

# Victorious

SUMMER 2010

MAGAZINE FOR FRIENDS AND ALUMNI OF VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON



**Te reo teaching  
goes digital**

**Canterbury quake: Our disaster experts**

**Organ donation in New Zealand**





# New role to lift Pacific performance

Luamanuvao Winnie Laban has made a career out of being first. She was the first Pacific woman to be an MP and the first to be a Government Minister in New Zealand. Now she is Victoria's—and New Zealand's—first Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Pasifika).

Winnie will lead the Pacific part of Victoria's Equity and Diversity Strategy.

"I'm really excited about my new role," says Winnie. "For me, a lot of the work will be in the weaving together of everything—having a good look at what's working and what isn't, and finding ways to work collaboratively to ensure our Pacific people are participating and succeeding."

Winnie feels that taking up a position at the University after more than a decade in politics was a logical move for her.

"Writer Professor Albert Wendt and Tuiloma Neroni Slade, now Secretary General of the

Pacific Forum, used to visit our family home in Wainuiomata for meals when they were poor students studying at Victoria on scholarships from Samoa—so there's a long history there. Education was always valued and encouraged at home, and I especially see its importance when I visit low-decile schools, which I often did as MP for Mana. Education can break poverty and give people the power to participate effectively in society."

The Government's Tertiary Education Strategy has set a target for tertiary institutions to increase the number of Pasifika students achieving at higher levels. The Strategy notes that while the last five years have seen a greater proportion of Pasifika people in tertiary education, they are still not well-represented at postgraduate level, and completion rates for Pasifika students are lower than for any other group.

"Although it's great to see more Pacific people graduating, there are some major challenges—

for instance, Pacific people being poorly represented in certain disciplines, such as Science, Engineering and Commerce," says Winnie.

A Victoria alumna, Winnie graduated with a Diploma in Social Work in the 1980s. "When I was studying here there were very few Pacific students and they didn't receive the level of mentoring and support they have now.

"I want to continue the good work that's being done by developing stronger links with family, school and community to ensure our children and young people don't fall between the cracks."

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New Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Pasifika) Winnie Laban at her official welcome to Victoria, with award-winning barbershop quartet The Fource, from Aotea College.

## From the Vice-Chancellor

From the moment aspiring students apply to study at Victoria to the day they graduate and become part of our alumni family, we strive to give them the best possible experience.

Universities are 'communities' more than ever before. Gone are the days when people simply attended class and returned home to study. As many of our alumni have experienced, there is a wide range of support services; state-of-art facilities for teaching and learning; and a wealth of opportunities for socialising and self-development. Whatever stage of life our students are at, our role is to provide a broad base of options so that they can receive a well-rounded education.

This year we developed the *Student Experience Strategy 2010–14*, which sets out our objectives for making Victoria an even better place to study. It covers every aspect of the student experience, including providing a rich academic and social environment, celebrating student success, involving students in planning, evaluation and leadership roles and offering a full range of student support programmes. It also looks at how we can use new technologies effectively to create a sense of belonging, and ensure that everything we do is informed by student feedback.

In this issue of *Victorious*, you can read about a few of the initiatives that relate to this Strategy. On the opposite page we introduce you to our new Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Pasifika) Winnie Laban, who was recruited to lead the plans and programmes already in place at Victoria to improve the rates of participation, retention and academic success for our Pacific students, as well as provide vision for new initiatives. This is a newly created position—the only one of its kind in New Zealand—and it is my pleasure to welcome Winnie to Victoria.

There are so many activities that students can get involved in at Victoria. On page 12 you can read about one of our most successful clubs, the Victoria Debating Society, which won the prestigious Australasian Debating Champs this year.

Also on page 12 is an article about Read and Write Gold software—a highly advanced reading and writing assistant—that we are installing on every PC at the University. This software, which goes several steps further than the traditional spell checker, will enable our students to improve their reading and writing skills while they study.

I look forward to continuing to share new initiatives from our Strategy with you in future issues of *Victorious*.

*Pat Walsh*

Professor Pat Walsh, Vice-Chancellor



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# Systems modelling informs tobacco policy



Associate Professor Bob Cavana in front of a poster from the Health Sponsorship Council.

New Zealanders inhale around three billion cigarettes a year, but research carried out at Victoria has good news for those wanting to stop—smoking cessation programmes work.

Associate Professor Bob Cavana of the Victoria Management School and Dr Martin Tobias from the Ministry of Health have developed a systems dynamics model to generate reliable estimates of the effects that smoking policy initiatives have on health and tobacco consumption.

They examined a 50-year period under business-as-usual and enhanced cessation intervention scenarios that show, says Bob, “that intervention works, although not as quickly as policy makers might expect”.

Their work, with Dr Ashley Bloomfield, informed a 2007 government decision to increase funding for smoking cessation by NZ\$42 million over four years, and also made the front cover of the prestigious *American Journal of Public Health*.

“There is keen international interest because tobacco remains one of the biggest preventable killers globally,” says Bob.

The research built on earlier work carried out by Bob and Leslie Clifford for the New Zealand Customs Service that examined the impact of the excise tax on tobacco.

“Tobacco presents an interesting dilemma—the Government wants to reduce consumption because of the health effects of smoking but, at the same time, the excise tax earns revenue of about \$1 billion a year.”

The research was also the first to estimate the size of the black market for illegally imported tobacco products, which could be worth up to \$3 million a year.

Bob’s next focus is developing a model to support effective tobacco control policies that will help reduce smoking rates among Māori.

“The work shows that systems dynamics modelling is really useful for taking a long-term, holistic look at social and other policy issues. We’re able to come up with facts and figures that move us from opinion to informed debate.”

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# Revolutionising identification



Imagine a supermarket checkout where an entire trolley of goods is scanned in one sweep, or a border checkpoint where customs officials can automatically recognise the source and identity of goods.

Soon manual processes and barcodes could be replaced with chips that use radio waves to better identify and track goods, using technology similar to Snapper cards and electronic toll booths overseas.

Victoria PhD student Marta Vos is looking into this next generation of identification with the help of GS1 New Zealand, a not-for-profit organisation that develops standards for supply chains.

“Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) had its origins in World War II when the British Airforce developed a radar-based system to identify incoming aircraft as friend or foe. It has come a long way since then,” says Marta, whose doctoral research is supported by the GS1 New Zealand EPCGlobal PhD Scholarship.

“I’ll be researching how government is using RFID and the opportunities and challenges of using it more.”

Marta says that exporting kiwifruit is one example where government and the private sector are working together and where RFID can be used by the grower and exporter, and for Customs and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, to see where the fruit has been and if there is any agricultural threat.

“There are interesting possibilities around making the interaction between business and government as seamless as possible. I’ll be researching how to apply that to the way we conduct business.”

Peter Stevens, CEO of GS1 New Zealand, says Marta’s background of working in New Zealand’s government, as well as overseas, made her an ideal scholarship recipient.

“We have a commitment to supporting education and research, and were keen to make the most of Victoria’s capital city partnerships through our premier scholarship.

“We’re hoping that Marta’s project finds ways that government can use the technology, bringing greater transparency and ensuring we’re talking the same language as our trading partners.”

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# Perceptions of organ donation and transplantation



*Dr Rhonda Shaw interviews a kidney dialysis patient for her research.*

Organ donation and transplantation is being explored by Dr Rhonda Shaw from Victoria's School of Social and Cultural Studies, in the first major New Zealand research of its type.

"Medical sociologists have been researching organ transfer overseas for some time, but this is the first comprehensive empirical study of its kind in New Zealand," says Rhonda, who researched New Zealanders' perceptions on this sensitive topic as part of a Marsden-funded research project.

The project set out to engage different groups of New Zealanders in dialogue about the social, cultural and spiritual significance of the body in organ donation and transplantation, and to investigate why New Zealanders have such low organ donation rates.

In April this year Rhonda led a seminar, funded by her Marsden grant and a Social Policy Evaluation and Research Committee (SPEaR) award, to discuss these issues. The multi-disciplinary seminar brought together social scientists, health professionals, transplantation specialists, policy analysts and members of the public.

New Zealand's low deceased donation rate, compared to other Western countries, was on the agenda for discussion. There were only 9.9 deceased donors per million people in 2009.

"We are not sure why the numbers of deceased

donors are so low. It might be related to cultural issues for Māori and Pakeha—reluctance in respect to cutting up the body and the desire to maintain bodily integrity in death," says Rhonda.

"It might also have to do with anonymity protocol restricting contact between donor families and recipients. If so, then one way to promote donation is to better cater for the psycho-social and cultural needs of people who are in a position to donate either as living donors or as members of donor families.

"This would involve understanding the diverse views of groups of New Zealanders around embodiment, bodily integrity and identity and people's beliefs and feelings about sharing body parts in a more culturally sensitive manner."

One of the most hotly contested issues at the April seminar was that of commercialisation and compensation for donors. Under the Human Tissue Act 2008 the commercialisation of any body tissue, including solid organs, is illegal.

"Understandably, New Zealanders have an in-built aversion to commercialisation, because they don't want to institute a payment system where people feel coerced or influenced into donating organs because they are impoverished or out of work," says Rhonda.

She says the current move by patient and professional groups to promote live donation from blood-related donors to donors who are

spouses or friends may be a way to address the low donation rate.

"Currently compensation does not even cover time off work, and yet when you consider the benefits of donation to the health system, and to recipients and their families, there is room for more discussion about adequate compensation to meet the costs of live donors."

Rhonda says New Zealand's high rates of chronic kidney disease (CKD), especially among Māori and Pacific people, means the topic of organ donation is important for New Zealand. In 2008, of those starting dialysis, 31 percent were Māori and 17 percent Pacific.

"These statistics reveal the burden of CKD for these groups, who make up 15 percent and 6 percent of the population respectively."

In September, Rhonda was awarded a Kidney Health New Zealand Grant (2010–2012) to continue research in this area.

"This study has two components. It will examine the impact of dialysis treatment on people's family and community life, and investigate the feasibility of compensation for live kidney donation, drawing on data from the perspective of donors themselves."

Rhonda will visit The Hastings Center and Interdisciplinary Center for Bioethics at Yale University in 2011 to conduct comparative research on this topic.

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# Helping autistic children communicate



**Ground-breaking research led by Victoria's Faculty of Education will shine a light on one of the most common but complex aspects of autism.**

Autism affects one in 150 children. Most of them have difficulty communicating and around 50 percent fail to develop speech at all.

Identifying the best communication tools for those without speech is the focus of a three-year research project being undertaken by both Professor Jeff Sigafoos from the School of Educational Psychology and Pedagogy and Dr Dean Sutherland from the University of Canterbury. Their work is supported by an \$885,000 grant from the Marsden Fund, administered by the Royal Society of New Zealand.

Professor Sigafoos and Dr Sutherland will study 40 children aged between four and seven, testing responses to the three most common alternatives to speech for autistic children—sign language, pointing to or exchanging pictures, and electronic speech-generating devices. The latter group includes applications on the iPad or iPod Touch and a range of text-to-speech machines.

Professor Sigafoos says the research has exciting potential to reduce some of the behavioural problems associated with autism.

“Evidence has been accumulating since the 1970s that autistic children who fail to develop speech are more prone to behaviours like aggression, extreme tantrums and self-harming. Frustration at being unable to communicate is regarded a prime cause.”

Professor Sigafoos says researchers around the world have differing views on which of the three options is most effective, but until now there has been little scientific evidence to inform debate.

“Our work won't settle the argument but, for the first time, there will be objective data about how autistic children respond to each of the communication tools.”

Children taking part in the research will be studied at home, at pre-school and at school.

“By identifying and using their preferred tools and techniques, we hope to be able to help autistic children become better all-round communicators.”

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# Translating meaning



**Literary translation is a boom area in academic research and one of New Zealand's own experts, Jean Anderson, understands why.**

“People are starting to realise how complex it is. You can't just sit down with a dictionary and look up the words. You have to consider the undercurrents in the text, the style decisions the writer made and how the work is structured.

“What I love about translation is that it's a crossover between something really practical and something that forces you to think very hard about every decision you make.”

Jean, who directs the New Zealand Centre for Literary Translation at Victoria, has a shelf of titles to her name including English versions of two books by Pierre Furlan, a former French writer in residence at Wellington's Randell Cottage.

Translating his novel *The Collector's Dream*, which tells the story of two great New Zealand eccentrics, was “a lovely thing to do because it

was like repatriating a New Zealand story”.

Established in 2007, the Centre has more than 10 researchers working in different languages and areas of interest. They translate foreign writers into English, New Zealand works into other languages and give advice to overseas translators of New Zealand literature. “New Zealand works are full of colloquial references that foreigners won't necessarily understand—a cattle stop is a good example.”

Victoria is hosting a major literary translation conference in December, attracting delegates from more than 30 countries who will hear ‘stunning’ keynote speakers, including two of the world's most quoted theorists, Lawrence Venuti and Gayatri Spivak.

Jean says the conference will establish the Centre as a leader in the Southern Hemisphere, committed to the artistic side of both translation and research that is carried out by Master's and doctoral students at the Centre.

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# The clock is ticking



Victoria University Antarctic and climate change researcher Professor Tim Naish has been watching the weather this year and has found nothing to reassure him.

The world's climate has been highly variable and erratic—a harbinger of global warming. A super-cold Russian winter and the ongoing drought and water shortage in South Australia have both made headlines recently. Other changes continue under the radar, including the loss of glaciers in the Andes and the Himalayas and growing acidification of the world's oceans.

In Antarctica, where Tim's research is focused, the trends are the same. Both the Greenland and West Antarctic ice sheets are beginning to melt and new research suggests the same is happening to the world's biggest ice sheet in East Antarctica.

"Rising sea levels present one of the biggest threats to civilisation as we know it," says Tim.

Tim is Director of Victoria University's Antarctic Research Centre and one of the lead authors of the next international climate change assessment from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), due for release in 2014. Much of his recent research has been carried out as part of the international ANDRILL drilling programme that is providing the first comprehensive picture

of how Antarctic ice shelves and ice sheets behaved during past periods of natural global warming.

A team of Victoria-led New Zealand scientists has drilled two holes, each over 1,000 metres deep, into the floor of McMurdo Sound to recover sediment cores that preserve a history of climate and ice sheet behaviour during the past 20 million years.

Tim says around four million years ago, the Earth was experiencing a hotter climate, with temperatures similar to what global warming is likely to deliver in the next century. Back then, he says, the West Antarctic ice sheet had melted, contributing five metres of sea level rise, while melting of the Greenland ice sheet contributed another seven metres.

His observations, from the drill cores and colleagues' computer simulations of the Antarctic ice sheets, support the findings of many other researchers around the world—that a one metre rise is the most likely scenario by the end of this century, though up to 1.5 metres is possible. Tim's assessment is relatively conservative, with other scientists predicting rises of up to two metres.

"The consequences of even a one metre rise are huge," he says. "Around 150 million people, many of whom are the world's poorest, will be affected."

Melting of the great ice sheets of Greenland and the Antarctic has only become evident in the last decade.

"Since then, satellite data is showing clear evidence of accelerating losses from both ice sheets and a doubling, in the last five years, of ice melting into the oceans."

Tim says ice sheets like West Antarctic are more likely to collapse than melt at a predictable rate.

"Around two-thirds of the ice sheet is below sea level, so when the ocean warms, the ice is very susceptible to melting. The warm water gets into the soft underbelly and it melts from the bottom up. It also lubricates the bases of the ice sheets and glaciers, a process that tends to increase their speed towards the ocean."

Tim has no doubt that the impact of climate change will be felt sooner rather than later.

"We are a little bit sheltered in New Zealand, but even here there is beginning to be competition for water, and many of our towns and cities are near the coastline.

"I'm 43 and I expect to see the negative consequences of climate change in my lifetime but I worry more about my children—they will definitely be impacted."

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# Experts in disaster

When disaster strikes, not only are emergency services called upon, but academics are suddenly in hot demand. After the Canterbury earthquake struck on 4 September this year, many Victoria-based experts provided on-the-ground advice, as well as research-based insight and analysis.



Fissures on Highfield Road, 7km west of Burnham. Photo: Dr Nicola Litchfield, GNS Science

## Science: Analysing the quake

Professor Martha Savage was awoken in Wellington when the 7.1 magnitude earthquake hit Canterbury at 4.35am. The geophysicist knew at once that it was a major quake.

“It felt far away, but it felt big. Later that morning after I’d checked the data on the earthquake, I contacted Euan Smith and John Townend.”

Martha, Euan and John are experts from Victoria’s School of Geography, Environment and Earth Sciences. They worked with collaborators at GNS Science to analyse the earthquake.

“We used a variety of seismometers—instruments that measure ground motion—to get more data on aftershocks and the previously undiscovered fault line.”

Martha, whose first job was running a seismic network in Nevada, says the seismometers, buried just beneath ground level, were placed all over the Canterbury region.

“They were concentrated in areas that helped us understand the earthquake better. There are permanent seismometers in place around the country but the ones we used gave us further detail and more localised information.”

Martha says the seismic instruments help scientists ‘see’ the faults better.

“The main fault that delivered the big quake was triggered by a small shock in another fault. The instruments help us gain more detail on faults in the area, what kinds of rocks there are, at what sorts of depths and so on.”

Martha led the Victoria response that involved a number of postgraduate students in the field in Canterbury, as well as working with GNS Science, the University of Wisconsin, Stanford University and the University of Auckland.

One of those students was Kathi Unglert, a Master’s student supervised by Martha.

“As well as the broad band seismometers, we placed 200 strong motion sensors. These measure only the bigger earthquakes and fit into the USB port of people’s computers just like a flash drive. We advertised for people to volunteer their homes.”

The responses came flooding in and Kathi worked with Civil Defence HQ to map where people were from and placed the sensors strategically to gather the best data.

“It was great that so many people were keen to be a part of that research. It helps us calculate the precise location of earthquakes as well as find out how different building materials respond.”

Now, Martha and students like Kathi will analyse this data for information on the potential for further earthquakes in the area and to inform building codes in Canterbury.

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Professor Martha Savage



Dr John Townend



Professor Euan Smith



Dr Geoff Thomas



Associate Professor Diane Brand

## Architecture: An opportunity for improvement

No lives were lost in the Canterbury earthquake, but thousands of buildings were damaged. Dr Geoff Thomas from the School of Architecture flew to Christchurch to survey the damage with a team from building association BRANZ a few weeks after the quake.

“We accompanied Earthquake Commission assessors examining damaged houses to investigate how well the houses built after 1978 performed.”

Geoff says that one of the major problems they found was that houses had been built on unreinforced concrete slabs on sites prone to liquefaction.

“Many of these houses were affected by lateral spreading, because the solid pieces of concrete cracked when the earth shook and didn’t settle evenly. As a consequence, many had to be demolished, whereas older style structures with piles in the middle could be jacked up and re-piled relatively cheaply.”

He says the “Christchurch fondness” for masonry cladding was also an issue.

“This type of cladding cracks more easily and increases loads because it’s heavier. The current Building Code requires the ties that connect brick cladding to the timber framing to be screwed in rather than nailed in, which is considerably more robust.

“The shape of modern houses also tends to be more complex. In a quake there is more differential movement, with some points moving more than others—this can cause the most damage.”

The team’s findings will be collated and turned into a report, which will consider whether changes to national building standards are necessary.

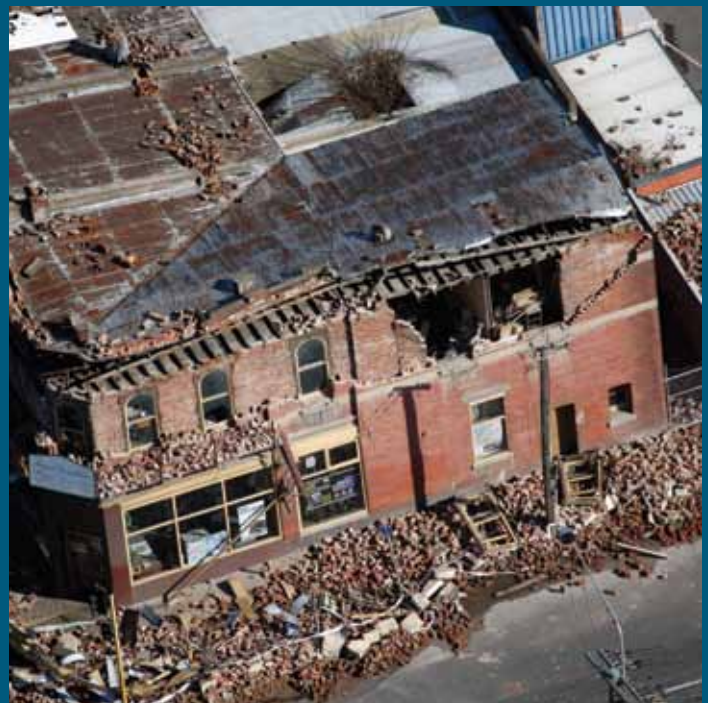
Geoff is leading a team in research that was already underway before the Canterbury quake, which is investigating cost-effective, practical systems of retro-fitting houses for safety, particularly for foundations with difficult access.

The project involves designing and building alternative bracing and connections, with testing in the structures laboratory at BRANZ.

“We aim to find a solution that is cheap and easy to install, making it accessible to homeowners.”

Geoff presented the findings from his Christchurch visit at a seminar hosted by the School of Architecture in November. There were presentations by other Victoria academics too, including one on how to use public space during an emergency and another on how to protect and restore heritage buildings.

Among the speakers was Head of School Associate Professor Diane Brand, also a member of the Christchurch Urban Design Panel. Diane talked about how earthquakes can become triggers for urban design.



An aerial view of damage to the Angus Donaldson building in Sydenham, Christchurch. Photo: The Press

“Normally in an earthquake you get a whole sector of a city demolished. However, in Christchurch the demolished buildings aren’t all in one place, so it’s a specialised design issue.

“There is a real danger of ‘under-building’ when the rebuilding takes place—and I would advocate heavy regulations. Some basic parameters need to be considered, such as building to the boundary so as not to disrupt the street edge and ensuring the minimum building height is the lowest building height that’s already there.

“While it’s sad to have lost a number of buildings, it is also an opportunity to make some changes for good. For instance, for some time the Council has wanted to increase inner-city housing to enliven the city centre.

“Also, there is an opportunity to design new buildings that make the same gestures to citizens and urban space as the previous buildings did, but are distinctly modern. This approach has been adopted in a number of cities worldwide. For instance, the Pompidou Centre in Paris, which houses the public library and museum of modern art, doesn’t pretend to be an old building but has a distinct relationship in terms of scale and grain.

“An even more attractive and robust Christchurch is possible in the wake of this disaster.”

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# If you can meet with triumph and disaster...



**It has been a testing year for Professor Sir Paul Callaghan as he battles with cancer, but also one filled with achievements and great satisfaction.**

This year, the Wanganui-born physicist, who has been fascinated with science from an early age, won major national and international awards and received significant science funding, including the largest 2010 Marsden Grant of \$1.04 million.

Last month he found even more success. He is a part of The Magnetic Resonance Innovation Team at Victoria and Magritek Ltd that won the \$500,000 Prime Minister's Science Prize for 2010. The prize is awarded for a transformative science discovery or achievement which has had an impact on New Zealand or internationally.

"During trying treatments for colon cancer—chemotherapy as well as a radical new surgical treatment in late October—he has gone about his work with characteristic good humour and stoicism," says Vice-Chancellor Professor Pat Walsh.

"He has continued his world-leading research, including a major research monograph that has

gone to the publisher, supported his PhD students and inspired a superb team."

Earlier this year, Paul won the Günther Laukien Prize for Magnetic Resonance, a major international award. Along with his colleague Dr Robin Dykstra, he was also awarded \$1.3 million of research funding in July from the Foundation for Research, Science and Technology.

His work in nuclear magnetic resonance uses radio waves to detect the motion of molecules. It is used in industries as diverse as oil exploration and healthcare, and has helped to improve MRI brain scans.

Victoria conferred an Honorary Doctorate of Science on Paul, also an alumnus, this December.

"In addition to his own prolific work and cutting-edge research, he has made significant contributions to communicating science within the wider community, and has added much to the debate about technology and its role in ensuring New Zealand's future prosperity," says Pat.

# A hot discovery



**There is keen international interest in technology invented at Victoria that could open the way for a worldwide increase in geothermal electricity generation.**

Professor Jim Johnston and his team from the School of Chemical and Physical Sciences have come up with a solution for one of the geothermal power industry's biggest problems—unwanted silica deposits.

The water produced after extracting geothermal energy is saturated with silica that clogs pipes and other equipment used in the process. One solution to prevent silica build-up is to keep temperatures high during steam/water separation, but this reduces the amount of geothermal heat energy available. Another option is to dose the water with acid to retard silica deposition, but this is both costly and risky.

Using their expertise in nanotechnology, Victoria researchers have developed a way of isolating the silica so that it doesn't stick to process equipment. The technology allows lower temperatures to be used, resulting in more geothermal energy being recovered, and

eliminates the need for acid. The silica can also be collected and sold.

The technology has been proven in the lab and Victoria's commercialisation company Viclink hopes it will soon be trialled by Mighty River Power.

Viclink Commercialisation Manager Rob McBrearty says as well as 'significantly improving' the efficiency of the world's geothermal plants, the technology could also allow countries to revisit geothermal fields previously rejected because of high levels of silica in the water.

"The whole world is frantically trying to increase its use of renewable energy. Geothermal power is attractive because it's predictable—you know exactly what will be coming into the grid."

Rob says the solution also offers exciting potential to access more chemicals than just silica from geothermal fields.

"There are other valuable components in that water, like lithium, but you can't get to them until the silica is removed."

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*Professor Jim Johnston with a piece of unwanted silica deposit—silica sinter—and calcium silicate powder, which is recovered from the geothermal water as a useful product.*



# Revolutionising the teaching of te reo



Tabitha McKenzie with iPad (with lecturer Rawiri Toia on iPad screen).

The teaching of te reo Māori has gone digital, thanks to a ground-breaking project led by Faculty of Education lecturers Tabitha McKenzie, Rawiri Toia and Hiria McRae.

The three lecturers in Te Kura Māori have developed an innovative approach to teacher professional development. In response to limited relief teacher numbers in schools and a dearth of language specialists, a model using video

podcasts, online support and in-school facilitation has been developed to advance Māori language and language acquisition amongst teachers.

The programme has been implemented in three rural regions, and co-ordinator Tabitha McKenzie says the use of podcasts sees schools and their communities taking the lead in their own language development.

“One of the advantages of using podcasts and iPods is that they are ubiquitous—it’s anytime,

anywhere learning. We know that teachers are very busy. The use of iPods means they don’t have to leave their school for six months for intensive training. They can now learn and implement new approaches to teaching on a daily basis.”

The trio have received recognition from afar for the project—this year winning an International Award for Excellence for a paper published by *Ubiquitous Learning: An International Journal*.

The project is funded by the Ministry of Education, and is part of a Teacher Professional Development project called Whakapiki i te Reo.

Tabitha, who coordinates the project, says she is delighted with the progress being made in schools, and the wider implications of the project.

“We are the first Whakapiki i te Reo provider to use mobile assisted technology, so we are revolutionising the way te reo Māori is being taught. The technology has allowed us to go nationwide and get out to those rural schools that often don’t get to participate in professional development because of their isolation.

“The use of mobile devices offers opportunities for strengthening Māori language and Māori knowledge, and expressing a Māori world view in local, national and international contexts.”

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## Expect the unexpected



Sara Kindon in the classroom.

Sara Kindon’s classes may not be easy, but her students are some of her biggest fans.

Sara, a Senior Lecturer in Human Geography and Development Studies at Victoria, has a string of teaching accolades to her name, including winning one of only 11 AKO Aotearoa

National Tertiary Teaching Excellence Awards earlier this year.

She uses innovative methods to get her students out of the classroom and “engaged in real life”. These approaches include working with former refugees, walking a high-ropes course and exploring the city blindfolded.

“Students say my assignments are among the hardest they’ve ever done, but most tell me they love what I do. I make them question their own assumptions, but that’s what many say they came to university for.”

English-born Sara never wanted to follow her father into teaching. “I learnt a lot about pedagogy at the dinner table and thought being a teacher would be too hard.”

However, after completing her Master’s in Canada, a friend persuaded her to apply for what Sara thought would be a short-term

academic position at Victoria. That was 16 years ago.

Sara, who has successfully supervised 60 postgraduate students, believes she is most effective when teaching from the heart. “I bring my intellect to bear on my passions, my ethics and my politics. I like to challenge myself and ask the same of my students.

“I try to involve all of a person in their learning. I want my students to feel valued as they question what they take for granted. A lot of them see themselves and the world differently as a result.”

Sara says she will be working even harder at her teaching from now on. “I’ve got something to live up to now I’ve won the award—students will be expecting a lot!”

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From the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), Professor Neil Quigley

## Research the key to future growth

**At Victoria research is one of our eight strategic goals, and creating new knowledge that has major social, economic or scholarly impact is core to our business.**

Improvements in the technologies applied to existing products and markets, and the creation of new products, underpin the productivity increases that drive economic growth. Higher productivity and new markets sometimes emerge from new science, as well as from new ways of thinking about human interaction and new ways of organising markets. The fundamental and applied research undertaken in universities plays a critical role in each of these sources of productivity gains.

The academic staff at universities like Victoria also make an important contribution because of their integration into specialist international research networks. In this role, they provide an important conduit through which new ideas originating in other countries are further developed in and applied to New Zealand, as well as disseminating internationally the path-breaking work being undertaken here.

A further contribution arises from the diversity of our research. The future path of technical, economic and social progress is uncertain, so the ability of Victoria to support a diversity of research programmes analysing issues from a wide range of different perspectives represents a crucial part of the infrastructure that supports ongoing progress in all aspects of our society.

In each issue of *Victorious* you can read stories about breakthroughs and discoveries in the areas of research and teaching—and there are many others we don't have room to share.

For instance, this year Victoria had a highly successful Marsden funding round which saw research funded across most faculties of the University. Of particular note were grants to researchers in the Faculty of Education and the Faculty of Architecture and Design, which both received Marsden funding for the first time.

Marsden-funded projects will look at such areas as opportunities for New Zealand wool and wireless technologies, religious change in Colonial India and how trivial images can create immediate illusions of memories.

Victoria staff have also had great success in obtaining prestigious James Cook Fellowships to support their research programmes. This year Professor Susan Schenk from Victoria's School of Psychology has been awarded a prestigious James

Cook Research Fellowship, in the Health Sciences category. She will work on understanding drug addiction by using new techniques to identify what causes long-term changes in brain structure and function that create a craving for drugs.

The New Zealand Law Foundation has funded a \$1.75 million project which brings together researchers from the University, Chapman Tripp and the New Zealand Institute of Economic Research to study the effectiveness of regulation.

Of course, in addition to their own research, academic staff are always supporting and supervising the excellent and enthusiastic work being undertaken by PhD candidates. It's fair to say that Victoria has established a reputation in New Zealand and internationally for academic excellence and the high calibre of its research and postgraduate study.

Strategically, we continue to focus on becoming a research-intensive university and a key aspect of this is increasing our number of postgraduate students. During the past five years, the number of postgraduate students at Victoria has increased more than 50 percent and we are continuing this focus by offering an increasing number of scholarships to both outstanding school leavers and PhD applicants.

This month Victoria has a record number of PhD students graduating. Almost 70 graduates from a number of faculties have devoted the past few years of their life exploring novel and interesting areas, supervised by academic staff who give their students a foundation of knowledge and the tools they need to make new discoveries.

Thesis topics have included the impact the recession has had on the New Zealand model of public sector management; the influence of tobacco smoke on the properties of proteins involved in the biological addiction to cigarettes; why sustainability innovations are not being adopted at the expected rate in the housing industry; and the factors behind the academic success of Samoan students in the New Zealand education system.

It is invigorating to see such varied and thought-provoking research being undertaken, and I am proud to be part of an institution which adds so much value to social, economic and technological progress in New Zealand and the world.



## Acting up—Drama alumni celebrate 40 years



*Alumni re-enact the last scene of Shuriken, which was first performed in 1983 under the direction of Professor Phillip Mann.*

It was a weekend of re-forging old bonds as Victoria Drama Studies' graduates from 1970 to 1990 held a reunion in October to celebrate the Theatre and Film programmes' 40th birthday.

For many alumni it was the prospect of an acting workshop with retired Professor Phillip Mann that drew them back to Victoria's drama studios.

It was also a chance to farewell retiring Professors David Carnegie and Associate Professor Russell Campbell, the other two permanent staff members during the Drama Studies period of 1970–1990.

Drama Studies alumna Margaret Belich says the success of the weekend—with more than 120 people attending the celebrations—can be put down to the spirit of camaraderie that binds graduates of Victoria's Theatre and Film programmes, the oldest courses of their kind in New Zealand.

"The quality of teaching was amazing, but it was also the group learning. Drama is very collaborative, both practical and academic, and our bond was really enriched by that."

Many of the graduates from the Drama Studies period have risen to prominent positions, not only in the more visible fields of the creative sector—like actor Robyn Malcolm or director Jane Campion—but also in every part of theatre, film, media and other creative industries, as well as public service, education and business.

Professor David Carnegie says the students of the first two decades of Drama Studies were remarkable.

"Only after 1990 could you get a degree in Theatre and Film. Prior to that, students did the course entirely for interest and love."

Margaret says the connections forged in Drama Studies that were evident over the reunion weekend offer a blueprint for the way Victoria alumni can interact and engage.

"There is so much potential there to enrich connections with our alumni. The desire to reconnect is not exclusive to Victoria's Drama graduates, of course, but we do camaraderie well. We certainly always threw the best parties!"

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## Building the foundations



*Programme Director Ian Masters helps students in a Mathematics class.*

Studying at university fresh from high school can be a difficult transition for the best of students. For students with English as a second or other language, it can feel like learning a new language all over again.

Research undertaken at Victoria, which tracks the progress of international students, has found that students who do Victoria's eight-month pre-tertiary Foundation Studies programme first have a considerably higher success rate at university.

"Our programme is specifically tailored to preparing students for university study," says Programme Director Ian Masters.

"There's a lot of technical language that students need to come to grips with, so we work on improving their vocabulary through content-based teaching that is relevant to their studies."

Throughout the programme students are exposed to a list of common academic words that students across all disciplines should know, such as 'constitute'. The vocabulary list, identified through the research of Dr Averil Coxhead from Victoria's Linguistics and Applied Language Studies Department, is now used in universities around the world.

New Zealand content is a compulsory part of the Foundation Studies programme, to give students an insight into the culture they are studying in. They have the option of studying New Zealand Literature, History or Politics, in addition to curriculum-based courses relating to the degree they wish to major in at university.

There is an emphasis on learning skills that are essential at tertiary level, such as listening strategies, note-taking techniques, presentations and the ability to lead group work. Students also learn critical reading and ways of detecting bias.

"This is important because in many cultures this skill is not taught—text is seen as the authority," says Senior English Teacher Judith Mason.

Judith says the pass rate for the programme is "very high", with almost all students continuing on to university study.

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# Winning the war of words



*DebSoc President Sebastian Templeton speaks at the Vice-Chancellor's Debate, held in November.*

*Should parents be allowed to modify their children's DNA?*

*Should housewives and house-husbands be paid for their work?*

*Should there be a parallel justice system for Māori?*

Sparks have flown over topics like these this year as teams from the Victoria University of Wellington Debating Society (DebSoc) have vanquished the opposition with the sharpness of their tongues, in both national and international competitions.

The Society is on a winning streak, having won the prestigious Joynst Scroll against other national university teams for the fifth year in a row and the debating contest at the University Games for the 12th year running. To top it off, this year they won the Australasian Debating Champs (Australis), the second biggest debating tournament in the world, with around 300 debaters and 100 adjudicators.

So what's their secret? DebSoc President Sebastian Templeton believes it's largely due to the strong culture of former members "sticking around and helping out". "Many of our leading members from several years back are still helping with coaching and judging competitions, so there's an entrenched custom of giving back to the Society."

This year Sebastian won the Sports Administrator of the Year title at the University Blues Awards, and fellow debater Stephen Whittington, who was named best speaker at the Australis Grand Final among other accolades, received the Sports person of the Year award.

Sebastian says most DebSoc members are law students, but a few of their top debaters are from the Philosophy and Mathematics schools. The Society is heavily involved with debating and public speaking events around Wellington, participating in a number of public debates for various organisations and taking a leading role in organising debating at a secondary school level.

"We find a lot of people who do debating at school and have competed nationally come to us—some students even choose to study at Victoria because of our debating success."

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# Gold for learners



*Spell check has long been a valued tool for computer users, but Victoria students and staff now have even more support with Read and Write Gold software.*

Designed to provide assistance when reading or composing text, this software is currently being installed on every PC at Victoria University.

Brett Challacombe-King, Disability Service's Adaptive Technology Adviser, says the award-winning software is "light years" ahead of traditional spell checkers and is especially

useful for people with learning disabilities, or learners with English as a second language. It sits discreetly on screen as an additional toolbar, ready to assist at any time.

Not only does Read and Write Gold suggest alternative spelling, it can also predict text. Brett says this is particularly helpful for people who have trouble choosing the correct joining word. Among numerous features, the program can detect homophone errors—where a word is pronounced the same as another word, but

differs in meaning.

"Read and Write Gold caters for a variety of learning styles, including auditory learners," says Brett.

Students who prefer to listen rather than read text are able to highlight any text and convert it to audio. They can then listen to the audio on the spot, or download it to their MP3 player to listen to on the bus, at the gym or wherever suits them best.

"There are various voices and accents to choose from, which can be sped up or slowed down. The technology has advanced to the point where the intonation sounds fairly natural.

"Thanks to this software, students are empowered to develop their literacy skills themselves in a non-pressured environment."

"Until now we've only had the software on a few student computers," says Rachel Anderson-Smith, Manager of Disability Services.

"We are now one of only two universities in New Zealand to have the software on every computer, which enhances Victoria's developing inclusive approach to learning."

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# Vacation with a vocation



Jenna Tinkle analysed death notices for her Summer Research Scholarship.

Scouring newspaper death notices and investigating people's bottled water consumption were just two projects that students were involved with last summer as part of Victoria's Summer Scholars Scheme.

This year more than 120 students will take part in Summer Research Scholarships, conducting research under supervision to support academic research already underway at Victoria.

"It's a great opportunity for students as they gain a variety of skills, including practice in data collection and analysis, conducting literature reviews and

interviewing techniques," says Scholarships Manager Philippa Hay.

Jenna Tinkle's summer project last year saw her working at the New Zealand Dictionary Centre under the supervision of Lexicographer and Director Dr Dianne Bardsley, analysing a five-year archive of death notices from three geographically-diverse newspapers. Through the notices she found patterns in the type of language used and the structure and content that revealed aspects of New Zealand life, culture and our unique brand of English.

"I was surprised at how the more I worked on the project, the more addictive it became," says Jenna, then a third-year student.

"The whole experience was invaluable, not only because of the useful research skills I gained, but because it gave me the opportunity to see what it's like to work in an academic environment with people who share my love of language—I was even asked to write an article about my findings at the end."

Paul Meuli, who was involved in a project at the School of Marketing and International Business at the end of his third year, examined perceptions of why people are buying bottled water.

"I conducted a survey on my own, but with just the right amount of guidance from my supervisor Jayne Krisjanous.

"It was an excellent bridge from undergraduate study to the Honours programme."

[www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/scholarships/summer-research.aspx](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/scholarships/summer-research.aspx)

# Understanding China



PhD graduate Jason Young is hoping that his research into China's political system will lead to more New Zealanders engaging with the superpower.

Jason graduated with a PhD in Political Science and International Relations this December.

He was awarded a Victoria PhD Scholarship to pursue studies of institutional change in China's hukou system, a system of residency permits where household registration is required by law. This included fieldwork in Beijing,

where he was based at China University of Political Science and Law (CUPL).

He says that studying the hukou system allowed him to develop the skills and understanding necessary to understand modern China.

"It gave me a good foundation in Chinese economy and society and an understanding of the profound transition China has been experiencing over recent decades."

Jason says Victoria's close connections with China make research about China very accessible for students, and greatly assisted him in his studies.

"When I did my fieldwork at CUPL I was provided office space, given access to their libraries and databases, introduced to important scholars and was in a unique position to mix with other postgraduate students.

Victoria is also home to the China Research Centre, which provides access to some of the world's leading Chinese scholars.

Invaluable to Jason was his knowledge of Chinese language, gained through four years of intensive study in Taiwan.

"A level of proficiency in written Chinese opens up a world of material that is rarely translated into English. For my research this meant I had access to academic books and articles, news reports and government regulations that I otherwise would not have."

Jason is also the course coordinator for a short course exchange programme with CUPL and returned there with 23 Victoria students in November.

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# Catching up with alumni

With alumni events held in Berlin, New York and London in September; and Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City and Jakarta in October—as well as two closer to home in Wellington in August and November—Victoria has reconnected with a vast number of alumni lately.

Below are photos from the events. To view more, visit [www.victoria.ac.nz/alumni](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/alumni)



## WELLINGTON

*Left to right: Rosemary Barrington, Hon Sue Kedgley, Garth Ireland.*

Our Wellington event at the Banquet Hall at Parliament in August was so popular we were unable to accommodate everyone who wanted to come. Consequently, another event was organised in November. Minister of Justice and Victoria alumnus Hon Simon Power hosted 400 alumni and spoke at the event.



## LONDON

*Left to right: Janine Edwards, Emily Kratz, Anouska Serich.*

Our London event was held at Macquarie Bank with magnificent 360 degree views of the city. James McArthur, alumnus and former CEO of Harrods, spoke on “life inside the world of a luxury business”.



## JAKARTA

A mix of 70 alumni and business partners enjoyed a convivial gathering at the residence of New Zealand Ambassador, His Excellency David Taylor in Jakarta. The event gave former Victoria students Cucu Sutarsyah and Ade Djumarma, pictured with Vice-Chancellor Professor Pat Walsh, the opportunity to see each other again for the first time in 19 years.



## NEW YORK

*Left to right: Lady Margaret Palmer (foreground), Jennifer Parkinson, Robin Parkinson, Sir Geoffrey Palmer, Professor James Belich.*

Our New York event was held at The Yale Club. Historian James Belich from Victoria's Stout Research Centre spoke on “Globalising New Zealand History”. Sir Geoffrey and Lady Margaret Palmer were among the attendees.



## BERLIN

*Left to right: Nina Staub, Antje Radtke, Markus Thoma, Christian Probst, Claudia Gielen, Falko Daub, Hermine Kleymann.*

The official residence of the New Zealand Ambassador was the venue for our Berlin event, hosted by Lisa Futschek, Chargé d'Affaires.



## HO CHI MINH CITY

Alumni in Ho Chi Minh City gathered at the New World Hotel. The trip was rounded off with the official opening of the academic year of the Joint Programme that Victoria offers at the University of Economics in Ho Chi Minh City, as well as celebrating with the scholarship winners for 2011.



## HANOI

*Left to right: Tu Nguyen, Nguyen Thi Phuong Thao, Ha Ngoc Le, Minh Pham Binh, Anh Nguyen Phuong, Nguyen Minh Ngoc, Chu Thang Trung.*

New Zealand Ambassador Her Excellency Heather Riddell opened the evening in Hanoi, where alumni and a string of VIP guests enjoyed networking and a visual presentation of the latest developments at Victoria.



# Leading the technical revolution



*Photo courtesy Exceptional magazine*

Victoria alumnus Derek Handley chose to leave the safety net of a graduate training programme after seven months to pursue an entrepreneurial dream.

It was a risk that paid off. Ten years on, the mobile marketing company he founded with his brother Geoffrey, The Hyperfactory, employs more than 100 people and has offices in Auckland, Los Angeles, Chicago, Hong Kong and Hyderabad.

“We knew we had the potential to produce something successful and wanted to do it while we were still young,” says Derek, now 32.

“We had nothing to lose—no money, status or reputation.

“We knew that the mobile industry would be enormous. It was the end of the dotcom boom when many companies were going bust, but we predicted there would be another technical revolution.”

Derek, last year’s Ernst and Young ‘Young Entrepreneur of the Year’, recently sold The Hyperfactory to American publishing company Meredith Corporation—staying on as Chief Executive. He has built up an impressive client base, including Coca-Cola, BlackBerry, L’Oreal, Vodafone and Disney.

Derek’s interest in business started young. He set up various small businesses when he was still at high school and as a student at Victoria, including businesses importing games from Asia to sell to retailers and a photo processing business.

Currently, he is focused on working with the entrepreneur community in New Zealand to create awareness of entrepreneurship as a valid career choice for young graduates.

Derek, who graduated with a Bachelor of Commerce and Administration and Building Science in 2000, says he chose to study at Victoria because it enabled him to undertake a holistic and multi disciplinary programme of study.

“Being able to traverse the creative and business worlds was very important to me and a good grounding for my career.”

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**SAVE THIS DATE**

**Thursday 14 April 2011**

Victoria University of  
Wellington Distinguished  
Alumni Awards Dinner 2011



VICTORIA UNIVERSITY’S  
DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARDS CELEBRATE OUR  
FINEST GRADUATES AND ACKNOWLEDGE THEIR  
CONTRIBUTIONS TO OUR COMMUNITIES.

Please join us on  
**Thursday 14 April 2011**  
at the Wellington Town Hall  
for the most prestigious event of Victoria’s calendar  
where the Distinguished Alumni Awards will  
be presented.

Discounts will be available for tables of 10.

**Get your group together now!**

If you would like more information or would like to  
purchase tickets, contact Jill Rodgers,  
phone 04-463 5246 or email [jill.rodgers@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:jill.rodgers@vuw.ac.nz)

Visit [www.victoria.ac.nz/alumni](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/alumni)  
for further details.



# Distinguished Alumni Awards winners

This year's Distinguished Alumni Awards winners will be celebrated at a special awards dinner next year.

These awards recognise the outstanding contribution of Victoria alumni to their profession, community or country.

Recipients epitomise the attributes of a Victoria University graduate leadership, creative and critical thinking and communication skills.



## John Shewan

John Shewan (BCA(Hons) 1977) was named among the 50 most powerful citizens by the *New Zealand Listener* in 2009.

After graduating from Victoria and spending a year lecturing in accounting, John joined PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) and went on to specialise in corporate tax consultancy and tax policy. He was elected Chairman of PwC in 2003.

In addition to being one of New Zealand's most highly-regarded professional accountants, John is a well-known commentator on tax matters and has been influential in reform of the New Zealand tax system. This includes being a member of the Victoria University Tax Working Group, whose recommendations to the current government on tax reform options featured prominently in the 2010 Budget.

Throughout his career John has displayed passion and commitment towards raising the standard of education. In this respect he has been actively involved with Victoria, providing advice and leadership to the Faculty of Commerce and Administration through his role as Chair of the Advisory Board and seeking public and private sector financial support for new strategic professorial chairs. He is also an active supporter of the Young Enterprise Trust and immediate past Chair of Samuel Marsden Collegiate School.



## Rod Drury

Rod Drury (BCA 1987) is a skilful and successful entrepreneur who has started and grown a series of New Zealand technology companies and inspired many others to be entrepreneurial. He is passionate about New Zealand and building a strong high-tech business economy.

He is the Founder and CEO of Xero, an accounting software company launched on the New Zealand Stock Exchange (NZX) in 2007, becoming one of the few high-tech firms to list on the NZX. He also co-founded Pacific Fibre, an initiative aimed at building a fibre cable network between Australia, New Zealand and the United States.

He has twice been named the Hi-Tech New Zealand Entrepreneur of the Year (in 2006 and 2007), received a KEA World Class New Zealander Award in 2008, is an Honorary Fellow of the New Zealand Computer Society and in 2009 won the prestigious Flying Kiwi award and was admitted to the New Zealand Hi-Tech Hall of Fame.

Rod's success extends well beyond his own companies. He is on the Board of the New Zealand Stock Exchange and is an active member of the Victoria University Commerce Facility Advisory Board.



## Taika Waititi

Taika Waititi (BA 1997) is a film director, writer, comedian and actor whose trademark deadpan humour and startling visuals have earned him an international following.

Named in the influential United States entertainment magazine *Variety* as one of 'ten new directors to watch' Taika's most recent feature film *Boy* received rave reviews in New Zealand and eclipsed several box office records.

Taika, who is of Te Whānau-ā-Apanui descent, won the Billy T James award for comedy in 1999, and in 2000 was nominated Best Actor at the New Zealand Film Awards for his role in the film *Scarfies*.

His award-winning streak as a filmmaker began with *Two Cars, One Night* which was nominated for an Academy Award in 2005. Taika went on to write and direct episodes of the Emmy-nominated *Flight of the Conchords* and, in 2007, released his first feature film *Eagle vs Shark*.

Taika's second feature film *Boy* premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in 2010, and won top prize in its section at the Berlin Film Festival.

Taika's most recent role is portraying Thomas Kalmaku in the superhero film *The Green Lantern*. He was made a New Zealand Arts Foundation 'New Generation' Laureate in 2006.





## Kerry Prendergast, JP

Kerry Prendergast (MBA 2004) is the former Mayor of Wellington who marketed the capital as a creative hotspot, an environmentally-aware city and a great place to live during her nine years in the top job.

Kerry, who received the highest rankings among her cohort of Victoria MBA students, has had a long and distinguished career in local body politics.

She began her political life as a Tawa Borough Councillor in 1986 and was elected to the Wellington City Council three years later. She went on to become Wellington's Deputy Mayor for six years and successfully contested the mayoralty in 2001, serving until 2010.

Kerry also completed two terms as Vice-President of Local Government New Zealand.

Her professional background is in the health sector as a registered nurse and, for 25 years, a midwife. She continued her midwifery role alongside her local government work until 2001.

Kerry has been a Director of Wellington International Airport Ltd for nine years.

She has been a trustee of the Joe Aspell Trust and the New Zealand International Festival of the Arts. She is an honorary life member of both the Katherine Mansfield Birthplace Society and the Royal New Zealand Plunket Society. She is currently patron of a large number of organisations. Kerry has received honours from both Chile and Italy.



## Sir Thomas Gault

Sir Thomas Gault (LLB 1962, LLM 1963) is one of the most distinguished members of the legal profession in New Zealand. After graduating from Victoria with a Master of Laws in 1963, he joined law firm A J Park & Son. He remained there for 20 years, earning a reputation as a rigorous lawyer and building strong expertise in intellectual property.

In 1984, Sir Thomas became a Queen's Counsel and, three years later, was appointed to the bench as a Judge of the High Court. He continued his rise through the ranks, being made a member of the Court of Appeal in 1991 and its President in 2002. When the Supreme Court of New Zealand came into existence in 2004, Sir Thomas was a member of the inaugural bench. He is also a member of the Privy Council of the United Kingdom.

In 2001, Sir Thomas received a knighthood (formerly known as a Distinguished Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit) for his services to the judiciary.

He is an award-winning golfer, who has also played an active role in golf administration.



## Piera McArthur

Piera McArthur (BA 1950, MA 1951) has made an outstanding contribution to the art world as one of New Zealand's leading painters and a pioneer in cultural diplomacy.

She attended Victoria with her late husband John and graduated with an MA in Modern Languages in 1951. Her creative talent came to the fore while living overseas as the wife of a New Zealand diplomat. Discovering the work of Chilean abstract expressionist Roberto Matta inspired her to start painting seriously and she developed her own original style, characterised by vibrant colour, movement and humour.

She exhibited in Paris, London, New York, Sydney and Moscow between 1975 and 1990, establishing her career as a painter and enhancing New Zealand's reputation internationally. In Moscow, Piera was the first New Zealander to have a solo show at the New Tretyakov Gallery. She considers that she came of age as a painter in the then Soviet Union.

Piera taught French at Wellington secondary schools during postings back to New Zealand and later Classical Studies in Hawke's Bay after settling there in 1990. Over the past 20 years she has exhibited extensively around New Zealand and undertaken commissions both locally and overseas.

Piera's art works reflect her constant search for knowledge and love of history. They tell the stories of musicians, ballerinas and everyday New Zealanders, combining social commentary with a record of New Zealand life.

# Scholarship supports liver disease research



**A scholarship that supports students to study or do research overseas has helped a young woman investigate how doctors can better identify a debilitating liver disease.**

Bhagyashree Manivannan was supported by a JL and Kathleen Stewart Scholarship to travel to the United States to further her PhD research into the liver disease schistosomiasis.

Schistosomiasis affects 207 million people worldwide and is a chronic illness that can damage internal organs, and impair children's growth and development.

"The parasite invades the liver and draws iron from the host, lowering the body's resistance. Because the liver is one of the main organs of the body and processes all toxins and pathogens, schistosomiasis affects the person's immune system," she says.

Bhagyashree, who graduated with a PhD in Cell and Molecular Bioscience in December, analysed the disease using human and animal modelling to identify proteins in the liver that were affected by schistosomiasis. She conducted her research at Victoria University before heading to the Center for Disease Control

and Prevention in Atlanta to examine human blood samples that had the disease.

"Along with my US collaborator, Dr Evan Secor, I looked at protein in human serum, the liquid part of the blood.

"We identified five biomarkers—the proteins that changed when infected by the disease—that can be used as diagnostic tools. It means that if, for example, you saw increased Keratin D in a blood test, the patient might have the disease."

Schistosomiasis is found in Africa, South America, South-East Asia and the Eastern Mediterranean, and is typically spread through freshwater snails that carry the parasite.

"Humans catch the disease moving through infected rivers and streams or by unhygienic practices in those areas," says Bhagyashree.

The JL and Kathleen Stewart Scholarships were established by John Stewart of the Stewart Charitable Trust, through the Victoria University Foundation. The scholarships, named in memory of John's parents, support students undertaking short-term study or research overseas.

# Advising the Reserve Bank



**Researching the major twists and turns of the economy—the effect of interest rates, exchange rate fluctuations and finance company collapses—is vital for the Reserve Bank.**

This year, Victoria and the Reserve Bank of New Zealand established an Associate Professorship, through the Victoria University Foundation, to enable study in these areas.

Dr Christoph Thoenissen was appointed earlier this year, researching and teaching at the University and working with the central bank a fifth of the time. He joins senior macroeconomists Professor Viv Hall and Dr Chia-Ying Chang in the School of Economics and Finance.

Head of School Professor Morris Altman says that the idea for the joint position originated at the Bank.

"We've worked with the Reserve Bank for many years. We were both keen on finding a way to increase the number of people studying high-level macroeconomics and energise this research in New Zealand."

Christoph is familiar with central banks, having previously worked at the Bank of England as well as conducting research in the UK.

He came to Victoria from the University of St Andrews in Scotland, with a background in macroeconomics—the study of the performance, structure, behaviour and decision-making of the economy.

"My research helps inform the Reserve Bank about current issues. In New Zealand, for example, many banks are owned by Australian companies. We're looking at questions such as whether this actually has any effect on the banking system."

Together with a Reserve Bank colleague, Christoph is currently researching international business cycle fluctuations, analysing how shocks to the financial sector spread between countries.

"You'll have heard the expression, 'When America sneezes, New Zealand catches a cold'. This country, like Australia, is a small, open economy and the effect of foreign shocks is much more significant. We're conducting some in-depth analysis of just what these shocks entail."



# Off the Press

*Gifted* and *Lives of the Poets* are two works recently published by Victoria University Press (VUP) and are reviewed for *Victorious* by Briony Pentecost.

Details of forthcoming publications by VUP can be read at [www.victoria.ac.nz/vup](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/vup)



## *Gifted*

By Patrick Evans

*Gifted* is a literary endowment from the pen of an academic wishing to share his love and respect for two literary giants. This is a novel about friendship, about writing and writers and about life. A compression of historical detail—part borrowed anecdote, part deduction, part invention—it offers an illumination of the creative life and odd companionship of two pillars of New Zealand literature, Janet Frame and Frank Sargeson.

Carefully situated as a work of biographical fiction, *Gifted* concerns itself as much with Sargeson's gift—a space apart from the world in which to write—as with the giftedness of Janet Frame. Evans takes some licence with detail, presenting Frame as emerging from naught to luminary in just those months spent with Sargeson in 1955. It is a necessary conceit, and although the reader sees that Sargeson is rather awestruck by Frame, it perhaps elevates his contribution to the emergence of her talent.

This is a deeply textured, evocative rendering of a formative period in New Zealand literature. Evans grants the reader an access to two sublime minds, crafting an insight into the daily life of two very private writers.

I came to *Gifted* knowing the names Frame and Sargeson, but only having a slight acquaintance with their work. This would perhaps be true of many readers. The intimacy of Evans' portrayal serves to introduce not only characters—for these are Evans' characters as much as they are historical figures—but also their minds. His representation may not be entirely faithful to historical 'fact' or individual style, but is an enticing invitation to read more.



## *Lives of the Poets*

By John Newton

Twenty-five years after the publishing of his inaugural volume, *Tales from the Angler's Eldorado*, John Newton's second collection of poems, *Lives of the Poets*, is a masterful assemblage of experiments with style and form, still with the lyrical quality reminiscent of his debut.

This new collection is arranged in four parts. It opens with the eponymous 'Lives of the Poets', which contains richly drawn sketches of both character and episode. The second section, with its near-constant second person address, sets a more decisive scene, while the third is a change of scene and pace, segueing into the fourth. These middle sections are no less beautiful than the nostalgic first section, and perhaps include some of the more evocative images in the portrayal of place and emotion. The final section, titled 'Stations', is more a return to the theme of the volume's title. Spattered with reference and wit, each 14-line poem refers to one individual in particular.

This is a contained collection, with an emotional sensibility and portrayal of landscape which at once produces a sense of feeling that is somehow tempered, yet potent in the refined musicality and play with rhythm and language.

One can be entirely lost, or partially lost, but the lull of Newton's words, their musicality and rhyme—sometimes blatant, sometimes gentle—excuses any lapse in understanding. There is pleasure to be found simply in the sound of the words so deftly put together in these small islands of poetry, bound together by an expansive narrative thread.



Briony Pentecost is an avid reader and writer, currently completing her Honours in English Literature at Victoria University.

# Victoria holds court



Filming of *The Court Report* in a lecture theatre at Victoria Law School.

The inside of one of Victoria Law School's lecture theatres is now being beamed into thousands of households around the country every Thursday.

It is one of the backdrops for a new television show on TVNZ 7, *The Court Report*, which includes a live studio audience made up of law students, legal practitioners and the wider university community. The programme takes a detailed look at legal issues, with a focus on underlying principles and informed analysis.

Since the show went to air in June, it has featured expert commentary from a number of

Victoria academics, including background information presented by Victoria's Adjunct Lecturer Steven Price.

"A strength of our Law School is its unique position in the capital," says Dean of Law Professor Tony Smith. "Our proximity to the principal legal institutions—Parliament, the courts and the public service—are emphasised by this programme, which places Victoria at the heart of legal discussion in this country."

<http://tvnz.co.nz/the-court-report/court-report-index-group-3602627>

## Friends in need



Residential block Alto Rio in Concepción, Chile after the 2010 quake. Credit: Erasmo Macaya

When a magnitude 8.8 earthquake struck Chile in February this year, several universities were affected, with some researchers losing important work—including scientific samples that took years to collect.

Victoria University has provided six four-month fellowships to Chilean researchers to ensure that their research can continue in Wellington in the interim.

"Many research facilities in Chile are still being rebuilt," says Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) Professor Neil Quigley.

"These fellowships are our way of reaching out to our academic colleagues in Chile, to ensure important research doesn't lose momentum."

The fellows arrived in November and have been teamed up with Victoria academics conducting similar work.

## Science 101



High school students from Wellington Girls' College learn about earth science.

School students from all around Wellington visited Victoria recently to explore science in hands-on workshops.

Victoria's School of Chemical and Physical Sciences has been running the high school outreach programme for a few years, and the Faculty of Engineering and School of Geography, Environment and Earth Sciences are now also involved.

"Students learned to recognise the imprint of early British settlers on Wellington by analysing sediment layers," says Alexa Van Eaton, one of the postgraduate students that organised the Geology workshop.

"The postgraduates worked alongside the school students, which helped us all get back to basics and show what we love about science."

## Taiwanese visit



Members of the Taiwanese delegation with staff from Te Herenga Waka Marae and the Office of Pro Vice-Chancellor Māori.

Te Herenga Waka Marae hosted and coordinated a programme for a delegation of Taiwanese indigenous scholars and community leaders in September, with support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Taiwan's Council of Indigenous People and the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in New Zealand. Taurima—Marae Manager, Te Ripowai Higgins says that the visit's purpose was to look at how Te Reo Māori has been revitalised in New Zealand and what strategies and initiatives can be replicated in Taiwan to assist with their indigenous languages. "Our networks in this field, from community, educational institutions and policymakers, gave the visitors an extensive overview of Māori language revitalisation initiatives."





Mladen Bizumic, *From Cube To Ball (Chapter 2)*, 2010.

## Our new modern heritage

Much of what we call 'modern' in architecture refers to buildings that might now be considered 'heritage'.

Modernism, characterised by its simplified structure and lack of ornament, is explored in its various forms in the Adam Art Gallery's latest exhibition *Designs for Living*.

The exhibition has been developed around The University of Auckland Gus Fisher Gallery's touring exhibition *Long Live the Modern: New Zealand's New Architecture, 1904–1984*, comprised of architectural models, drawings and photographic documentation of buildings identified as crucial to our modernist history.

"Our exhibition uses the word 'modern' in a broad way, pursuing twentieth century architectural initiatives concerned with the 'new,'" says *Long Live the Modern* curator Julia Gatley.

"It was believed that the 'new' would change lives in positive ways at a time when the nation was in a process of rebuilding itself after World War II, in pursuit of a better life."

To complement *Long Live the Modern*, the Adam Art Gallery has invited three New Zealand artists to present projects from their own investigations into modernism: Vienna/New Zealand-based artist Mladen Bizumic, and Auckland-based artists Lisa Crowley and Louise Menzies. Bizumic presents a purpose-built installation of sculptural forms and

photographic collages that fills an entire room of the Adam Art Gallery in tribute to the modernist designs of Austrian-born architect Ernst Plischke.

*National Projects*, Crowley's photographic series, revisits the collective ideals of mid-twentieth century modernism. She depicts intimate interiors of New Zealand's State Housing project, as well as an immersive image of the Maraetai dam on the Waikato River.

Menzies' contribution began with her research of archival material held by Victoria University's J. C. Beaglehole Room produced by the School of Radiant Living, a mid-twentieth century spiritual movement based in Havelock North that taught holistic philosophy, spirituality and physical health.

The exhibition is accompanied by a public programme of discussion, artist talks and tours designed to provide a platform for critical discussion and enhance engagement with the exhibition.

"*Designs for Living* reminds us how much the 'modern' movement has influenced us and continues to do so," says Director of the Adam Art Gallery Christina Barton.

For more information on the exhibition and its public programme, visit [www.victoria.ac.nz/adamartgallery](http://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 gift to Victoria University.

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For more information about making a gift to Victoria University, contact Diana Meads at the Victoria University Foundation, in confidence, on free phone 0800 842 4438, via email at [diana.meads@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:diana.meads@vuw.ac.nz) or by mail at Victoria University Foundation, PO Box 600, Wellington 6140, New Zealand.

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