the prison systems of the English-speaking countries."

As an example, John says that 'conjugal relations' are encouraged and facilitated in Scandinavia.

"Most prisons provide accommodation where partners and children can stay free of charge for weekends—usually at monthly intervals—with

the prisoners on an unsupervised basis. This is obviously an important mechanism in maintaining relationships and reducing tension."

He says inmates are also given more responsibility for the day-to-day running of the prisons. In one prison he visited in Helsinki, prisoners were given the responsibility of looking after tropical fish in large glass tanks—a level of trust unimaginable in the New Zealand prison system.

The central question of John's ongoing research is what can explain such remarkable differences in the penal conditions between the Scandinavian countries and English-speaking countries like New Zealand—considering similar trends in crime rates since the 1950s.

He says the low rates of imprisonment and humane prison conditions in Scandinavia emerged from cultures of equality that existed in these countries—equality that was embedded in their societies through the universalism of the welfare state.

In contrast the welfare state developed differently in England, Australia and New Zealand, the Anglo countries John is researching.

"There was always a suspicion and resentment of certain groups that seemed to get a better deal out of welfare. The welfare state in many ways contributed to a sense of resentment and exclusion that you find in these societies—particularly against lawbreakers and prisoners."

The differing models of welfare have helped to produce the very different models of penal systems. This process has been exacerbated by economic restructuring in the Anglo countries in recent decades.

"With restructuring in the 1980s these societies became more and more exclusive, rather than inclusive, and punitive and intolerant, rather than conciliatory and forgiving. We can see this reflected in attitudes to crime and punishment in these Anglo countries—in dramatic contrast to the Scandinavian system where welfare was always on a universal basis."

He says the Scandinavian system has produced strong levels of social solidarity and high levels of trust between individuals and between individuals and state institutions. This is reflected in every area of society, including the penal system.

"At the same time, the Scandinavian countries invest very highly in education and there seems to be a much greater regard for expert

knowledge and influence on penal policy. In contrast, in the Anglophone countries law and order lobby groups seem to have more significance—with very contrasting results," he says.

"For the most part, criminals in the Anglo societies are regarded as dangerous outsiders, but in Scandinavia they are another form of welfare client no different to anybody else. For example, in one open prison I visited near Stockholm, there was a car park for the prisoners."

There are major distinctions between Scandinavian closed and open prisons, with the latter holding between 20 and 30 percent of the prison population. In these prisons, fences, walls and other barriers are reduced to a minimum. They contain prisoners on less serious convictions, and also exist as inducements for good behaviour and an opportunity towards the end of long sentences to prepare for release.

The next stage of John's research, assisted by his James Cook Research Fellowship, will include similar visits to prisons in New Zealand, England and New South Wales.

He says the point of his research is not to suggest that societies like New Zealand need to follow the Scandinavian trend, rather to understand what has led to the differences, and perhaps see if there are lessons to be learnt from a remarkably different system.

He questions whether there is a sufficient level of trust and egalitarianism in New Zealand society—and consequently the political will—to make any changes to New Zealand's penal system, despite its failings.

"It comes down to trust, but also to political priorities. Do we build more prisons to keep society divided, or do we spend money in such a way that we help to try and bring members of society together? I think we can learn a lot from the Scandinavian countries, that not only have the lowest rates of imprisonment in the OECD, but are also the biggest spenders on education per capita."

John aims to produce a book on his research after the completion of his Fellowship in 2011.



Tapping into overnight success

'Overnight success' can come in small packages.

Seven years ago online telecommunications software Skype was developed in Estonia by three programmers: Ahti Heinla, Priit Kasesalu and Jaan Tallinn. Now Skype is available in 29 languages, with 44 million users around the globe.

These types of companies that internationalise soon and rapidly after they are established are known as 'born global' firms—a phenomenon International Business PhD student Stephan Gerschewski is analysing.

According to Stephan, these types of firms are increasingly found worldwide, particularly in smaller economies such as New Zealand, Australia and Finland. To expand and stay competitive, born global firms enter overseas markets to overcome the relatively small size of their domestic markets.

"With a world that is now just a click of the mouse away, conducting international business is increasingly easier," says Stephan.

"Born global firms are generally highly entrepreneurial and often have very innovative products or services that target niche markets. They think globally and work on setting up extensive social and business networks."

As part of his research Stephan is examining how to best measure international performance of born global firms. He believes the findings of his study could provide helpful advice for firms that are looking at internationalising, as well as for current international companies. It may also assist policymakers to tailor export support programmes to these firms.

Earlier this year Stephan won a Best Proposal Award at the Australia and New Zealand International Business Academy (ANZIBA) conference for his research presentation. Having now completed the theoretical part of his research, the next step will be to interview and survey born global firms in New Zealand and Australia.

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Birthmark research could treat infant tumours



Left to right: Dr Darren Day, Dr Anasuya Vishvanath and Professor Swee Tan in the research laboratory Photo: The Dominion Post

Strawberry birthmarks have been known to cover almost the entire body of some infants, and although not usually dangerous, can be alarming to parents. However, research by a recent Victoria graduate has made some progress towards treatment.

Anasuya Vishvanath's findings suggest that stem cells could be used to more effectively treat strawberry birthmarks (or infantile haemangioma as they are known in the scientific world) in future.

"Haemangioma are benign tumours that are caused by the abnormal growth of blood vessels. They grow rapidly for the first year of life and are then gradually replaced with fatty tissue over the next five to seven years," says Anasuya.

Anasuya's research identified key genes that are critical in the growth of the haemangioma and isolated stem cells from the lesions. She then grew these stem cells into bone and fat cells.

"This allowed me to develop a model using stem cells that better explains the natural progression of these benign tumours."

Using tissue biopsies grown in cell culture, Anasuya identified a potential new treatment option that may inhibit stem cell growth, thereby reducing the development of tumours.

Infantile haemangioma are the most common infant tumours, affecting up to 12 percent of Caucasians, but are less common in other races. In most cases they totally disappear by the time the child turns five, but can last longer, sometimes leaving scarring or discolouration of the skin.

"Girls are also three times more likely to be affected than boys," says Anasuya.

Anasuya completed her PhD under the supervision of Dr Darren Day and plastic surgeon and renowned infantile haemangioma expert Professor Swee Tan.

Currently a second-year medical student at Auckland University, she is hoping to put her PhD research to use when she specialises in either paediatrics or radiology.

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Learning to make a difference

Fijian-born Donasiano Ruru arrived in New Zealand in 2006, the weekend Fiji won the Sevens.

It was a fitting start for the NZAID scholar, who says he has never had a dull moment in Wellington.

The former primary school teacher and Lautoka Teachers' Training College lecturer came to Victoria University to pursue his doctorate in Development Studies. His research examines the effectiveness of international aid to teacher development, using the AusAID-funded projects at Lautoka Teachers' College and the Fiji College of Advanced Education as case studies.

"In any aid relationship there needs to be genuine partnership with equal voices between the aid donors and aid recipients," says Donasiano.

"In my studies I have proposed a practical framework for assessing the effectiveness of aid delivery, and suggest a model that could work in Fiji and within the Pacific context.

"One of the problems I have identified is that the Pacific governance lacks a comprehensive succession plan. There needs to be somebody to take over when the older generation passes on."

Donasiano has explored this idea through the Pacific Students Leadership Cluster Group, which has a vision of growing and nurturing 1,000 new generation Pacific leaders by 2015. He wrote a chapter for the group's book *Living and Leaving a Legacy of Hope: Stories by New Generation Pacific Leaders*, launched earlier this year.

As Vice-President of the Fiji Students' Association, he has also been



mentor to the younger President. As he makes preparations to return home, Donasiano is happy to leave knowing the association is in good hands, and looks forward to putting his newly acquired skills and knowledge to use in Fiji.

"It has been interesting to be away from home during troubled times, as I believe it has given me a more balanced perspective on the situation.

"It has also filled me with enthusiasm to return and make a difference."

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Exchange of ideas

Travel can be part of the university experience these days, thanks to the Victoria Overseas Exchange (Vic OE) programme.

The programme, now in its seventh year, allows students to complete one or two trimesters of their degree overseas, while paying normal Victoria tuition fees.

All accepted exchange students receive a grant of up to \$1,000 to help finance their trip, but the Faculty of Commerce and Administration (FCA) is offering an extra incentive to its students who have been accepted on Vic OE, with scholarships of up to \$5,000 now on offer.

The first seven FCA scholarship winners departed at the beginning of Trimester Two.

"We strive to turn out graduates who have a global understanding of their discipline," says Pro Vice-Chancellor/Dean of the Faculty of Commerce and Administration Bob Buckle.

"We wanted to make it easier for students to explore new ideas from other countries and to gain international experience firsthand while studying."

Vic OE is based on a formal reciprocal agreement between universities. Students have a choice of universities in 27 different countries to attend. Victoria has partnerships with some of the best business schools in the world, from Bocconi University in Italy, to National University of Singapore and Lancaster University in the UK. The majority of the partner universities teach primarily in English; however, others may require a minimum level of proficiency if another language is required.



Professor Bob Buckle with three of the scholarship winners. Left to right: Katherine Edlin, Mark Hudson, Stephanie Smith

"Overseas exchange enriches the student experience in many ways. Students who have been on exchange talk about the lifelong friendships they have developed and their unforgettable experiences," says Bob.

"The experience enhances their study and provides a richer basis for their future careers."

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FROM THE DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR (ACADEMIC) PROFESSOR PENNY BOUMELHA:

Ensuring equity for all

Victoria is developing an Equity Plan, building on its Strategic Plan goal to “provide an inclusive and representative environment for staff and students that is conducive to equity of opportunity for participation and success”.

The Equity Strategy Group, including representatives of all faculties and of units providing support services to students and staff, is working to develop a draft plan for consultation with the wider university community and with some key groups of stakeholders. There is a good deal still to be done if we are to ensure that we derive the maximum benefit from this important initiative. Even at this stage, however, its value is evident.

While there must be a clear focus on the obstacles and problems that equity policies and programmes are designed to address, the process of equity planning is in addition an opportunity for Victoria to celebrate the rich diversity of its student and staff community, and the many different ways in which they make their contribution to its continuing success. It also serves as one of the ways in which we can integrate core institutional values of equity, respect and active community engagement into our daily activities.

For these reasons, the Equity Plan will be at once a statement of some important principles and an identification of some priorities for action. The plan represents the University’s commitment to fulfil its responsibilities to provide all of its staff and students with an inclusive environment for work and learning. They need equal opportunities to fulfil their potential and make their contribution. This means ensuring that our policies and processes are developed in such a way that decisions affecting individual students and staff members are made on the basis of a full and equal consideration of merit.

The Equity Plan also signals the University’s recognition that the presence and success of a broad range of talented students and staff members of different backgrounds and

experiences will help link it more meaningfully to the local and global communities it serves. The international reputation of Victoria will depend in part on our ability to sustain a lively and diverse scholarly community and on our determination to foster a culture of respect where discrimination and harassment are not tolerated.

At the same time, it will be important to acknowledge in the development of the plan that equity does not require all individuals to be treated in the same way. Rather, we must recognise and address systemic disadvantage with a view to mitigating or, where possible, eliminating barriers to achievement and success.

The University’s commitment to equity in employment means that it will appoint and reward its staff on the basis of merit, taking into consideration their qualifications, experience and skills; and that it will provide them with a safe, accessible and appropriate working environment. Victoria’s commitment to equity in education means that we will do all we can to ensure that our policies, our curricula, our teaching practices and the learning support offered give all of our students the chance to enter the University on the basis of merit and to have equal opportunity to achieve success.

This is the vision of equity which underpins the work of the Equity Strategy Group so far. This work has included identifying the principal equity groups of students and staff whose further participation and success can be supported by the plan, and setting out some broad objectives to be served by more specific actions. It remains a work in progress, but I am confident that it will play an important role in sustaining and extending the distinctive experience that Victoria provides.

Exploring the Pacific



He is the first Honours student and the first Master's student to graduate from Victoria University's Pacific Studies unit.

And now Graeme Whimp has won a coveted Australian National University (ANU) scholarship to begin his PhD study at the Canberra institution.

The ANU scholarship is awarded to the highest-ranked applicant in each of the ANU's seven colleges. It offers a stipend and research support for the three-year duration of PhD study.

"ANU's Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies has a long and distinguished tradition of humanities-based Pacific-oriented research," says Graeme. "I am honoured to be able to take up this study."

His PhD study will focus on representations of the Pacific by the early ethnographers of Polynesian society and the lives of those representations.

Graeme expects to split his time between Canberra and Wellington, where he will utilise the Turnbull Library's resources.

His PhD research builds on his Master's thesis, which focused on the representation of one of New Zealand's colonial projects.

"In particular, I looked at the experience of New Zealand colonial administrator Walter Edward Gudgeon in the Cook Islands. His writings—both personal and official—reveal a number of contradictions, ambiguities, anxieties, uncertainties and fears that do not appear in existing accounts of the Cook Islands colonial experience."

Graeme's interest in the Pacific region dates back to when he worked as a union activist in Auckland in the 1970s, and a stint coordinating the development of union educational resources in nine Pacific countries. He has spent a significant amount of time in the region.

Victoria University's Pacific Studies programme started in 2000 and the PhD programme followed in 2004. There are currently seven Honours students. The programme focuses on present and future Pacific development issues through a Pacific lens, focusing on Pacific knowledge construction and research methodology.

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Grand designs



If Nazia Kachwalla had her way the Museum of Wellington City & Sea would receive a thorough makeover.

Conceptually redesigning the museum, which she renamed 'The Museum of Ephemera', won the Interior Architecture graduate a major award this year.

Nazia was named overall winner of the prestigious Australasian Student Design Awards (ASDA), as well as winning first place in the Interior Design/Architecture category.

Her concept was inspired by the historic function of the museum. "The original function of the building as a warehouse led me to use the allegory of a crane as a starting point," says Nazia.

"The historical board room and staircase were treated like containers that had been craned into the building for storage."

ASDA's judging panels consist of highly respected experts in each design discipline. Work is judged on concept, creativity, function and materials, as well as understanding and use of environmentally sustainable design practice.

Nazia took an interest in the ephemeral collection at the museum, which holds printed material produced by shipping companies and other organisations, including brochures, menus, tickets, passenger lists and stationery.

This led to an exploration of ephemeral qualities of reflection, light, glass, transparency and movement in architecture, in contrast to solid, static architecture.

Her design maximised the amount of sunlight that came into the building, reducing the need for artificial light. Walkways and partitions were made of concrete, which absorbs, stores and later releases significant amounts of heat to make the building more energy efficient.

Victoria University Programme Director of Interior Architecture Christina Mackay is proud of Nazia's success. "In the design world, this is the equivalent of winning the rugby!" she says.

Since completing her studies, Nazia has been travelling in Dubai, India and Sydney, where she was taken with the rapid rate at which cities are growing. She is currently pursuing a Master's in Architecture at Victoria, to explore ways to create intimacy within large spaces.

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Who's New



Andrew Simpson

In the newly established position of Chief Operating Officer, Andrew Simpson will provide strategic leadership, oversight and guidance on a broad range of University-

wide issues and developments. Andrew brings a wealth of strategic and operational management experience to this role from his national and international career in the university sector. Most recently, he was Vice-Principal (Operations & Finance) at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, Canada, from 2003 until 2008. Prior to that, he was the University of Waikato's Chief Operating Officer (2001–2003), Director Finance & Resources (1999–2000) and Director Financial Services (1997–1998). He has also held positions at the former Central Institute of Technology in Wellington, the University of Otago and Ernst & Young. He holds a Bachelor of Commerce from the University of Otago and is a registered New Zealand Chartered Accountant.



Professor Morris Altman

Morris Altman is the new Head of the School of Economics and Finance, joining Victoria after a successful tenure as Head of School and Professor of Economics at the

University of Saskatchewan, Canada. Morris brings considerable expertise and management experience to the position. He has published more than 70 refereed papers on behavioural economics, economic history and empirical macroeconomics, and three books on economic theory and public policy. He is currently completing three books on related subjects. Morris served as President of the Society for Advancement of Behavioral Economics from 2003 to 2006. He is currently the President of the Association for Social Economics, the Editor of the *Journal of Socio-Economics* published by Elsevier Science and a former Associate Editor of the *Journal of Economic Psychology* where he remains on the editorial board. He was recently selected to be on the editorial board of the *Open Economics Journal*.

Bringing anthropology and film together



Above: Images from some of the Anthropology and Film students' ethnographic films

Most students spend summer either working to fund their studies or working on their tan.

But 26 Victoria Anthropology and Film students spent last summer making short ethnographic (culturally focused) films as part of a new experimental course, ANTH 215 Special Topic: Theory and Practice of Visual Ethnography.

Dr Paul Wolfram says the three-month course, which featured guest lecturer Rolf Husmann from Germany's IWF Knowledge and Media Centre in Göttingen, was aimed at teaching students how to interview for, shoot, edit and screen their ethnographic films.

"It was intended as a practical visual course that allowed students to understand their subjects and capture their stories. The difference between an ethnographic film and a documentary is that the former is made through a long-term collaboration with your subject, getting to know them, what they're interested in and how you can tell their story from their perspective."

Students weren't, however, afforded the luxury of a long time to get to know their subjects.

"Ethnographic film-makers usually spend months if not years with their subjects, but our students only had a few months."

Students were asked to focus on life in New Zealand and subjects included a circus performer, a group of Manners Mall street kids and Taranaki's Parihaka Peace Festival.

"Given the time constraints and the fact that most of the participants were Anthropology students and therefore unfamiliar with the film-making discipline, they did a remarkable job. The seven films showed a depth of understanding and empathy with their subjects that I wasn't expecting."

The resulting films were, in fact, so good that two of them—the street kids and Parihaka films—have been selected to screen at an international ethnographic film festival in Slovenia next month.

Paul says it's the first time the course has been offered at any New Zealand university, and it was so successful he is hoping to offer it again in 2010.

"It worked very well as a course for both Film and Anthropology students, and it allowed them to explore the creative and practical aspects of ethnographic film-making."

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Adjusting to life in New Zealand



Young Muslim migrants to New Zealand cope well given the challenges they face, according to PhD student in cross-cultural psychology Jaimee Stuart.

As part of her research, Jaimee looked at how young people develop in a multicultural society, in particular the way Muslim migrants and refugees adjust to life in New Zealand.

The first part of her research involved interviews with young Muslims from a variety of backgrounds as well as a forum run for the community in association with the New Zealand Federation of Ethnic Councils.

Jaimee says she was surprised at how well adjusted and positive all the young people were.

“I was impressed by their resilience. One thing I’ve found is that the ways young Muslims cope with adversity is very proactive. They take the good and minimise the bad. Where they might encounter prejudice they see it as an opportunity to educate.”

She says the biggest challenge many Muslims face is dealing with misconceptions about Islam

that come from the media.

“Every one of my interview participants mentioned something about terrorism, without me bringing it up. That misconception about Islam has a huge impact on them.”

She says that despite New Zealand’s multicultural image, we still have a long way to go.

“New Zealand is still a very closed society. When someone is visibly different—for example a woman wearing a hijab—it can be seen as threatening, and therefore a barrier to communication.”

For her PhD Jaimee was awarded a Sasakawa Young Leaders Fellowship, which she says has assisted her greatly.

Jaimee will be presenting the first part of her research in Honolulu at the International Academy of Intercultural Research’s 2009 conference. Ultimately she would like to see her research used to foster social cohesion and develop New Zealand’s global identity as a truly multicultural society.

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Educating engineers

Victoria University’s new Engineering programme is tailored to reflect the needs of the 21st century.

Dean of Engineering Professor John Hine says electronic and computer-based systems are increasingly important for communications, entertainment and creativity, and that the demand for high-quality Engineering graduates in this field continues to grow.

Victoria’s Bachelor of Engineering (BE) students can choose to specialise in electronic, software, computer system or network engineering.

“The subject areas we teach are all in high demand, and I’m certain industry will embrace our first batch of BE graduates in 2010,” he says.

John says the BE degree structure at Victoria is innovative and creative.

“While adhering to international standards, we haven’t recreated what other universities offer. Our programme will ensure graduates have the skills and knowledge to design practical, efficient, economic and sustainable solutions to real-world problems.”

He says the BE programme builds on the experience the University has in delivering

science and technology programmes supported by research and top-quality teaching, while offering a distinct professional engineering ethos and structure.

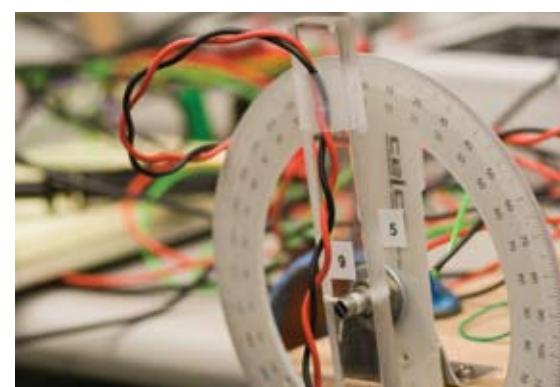
“Our students receive an essential grounding in teamwork, management and ethics, which is vital for modern, successful engineering professionals. We’ve made it compulsory for students to take a certain number of papers outside the Engineering programme—they can choose anything from Asian Studies to Science.”

Career prospects for Engineering graduates can be found everywhere, from environmental monitoring to health care, communications and transportation.

He says the BE is proving to be a popular degree, with enrolments well above forecasts.

“Renovations are currently underway at the University’s Kelburn Campus to accommodate the growing programme—including new laboratories in the Cotton Building and space in the Alan MacDiarmid Building, which will be completed in June 2010.”

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Distinguished alumni

Over 440 alumni and friends of the University attended Victoria's third Distinguished Alumni Awards dinner. The dinner recognised the remarkable achievements of economist Gareth Morgan; champion runner Melissa Moon; marine explorer Bill Day; Family Court Judge Peter Boshier; renowned historian Raewyn Dalziel; and leading educationalist Anne Meade.



Inside the Wellington Town Hall before the dinner



Chancellor Emeritus Professor Tim Beaglehole and Vice-Chancellor Professor Pat Walsh with the 2009 Distinguished Alumni Award winners



Jo and Gareth Morgan



Dr Anne Meade with staff from Daisies Early Childhood Care & Education Centre, which is a new venture for Anne and her daughter Linda



Left to right: Chancellor Emeritus Professor Tim Beaglehole, Clara Ogden, James Ogden, Minister of Education Hon Anne Tolley



Melissa Moon and partner Tony Adams



Bill Day with his friend and former professor Dr Paul McDonald



Judge Peter Boshier with his family. Left to right: Edwin, Peter, Sheryl and Marcus



Left to right: Dr Claudia Orange, Raewyn Dalziel, Rod Orange

A family affair



Victoria alumni left to right: Tim Burns, Nathan Horne, Richard White, Ron Pynenburg, Ken Collins and Joanne Kelly in front of the Jasmax-designed Alan MacDiarmid Building. The team at Pynenburg and Collins and Lab-works Architecture designed the specialist laboratories currently being built inside.

Wellington architecture firm Pynenburg and Collins Architects Ltd believes in keeping it in the family.

The alumni family, that is.

Partners Ron Pynenburg and Ken Collins started the business shortly after graduating from Victoria's School of Architecture in 1982. Another alumnus, Tim Burns, became the third director in 2000.

The practice now employs 13 people, six of whom are Victoria alumni. They have also previously employed other Victoria graduates, many of whom are now overseas.

"Our experience is that Victoria graduates are up there with the very best," says Tim.

"Their ability to slot into an existing team and be productive very quickly is a real credit to the School."

But the firm's ties with Victoria run deeper than just having a preference for alumni: their expertise in scientific facilities has led to the creation of a specialist offshoot, Lab-works Architecture, which has seen them design Victoria's recently completed Coastal Ecology Laboratory in Island Bay, as well as labs for the School of Biological Sciences and the School of Chemical and Physical Sciences, which are currently being built within the Alan MacDiarmid Building.

"The Coastal Ecology Laboratory provides a world-class research and teaching facility that responds to, and is respectful of, its environment. As well as being functional, it is intended to be aesthetically pleasing and merge well with the coast," says Tim.

Meanwhile the Alan MacDiarmid laboratories were designed to be open to each other and visible from other spaces within the building, which encourages the sharing of information and learning, says Ken.

"Our passion is to create environments that enhance people's lives, so it's hugely gratifying to be able to provide world-class environments for Victoria students. We feel that we are contributing something that will last a lifetime."

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Selling Te Papa to the world

Pinned to the wall behind Bridget MacDonald's desk is a quote from Jonathan Livingstone Seagull about taking chances and learning how to fly.

They're words that the alumna says have guided her circuitous route from science graduate to selling Te Papa to the world.

"I started off wanting to become a doctor, which morphed into a BSc in Physiology."

Despite her love of science, Bridget says she always felt the pull towards a corporate environment.

"So I changed tack and eventually returned to Victoria to complete a Master of Management Studies."

That led her to New Zealand's national museum, Te Papa, where she started as a strategic policy and planning adviser.

"It was a role that allowed me to use the skills from my management degree, because I got involved in developing corporate and operational policy, doing quality assurance reviews and basically getting a feel for how Te Papa operated."

Two years later, Bridget put her hand up for the Communications Manager role.

"I'd always secretly envied the Marketing and Communications team and thought they did some great things."

Not having a background in marketing or communications wasn't a barrier, she says.

"I've always believed that if your skills are transferable and you have enthusiasm and determination, then you can make things happen."

In 2006, Bridget was shoulder-tapped for the role of Te Papa's Tourism Marketing Manager, a job that sees her flying to Europe, America, Asia and Australia several times a year.

"My aim is to raise Te Papa's profile and increase our international and domestic visitor numbers. This involves visiting trade shows and meeting with travel wholesalers, agents and inbound tour operators, to encourage them to send tourists to Te Papa."

Bridget says she plans to stay in the tourism industry for the foreseeable future and credits her rapid rise through the ranks to her tertiary education.

"Attending Victoria helped to shape my future and taught me essential analytical and management skills that I will use for the rest of my life."

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MBA success story



It's a classic rags to riches tale: leave school at 15 without School Certificate, take on an assortment of odd jobs, have a career epiphany in a kitchen and wind up 30 years later as CEO of one of New Zealand's leading print firms with a turnover of around \$25 million.

According to Steve Messenger, the wheels of his journey from high school dropout to management were oiled by a Master of Business Administration (MBA) from Victoria University.

"For years, I suffered from what I call the 'impostor's syndrome'—I was running a successful company and mixing with bankers and lawyers, but I always felt I didn't belong because I didn't even have School C."

Steve's entrée to the business world came after years of working as a top chef in New Zealand and the UK.

"I then got a job as a sales rep in the bedding industry and ended up owning the Superior Sleep brand and four stores."

But following a downturn in the bedding market, he found himself entering the print business and following his dream of studying.

"It took me three years to finish the MBA because I was working full-time, but it was worth it because it gave me confidence and a framework with which to articulate my opinions, a business language and a set of universal tools, and credibility within the business community."

So much did Steve appreciate his time at Victoria that he often returns to lecture on problem-solving and decision-making skills.

This year marks the 25th anniversary of Victoria University's MBA programme and MBA Director Dr Arun Elias says a series of seminars, commemorative events, initiatives and functions are planned to mark the occasion.

"Victoria's MBA programme has grown from strength to strength and last year we were awarded international accreditation by the British-based Association of MBAs (AMBA)," says Arun.

"This accolade assures the quality teaching, theory and practice offered in our programme, and sets the benchmark for our future growth."

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From film-making to avocado oil



Gary Hannam (right) with film-maker Roger Donaldson and Roger's wife Marliese Schneider

It's not often the words 'avocado oil' and 'film-making' are mentioned in the same breath, but any conversation with Victoria alumnus Gary Hannam is bound to include the two concepts.

That's because the Swiss-based businessman not only chairs the avocado oil company Olivado, he also produced the successful New Zealand film *The World's Fastest Indian*.

Born in Whangarei, Gary completed his BCA and BA(Hons) degree at Victoria in 1976, staying on as a commerce lecturer for another three years.

But running a business was always in his DNA and in 1981 Gary started the Film Investment Corporation of New Zealand, a company that secured film financing.

"The first project was Roger Donaldson's *Smash Palace*. I later worked with Roger on *The World's Fastest Indian*," says Gary.

His company was also responsible for bringing such iconic Kiwi films as *Vigil*, *The Navigator*, *Kingpin* and *Lost Tribe* to the big screen.

Having a self-confessed weakness for a challenge, Gary then headed overseas where he founded several finance and funding companies.

He joined Kerikeri company Olivado as an investor when it was set up in 2000.

"We export to the US, Canada, Taiwan, Japan, Australia, England, Ireland and Denmark and probably sell around 60 percent of the world's avocado oil."

It was Gary who decided to supplement the Kerikeri production with a base in Kenya.

"It's a great temperature to grow organic avocados and we now have 640 small local farmers growing organic Fairtrade avocados for us."

The oil, which Gary says successfully combines health attributes with a functional product, is processed at a plant on the outskirts of Nairobi.

His love of the film industry, however, has never dimmed and Gary is currently working on a project with *Once Were Warriors* actress Rena Owen to turn the Heretaunga Pat Baker novel *Behind the Tattooed*

Face into a feature film. gh@tanlay.com

Graduates dress for success

High heels and dress shoes, academic gowns and hats were de rigueur for graduating students as they paraded through Wellington streets in May.

Over three days of ceremonies, almost 2,000 students put their best feet forward to celebrate successfully completing their studies.

Twenty PhDs were granted, along with approximately 2,200 degrees, diplomas and certificates.

Other highlights were the four honorary doctorates awarded to writer Lloyd Jones, scholar and researcher Stephen Turnovsky, academic Pham Van Nang and arts administrator Sarah Billingham.

“Joining the ranks of Victoria alumni is a significant milestone, and we look forward to following our graduates’ future successes,” says Vice-Chancellor Professor Pat Walsh.



Husband and wife graduate together

It was a match made in computer science heaven. Now seven years later, Victoria University students and husband-and-wife duo Pippin Barr and Rilla Khaled have both graduated with PhDs in Computer Science.

The couple, who married in Bangladesh last year, say completing their doctorates at the same time has been a positive experience.

“Doing research at this level isn’t easy, so having your partner aware of what you’re going through and being sympathetic made a huge difference to both of us,” says Pippin.

“It also let us spend vast amounts of time together during the day, certainly more than if one of us had taken a different career trajectory,” adds Rilla.

Pippin’s research analysed the interaction between humans and computers in video games, and developed a model for understanding how video games persuade players to adopt particular values such as violence, humour and nurturing qualities.

Rilla’s research focused on the effectiveness of culturally targeted technology such as video games in influencing behavioural change (eg. attitudes towards smoking), and she developed her own video game, *Smoke?*, which encourages young people to stop smoking.

Pippin says their PhDs complemented each other: “We’re both believers in video games as a powerful medium of expression and change, and at the centre of both our dissertations is an interest in persuasion and culture.”

The couple received almost identical offers to do further research at Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada, where they are currently based.

They have both also been short-listed for the same job—as assistant professor at a Danish university.

“Being in the same field means we’re certainly in competition for the same jobs, which sounds as though it could lead to marital strife, but we’ve very comfortable with one of us getting the job. We have a lot of projects for the ‘other’ person to do, such as writing a book we’re collaborating on and continuing research,” says Rilla.

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Talking the way to victory

Seven months of hard work paid off when Victoria's Vis Moot team won the highly sought-after Frédéric Eisemann Award at the sixteenth annual Willem C. Vis Mooting Competition in Vienna in April.

Katherine Belton and David Hume talked their way to victory in front of almost 1,000 students and arbitrators from 59 countries. "The flexibility, ability to concentrate on the main issues, and professionalism of the Victoria team led them to victory," says one of the team's mentors, Dr Petra Butler. The Moot fosters study in the areas of international commercial and arbitration law and encourages the resolution of business disputes by arbitration. Teams must submit written memoranda prior to the Moot for both sides of the dispute and put forward an oral argument based upon the memoranda.

For seven months Katherine and David were subjected to constant constructive criticism by their coach Richard May (solicitor at Chapman Tripp in Wellington and a former Vis Mooter), and helped by Michael Cavanaugh (solicitor at Heany & Co in Auckland and also a former mooter), with Dr

Petra Butler as the Law Faculty member providing the oversight and expert knowledge.

"Long hours of research and writing went into this competition, as well as several hours of practice moots in Wellington," says Petra.

In preparation for the oral arguments in Vienna, Katherine and David had 25 practice moots in Wellington. They also did about 30 pre-moots in a number of German universities, and in Madrid, Belgrade and Leuven for two weeks before the competition started, and got through four knock-out rounds to reach the final.

A total of 233 teams from 59 countries competed in the Moot this year.

Katherine and David worked with staff of the Victoria University Foundation to raise funds for their trip. A range of individuals and organisations within and beyond the legal community contributed, including Baldwins, the New Zealand Law Society, Minter Ellison, Russell McVeagh and the Wellington Rotary Charitable Trust Board.

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Katherine Belton and David Hume in Madrid

Photo: The Dominion Post

Back to school



Scott Christensen used to inspect and repair weapons in Afghanistan.

Now he makes the daily trip up the hill to Victoria's Kelburn Campus to attend lectures and discuss cell and molecular bioscience.

It's a bit of a transition for the former New Zealand Army weapons technician, but Scott felt ready for a change. "I was looking for a new challenge, something I really believed in," he says.

The last time Scott had studied was 1997, so he enrolled in Victoria's Certificate of University Preparation to 'warm up' first and learn the art of essay writing.

"It was very worthwhile," says Scott. "My brain felt useless for about a month, and then everything changed gear and I was away."

Now Scott says he is doing well and finding study immensely fulfilling.

"Originally I was planning to major in Marine Biology and Environmental Science. However, being diagnosed with a fatal kidney disease steered me towards Cell and Molecular Bioscience, and I will be studying genetics for the next few years, with the aim of finding cures to hereditary diseases."

Scott was helped along the way towards his dream by a Jordan Foundation Scholarship, worth \$1,000 upon successful completion of the Certificate of University Preparation.

The scholarships, established by the Jordan Foundation, are for students wanting to undertake tertiary study who might otherwise not get an opportunity.

Selection is made on the basis of financial hardship, academic merit and personal motivation.

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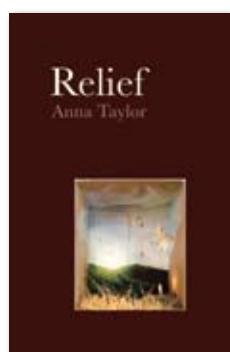
Off the Press

Relief and *Twenty Contemporary New Zealand Poets: An Anthology* are two works recently published by Victoria University Press (VUP) and reviewed for *Victorious* by Sarah Jane Barnett.

Details of forthcoming publications by VUP can be read at www.victoria.ac.nz/vup

Relief

By Anna Taylor

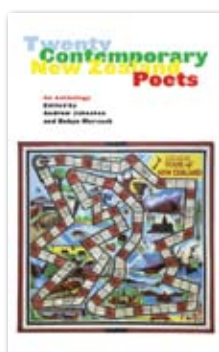


Relief is Taylor's debut book of short stories after she completed the MA in Creative Writing at Victoria University in 2006 (which won her the Adam Prize that year). The book is made up of 11 finely crafted short stories that take the reader into the heads of her characters as they struggle with the grey space between expectation and their everyday lives.

Whether it is a teenage girl coming upon an intruder, a young boy's feelings about his father's new girlfriend or a mismatched couple that plan a spontaneous weekend, Taylor's characters suddenly find themselves in tense situations from which they try to grasp relief. As a reader you hope they find it. Although dark, the stories aren't dramatic or overwrought but provide a pleasurable tense and lush read. Many are set in what feels like small town New Zealand and Taylor's natural and intimate prose paints the scene vividly. The stories let the reader empathise with the worries of her characters through every puff, wheeze and arm swing. Comic at times, uneasy yet tender, *Relief* is an accomplished addition to New Zealand fiction.

Twenty Contemporary New Zealand Poets: An Anthology

Edited by Andrew Johnston and Robyn Marsack



The names listed in red on the back cover of the book will be enough to make any poetry fan search out their own copy. Showcasing 20 names in New Zealand poetry, each miniature collection is preceded by a short introduction where the poet talks about their themes and writing process, from assemblage and sleep-writing to poems inspired by song. *Twenty Contemporary New Zealand Poets* has been seamlessly edited to let the voice of each poet jump off the page, while at the same time creating a snapshot of the lyrical, witty, elusive and electric world of modern New Zealand poetry.

In work from 1986 onwards, established poets such as Curnow, Stead and Manhire sit beside younger poets such as Avia and Colquhoun, whose tongue-in-cheek seriousness explores a different New Zealand. In order of appearance the poets are: Allen Curnow, Hone Tuwhare, C.K. Stead, Vincent O'Sullivan, Ian Wedde, Bill Manhire, Elizabeth Smither, Brian Turner, Cilla McQueen, Dinah Hawken, Gregory O'Brien, Jenny Bornholdt, Fiona Farrell, Bernadette Hall, Geoff Cochrane, Robert Sullivan, James Brown, Glenn Colquhoun, Anne Kennedy and Tusiata Avia. Jointly published by a leading British poetry publisher, this collection is an excellent introduction to modern New Zealand poetry.



Sarah Jane Barnett is an IT professional and writer in Wellington. Her work has appeared in a range of literary journals such as *Landfall*, *Sport*, *Takahe* and *JAMM* and in the e-zines *Blackmail Press*, *Snorkel* and *Turbine*. Sarah has a Master's in Creative Writing from Victoria University and is currently finishing her first book of poetry. Her poem 'The Drop Distance' was selected for the collection *Best New Zealand Poems 2007*.



Sign language on show

Two current and two former Victoria University students recently produced a play in New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL). Darryl Alexander, Jack O'Donnell, Nicola Clements and Suzi Holland spent a year putting together *Words Apart*, a 60-minute play about a young Deaf man whose first language is NZSL. He meets a young hearing woman who must learn to sign as she develops a relationship with him. The story illustrates that

being Deaf is more than having impaired hearing—it is a particular experience of communication, social life and identity. The play was staged at the 2009 Fringe Festival in Wellington, and again during NZSL Week in May. Victoria University has taught NZSL since 2000, with more than 80 students enrolled in first- and second-year courses each year.

www.victoria.ac.nz/lals

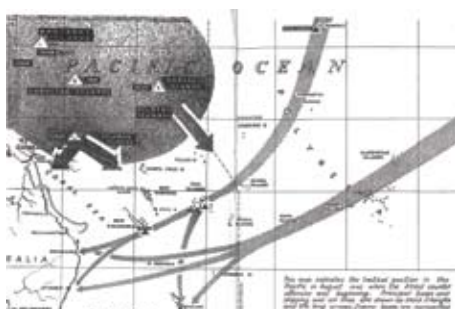
Shakespeare's lost play



Think again if you thought world premieres of William Shakespeare plays were a thing of the past. The lost tragicomedy *The History of Cardenio* by William Shakespeare and John Fletcher, reconstructed by world-renowned Shakespeare scholar Professor Gary Taylor, was recently presented by Victoria University Theatre students. Based on Lewis Theobald's *Double Falsehood*, an 18th-century adaptation of Shakespeare and Fletcher's now-lost original, Professor Taylor's work took the audience closer than ever before to this little-known play. Director and Victoria University Professor David Carnegie says reconstructing the staging of a renaissance performance meant the play came alive with a special magic. An international colloquium on *The History of Cardenio* was held at Victoria in conjunction with the world premiere, led by Professors Taylor and Carnegie.

www.victoria.ac.nz/cardenio-colloquium

Honouring fallen heroes



Kiwis honouring fallen heroes now have free access to the remarkable history of New Zealand's Third Division, courtesy of Victoria University's New Zealand Electronic Text Centre (NZETC). In the context of New Zealand's participation in World War II, the scale and significance of the Third Division's involvement in the Pacific is often forgotten, says Acting NZETC Director Jason Darwin. More than 38,000 New Zealand troops embarked to serve in the Pacific (compared with 59,000 for the northern hemisphere), and a significant number of these were wounded or killed in battle. Jason says World War II resources are amongst the most popular of the NZETC's online resources. He says the history of New Zealand's Third Division will be valuable for descendants of those who served in the war—or anyone interested in New Zealand history.

www.nzetc.org/tm/scholarly/tei-corpus-WH2IP.html

Wairarapa rocks



The geological wonders of the Wairarapa—in the lower North Island—were brought to life for a day by 40 intrepid participants enrolled in Victoria University's Community Continuing Education course 'Wairarapa Rocks!'. Led by Dr Cliff Atkins from the School of Geography, Environment and Earth Sciences, the popular course began with a lecture introducing the rocks and landscape, which hold insights to a remarkable geological history spanning hundreds of millions of years, followed by a very successful 'hands-on' fieldtrip to key sites in the Wairarapa. Highlights included an overview of an ancient seaway that existed through the Wairarapa Valley, streams offset by the Wairarapa Fault, shellfish fossils in the cliffs at Kupes Sail and 100 million-year-old sediments and lavas at Cape Palliser.

www.victoria.ac.nz/conted



Peter Trevelyan with his work, 'As yet untitled', using approximately 20,000 0.5 millimetre pencil leads

The Future is Unwritten

The Adam Art Gallery has invited nine New Zealand artists, designers and writers to produce new works that respond to our uncertain times—and speculate on the future.

Using the unique architectural structures of the Adam Art Gallery situated at Victoria's Kelburn Campus, and the online space of the gallery's website, the artists have produced works that look towards the future, in the context of the political realities of our contemporary world.

Exhibition curator Laura Preston says the exhibition showcases innovative ideas from nine young artists, each responding in their own way to the current socio-political climate.

"The artists' projects act as a series of propositions for embracing this time of uncertainty, where structures and systems that we have come to know are being brought into focus and re-defined—from the mechanisms of the capitalist system and the imminent risks to the environment, to a modernist belief in progress," she says.

She says the exhibition considers the potential of both the gallery and the web to act as sites that reflect on the shape of power, and to consider alternatives to present institutions.

"The exhibition also responds to the University as a site for research and critical thinking, and as a forum for the re-visioning of art histories," says Laura.

One of the more intriguing works on display is a pyramid structure created by Wellington artist Peter Trevelyan. The work is made entirely out of 0.5 millimetre mechanical pencil leads—approximately 20,000 of them.

Peter says the work draws on utopian visions of the future, but a future "that is tentative and drawn, rather than real—it's so fragile, like a utopian ideal".

Accompanied by a public programme of night talks, a workshop and sound event, the exhibition has turned the Adam Art Gallery into an active site of discussion and a resource for the future.

The Future is Unwritten is on until 30 August 2009 at the Adam Art Gallery. For more information, visit www.victoria.ac.nz/adamartgallery



What opportunities could you open up?

You can help New Zealand's brightest students achieve their academic dreams by making a bequest to Victoria University. You can choose to create a scholarship in a subject of your choice, direct your bequest towards research, or simply leave a gift to be shared in the future. Whichever you choose, it will open doors that will change their lives forever. If you'd like to know more about how to make a bequest to Victoria University, contact Diana Meads at the Victoria University Foundation, in confidence, on +64-4-463 6030, via email at diana.meads@vuw.ac.nz or by mail at Victoria University Foundation, P O Box 600, Wellington 6140, New Zealand.

For more information visit www.victoria.ac.nz/foundation.