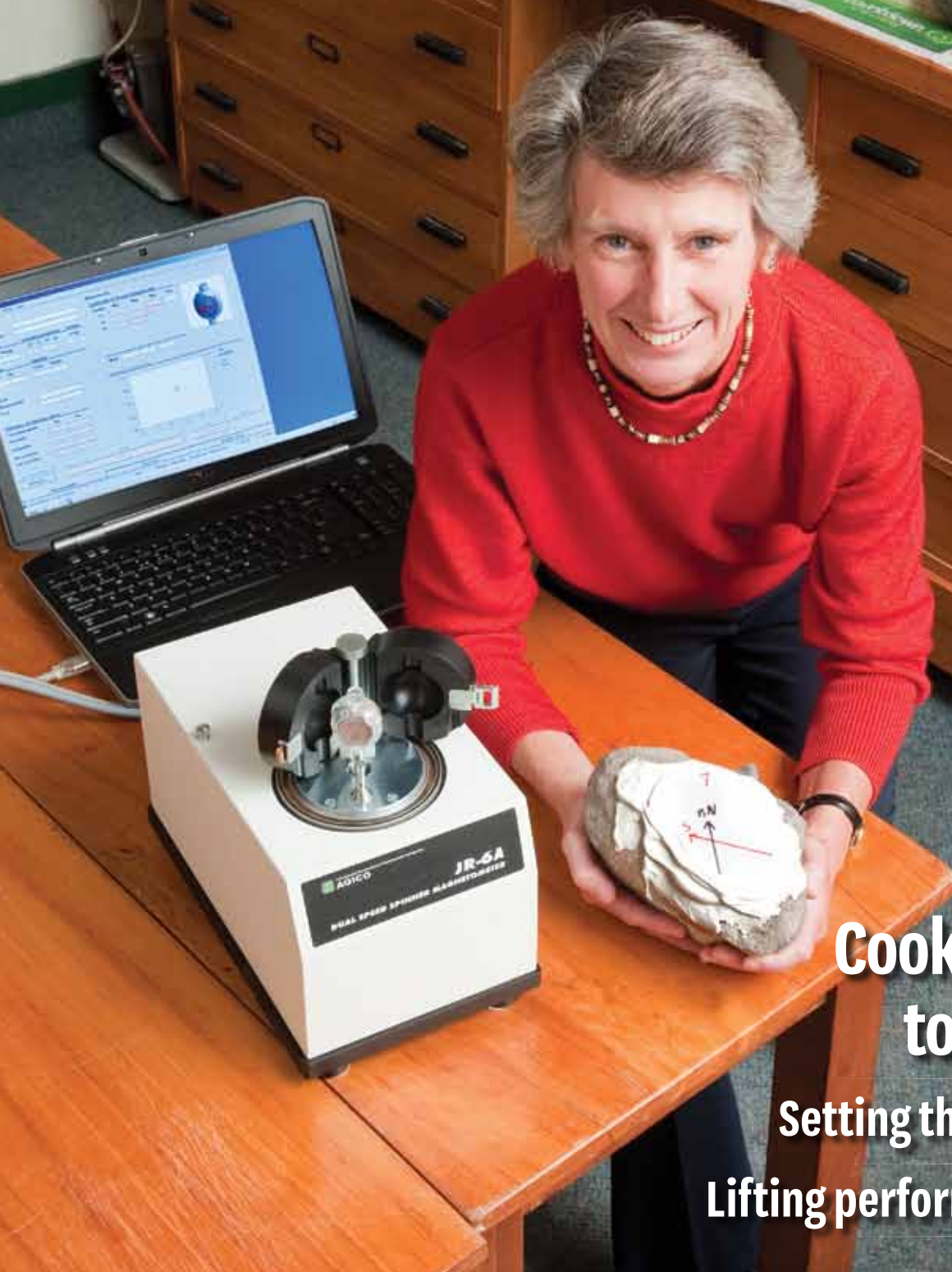


# Victorious

SPRING 2012

MAGAZINE FOR FRIENDS AND ALUMNI OF VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON



**Cooking up clues  
to Earth's core**

**Setting the record straight**

**Lifting performance in schools**





# A life of its own

When internationally renowned architect and installation artist Philip Beesley said ‘yes’ overnight to an invitation to come to Wellington, Industrial Design Professor Simon Fraser knew it was an opportunity not to be missed.

Philip was a keynote speaker at a major international conference, DeSForM 2012, hosted by Victoria’s School of Design earlier this year. But he wasn’t just here to talk—he also brought with him an experimental, interactive installation that explores future architectural possibilities.

‘Vesica’, exhibited at Wellington’s City Gallery, is constructed from a fine, translucent web of 10,000 digitally fabricated components activated by sensors and microprocessors.

It reacts to people’s presence with movement, light and sound.

An unexpected outcome for the School, says Simon, was the level of student engagement with Philip’s work.

“We had students from all areas, including industrial design, design physiology and digital fabrication, go down to the City Gallery and come back influenced by his ideas. His participation mobilised the whole School.”

Media Design student Meredith Crowe spent 10 days putting the intricate installation together and another five taking it down. “It was like Lego for adults,” she says, “but much more daunting.”

Meredith says working alongside Philip was inspiring. “We often think too small in this part

of the world. Seeing his vision and how he had achieved it helped me with the installation I am doing for my Master’s.

“Even though he is famous, he has to solve the same problems as the rest of us.”

Being in the room with the installation was a powerful experience, says Meredith. “The installation gripped people and they were turning up wanting to have a look, even as we were taking it down.”

The installation is now on display for the 18th Biennale of Sydney on Cockatoo Island.

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The installation *Vesica* at the City Gallery in Wellington  
Image © PBAI

## From the Vice-Chancellor

Since the last issue of *Victorious*, I've enjoyed meeting many of you at functions in Berlin, London, New York and at a pan-New Zealand universities function in Taiwan—you can read more about some of these events on page 15. As well as revisiting our alumni in Kuala Lumpur in June, Victoria reconnected with alumni in Kuching in Malaysia, where Pro Vice-Chancellor (International) Professor Rob Rabel met many Victoria graduates at the first event to be held in the city for six years.

We value our close ties with alumni, including the 8,000-strong cohort of graduates now based overseas. We enjoy hearing of your successes and learning from your feedback. It helps us deliver a better learning, teaching and research environment and a better overall student experience.

Our relationships with friends, partners and associates are also extremely important. Being a capital city university, we've developed close ties with a wide range of business and government organisations here in Wellington, but a particular focus for the University is to continue building stronger relationships internationally too.

In April I travelled to Indonesia as part of the Prime Minister's delegation and while there I signed the renewal of our Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University of the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture. The agreement brings co-funded academic staff members from Indonesian universities to Victoria to undertake PhD study. It is one of a number of co-funding arrangements Victoria has signed with Vietnamese and Chinese government agencies to educate foreign government-funded PhD students and support higher education capacity-building in Asia.

Victoria also hosted a visit from His Excellency Jia Qinglin, Chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference of the People's Republic of China, and welcomed the Deputy Prime Minister of Vietnam, His Excellency Mr Nguyen Xuan Phuc, to the University for the first time. In May, we signed a letter of intent to establish an articulation agreement in Engineering and Computer Science with East China Normal University in Shanghai.

Through these global connections Victoria's students learn to work alongside people of different nationalities, with different cultural practices and unique world views, and in doing so, they equip themselves to enter an increasingly globalised world and workforce.

Professor Pat Walsh, Vice-Chancellor



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# Going digital



As more public services are delivered online, Professor of e-Government Miriam Lips is exploring what that means for managing digitised personal data.

While many of us already use the internet and smart phones to quickly complete life's essential activities, Miriam says the Government needs to be even more vigilant than the private sector about how that information is used.

"Digital information can be copied, accessed and shared easily. It's going to be important to build privacy and security safeguards into systems so the public can be confident their information is being used appropriately.

"A 21st century government should provide its services through digital channels but we need to have a public debate about what kind of services we'd like to be able to access online, on smart phones or through social media," she says.

To push this debate forward Miriam chaired, in conjunction with the Department of Internal Affairs and the Office of the Privacy Commissioner, a second major international conference on digital identity in a networked world. Experts from far and wide travelled to Wellington earlier this year to explore how businesses and government agencies could better manage the digital information they capture.

Miriam says that while officials have the opportunity to learn from best practice overseas, her research has shown that New Zealand bucks the trend when it comes to traditional assumptions.

"There's a popular perception that people are generally very distrustful about giving government personal data and seeing it used across agencies. But our research has found that if it's clear how that information is going to be used, New Zealanders are generally very trusting of the New Zealand Government and see sharing information between departments as better value for the taxpayer."

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# Venus inspires national debate

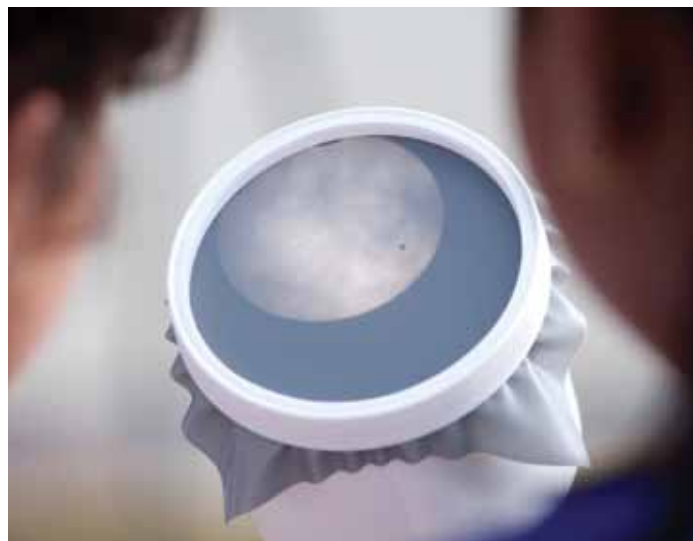


Photo: Stephen Jones

New Zealanders young and old gathered in Gisborne earlier this year to debate the future of the nation, using the time and place of a rare astronomical event to kick-start discussions.

As the crowd covering the Tolaga Bay wharf reached the second verse of the national anthem on 6 June, the clouds parted and there was Venus, passing across the sun. It was an inspiring start to a three-day forum to contemplate New Zealand's future, says Professor Lydia Wevers, Director of the Stout Research Centre and one of the Steering Group members of the Transit of Venus forum.

Held at the site of Captain James Cook's memorable encounter with local Māori—a voyage prompted by the Transit of Venus in 1769—the forum was the idea of the late Professor Sir Paul Callaghan, who saw the transit as an opportunity to ask some important questions about the kind of country we want to become.

"When Cook came here all those years ago it was the start of a new cultural history between two peoples that has led us to where we are today. We have a shared heritage and a shared future, and Gisborne has become a place to discuss these magnificent new beginnings," says Lydia.

Three hundred attendees heard professionals across a range of disciplines debate a raft of issues, all focused on developing a socially cohesive and economically and environmentally prosperous New Zealand. Participants were left challenged to put at least three ideas into action.

"While I can't summarise the vast array of ideas raised, the forum in itself demonstrated the immense value of our people and places," says Lydia. "The welcome provided by the tiny Uawa community in Tolaga Bay to the 1,000 people who arrived that day was extraordinary. It also threw into sharp relief for me how enriching Māori culture is to our society—the poignancy of a waiata or haka, when words don't suffice."

The forum was a partnership between Victoria, the MacDiarmid Institute, the Royal Society of New Zealand and Te Aitanga-a-Hauiti and the Tolaga Bay community. Presentations and panel discussions are available online at [www.royalsociety.org.nz/transit-of-venus-forum](http://www.royalsociety.org.nz/transit-of-venus-forum)

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From left to right: Hawea Tomoana (Te Ati Awa-Waiwhetu, Ngāti Kahungunu), Para Tomoana (Ngāti Kahungunu), Dr Gillian Turner, Dr Malcolm Ingham and Mike Ross (Tainui).

# Cooking up clues to Earth's core

**For most people, the high point of their first hangi is tasting food cooked in an earth oven.**

But for Dr Gillian Turner it was when the meal was over—so she could get inside the pit.

In the end, Gillian, a geophysicist in the School of Chemical and Physical Sciences, had to wait three days for the oven to cool down enough to inspect the hangi stones at the bottom of it.

Gillian is leading a team of scientists studying changes in Earth's magnetic field, the constantly moving force that makes compass needles point to the north and guides many birds and animals on their migratory path.

Keeping track of that force, she says, shines light on what is happening inside the Earth's molten iron core. Her focus is changes to the magnetic field in the Southwest Pacific region over the past 10,000 years. "The missing piece of a global jigsaw puzzle as it is the last big region of the world where such work is yet to be done."

The scientists, who have three years of Marsden funding for the project, are gathering data from volcanic rocks, lake and marine sediments and pieces of old pottery, all of which contain natural records of the magnetic field.

In collaboration with archaeologist Dr Bruce McFadgen, they are also investigating the idea

of sourcing records from ancient hangi stones at undisturbed pits around New Zealand.

To check if that would give them relevant information, a live experiment was carried out by laying a hangi at Waiwhetu Marae in Lower Hutt.

"Hangi stones get very hot which causes the grains of magnetic minerals in them to lose any magnetisation. As they cool, they become remagnetised by the present magnetic field," says Gillian. "If today's stones give an accurate record of the direction and strength of the magnetic field then we can be confident ancient stones will do the same."

Gillian was given hangi stones from Nelson, Hawke's Bay, Wellington, Otaki, Mount Taranaki and Mount Ngauruhoe. In some of them, she inserted thermocouples to monitor their internal temperature.

Victoria's Te Kawa a Māui/School of Māori Studies helped source the rocks and organise the hangi which coincided with Matariki celebrations and attracted several hundred visitors.

The hangi was started just before dawn and Gillian monitored the steadily rising temperature. She expected a high of perhaps 800 degrees Celsius and was amazed to see the gauge reach 1,150 after a few hours.

Uncovering the rocks a few days later was a precise operation, she says.

"We excavated very carefully and then made a Plaster of Paris cap on the top of each stone—a bit like icing a Christmas cake. Before removing them, we marked magnetic north and the direction to the sun on each stone."

The rocks are now back in Gillian's laboratory where sampling and further magnetic measurements will take place. The early signs look positive. "I'm optimistic we can use the findings to design a protocol that will allow us to measure rocks at archaeological hangi sites."

There are plenty of those throughout New Zealand she says, some of which date back to five or six hundred years before Pākehā came to New Zealand.

Apart from the scientific benefits, Gillian says it was a privilege to collaborate with Māori in conducting the experiment.

"It was a quite special meeting up of science with Māori culture, and we had amazing support during the planning and on the day. That we were given and loaned hangi stones was particularly significant as they are very precious to their owners."

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# Investigating Parliament's urgency provisions



From left to right: Polly Higbee, Professor Claudia Geiringer and Professor Elizabeth McLeay.

**A study examining how bills were put through Parliament has found that the system's urgency provisions have often been abused.**

Professor Claudia Geiringer, Professor Elizabeth McLeay and Polly Higbee discovered more than 1,600 bills were accorded urgency between 1987 and 2010.

The researchers interviewed 18 MPs and senior parliamentary officials as part of the study and found a widely held view that there weren't enough scheduled sitting hours to get through government business. Urgency was used as a tool to get extra time.

"Governments often used urgency to make progress with their legislative programmes generally, as opposed to when there was a genuine need—such as a civil emergency—for something to be fast-tracked," says Elizabeth.

"Relying on urgency to address the perceived problem of insufficient time is undesirable because it comes at a cost to the integrity of the legislative process, and contributes to a public perception that legislation is being rammed through."

While abuse of urgency has been greater at some times than others, successive New Zealand governments have relied on urgency to pass legislation more quickly.

The 2008–11 National-led Government was one of the most frequent users of urgency motions

since the introduction of MMP in 1996, along with National-led governments between 1996 and 1999.

"These governments also relied comparatively heavily on the worst type of urgency: to eliminate select committee scrutiny of legislation," says Claudia.

The Urgency Project was funded by the New Zealand Law Foundation and supported by the New Zealand Centre for Public Law at Victoria and the New Zealand Law Society's Rule of Law Committee. The results of the study were published late last year in the book, *What's the Hurry: Urgency in the NZ Legislative Process 1987–2010*.

Partly as a result of the study, Parliament's rules have now been amended to provide a different mechanism to allow the House to sit for longer hours. As a result, there has been far less reliance on urgency during the new parliamentary term.

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# Setting the record straight

**Dr Patricia O'Brien says historical New Zealand records paint the man at the centre of Samoa's nationalist Mau movement as treacherous and self-serving, but she's putting forward an alternative view.**

Patricia, from the Center for Australian & New Zealand Studies at Georgetown University in Washington DC, is the current J.D. Stout Fellow at Victoria where she is researching race, violence and colonial rule in Samoa.

Patricia's interest in Ta'isi Olaf Nelson, one of Western Samoa's richest and most influential men, was sparked by reading letters and papers about him in New Zealand and during two trips to Samoa.

Ta'isi was a vehement critic of the New Zealand colonial administration and helped found the Mau passive resistance movement. Patricia says he came to be viewed in New Zealand as "the cause of all the trouble".

"New Zealand governments, prior to Labour coming into power in 1935, definitely set out to destroy his image and reputation and the propaganda about him has never been contested.



Patricia delivers her lecture in Apia. Photo supplied

"One of the perceptions put forward was that his actions were about gaining power and furthering his economic interests, which records show is unfair. He actually ended up losing most of his fortune fighting for Mau."

Ta'isi's family, headed by His Highness Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Efi, the Samoan Head of State, has welcomed Patricia's interest. He hosted a lecture by her in his former home, Tuafu, in Apia—a house that was once the nerve centre of Mau as well as a venue for grand entertaining.

She gave the same lecture at Victoria in June to mark the 50th anniversary of Samoan Independence from New Zealand and is planning to turn her research into a biography of Ta'isi.

"Mau history is still divisive in Samoa today. It's not my place to talk about what Samoans think of Mau today, but there is an untold story which needs to come out."

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# Winners and losers in the deep blue sea



*A hydrographic model of the Cook Strait region developed by Jeff's team to predict larval triplefin fish movement. 'Warm' colours indicate stronger ocean currents.*

Dr Jeff Shima and his team at Victoria's Coastal Ecology Lab on Wellington's South Coast are studying what makes winners and losers in New Zealand's abundant triplefin fish population.

Triplefins are small reef fish, commonly found on shallow reefs and in tide pools. Females lay eggs within a nest that is defended by males. Eggs hatch after two weeks, and the larval baby fish then drift on ocean currents for around seven weeks while developing. Once grown, they settle down to the sea floor, and live their lives within a few square metres of that location.

Jeff defines winners as those fish that survive long enough to reproduce—thus ensuring the continuation of their genetic lines—while losers are the ones that live for a period of time but fail to successfully breed.

"What we want to work out here is whether environmental factors influence whether a fish is a winner or a loser. It's the whole nature versus nurture debate, played out in the fish world."

To do this, Jeff looks at fish ear bones. "Fish ear bones are like a diary—they can tell us where

and when the fish was born, how fast it has grown at different times in its life and when it made the transition into the adult population. Because fish ear bones grow on a daily cycle, they form rings that can be 'read' in much the same way as tree rings. The ear bones also record the chemistry of surrounding seawater, and we can use this information to figure out where the fish was born, and where it spent time in different stages of its life.

"The wealth of information within fish ear bones has allowed us to reconstruct a detailed history of individual fish. We have learned that winners and losers are not determined by their birthplaces, but rather by where they spend time early in their development—fish that spend some time in their early development within sheltered harbours tend to grow more quickly."

Jeff says that the research is also looking into the effects of losers on winners. "Important principles of biology are based upon the notion of 'survival of the fittest'—and most biological research focuses on winners. For animals such as the triplefin fish, living among losers may have an effect on winners, and losers may alter evolutionary processes.

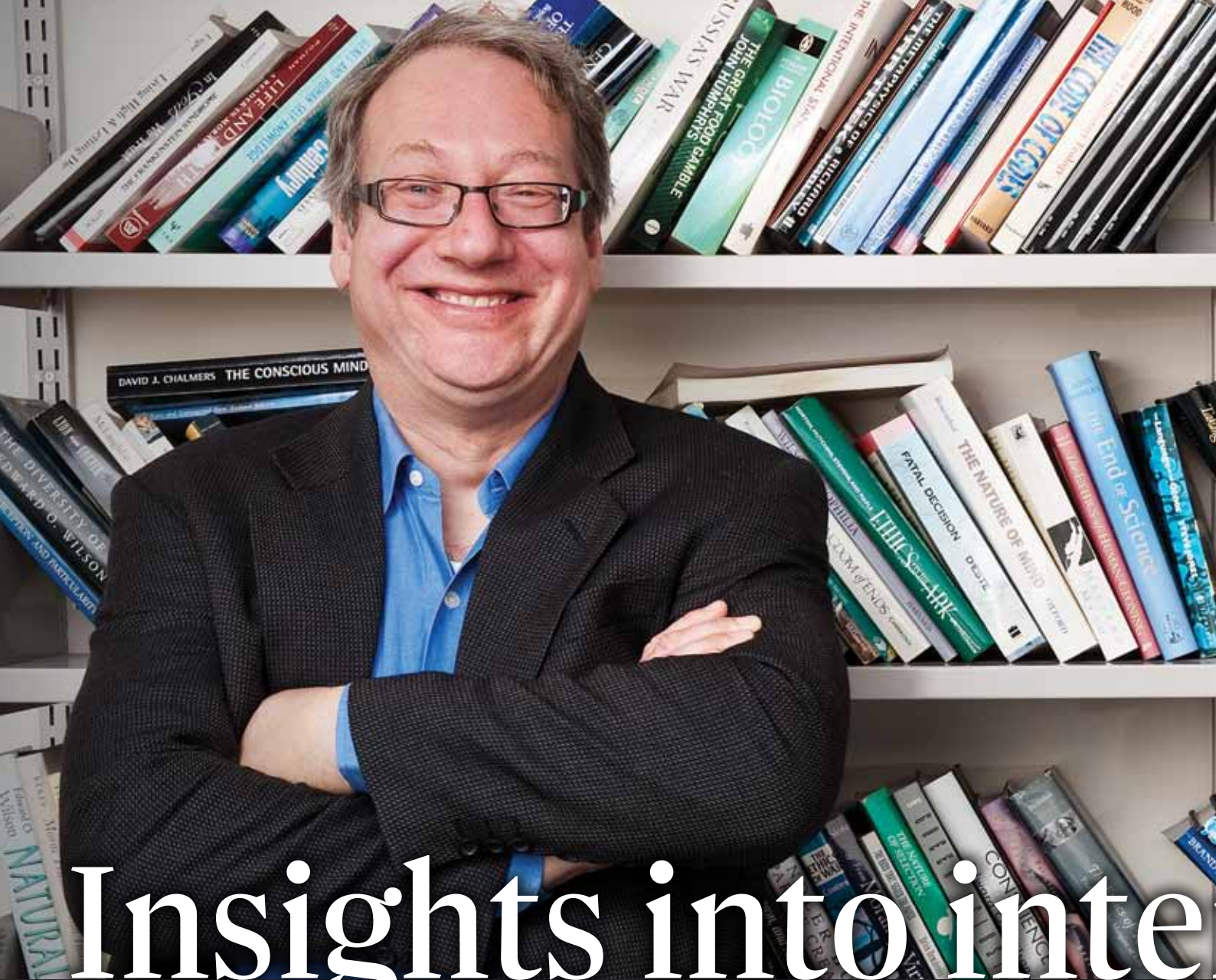
"We are really excited by this new research direction. It is a mixture of 'gumboot' science and high-tech approaches. Who would have thought that fish ear bones could help us to challenge ideas that have been firmly held since the great work of Charles Darwin?"

The research, which is also applicable to other species of fish, will bring scientists closer to understanding the drivers of change in fish populations.

"We have a very limited understanding of the movements of larval fishes," says Jeff. "This information is essential if we hope to successfully manage fisheries and marine biodiversity. In order to forecast population growth and protect fish stocks, we need to be able to identify important source populations for future generations of fish."

Jeff's research has been supported by grants from the Marsden Fund.

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# Insights into inte

Philosophers have a reputation for dealing with ancient, abstract topics but concrete modern dilemmas get plenty of attention at Victoria.

The vibrancy of the discipline, which sits within the School of History, Philosophy, Political Science and International Relations, is reflected in an impressive publication record that has seen its staff produce and edit eight books in the last two years.

One of those authors is Associate Professor Nick Agar, whose most recent book examines radical enhancement—technologies and therapies that expand human capabilities far beyond what is naturally possible.

Examples include anti-ageing therapies, the ability to select for certain genetic traits and electronic implants.

“One proposed treatment for Alzheimer’s that is currently being tested is to implant people who have the condition with an artificial hippocampus, which is the memory centre of the brain and one of the first parts to be affected,” says Nick.

“Once we have taken that step the question will become ‘Why put up with ordinary human powers of memory when we can enhance our capability with an electronic device?’ It’s a complex area because the same therapies that can be used to make someone well can also be used to enhance their abilities.

“My book questions where the limits should be, and the moral status of those limits.”

Human enhancement is a polarised field with proponents and opponents at either end. Nick says he is trying to steer a path between the two.

“These new technologies are part of our world but, while accepting that, I also want to give weight to human values. More is not always better and I believe the experiences and achievements that are typical of human beings are important and worth hanging on to.”

The key thing, he believes, is to have the discussion.

“While we are getting faster at developing technologies we don’t get better at puzzling.

“It takes time to work out whether something is a good thing or not. We have the technology to

make human enhancement a reality now, so there is little time to mull over the pros and cons. We need to be debating these topics or we will leave the people who develop the technologies to make the decisions for us.”

Nick says he is writing for “anyone who is thinking hard about the future of our species”, and his work does not assume any technical knowledge.

*A Priori* on the other hand, the latest book by Professor Edwin Mares, is written for students in their third year of Philosophy studies and beyond.

“The impact is greater if you can reach students,” says Edwin. “They are more influential than the relatively small community of professional philosophers.”

*A Priori* examines the nature of knowledge and how we justify our beliefs.

Many influential philosophers have argued in recent years that philosophy is an *a priori* science, or one that results from theoretical deduction rather than observation or experience.





Professor Edwin Mares and Associate Professor Nick Agar.

# resting questions

Edwin challenges that view, putting forward the opinion that there are beliefs which cannot be justified with empirical evidence.

“Take the equation  $2+2=4$ . We think it has always been that way and has to be that way but actually we haven’t experienced everything in the Universe and there could be situations where  $2+2$  does not equal four.

“No matter what you do with it, there is a non-empirical element. You can say that’s how we choose to understand mathematics but that’s not true evidence, it’s a decision.”

Another example, he says, is the phrase ‘a grandfather is also a father’. “We accept that as true because we agree about the meaning of the words not because we have actually checked. It’s a misunderstanding to claim that statement comes from empirical knowledge.”

A key concern for Edwin has been demystifying the debate over *a priori* knowledge.

“Non-empirical justifications are a lot easier to come by than people think. There has been a view that *a priori* knowledge is God-given or comes from a mysterious source but I believe it

is a lot more prosaic than that.

“I’m arguing that there are non-empirical elements in the normal way we form knowledge.”

Edwin says researching and writing is supported and encouraged at Victoria and not just for the contribution it makes to wider debate.

“Writing and thinking are not disjointed—when you are working something out, it’s often best to do it on screen and then read it over. Sometimes things that seem good in your head are not so good on paper and vice versa.”

Nick says philosophers at Victoria are researching a diverse range of topics. “It’s unpredictable what people will get fascinated by. We have researchers focused on issues ranging from patriotism to conspiracy theory—if there is an interesting question you get involved in it here.”

Philosophy has been taught at Victoria for more than 60 years with Professor George Hughes appointed to the first Chair in Philosophy in 1951. He held the position for 33 years and his interest in ethics and logic remains a particular strength of the programme.

It is exciting, says Nick, to see steady growth in the number of students enrolling in philosophy.

“The general thinking and problem-solving skills that philosophy teaches can be just as useful as training in one defined area.”

Those skills are also widely applicable with their former students in careers ranging from the public service and teaching to technology companies.

It’s also not uncommon, says Nick, for students to take up philosophy later in tertiary study.

“We get quite a lot of students who feel they have learned a lot of interesting stuff during their undergraduate degree, but something is missing and they come to philosophy to find it.”

A list of the books published by Victoria’s Philosophy staff since 2010 is available online, at [www.victoria.ac.nz/hppi/about/news#a105734](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/hppi/about/news#a105734)

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# International teachers as learners

When international English teachers come to New Zealand for professional development they improve their language skills. More importantly, they find new ways of thinking about education in their home countries.

So say Dr Carolyn Tait and Dr Margaret Gleeson, from the School of Educational Psychology and Pedagogy, who are researching teachers' experiences of being immersed in New Zealand's education system and culture.

A significant number of international teachers travel to Victoria's Faculty of Education every year to complete professional development courses delivered by Carolyn and Margaret.

To better meet the needs of their students and the institutions that send them, the pair examined the experiences of nine senior teachers from Hong Kong. The group was interviewed during a five-week period of professional training—and once more a year later.

Carolyn says they were interested to learn how teachers managed their own learning.

"We approached our research with a community of practice perspective. Usually that means a group of people gather for a common purpose, reach conclusions and these sustain them



Dr Carolyn Tait and Dr Margaret Gleeson.

indefinitely. But for this particular group, once they'd succeeded in their academic modules here in New Zealand, they didn't have opportunities to apply their learning in Hong Kong."

Margaret says the group took skills back home that were different from what she and Carolyn had anticipated, but still had value.

"With distance from everyday distractions and demands, these teachers developed a critical understanding of their own practice. They reported they'd gained confidence and had formed a new perspective of their country's

education system. This may open new avenues for their teaching practices in the future."

Carolyn says their research also identified effective learning methods for international teachers, which included allowing teachers to discuss complex emotional or cognitive issues in their native tongue first and learning through group work.

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# Improving maternity care for Samoan women



A study carried out at Victoria has explored Samoan women's attitudes to pregnancy, birth and maternity care.

Dr Ausaga Faasalele Tanuvasa, a Senior Research Fellow at the Health Services Research Centre in the School of Government, interviewed 40 Samoan women—20 born in

Samoa and 20 in New Zealand—during a two-year project funded by the Health Research Council of New Zealand (HRC).

It was the first time HRC had funded a lead Pacific researcher to investigate issues affecting Pacific Islanders.

Higher rates of infant death, premature delivery and birth complications among Pacific women result from a later start to antenatal care.

However, regardless of when they first attended antenatal care, most women in Ausaga's study had good pregnancy outcomes.

Ausaga says Samoan women tend not to contact a midwife in the first trimester because they view pregnancy as wellness, not a sickness.

Very few of the women she interviewed had planned their pregnancies, seeing them as a natural and normal event.

But the study has also shown that most women interviewed didn't relate to the content of antenatal classes or the way the classes were delivered.

Ausaga says New Zealand-born Samoan women know more about their bodies than their island-born counterparts, but it doesn't mean they take better care of themselves. In fact, her research shows they are more likely to smoke and drink alcohol.

Samoan-born women also tend to combine Western and traditional healing systems, with 13 of those interviewed having enjoyed traditional abdominal massages during their pregnancy.

Ausaga, who came to New Zealand as a teenager to train as a nurse, presented her findings to the International Confederation of Midwives in South Africa last year.

She hopes her study will result in traditional healers working more closely with midwives to deliver antenatal care to Pacific women and the introduction of childbirth education classes that are better suited to Pacific women.

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From the Pro Vice-Chancellor Education, Professor Dugald Scott

# Lifting performance in schools

**Victoria's Faculty of Education is well placed to help meet ambitious education targets outlined by the Government, borne from years of experience training teachers and researching education systems.**

The Government's proposals to change teacher-student ratios sparked outrage in homes and in media coverage across New Zealand recently. What may have been lost in the furor are recent accounts of the country's education system that identify areas for improvement (see inset), particularly the wide gap between the academic achievement of the best and worst performing pupils.

The Faculty of Education has been training teachers and carrying out research and teaching on many aspects of the education system for more than 130 years. This record means we can enjoy some responsibility that, as reported by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), "on average, New Zealand students are among the top performers in the world". But we must also shoulder part of the blame for the persistently wide dispersion of achievement: the over representation of Māori and Pasifika in underachieving groups, and the atypically large influence that socio economic background has on student achievement in New Zealand.

Because of the widespread and within-school nature of this problem, it cannot be assumed that simply cloning the teachers that schools regard as their best—even if it were possible—would improve the academic performance of pupils at the 'tail' end of achievement.

Indeed, our evidence suggests that schools are generally ill-equipped to identify the teaching practices which have led to the wide dispersion, and are equally ill-equipped to identify and enact practices which could bring the dispersion within the kind of limits that are more common in the OECD. Without reducing this marked difference in achievement, we are unlikely to reach the target of 85 percent of 18-year-olds gaining NCEA Level 2 or equivalent by 2016. (The 2011 figure is approximately 68 percent.)

One important part of the answer lies in providing schools with the analytic techniques, the software and the systems to link teaching practices with student outcomes. Such fine-grained analysis is needed to identify the causes of this dispersion, and then work can begin to reduce it. Without making use of quite sophisticated statistical techniques a school cannot identify the practices—found within a sea of otherwise good practice—that are contributing to the wide dispersion of achievement for particular groups in their school.

Without expertise in assessing student progress—as opposed to point-in-time assessments—schools will similarly find difficulty in judging the effectiveness of improved practices. Teachers and schools with tools and expertise in this kind of analysis will be better equipped to lift the achievement of targeted groups.

Another part of the answer lies in the ability to identify and engage learners at risk of disengaging from education and training, and to work with parents and communities to reduce this risk. Teachers need an understanding of the causes of behaviours and motivations which reduce learning opportunities and alienate children and young persons from education, and the skills to address them.

The Faculty of Education is planning a postgraduate teaching qualification which will equip all new graduates with these techniques and skills, most of the latter based on research carried out by academic staff in the Faculty. The Minister of Education's announcement of her Government's intention to require a postgraduate qualification for entry to teaching will allow Victoria to play a vital role in lifting New Zealand school students from among the top performers in the world, to the best performers in the world.



## The good and the bad

A recent report by the OECD summarised the successes and shortcomings of New Zealand's education system.

"... while on average New Zealand students are among the top performers in the world, the dispersion of achievement scores is particularly large. Among the high-achieving countries, New Zealand had the widest range of scores between the bottom five per cent and the top five per cent. Performance differences were most pronounced within schools rather than between schools. While some Māori and Pasifika students showed high performance, Māori and Pasifika students were over-represented at the lower end of the performance distribution. New Zealand's results in international student assessments have been relatively stable over the past decade showing consistently high average performance, coupled with a wide dispersion of achievement scores."

Nusche, D., et al. (2012), OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education: New Zealand 2011, OECD Publishing.

## Catching, tagging and tracking hedgehogs



Students measure a tagged female hedgehog. Photo supplied

A project to follow the fortunes of hedgehogs on Victoria's Kelburn Campus has given taught Master's students first-hand experience of the world of research.

Part of the Conservation Biology course, the self-directed two-month project measured hedgehog population size and tracked the movements of 10 individual hedgehogs by tagging them with small radio transmitters. Students' research efforts were coordinated by conservation ecology student David Spiegel under the supervision of Senior Biological Sciences Lecturer Dr Wayne Linklater.

David says he was surprised by the size of the hedgehog population on campus. "I'd predicted a high population but in spite of laying 170 traps only 10 hedgehogs were captured. Population density was very low in comparison to rural counterparts, contradicting studies on urbanised hedgehog populations in Europe."

Students also wanted to check if more females would be captured—a finding that would be in line with international studies—and, of the 10 trapped, eight were female and two male.

"There was a high female-biased sex ratio of hedgehogs on campus. Male hedgehogs are more mobile, they cross more roads and this increases their risk of death," says David.

Tagged hedgehogs were mostly based around the Mount Street cemetery, and were tracked crossing Kelburn Parade and Salamanca Road.

David says the project showed what parameters make a good research project. "A two-month period was necessary to sample all the hedgehogs in a study area of our size, and specimens needed to be sampled at least 10 times to produce reliable results."

The project formed part of a new initiative between Victoria's Campus Services team and the Centre for Biodiversity and Restoration Ecology to conduct a biodiversity inventory of the University's campuses.

"Plants and animals are also teaching and research assets," says Wayne. "Monitoring hedgehogs is part of this programme because we also need to understand the impact of introduced exotic animals, especially those that have pest status."

The inventory will be used to develop a biodiversity plan for Victoria.

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## Challenging students' expectations



Photo: Simon Hodgson

The process of creating fresh musical performances is inspiring young musicians in the New Zealand School of Music.

Promoting the music of the Enlightenment period to the next generation of musicians is Dr Erin Helyard, a specialist in harpsichord and fortepiano, who joined the New Zealand School of Music (NZSM) as Lecturer in Period Performance at the beginning of this year.

"My aim is to help young musicians create vivid, expressive music and perhaps challenge some of the usual expectations of music listeners. My parents were both teachers, and I just relish teaching—it's extremely satisfying when you see a student have an 'aha!' moment."

Erin has been working with NZSM students to explore different ways of performing music through discussion, analysis and even listening to early recordings for inspiration.

"I've been working with students who play all sorts of instruments, to help them achieve more freedom and expression in their music-making. It has been fascinating—younger musicians have such an 'eyes wide open' approach to how they interpret music, which means interesting ideas come up all the time."

Erin's own interest in music began at a young age, playing on the family piano and listening to music on the radio. Fascinated by the "strange" musical sounds of the 17th and 18th centuries and European culture, he eventually took up the harpsichord as a teenager.

After graduating from the Sydney Conservatorium, Erin worked with the Australian Chamber Orchestra and then took up the opportunity to study in Canada where he completed a Master's degree in fortepiano performance in 2007, and a PhD in musicology in 2011, both at the Schulich School of Music at McGill University, Montreal.

He continues to develop his career as a soloist through recordings and concerts, and hopes the links he has in Australia and New Zealand will help foster closer connections between musicians from both countries. He is a founder and co-Artistic Director of the Sydney-based Pinchgut Opera and is a central founding member of the Orchestra of the Antipodes.

NZSM is a joint venture between Victoria University and Massey University.

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# Signs of success

An enthusiasm for helping hearing students communicate with the Deaf community led to accolades for Dr David McKee, Director of Victoria University's Deaf Studies Research Unit.

The 2012 New Zealand Sign Language in Action Awards, organised by Deaf Aotearoa, recognised David's outstanding contribution in establishing New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) teaching, teacher training and promotion of sign language in New Zealand.

David received both the NZSL Champion Award and NZSL in Teaching Award at the ceremony, testament to his passion and commitment to supporting the Deaf community. "I was humbled and honoured to receive these awards," he says.

The NZSL in Teaching Award recognises that David's teaching efforts have made a great contribution to teaching NZSL to Deaf and hearing students. He teaches Deaf students in the Certificate in Deaf Studies: Teaching New Zealand Sign Language and hearing students in the popular introductory NZSL courses at Victoria.

"I take joy in watching hearing people learning how to communicate with Deaf people. I am Deaf, and I thrive on building the partnership between the Deaf community and hearing people," says David.

Deaf Aotearoa Chief Executive Lachlan Keating says David has been instrumental in NZSL research and resource development. "These awards recognise David's hard work, commitment and passion for protecting, promoting and keeping NZSL successful."

One of David's contributions was co-editing the *Concise Dictionary of NZSL*, and more recently, he was the managing editor of the *NZSL Online*



Dr David McKee

*Dictionary*—a bilingual reference tool which helps people search for NZSL vocabulary, available at [nzsl.vuw.ac.nz](http://nzsl.vuw.ac.nz)

Along with Dr Rachel McKee, a Senior Lecturer in the School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies, he received a Marsden Fund grant to research sociolinguistic variation in NZSL. David has recently been teaching a regional Sign Linguistics programme to Deaf students from around Asia and the Pacific at the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

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# Stepping outside cultural comfort zones



A new guide is helping Victoria staff to incorporate more of New Zealand's unique cultural heritage into their teaching and course curriculum.

"Even successful teachers have asked for help with teaching Māori students and Māori content," says Lecturer Meegan Hall from the Centre for Academic Development.

To help staff and tutors on their way she's produced a new guide to teaching Māori content in Victoria courses.

It's one of a number of initiatives already underway to increase the number of Māori students successfully completing their tertiary studies.

"If we can get students involved in the university environment, feeling comfortable and feeling like they're part of the place, then the likelihood of them continuing their studies is really high. Incorporating culturally inclusive practices into teaching is one of a number of opportunities to create an environment that's conducive to helping our Māori students achieve," says Meegan.

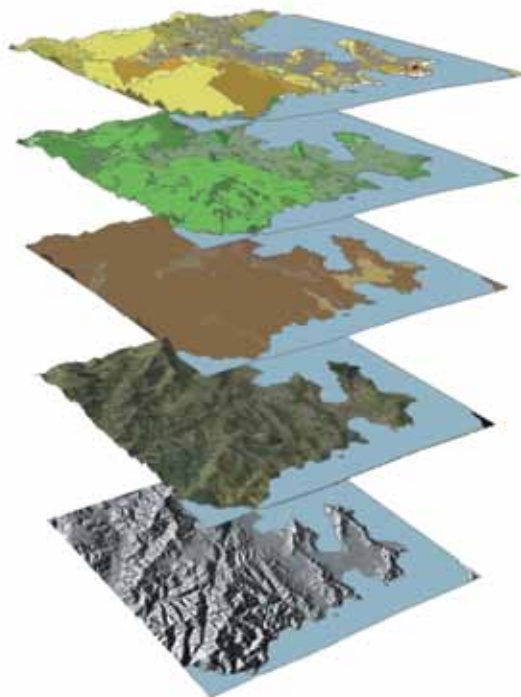
The guide brings together the strategies, experiences and approaches used by non-Māori academics who are effective teachers of Māori content and students. It explains how their strategies are transferable to other situations and provides useful tips for staff to use as a starting point for further thought.

"In order to be good academics there are a number of scholarly standards that the literature has identified about how we set our goals, how we deliver our messages, how we evaluate the work we are doing and how we reflect on our practice," says Meegan.

"To be really good academics at Victoria we need to be thinking about all of those in relation to our Māori students and this guide outlines the steps that staff can take to begin that journey."

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# Meeting industry demand



GIS information on Wellington indicating, from top to bottom, areas of deprivation, land cover, geology, aerial photography and hill shade. Image supplied

**A new Master's programme at Victoria will help meet a trans-Tasman shortage of geographic information science specialists.**

A Master in Geographic Information Science course has been launched at Victoria University this year, following a successful pilot programme in 2011. A joint collaboration with the University of Canterbury, the course is attracting interest from undergraduate geography students, as well as from people already working in industries where geographic information systems are becoming an important business tool.

Lecturer Dr Mairead de Roiste, from Victoria's School of Geography, Environment and Earth Sciences, says geographic information science (GIS) uses software information systems that work with geospatial data such as aerial photos and road maps.

"New Zealand Post, for instance, uses software to find the quickest way to deliver mail. Important urban issues such as green spaces, water quality, crime and even people's commuting decisions can be analysed and better understood using these systems. GIS can

even be harnessed for understanding hazards such as determining where landslides are likely and for monitoring changes to natural resources, like forests."

The two-year programme, which contains both research and course work elements, is designed to provide a variety of topical, relevant areas of study, and address a current shortage of skilled workers.

"This is a jobs growth area—shortages are reported in a number of countries, including the USA and Australia, and GIS skills are also in demand here in New Zealand," says Mairead.

Students kick-start their studies with an intensive one-week field trip in Kaikoura where they develop skills such as data collection, modelling and cartography through hands-on experience, traditional lectures and group work. This year the course included a marae visit and using University-developed software to navigate indoors—a particular problem for current navigation systems.

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# Teaching by doing



Students rehearse with David for *Summerfolk*.

**Associate Professor David O'Donnell's theatre students were so inspired by his belief in putting theory into practice that one of them nominated him for the Victoria University Teaching Excellence Award last year, which he won.**

"I don't want my students to just read a play text, but also discover the works through the body." That means students studying a classical play in David's courses often take part in workshops, and eventually perform it to an audience.

He also believes in making traditional works more relevant and immediate. This year some of his students created a new version of Russian playwright Maxim Gorky's work *Summerfolk*.

While the themes were unchanged, the language, costumes and references were contemporary with, for example, a scene about class differences being reworked to feature the Occupy Wall Street protests about inequality.

David continues to work in the world of theatre (he directed *West End Girls* at Wellington's Circa

Theatre in August, 2012) giving him opportunities to do creative research "by trying new design approaches or different ways of working with actors". It's something which also excites his students.

"A lot of them want a career in the performing arts and they respond to having a lecturer doing what they aspire to."

David says there's a huge mentoring component to his teaching.

"I encourage independence and leadership because my students will need those attributes wherever they end up working.

"But I also see students as my collaborators—I share my knowledge with them and they bring quite different perspectives to the plays we are studying."

David came to teaching after 10 years as a professional actor. An interest in directing led him to complete a Bachelor of Arts in Drama and English at Victoria and lecturing roles at the University of Otago and Victoria followed.

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# Diving into freshwater regulation

Law alumna Amelia Keene is set to dive into freshwater regulation on the back of a \$50,000 New Zealand Law Foundation Ethel Benjamin scholarship for outstanding young women lawyers.

The scholarship honours New Zealand's first female barrister and solicitor, Ethel Benjamin, who was admitted to the bar in 1897. Since the centenary of this event, the Law Foundation has granted an annual scholarship to New Zealand women law graduates for postgraduate study.

For the next 10 months, Amelia will study a Master of Laws specialising in freshwater regulation at Columbia University, New York. "I haven't had the chance to do a lot of environmental law thus far, so this gives me the opportunity to develop a specialisation."

The Master's programme at Columbia University is principally made up of course work, but Amelia also plans to complete a research paper comparing regulatory models of

freshwater management in New Zealand and the US. "The scholarship has come at exactly the right time, allowing me to pursue an interest I feel very strongly about," she says.

Amelia says that there is debate around federalism in the US and tension between state and federal regulatory powers.

"This is a particular issue in the environmental context, where, for resources like freshwater, there is a lot of argument about whether national regulation provides the best environmental outcomes. The debate in the US has also focused on the underlying economic and public participation implications. But federalism hasn't been the focus of academic commentary here," she explains.

The central notion of her research is that New Zealand's National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management, which came into effect in July 2011, represents a shift away from regional council autonomy towards central government



control, highlighting real change for the way New Zealand approaches environmental regulation and one that merits careful study.

"I don't necessarily think centralism is bad. The question is how we can best structure it to achieve the right balance."

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# Long time brewing



Stu McKinlay and Sam Possenniskie visit the new café and bar on campus, *The Hunter Lounge*, located in the refurbished Student Union Building.

The thought of brewing their own beer had long been fermenting in the minds of alumni Sam Possenniskie and Stu McKinlay.

The duo behind the award-winning craft beer label *The Yeastie Boys* say it all began at the old Eastside bar on Victoria's Kelburn Campus.

"It was quite a small bar, but it had a really good community back then. I can remember a few discussions around which courses had lectures that were conducive to opening times," says Sam.

Their fascination with trying unique flavours quickly ran dry at Eastside, and it was an introduction to craft brewery Emerson's bitter

ale Bookbinder at Wellington bar Tupelo, now Little Beer Quarter, that proved the turning point.

"I remember having my first sip of this beer and thinking that it was the worst beer I'd had in my life ... and then in a few more sips, deciding it was the best," says Sam.

"We were flatting together in Karori at that stage, and from then on conversations would often work their way around to wow, wouldn't it be amazing to do this ourselves," adds Stu.

After graduating with business degrees—Sam also with Honours in Economics and a Bachelor of Arts—they went their separate ways. Sam moved to Auckland to further a career with ANZ Bank and Stu moved to Thames, then a black spot for the craft beer market.

"I went from having about a dozen craft breweries around in Wellington, to just two in Thames—it was like I was in my early 20s again. So I started brewing," says Stu.

What began at home has now grown into a 2,000-litre a week contract through an Invercargill-based brewery, and international accolades.

"When I think back on it, we had a great time at Vic. Studying in Wellington meant the city and a good night out was just a short walk down the hill away," says Sam.

[www.yeastieboys.co.nz](http://www.yeastieboys.co.nz)

# Banking on success

**Like many a headstrong teenager, Mary MacLeod ignored her mother's advice to study law and took accounting instead.**

But she quickly realised she didn't want a career in accounting after all—"if I'm honest with myself I really enjoyed the commercial law papers in my commerce degree," she says—and transitioned into the world of banking and finance. It was an inspired move.

Early in 2011, Mary was appointed Deputy Chief Executive Officer of the investment banking division of Beijing's ICBC Bank, the world's largest bank. It was the first senior foreign hire for the bank, out of a 300,000-strong workforce, and Mary was headhunted for a role that *Euro money* magazine reported as making her "the most powerful foreign banker in China ... in the most interesting job in investment banking in the world".

Mary, who graduated in 1985, says the broad nature of a Victoria commerce degree has proved worthwhile.

"While I didn't appreciate it fully at the time, I've come to value all the areas of commerce I was introduced to at Victoria. It's a solid grounding and it forces you to think across a number of business functions."

Mary began her banking career in Auckland with NatWest, then tax accountants McLeod Lojkin, before joining Bankers Trust, now Deutsche Bank. She spent the next 20 years working in credit and corporate finance in Auckland, Sydney and Hong Kong. When approached by ICBC, she was Chief Operating Officer of the investment banking division for Asia and the Pacific at Deutsche Bank.

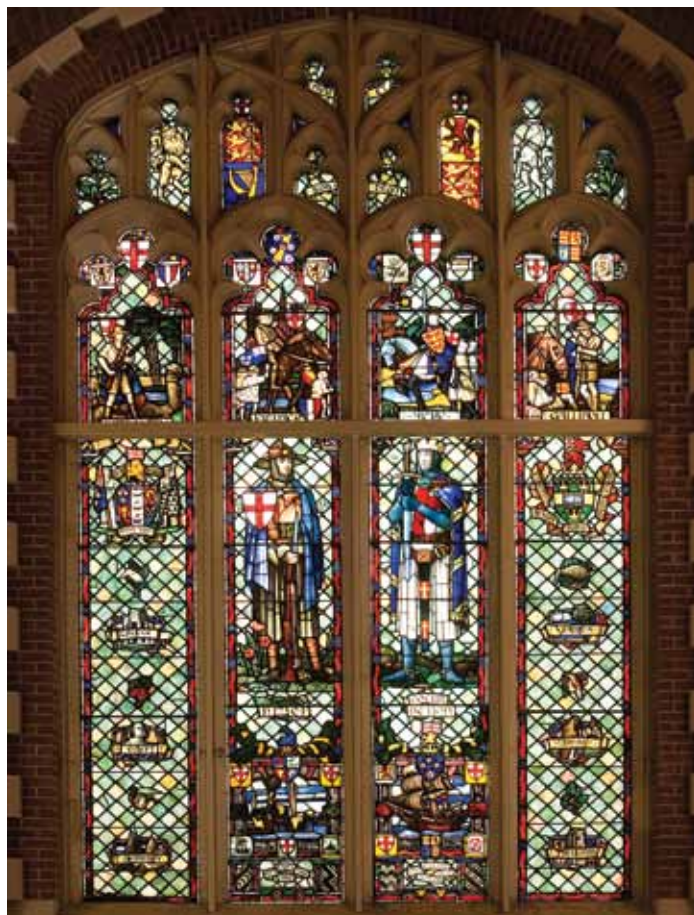


*Mary, her husband Mike and sons Jacob and Joshua visit the Great Wall of China.*

Her international career has highlighted the attributes of New Zealand's culture and educational system that makes for distinctive employees.

"I think New Zealanders grow up with the attitude that we can turn our hands to anything. That, along with Victoria's approach of teaching you to think critically, has been highly valuable," says Mary.

"Mere knowledge of the facts isn't enough anymore. What you need, and what I look for when I'm hiring staff, are people who can think of new ways of doing things and new ways of solving problems."



## Exercise your right to vote in the University Council election on 25 October 2012

Alumni are represented on the Victoria University Council and are voted into these positions by graduates of Victoria.

To be eligible to vote, you must be actively enrolled on the Court of Convocation Register. Graduates of Victoria are automatically registered, but if you have not voted since 2004 you will need to re-register.

Voting will be conducted primarily online. Please ensure you have provided us with a valid email address, or notify us if you prefer to receive voting material in the post.

To re-register or to update your details, contact Alumni Relations by 27 September 2012, providing your full name (and name at graduation if different), postal address, email address, degree and date of graduation if known.

For more information, visit [www.victoria.ac.nz/council/elections](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/council/elections)

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# The Kiwi connection

Record numbers of alumni gathered at recent events in New York, Berlin and London hosted by Vice-Chancellor Professor Pat Walsh and senior university staff. Attendees enjoyed a keynote presentation by Professor John Psathas, renowned composer and lecturer at the New Zealand School of Music.

Victoria has alumni groups around the world. Find your contact in a city near you at [www.victoria.ac.nz/alumni](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/alumni)



Nearly 70 alumni, including a large number of law graduates, attended the alumni event hosted by New Zealand's Deputy Head of Mission Lisa Futschek at the Official Residence of the New Zealand Ambassador in Berlin.



Fabian Schnelle, Tina Dubiel and Christoph Robitzsch at the Berlin alumni event.



Victoria University's quartet in residence, the New Zealand String Quartet, took centre stage during New Zealand Week at contemporary cultural venue King's Place in London. Kate Duffell, Suzanne Filteau and Julie Anderson came along to enjoy the festivities.



Guests at the London alumni event enjoy a pre-concert talk from Professor John Psathas before listening to the Quartet perform works he's composed.



The New York alumni event was co-hosted by His Excellency Jim McLay, New Zealand Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations, pictured here receiving a gift at the end of the speeches.



Professor John Psathas with Harikesh Nanji and Mark Timmerman in New York.

# Victoria's newest alumni

More graduands than ever before celebrated completing their degrees in Victoria's May Graduation ceremonies. Thirty-two PhDs were granted, along with 2,118 degrees, diplomas and certificates.

Victoria University Vice-Chancellor Professor Pat Walsh says Victoria's graduation ceremonies are a wonderful mix of age-old tradition, pageantry and spontaneous celebration with a uniquely New Zealand feel.



Graduands parade down Lambton Quay on Thursday 17 May led by the Scots College Pipe Band.



There's time for a quick chat before graduands process into the Michael Fowler Centre for the graduation ceremony.

## Keeping it in the family

A Tongan mother of seven had two reasons to celebrate in May—finally getting to graduate, and being able to share the experience with one of her daughters.

Senorita Laukau completed her Master's of Education in 2010, but deferred graduating until her daughter Ilaise completed her Bachelor of Commerce and Administration, so they could graduate together.

Born in Tonga and educated in the Pacific Islands, Senorita moved to New Zealand with her husband in 1988. In 2005, while she was working at the Tertiary Education Commission as a Senior Adviser Pacific, she realised she needed to extend her knowledge on Pacific education issues.

"Going back to university was a big deal," says Senorita. "At first, I wasn't sure if I could do it, so I started out doing a paper in the summer trimester. But study really suited me, and the support given to me by my tutors and my employer was fantastic—so I continued with it."

Part way through her study, Ilaise started studying at Victoria, and Senorita says that studying at the same time helped them both. "It really did keep both of us going. We could encourage each other, and I enjoyed being a role model for her."



Senorita and Ilaise Laukau in Wellington's Civic Square. Photo: Chris Skelton/FairfaxNZ

Senorita says that she couldn't have completed her Master's without her family and friends behind her. "My children, extended family and friends all rallied round and backed me throughout, and I simply couldn't have done it without them. In return I want to make a

difference, by doing all I can to help others realise their own potential and gifts."

And she has some advice for other Pacific students still working towards graduation. "Hang in there! Pray hard and work hard, and support each other in every way that you can."



# Honorary doctors join alumni community



At May Graduation, an acclaimed astrophysicist and outstanding business leader joined the Victoria University alumni community.

**Professor Warrick Couch** (Honorary Doctorate in Science) is an astrophysicist whose research has greatly increased our understanding of stars, galaxies and clusters of galaxies. He has published an impressive 216 peer-reviewed papers, and received nearly 25,000 citations to date—a feat recognised with the honour of High Citation researcher, placing him in the top 0.5 percent of astrophysics researchers worldwide. Using both Earth- and space-based optical telescopes, he has participated in several major observational research projects and he played a crucial role in the discovery that the universe is expanding at an accelerating rate.



**Sir John Anderson** (Honorary Doctorate in Commerce) is a successful businessman and long-standing volunteer to numerous organisations. Throughout a successful executive-level career in banking and finance, Sir John oversaw significant mergers in the industry and was frequently commended for his exceptional leadership and problem-solving ability.

His governance skills have been called upon by successive governments, and community and sporting organisations. He has held numerous chairmanships across fields as diverse as health, media, rural services, finance, the environment and regional governance—but he is perhaps best known for his considerable service to New Zealand and world cricket over many years.



Our profile of **Professor Jack Richards** in the last issue, who was awarded an Honorary Doctorate in Literature in the December 2011 Graduation, was inaccurate, and we apologise for any confusion. Below is a corrected piece.

Jack is a renowned specialist in second and foreign language teaching. He is the author of numerous professional books for English language teachers, and the author of many widely used textbooks for English language students.

He is a generous patron of the arts and education, having sponsored scholarships for students at both Victoria's New Zealand School of Music (NZSM) and Tairāwhiti Polytechnic in Hawke's Bay. He is also joint sponsor of an annual Composer in Residence Programme at NZSM and in 2011 was the visiting Ian Gordon Fellow in the School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies.

## Finding the key to happiness



Stepping on stage to deliver the graduate address, Dr Erica Chadwick knew it would be a moment to remember.

She had spent the past three years researching 'savouring strategies'—the thoughts and behaviours people use to create, maintain or enhance positive experiences.

One strategy—actively realising a moment would be a memory to enjoy again in the future—was shown to positively influence wellbeing and happiness in adults.

While past research examined how people savour major but fleeting events, such as going on holiday or receiving a high mark at school, Erica's PhD investigated the little things in life to determine what actions or thoughts were most effective for feeling happy, and for overall mental wellbeing.

Erica questioned more than 400 young New Zealanders in the Bay of Plenty and 1,500 adults

from across New Zealand and overseas on what they do on a daily basis to 'savour' experiences.

Physical actions such as celebrating by high-fiving or rushing over to a friend to share good news actively boosted feelings of happiness, as did subtle actions such as paying greater attention to enjoyment of minor events and being more mindful of surroundings.

"What I found interesting as I analysed my research results was that the slower, more mindful styles of savouring had a negative impact on teenagers' mental wellbeing. On the other hand, these same strategies were positively linked to adults' mental wellbeing."

Erica says that for everyone, regardless of age, research clearly shows that good relationships with family and friends remains the most valuable tool for feeling happy and mentally well.

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# Gifts bolster public policy research

An Institute for Governance and Policy Studies has recently been established in Victoria's School of Government, which builds on the activities of the former Institute of Policy Studies—a centre of discussion, research and publication first set up in 1983 by the late Sir Frank Holmes. Two generous endowments from the Holmes family (left inset) and Grant and Marilyn Nelson of The Gama Foundation (right inset) have enabled this expansion of Victoria's research capabilities.

## A passion for policy



Sir Frank Holmes was determined that there should always be a forum for the discussion of public policy that could not be muzzled by politicians. So, following his death last year, the Holmes family gifted an endowment to ensure the conversation will continue at Victoria.

Sir Frank Holmes' long association with Victoria began in 1952 when he joined the then Victoria University College as a young economics lecturer.

He began his tertiary studies at the University of Otago, before his

education was interrupted by service in the Air Force in the Pacific during World War II. On his return to New Zealand, and following the completion of his education at Auckland and Otago Universities, he moved to Wellington to pursue his career.

Sir Frank was soon promoted to Professor of Economics and then head of department at Victoria, where he presided over a growing department until 1967. After leaving the University he continued to forge an illustrious career in public economics and domestic and international trade policy, in Wellington and abroad.

His colleague and young protégé at Victoria, Emeritus Professor Gary Hawke, says Sir Frank was keen on injecting thought into all processes involved in public policy.

"At the centre of Frank's long career was the University, and especially the Institute of Policy Studies, which he was instrumental in establishing in 1983. He authored a stream of studies through the Institute—nobody will be able to study the country's economic and social development without using material written by Frank."

In recognition of this significant contribution, and in accordance with his wishes, the Holmes family has established the Sir Frank Holmes Visiting Fellowship in Policy Studies.

The annual fellowship will bring a distinguished researcher or senior policy adviser to the Institute for Governance and Policy Studies to examine a major contemporary issue of public policy. The first recipient, Distinguished Professor Greg Duncan from the Department of Education at the University of California, Irvine in the United States, arrives in November.

## Standing up for the average citizen



Grant and Marilyn Nelson chat to Vice-Chancellor Professor Pat Walsh.

The collapse of finance companies and the leaky homes debacle have shown the high price the public pays when good governance fails.

To bolster how the long-term interests of the New Zealand public are considered in policy-making processes, philanthropists Grant and Marilyn Nelson have endowed \$3 million to establish the Institute for Governance and Policy Studies.

Grant says the idea of the endowment stems from the couple's concerns about government decision-making processes.

"We had become aware of how vested interests used their money, influence and lobbying power to get the decisions they wanted—while the long-term interests of the public were often overlooked or not adequately represented."

Head of the School of Government Professor Peter Hughes says the generous gift broadens the work of the former Institute of Policy Studies. "The renamed institute is focused on producing independent, high-quality and high-impact research on the wider state sector as well as ongoing work related to public policy.

"Our vision is of a research centre of independent thinking, debate and public discourse that will inform and influence governance and public policy development in New Zealand and internationally as well."

Research findings will be disseminated to the public, officials and elected representatives.

Grant says he hopes the Institute's activities will lead to decisions that better serve the interests of the public.

"It is our intention to provide further support for the Institute and we would encourage anyone else with similar concerns to ours to assist with its work. This could, for example, include providing a student scholarship for postgraduate research."



# Off the Press

*I Got His Blood On Me* and *Common Land* 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 found at [www.victoria.ac.nz/vup](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/vup)



## *I Got His Blood On Me*

By Lawrence Patchett

*I Got His Blood On Me* is Lawrence Patchett's debut collection. It features 12 short stories, dubbed 'frontier tales', which are, in fact, not so short. Their length should not be a hindrance, however, as Patchett's stories are thoroughly engaging, with a compelling drive from start to finish.

These stories have their roots in historical fact and borrowed detail. Patchett has acknowledged the histories upon which his fictions rest, and as relationships with the past, and with history itself, are played out, an interest in and anxiety about the treatment and use of history emerges as a common thread.

Each story is a full-bodied adventure sparked by a unique event, and buoyed along by the ensuing challenges faced by each character. The narration is fresh and rugged, which is not to say that these are rough-hewn stories. They are artful narratives, which transport the reader.

Patchett's characters inhabit familiar landscapes, whether set in (sometimes reimagined versions of) the past, present or future. There is time-travel, holograms and ghosts, but each story is entirely contained within the logic of its own universe. The settings and their attendant environments are definitely frontiers, but those I found more striking were the personal frontiers encountered by each of the characters, as they struggled with new, unexpected and exceedingly difficult circumstances.



## *Common Land*

By Lynn Davidson

*Common Land* is Lynn Davidson's fourth poetry collection, and features poems and essays centred around family, love, loss and journeys. It is a spacious collection, encompassing many years of the poet's life, and many different landscapes.

The collection travels. It visits different countries and localities, different times, people and memories. And yet it is unquestionably unified, collecting and recording small moments, common experiences and recognising what makes them extraordinary.

The combination of poetry and essay is used to great effect. The essays come from a distinct but integrated voice, telling a different kind of story around and between the poetry. They are more direct perhaps, but no less shining than the poetry, touched as it is by light and sincerity. What results is a tightly woven tapestry—life with all its joys and difficulties, challenges and achievements. *Common Land* is a collection which opens the reader to an emotional experience beyond the words on the page.

Lynn Davidson refers to a poem as "a piece of common land", and this collection is an open invitation to places where the air is fresh, and life is happening. They are quiet spaces, conjured with gentle, quietly stunning language, and I found myself happily dwelling inside them, hooked on a line or a feeling long after reading.



Briony Pentecost describes herself as an avid reader and writer. She completed a Master of Arts (MA) in Creative Writing at Victoria in 2011.

# From the Old World to the New

The latest exhibition at the Adam Art Gallery examines renowned French artist Marcel Duchamp's effect on New Zealand's artists and cultural history.

'Peripheral Relations: Marcel Duchamp and New Zealand Art 1960–2011' runs from 28 July–7 October 2012 and brings together artworks across three generations as well as items by Duchamp himself.

Gallery Director Christina Barton says Duchamp (1888–1968) is considered one of the most influential artists of the 20th century, and is especially known for redefining what art could be.

"Amongst his most notorious works are his 'readymades'—store-bought items he deprived of their usual function. The first of which was

his *Bicycle Wheel* of 1913, in which he attached a bicycle wheel to a stool in his studio as a totally new kind of sculpture."

Curator Marcus Moore, whose PhD research is the basis for the show, says Duchamp was championed by a new generation of younger artists in the 1960s who were keen to find alternatives to conventional ways of making art.

"This led to a new interest in his work, which was fanned by touring exhibitions and publications. New Zealand was only the third country to host a major survey of Duchamp's work in 1967 and it has been one of my goals to see what effect this show had on artists here."

The exhibition is accompanied by a full public programme including a lecture series and roundtable discussions.

[www.adamartgallery.org.nz](http://www.adamartgallery.org.nz)



Michael Parekowhai, *My Sister, My Self*, 2006, fibreglass, mild steel, wood, automotive paint, collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu.

## Victoria features at prestigious book fair



A selection of esteemed poets and writers connected with Victoria University have been invited to attend the world's biggest trade book fair of its kind, the Frankfurt Book Fair.

New Zealand has been named Guest of Honour at the annual international trade fair, which takes place in October.

Professor Bill Manhire, Director of Victoria's International Institute of Modern Letters, is hosting an event at the fair featuring German and New Zealand poets, who will write and read poetry about the Transit of Venus.

"Being Guest of Honour is a wonderful opportunity for New Zealand to take centre stage at an illustrious international event. It also provides a rare chance for our writers and poets to connect with their German counterparts."

Victoria graduates invited to the fair include some of New Zealand's most prominent authors and poets such as Lloyd Jones, Witi Ihimaera, Kate Camp and Tina Makereti.

## Bringing the war years to life



Master's student Linda Jeffrey is developing an educational web feature on how children and schools supported the war effort. Photo supplied

School students will get a taste of what it might have been like to live through the First World War in New Zealand through research being carried out by Victoria Master's students.

Educational web features are being developed with the Ministry of Culture and Heritage for the New Zealand History online website. One student will research what New Zealanders read during the war and another will complete a feature on women and children in the war years.

The features form part of new materials being prepared to commemorate the 100-year anniversary of World War I in 2014.

Museum and Heritage Studies Programme Director Dr Conal McCarthy says the initiative is a "win-win". "The students get professional experience working on a real-world project and the Ministry benefits from some top-class research."

[www.nzhistory.net.nz](http://www.nzhistory.net.nz)

## Gamelan wows at festival



Minuit's Ruth Carr with Gamelan Taniwha Jaya. Photo: Dominika Zielinska

Twenty-five performers from the New Zealand School of Music wowed revellers at the international festival of world music, arts and dance (WOMAD) in New Plymouth earlier in the year.

Two traditional Indonesian instrumental ensembles based at Victoria, Gamelan Padhang Moncar and Gamelan Taniwha Jaya, performed music from the islands of Java, Bali and Sumatra.

As well as a traditional Javanese puppet show, manager Professor Jack Body says collaborations between the two groups and other artists were festival highlights. Balinese ensemble Gamelan Taniwha Jaya took to the stage with electronic band Minuit, and Sumatran and Javanese traditions were melded in a children's puppet show.

The performances were funded by a grant from the Asia New Zealand Foundation and support from Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia.

[www.gamelan.org.nz](http://www.gamelan.org.nz)





Volunteer Service Abroad Project Manager Barry Binding watches Haus Stori take shape. Photo: Pete Carter

## Helping keep Bougainville's culture and history safe

A group of New Zealanders is partnering with locals in Bougainville, Papua New Guinea, to build a library and cultural centre for the island—and Victoria University is providing essential support.

The Bougainville Library Trust was set up by Lloyd Jones, author of *Mr Pip*, following his research in Papua New Guinea.

“Bougainville has struggled through a decade of civil war, during which schools and libraries were destroyed, children had nothing to read and cultural learning came to a halt,” says Lloyd. “We want to support local people to preserve and rebuild Bougainville’s culture, as well as to strengthen literacy.”

To this end, the Trust is working with local group the Bougainville Heritage Foundation and Volunteer Service Abroad (VSA) to establish, build and stock a centre called the Haus Stori, in Arawa, Central Bougainville.

“The library is not simply about books, but about storytelling: the concept of Stori also embraces song, dance and oral histories,” says Lloyd.

Victoria University is partnering with the Trust to provide a collection policy framework, put in place processes for the lending of books and build local capability to provide library services.

Professor Penny Boumelha, Victoria’s Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), says the University is pleased to work with the Trust on a

project that differs from the norm. “We have had to think in different ways about what we provide, and take into account issues that are not encountered in New Zealand—such as how to take good care of books on a tropical island, with the associated warm temperatures and humidity.

“The other big challenge is how, given the low literacy levels in Bougainville, we can ensure that the content of reading materials is appropriate for the age and maturity of the reader, regardless of their literacy levels.”

Lloyd, a Victoria graduate, says that Victoria University’s help is critical for the Haus Stori.

“We are building the chassis, if you like, but Victoria is enabling it to work by providing the engine. We know that there are long-term questions, with answers still to be determined, but by working together with the Bougainville Heritage Foundation, Victoria and the VSA, I know that we can make a positive contribution to the lives of people in Bougainville, now and in the future.”

The building of the Haus Stori is expected to be completed later this year. [www.bougainvillelibrary.org.nz](http://www.bougainvillelibrary.org.nz)



## Get behind tomorrow's best.

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Gifts of any size are highly valued—to find out more, contact Diana Meads in confidence at [diana.meads@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:diana.meads@vuw.ac.nz), by mail to Victoria University Foundation, PO Box 600, Wellington 6140, New Zealand or by calling 0800 842 4438.

For more information, visit [www.victoria.ac.nz/foundation](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/foundation)



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