



SUMMER 2012

# Victorious

MAGAZINE FOR FRIENDS AND ALUMNI OF VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

**Creating  
successful companies**

**Bridging two worlds**

**Korea goes viral**





# Unearthing ancient secrets

When Dr Brent Alloway travelled to Indonesia's Flores Island earlier this year, he had little inkling he was about to uncover some remarkable archaeological finds.

Flores Island, located in eastern Indonesia, is famous for the 2003 discovery of a nearly complete skeleton of a new hominin species *Homo floresiensis*—nicknamed 'the Hobbit', as it would have stood just over one metre tall. The spectacular fossil was unearthed six metres underground in a grand, cathedral-like cave along with a range of stone artefacts, and the skeletal remains of other individuals.

Brent was invited to join a team of archaeologists and scientists from Indonesia, Australia and the United States to conduct a detailed analysis of volcanic ash layers in two areas where hominin remains and artefacts have been found—the So'a Basin in central Flores, and the Liang Bua cave where the species was first discovered.

"It really is an incredible experience and a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to be part of research that fundamentally seeks to reveal more about our ancestral origins," says Brent.

His investigations are helping scientists better understand the environment hominins would have encountered on the island—home to 14 active volcanoes—and assess the impact major volcanic activity may have had on local fauna and the environment.

Brent made two surprising finds during his first two-week trip to the So'a Basin: he discovered two ancient hominin-made stone artefacts.

The first was a bifacial flake, found preserved beneath a volcanic deposit around one million years old.

The next day, at a different site, Brent found a well-formed radial core stone made of chert, used by hominins to make the smaller stone flakes, almost immediately beneath the same volcanic deposit. This makes the tools and core that Brent found more than one million years old.

"It was almost unimaginable, and incredibly exciting, to find such stone tools of this age, undisturbed since the day they were discarded."

Brent says finds such as these are remarkable, because almost identical tools have been found alongside remains at Liang Bua, indicating that similar tool-making techniques may have survived on Flores Island for at least one million years.

"It raises some very interesting questions about who might have originally made these tools, how and when hominins arrived on Flores, and where they originated."

"Travelling to Flores has made me a firm believer that we should never underestimate the ability of our ancestral relatives to disperse around the world and, along the way, negotiate formidable environmental obstacles."

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# From the Vice-Chancellor

Victoria has spent significant time this year looking to the future, and it is with anticipation we approach 2013.

Much of our focus has been articulated in our third Investment Plan, which specifies our goals up to 2015. While the plan is required by the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC), it's also an important mechanism to regroup, pause and reflect on Victoria's best next steps.

A considerable amount of thought has gone into setting out our institutional mission. While universities are more alike than different in character, our successes can be found, and will increasingly be found, in the areas that make us distinctive.

It is my view that Victoria is a university characterised by its engagement with New Zealand and the world. While all universities have relationships beyond their campuses, it is the depth and breadth of Victoria's engagement and our unique bond with the capital city that makes us a leader in this area.

Our engagement takes multiple forms: collaboration with local, national and international communities; partnerships with key stakeholders; and engaging with big issues, good ideas and original thinkers—wherever they may be.

While Victoria is already a highly internationalised institution, we are ambitious to become even more so. We have set ourselves the objective of developing graduates who will shape and lead their chosen fields, and do so imbued with a global perspective.

We need to ensure all of our students leave Victoria well placed to forge their future, so the plan also articulates how we will continue to improve students' experiences of their university education.

We remain committed to increasing the use of simulating digital technologies in learning and teaching, and offering students the opportunity to acquire additional skills through internships, leadership programmes and other extra-curricular activities.

All universities have also been charged by the TEC with improving levels of Māori and Pasifika achievement. We offer a range of services and programmes to support every Victoria student, but it will be important for us to identify and understand why some forms of support are more successful than others so our resources can be used most effectively.

All this work will require ingenuity, tenacity and cooperation. However, our goals are achievable, and Victoria stands ready to grasp the opportunities that lie ahead.

Thank you all for your continued support this year. I wish you a safe and happy festive break.

Professor Pat Walsh, Vice-Chancellor



Liang Bua cave where *Homo floresiensis* was discovered in 2003. Photo: Dr Brent Alloway

Inset: Dr Brent Alloway holds the ancient bifacial flake tool he discovered on Flores Island. Photo: Dr Brent Alloway

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## Contents

### 2 Research and Innovation

A look at the diverse range of research by our staff and students

### 9 Policy and Planning

How Victoria is responding to decisions made in the tertiary sector

### 10 Learning @ Victoria

Showcasing learning and teaching at Victoria

### 13 Alumni News

News from graduates and events of interest to alumni and the university community

### 17 Gifting

Stories about those who have donated funding, resources and time to support the University

### 18 Off the Press

Reviews of recent publications by Victoria University Press

### 19 Town and Gown

Where Victoria meets the community for activities, performances and the sharing of expertise



# Korea goes viral

Dr Stephen Epstein isn't surprised the single *Gangnam Style* by South Korean rapper Psy has become the most-liked video of all time on YouTube.



"Korean pop culture has become a key selling point of the Korean wave that's taking the world by storm.

"*Gangnam Style* illustrates that culture—it's visual and catchy and made by an artist who typifies an aspect of modern identity. He's strongly Korean but studied in the US, speaks English well and can take advantage of media opportunities with style and flair."

Stephen, Programme Director of Asian Studies in the School of Languages and Cultures, has Marsden funding to research how information and communication technologies (such as YouTube), travel and migration are reshaping national identity in South Korea.

He describes Korea as a "laboratory for studying social change".

"The country has experienced turbo-modernisation, moving from being one of the world's poorest nations in the 1960s to having one of the most powerful economies in the 2000s."

He says its makeup is also changing with 1.4 million foreigners now residing in South Korea. "That's a big shift for a country that has traditionally seen itself as ethnically homogenous and coming from one bloodline."

Among them are around 400,000 ethnic Koreans from China as well as 25,000 North Koreans who have migrated south, says Stephen, contributing to a growing sense of South Korea's distinctiveness.

"Here are people who speak the same language, eat the same food and have the same traditional customs, but they are not South Korean.

"It strengthens the view of South Korea as a distinct nation and has also changed attitudes to their northern neighbours. North Korea is increasingly viewed as another country rather than the 'evil half' of the Korean self," says Stephen.

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# Deep beneath the Southern Alps

Dr Carolin Boese travelled all the way from her home in Germany to study earthquakes on New Zealand's most hazardous fault line; and then hiked 12 hours to reach her most remote research station.

With assistance from her supervisors Professor Tim Stern, Professor Euan Smith and Dr John Townend from Victoria's School of Geography, Environment and Earth Sciences, Carolin installed 11 specially designed stations in the central section of the Alpine Fault on the South Island's West Coast—regarded as one of New Zealand's harshest environments.

"The conditions we faced installing and maintaining the stations included rain, snow, strong winds and extreme temperature variations, as well as the constant interest in the equipment," she says.

Carolin led the field work for the Marsden-funded research project, which involved drilling holes up to 100 metres deep and installing sensors that record earthquakes well below human perception.

"We found that the area frequently experiences seismic tremor, or a series of slow, creeping earthquakes that can last up to 30 minutes each."



Dr Carolin Boese by a seismometer she installed in the Karangarua Valley south of Fox Glacier. Photo supplied.

Since sensors were installed, the stations have recorded around 2,500 small earthquakes which are taking place in a 30 kilometre-wide area under the Southern Alps, rather than on the Alpine Fault.

Tim says the seismic tremor is located at depths of 20 to 45 kilometres, whereas regular earthquakes are usually confined to the top 10 kilometres of the Earth's crust.

It's only the second time this type of seismic activity has been recorded on a strike-slip

fault, which means the sides of the fault move horizontally rather than up or down.

Carolin says these slow earthquakes don't cause damage, but knowing they are happening sheds new light on activity in the Alpine Fault.

"A better understanding of these tremor events could provide vital clues in our understanding of both faults and earthquakes."

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# Art in Oceania



Left to right: Two basketry figures in front of a daima (men's longhouse), Papua New Guinea, 26 June 1921, courtesy of the Australian Museum, Sydney. Man from Malaita, Solomon Islands, wearing ceremonial dress with beaded belt depicting the Union Jack, Fiji, late 19th century, © The Trustees of the British Museum, London. Baining people, painted barkcloth mask, Papua New Guinea, collected between 1890–1913, Museum der Kulturen, Basel.

Six years ago, Dr Peter Brunt's musing on the state of literature on Oceanic art struck a chord with colleagues and an international publishing firm. The result is a new, paradigm-shifting book on the topic.

Peter, a Senior Lecturer of Art History, says *Art in Oceania: A History* encourages people to look at Pacific art in new ways.

"Until recently, the genre had been to present an overarching regional survey that looked at tribal art and carving—the kind of pieces you might find in an ethnographic museum—from particular places or cultural areas.

"There was a lot happening in the field that wasn't reflected in that approach, not just contemporary art but also the influence of things like Christianity, the world wars, colonisation and independence, trade, tourism and migration," says Peter.

The book breaks new ground by exploring historical and current influences on indigenous art in the Pacific, covering genres ranging from ancient rock art and ritual architecture to contemporary painting and installation.

More than 500 images illustrate these influences from the earliest archaeological work through to works created in 2012.

Many existing books on Oceanic art are individually authored publications by authorities in the northern hemisphere, but

Peter took a different approach. Seven of the world's leading authorities on Pacific art collaborated to produce *Art in Oceania*, bringing together the perspectives of Māori, Pasifika and European scholars.

Peter edited the tome with Nicholas Thomas, Professor of Historical Anthropology at Cambridge University, and Stella Ramage, a PhD student in Art History at Victoria.

Others who wrote material include Sean Mallon, Senior Curator, Pacific Cultures, at Te Papa, with whom Peter had his earliest conversations about the possibility of writing the book, and Dr Damian Skinner, a curator at Auckland Museum and current Newton Fellow at Cambridge University.

Additional contributions come from authors based at the University of Auckland, the British Museum and University College in London. Postgraduate students in Victoria's art history programme have also worked on the book.

Marsden funding was pivotal to the project, but resourcing has also been collaborative with other contributions coming from Victoria and Auckland universities, Te Papa, the British Museum, the UK-based Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology and Arts & Humanities Research Council.

Examples of the topics covered include Nicholas's writing on early settlement and

voyaging in Western Oceania and art, trade and exchange in New Guinea from 1700–1940.

Sean's subjects include the impact World War II had on visual art and tourist art and its markets since 1945. Peter's contributions range from exploring art and decolonisation to the globalisation of contemporary Pacific art.

In addition to the main authors, the book includes many other voices, says Peter.

"They come through featured quotations from all sorts of sources such as letters, missionary journals and artists' own writings."

The book will be valuable for scholars and students, says Peter, but will also be of interest to general readers who are thinking about New Zealand's place in the Pacific or the region generally.

"Overall, I think it shows that art in Oceania is the product of its history and the creative way Pacific peoples have borrowed, interpreted, incorporated new ideas and reflected their world in their art."

*Art in Oceania* has been published by Thames & Hudson in the United Kingdom and Yale University Press in the United States.

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# New facility for autism research

A purpose-built clinic at Victoria University is giving parents and teachers quick access to findings from a ground-breaking three-year study into the best communication tools for children with autism.



Researcher Dr Larah van der Meer and student Hannah Waddington at the clinic.

Most children with autism have difficulty communicating and around half fail to develop speech at all.

Professor Jeff Sigafos from Victoria and Dr Dean Sutherland from the University of Canterbury are testing children's responses to three common alternatives to speech sign language, pointing to or exchanging pictures and electronic speech-generating devices such as iPads loaded with special applications.

The children taking part in the Marsden-funded study make regular visits to a house on Victoria's Karori Campus that has been converted into a clinic with a one-way vision area.

"It looks like a home so it's friendlier for the children," says Jeff. "It allows parents to watch us working with their children, so they can learn how to carry out the interventions we are recommending they use at home."

He says additional benefits come from having researchers under one roof, as less experienced students working on the study can be trained by their more experienced colleagues.

So far, the research is showing that it's relatively easy for parents and teachers to become skilled at helping children to use all three of the alternative communication methods being tested, says Jeff. But it's also highlighted, for the first time, the importance of taking a child's preferences about communication tools into account.

"When you do that, the child seems to learn faster and retain what they have learnt better."

Jeff says the research also indicates that preferences can change over time and need to be reassessed periodically.

He says the topic of which communication tools are most effective for children with autism is hotly debated around the world and the study is providing objective data to inform discussion. Ultimately, he says the findings could also help reduce behavioural problems associated with autism.

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# Laws of belonging



Laws of citizenship are changing across the world, says Senior Lecturer in Law Dr Caroline Sawyer.

Caroline is researching a growing trend to repeal the *jus soli*, the right by which anyone born in a country is automatically recognised as a citizen. Caroline is examining the loss of this intrinsic element of the common law across former British territories.

"When legislation is changed, it is usually claimed that *jus soli* rights are abused by people who deliberately travel to common law countries to give birth and have citizen children to get residence rights there for themselves," she says.

"But parents rarely get those rights that way anyway. The major effect is to prevent immigrant families and communities from automatically becoming a full part of the social fabric at the second generation."

The United Kingdom was the first to repeal the pure *jus soli* in 1983. New Zealand changed its law in 2006.

Caroline's current work is part of a long-standing research interest in migration and statelessness.

She says concerns about security have led to a concerted international effort to regulate travel and harmonise migration systems. "As a result, different legal systems are coming closer together in how they deal with immigration rules."

New Zealand is a special case, says Caroline.

"Because of its geographical distance, New Zealand has less practical concern with keeping people out and puts a lot of effort into attracting skilled migrants."

Caroline, formerly a practising lawyer, co-authored *Statelessness in the European Union*, published last year, which looks at the legal and human rights of displaced or de-recognised populations in four contrasting European Union countries—France, the United Kingdom, Estonia and Slovenia.

In addition, she looks at changes in the laws of deprivation of citizenship which have also affected individuals and groups in those countries.

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# Exploring the benefits of markets and models

**Decades of research into markets and models leaves Professor of Economics Lew Evans in no doubt that allowing New Zealanders to buy shares in state-owned enterprises (SOEs) would deliver significant benefits to the country.**

Although SOEs provide more information than they did when they were government departments, Lew says the public knows relatively little about their actions and economic performance.

“At the moment, SOEs are silos—the state provides goods and services through them but there’s little interaction with the public or independent analysis of their performance. Presently, their services are discussed publicly but their performance and issues of delivery much less so, although they do have to explain themselves to debt holders.

“For example, a number of SOEs have investments in other countries but no one has the direct interest or knowledge to assess these, except the SOE boards that approved the investment in the first place.”

Lew joined Victoria University in 1976, first as a Lecturer, and now Professor, in the School of Economics and Finance and latterly as a Distinguished Research Fellow in the New Zealand Institute for the Study of Competition and Regulation (ISCR), which is based at Victoria University.

As the first executive director of the ISCR, he played an integral role in the establishment of the independent research institute in 1998, and

championed its focus on high-quality academic research which informs issues relevant to New Zealand institutions and markets. In particular, the energy sector—a field Lew has a long-standing research interest in and holds considerable expertise on.

He says many New Zealanders may recall the power crises prior to the mid-1990s, where public campaigns called for households to take energy-saving measures during unusually dry winters.

What was then an inconvenience to households has been shifted to New Zealand’s industrial and commercial sectors by the establishment of a wholesale electricity market in 1996.

Lew was a member of the Electricity Market Surveillance Committee of the New Zealand Electricity Market from 1996 to 2004, and in 2009 he participated in the Ministerial Review of Electricity Market Performance, which proposed 29 measures to improve the performance of the market, its institutions and its governance.

He says the market was formed to provide some certainty that the price of power was not subsidised from taxation, but was determined by supply costs and competitive approaches.

“The market enables generators and purchasers to come together to determine how electricity demand is to be met in half-hour trading periods and to set a half-hour price of electricity. It also encourages a pricing process that gives parties an opportunity to manage their exposure.”

Lew says the half-hour price is important because it guides wise use of water in times of both drought and plenty.

However, uncertainty around supply and price caused by volatile winter weather can send unprepared companies into liquidation.

“It takes a well-prepared and perceptive organisation to ride the highs and lows of electricity generation in New Zealand, but the benefits of the market include shifting the management of risk to those best able to do so.”

Lew says he is fascinated by the interplay of technology, physics, nature, economics and finance in electricity, as well as the various mixes of factors that affect organisations and other industries he has studied.

Much of his work—and the books, research reports, presentations and working papers authored by fellow colleagues—are available through the ISCR website and can be downloaded at [www.iscr.org.nz](http://www.iscr.org.nz)

Lew was influential in the establishment of the ISCR in 1998 and was its Executive Director for seven years. The ISCR’s support by sponsors enables it to choose research topics of wide public interest and requires it to communicate in various ways. In September 2012 there were 80,000 downloads from the ISCR website, of which more than half were carried out from offshore sites.

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# A sunny future

The timeframes for seeing results of scientific research are notoriously long, but Dr Justin Hodgkiss thinks his current area of focus should deliver within five to 10 years.

Widely regarded as one of New Zealand's top emerging scientists, Justin uses lasers to investigate solar cells made from advanced plastics. It's a vibrant field of research worldwide because of its potential to deliver an affordable and abundant new source of renewable energy.

Conventional solar cells use silicon to absorb light and convert the energy into electricity, but processing silicon into a working solar cell is very expensive. The major advantage of plastic electronics, which use special types of polymers, is that they can be dissolved to make an ink and then printed in sheets.

Justin's vision is to see solar cells cost about the same as paint or glass, making it feasible to incorporate them into roofing materials that provide more than enough energy for a home or office building.

"What's important is dollars spent to produce each watt of energy," says Justin. "If we can make printable solar cells cheaply enough, they could become an everyday source of energy."

And, he says, it's an area of huge promise for New Zealand.

"The fabrication process for polymer solar cells is so simple, there is no reason we can't do it here.

"And it's definitely sunny enough in New Zealand for solar cells, providing we also develop the energy storage technology that will cover us when the sun's not out."

Solar cells are already coming off the press internationally, targeting niche outdoor applications such as energy for powering lights inside tents or charging cell phones, but they

still aren't cheap or efficient enough for widespread commercial use.

"But the fundamental science will be done within a decade," says Justin. "Then it will be a manufacturing or engineering problem and will ultimately be judged in the marketplace."

It's a timeframe that neatly matches Justin's career path. In 2011, he was awarded a highly sought-after Rutherford Discovery Fellowship which provides research funding of up to \$200,000 a year for five years.

In addition to covering research expenses and PhD student scholarships, the money pays his salary to work full-time on research. Justin has opted to keep teaching a few of the classes he takes as a Senior Lecturer in the School of Chemical and Physical Sciences and to continue as a Principal Investigator for the MacDiarmid Institute for Advanced Materials and Nanotechnology.

"Teaching is a very important part of being an academic. It's great to interact with undergraduate students and it also forces us to re-examine and communicate basic science concepts which is invaluable for research."

In the time he devotes to research, Justin is focused on using advanced laser spectroscopy tools to answer fundamental questions about the physics of photocurrent generation in solar cells.

The challenge, he says, is that key processes are hidden in timescales from seconds down to femtoseconds (one millionth of one billionth of a second) and are virtually invisible.

His research group is looking at what happens in the first femtoseconds when the light absorbed by polymers begins generating free charges to flow as electricity.

"They absorb light and generate charges very efficiently but many of the charges then recombine rapidly. We are trying to find out how to use light to generate more charges that



Spools of solar cells. Photo: Eight19 Ltd

don't recombine so that we can extract them as electric current and end up with more energy."

This knowledge could guide the design of improved materials for low-cost solar cells and also improve understanding of a range of other photoactive devices.

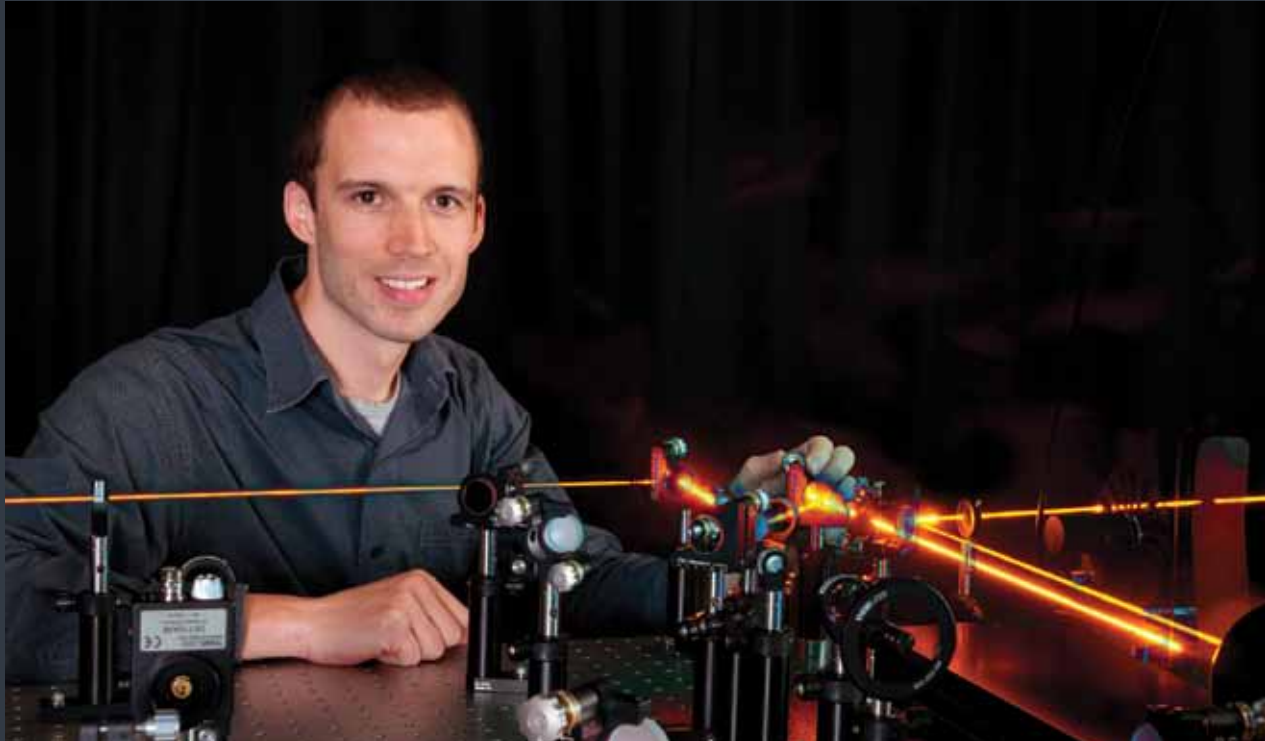
The measurements involved require special, highly sophisticated tools, many of which are being custom made by Justin and his students in a purpose-built Ultrafast Laser Laboratory at Victoria.

As well as advancing his current research, Justin says the focus on building new scientific tools is a form of future-proofing.

"As much as possible, we've built things ourselves, many of which could be reconfigured to answer different questions. Not only do we







have tools to illuminate the operations of solar cells, we will also be able to adapt the tools to use in a range of areas beyond the current research.”

Justin says his original fascination with laser spectroscopy was “undoubtedly superficial” and came from the intrigue of steering different coloured laser beams through a maze of mirrors in a dark lab.

But he has found enough to maintain his interest in the area ever since. After completing his PhD as a Fulbright Scholar at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Justin moved into postdoctoral research at Cambridge University in the United Kingdom.

Justin says a love of building things is important in the field of laser spectroscopy. “It can take weeks or months to get everything ready for the

one hour when a measurement is recorded, and then many more weeks to process and analyse the data and hopefully reveal something new.”

But doing the science is not the only challenge Justin has been addressing over the past few years.

He says establishing a research group has been more demanding and has taken longer than he anticipated.

“To begin with, you are juggling a lot of new responsibilities. Aside from teaching and applying for research funding, precious time in the lab is spent training research students in skills that cannot be taught in class. You have to show your students what is required and not just on a practical level—you also have to direct them to the literature to understand the big ideas. Research challenges students in ways that

they are not always prepared for but that’s all part of the fun.”

The pay-off is sweet when it comes, says Justin.

“One of the best things about being in my position is when your students start driving their projects and solving really tricky problems independently. My students are teaching me and each other all the time. My role now is more about asking questions than giving instructions.

“The collective capability of the group gives a momentum and opens new research possibilities that are truly exciting.”

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# Reporting the full picture

An increase in the amount of assessment in schools, particularly in relation to national standards in reading, writing and mathematics, is fuelling ongoing debate about New Zealand's education system.



Dr Michael Johnston, Senior Lecturer at the School of Education Policy and Implementation, says that the way in which assessment data are

typically used to compare schools fails to capture the full picture.

Michael says assessment data should be reported in a way that shows the performance of individuals and schools over time. "There needs to be less attention on point-in-time performance and greater focus on measures of progress.

"Students at low-decile schools might compare unfavourably to students at higher-decile schools in terms of the proportions of their students who are at or above the national standard at a particular point in time, but it may actually be the case that students at a low-decile school make as much, or more, progress over a given time period than students at a higher-decile school."

Michael believes that current methods of reporting assessment data also fail to consider social influences on educational achievement. "There are factors correlated with educational

success that are beyond the control of teachers, so point-in-time comparisons of schools are almost meaningless."

He says information that is focused on educational progress can be used more effectively than point-in-time data to understand, and ultimately reduce, the wide disparities in educational achievement between various demographic groupings of students, and to improve student achievement overall—a view that is confirmed by recent international research.

Michael is currently leading a Ministry of Education project to develop an assessment tool that will help teachers to consistently measure and report individual students' progress in reading, writing and mathematics. The tool is due to be complete and available to primary school teachers by 2014.

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# Technology to create a safer world

Research into a new programming language has the potential to prevent future software failures in safety critical systems.

Infamous examples of software failures include the Therac-25 disaster, where a computer-operated radiation therapy machine gave patients lethal doses, and an enormous power outage in the United States in 2003, which led to around 45 million people being without electricity for up to two days.

Eliminating failures from computing systems is, unsurprisingly, recognised as a major challenge facing software engineering, particularly as systems become increasingly complex.

To address this challenge, Dr David Pearce, from the School of Engineering and Computer Science, has received a Marsden Fast-Start grant to develop the Whiley Project—a new programming language he has designed that uses automated mathematical and logical reasoning to check computer software decisions are correct.

Currently, the most widely accepted way of eliminating software errors is through extensive testing. But this cannot always guarantee the absence of errors, because in large and complex systems it simply isn't feasible to test every possible input.



Dr David Pearce (in foreground) with students.

"Software is becoming more and more ubiquitous—it's involved in all sorts of things we do in the modern world. As software engineers, we need to find ways of making sure we eliminate as many errors as we possibly can," he says.

"Ultimately, the Whiley Project is about making software more reliable."

David has been developing Whiley since 2009 and sees it having applications for everyday software programs, as well as highly-specialised, custom software for safety critical systems where human wellbeing is paramount.

"Certain mistakes are common in computer programs; for example, overflow errors, where a number is simply too large for the computer to handle. Whiley has the potential to ensure that scenarios like this can be avoided in the future, by testing the logic of the program in advance."

Funding for the project runs to 2015, during which time David will be developing the necessary algorithms and techniques to make Whiley work. He says he hopes to eventually see Whiley being used in industry.

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# Looking back on the future of law

**One of Victoria University founders, the Right Honourable Sir Robert Stout, a Chief Justice and occasional lawyer, rightly anticipated the benefits of having a Faculty of Law based in Wellington.**

He made his case for the provision of a university education in the capital city to a cost-weary Government in June 1886; suggesting that, in the interests of the colony's regional economies, institutes of higher education could specialise. With remarkable foresight, he said:

“So far as Wellington is concerned, it is the seat of Parliament and the seat of the Court of Appeal. This city might be prominent for its special attention to jurisprudence, to law, to political science, to history.”

While it was not to be at that time—the bill was defeated and the creation of Victoria College, now Victoria University of Wellington, wasn't passed by Parliament until December 1897—Sir Robert identified the unique possibilities afforded by the study of law in Wellington.

More than 100 years on, the discipline remains a distinctive strength of the University. To consider how the Faculty has stayed true to its founding purpose, whilst being able to move with the times, *Victorious* spoke to Pro Vice-Chancellor and Dean of Law Professor Tony Smith.

“The study of law has traditionally been a matter of practical training for a professional career; so the most noticeable change for graduates from yesteryear may be the intentions of current students. Many people studying law these days don't necessarily see themselves entering the legal profession, and it's an international trend.

“This reflects the modern reality that many who now teach in universities do not themselves practice, whereas up until the 1970s, law was a subject that was taught largely by

practising lawyers—lectures used to be squeezed between dashing to and from court. Lecturers are now primarily educating students about the law, and that is a rather different objective than in times past.”

Increasingly, students are completing double degrees, which usually only require one additional year of study on top of the four-year LLB degree, and Tony says this is a desirable development.

“The lawyer who has a sound understanding of economics and/or finance should be better equipped for a career as a commercial lawyer, and a science or engineering graduate is likely to understand rather better, say, forensics, patent and construction laws than one possessed of a single degree.”

While these changes have not affected the way the discipline of law is taught—the Faculty remains committed to the Socratic method—it has changed the skills with which students depart, with a greater focus on teaching knowledge and skills that are transferable and prepare graduates for work.

Tony says a law degree is not for all students, but those who take up the challenge can thrive on the same intellectual excitement that legal alumni have enjoyed for decades.

“It is true that an ability to read and absorb quickly large amounts of information is required, but once the basic techniques are mastered, the legal imagination can be constructively engaged on all manner of legal puzzles and problems that society presents. The pervasiveness of law guarantees that there is an inexhaustible supply of material to study and explain.”



*Pro Vice-Chancellor and  
Dean of Law Professor  
Tony Smith*

## Competition success

Competitions are an important part of the student experience at the Faculty of Law and give students the opportunity to hone their practical skills in simulated legal scenarios. It is an area where the Faculty has achieved considerable success over the years.

Students emerged particularly triumphant from the annual New Zealand Law Students' Association (NZLSA) conference in 2012, making four out of the five competition finals:

- For the first time in more than 10 years, Victoria students—Alexandra Sinclair and Campbell Herbert—won the NZLSA Mooting title, although by the slimmest of margins (a solitary point).
- Adele Taylor and Elisabeth Perham won the Russell McVeagh Client Interviewing Competition.
- Duncan McLachlan and Aric Shakur won the Bell Gully Junior Mooting Competition.
- William Findlay was runner-up in the Minter Ellison Rudd Watts Witness Examination Competition.

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

# Creating successful companies

Failure will not only be acceptable in a new postgraduate programme being offered at Victoria in 2013, it will also be used as a learning tool, says Professor of Chemistry Kate McGrath.

Kate is the driving force behind a one-year Master of Advanced Technology Enterprise degree, which is designed to nurture the next generation of innovators and entrepreneurs. “Students will learn how to start a company by starting a company,” says Kate. “As much as possible, we’ll create a real business environment but without the risk. Part of that is learning about things going wrong—how to recognise failure, learn from it and move forward.”

The programme is unique in the way it integrates disciplines across the University in a business environment, and is open to graduates “who have an entrepreneurial spirit”, says Kate.

They will work in teams, pooling their strengths and areas of expertise to develop ideas into viable business propositions and pitching their proposals to potential investors at the end of the year.

Kate, who is also Director of the MacDiarmid Institute for Advanced Materials and Nanotechnology, says the programme is a response to New Zealanders’ ‘I can do everything’ attitude.

“We have this culture that breeds innovators who think they should figure everything out for themselves, instead of saying ‘I don’t how to do this and will find someone who does to work with me’.”

Each team will be assigned mentors from industry and the University with skills and knowledge to match the ideas being developed.

The new programme has strong backing from companies, business incubators and investors who see multiple benefits in being involved, says Kate. “They get to work and form relationships with young innovators but it’s also an opportunity for them to build connections across Victoria.”

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# Bridging two worlds

Navigating Victoria’s Kelburn Campus with an orienteering map or taking photographs at an archaeological site is all in a day’s learning for Dr Ocean Mercier’s students.



Dr Ocean Mercier on Te Herenga Waka Marae.

The Māori Studies lecturer strives to provide fresh ways to learn—an approach reflected in

her teaching philosophy, ‘Always learning, learning in all ways’. And her efforts have not gone unnoticed—she was the recipient of a 2012 Sustained Excellence in Tertiary Teaching Award from Ako Aotearoa.

Ocean was the first Māori woman to graduate with a PhD in Physics. A decade ago, she moved from researching physics into learning and then teaching in Te Kawa a Māui/School of Māori Studies.

It felt like walking through a wardrobe, says Ocean, into a whole new world that was more collaborative and where students were expected to share opinions and argue their case.

Science remains an interest, but Ocean now teaches it in an indigenous context through a number of new programmes for undergraduate students.

Her first-year students learn about the differences and similarities between Western and Māori ways of forming new knowledge.

“Indigenous cultures often view an issue more holistically, for example, and are willing to accommodate unmeasurable, spiritual elements. Science from a Māori perspective also

involves posing questions, exploring theories and learning through trial and error,” she says.

Second-year students gain skills in cultural mapping, using Google Earth and Geographic Information Systems software to create maps featuring things like geo-biographies of historical figures in Māoridom, condition assessments of pā sites around Wellington and a Google Sky map of Māori astronomical knowledge. This work is being brought together in a Te Kawa a Māui digital atlas.

Ocean’s third-year students also use innovative learning strategies, such as participating in virtual exchanges using online forums and real-time video conferencing with indigenous students from Alaska, to discuss how Western science and indigenous knowledge can work alongside each other.

Ocean encourages her students to learn from each other. “I am not the expert imparting knowledge, but an informed person who can generate an environment that is conducive to learning.”

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# Insights into big business

The “incomprehensible” size and scale of business in Asia was brought home to student Geoff Keast on the day he saw approximately 35,000 factories along a 100-kilometre stretch of road.



The butterfly pavilion in the Grande Praça, MGM Macau. Students attended a presentation from New Zealander Grant Bowie, CEO of MGM China Holdings Ltd. Photo: Shaun Burke

Geoff was travelling from Shenzhen to Guangzhou, in the manufacturing heartland of China, along with 18 other participants of Victoria's Master of Business Administration (MBA) pilot study tour.

The seven-day tour, hosted by Mace Consulting and Destination Mainland China, began in Hong Kong and ended in Macau via Guangzhou—an economic zone affectionately referred to as the ‘golden triangle’. Participants visited Western businesses operating in Asia and Chinese businesses exporting products and services to New Zealand.

As the New Zealand Sales Manager for an Australasian manufacturer, Geoff says seeing operations management strategies in practice in Guangzhou was a highlight of the tour for him.

“Saving one or two seconds a day from someone's workflow makes a big impact when you have a staff of 50,000. Using competitive manufacturing techniques such as Ishikawa diagrams or Lean Six Sigma and Kaizen teams delivers significant operational savings ... although the return on investment for looking

into those principles could never be that high for my organisation.”

But, he says, it was the opportunity to visit these businesses as a student, rather than a supplier or customer, which was most valuable.

“I think organisations treated us in a slightly different manner because they knew we were there to learn. We wouldn't have heard about their HR, operations and strategic processes otherwise, and it was seeing those theories and frameworks applied in large businesses, and actually adding benefit, that was most interesting for me.”

MBA Programme Director Natalie Stevens says the idea of running a study tour to these places was to offer students the opportunity to see world-class management strategies and process improvement theories in action. “We can teach these in lectures and seminars, but there is nothing better than learning something by experiencing it.”

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

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# ‘Glamping’ at Ngapotiki Reserve



Paraoa's Ribcage: A semi-permanent structural design resembling the remains of a beached whale's ribcage. Photo: Jono Coates

The words ‘glamorous’ and ‘camping’ may seem worlds apart, but a project between the Faculty of Architecture and Design and the Department of Conservation (DOC) brought them together into the concept of ‘glamping’.

Third- and fourth-year digital media, industrial design, landscape, architecture and interior design students were challenged to develop semi-permanent structures that would provide a luxurious camping experience at Ngapotiki Reserve, on the Wairarapa Coast.

Situated just north of Cape Palliser, the reserve is an unofficial campsite owned by DOC, and is renowned for its rugged coastline and beautiful scenery. “The site that was chosen is very exposed and has a prominent south-west wind,” says Programme Director of Interior Architecture Natasha Perkins.

“Each student explored their own lines of enquiry but all had to design for an experience that would encourage ordinary people to get outdoors,” she says.

Visiting Ngapotiki was a fundamental part of the process, so students could experience first-hand

the location and environment for their designs.

Jono Coates, a recent Bachelor of Design graduate, says the project required investigation into methods of portable construction, weather-proofing, comfort, aesthetics, form and an overall story.

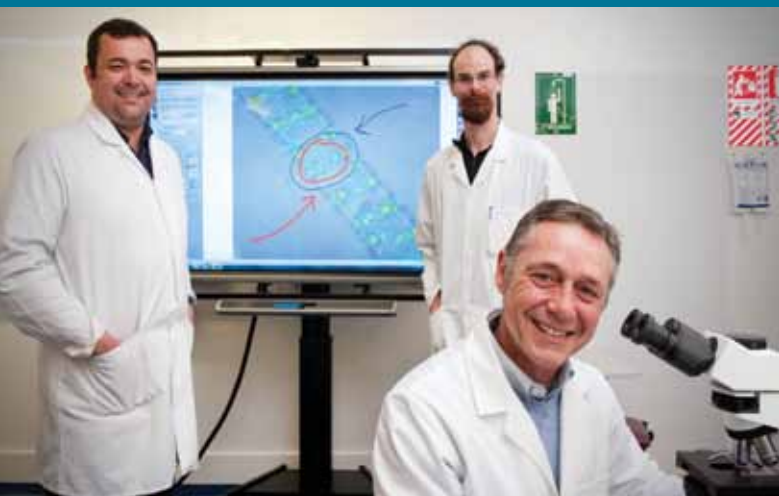
“My structure was made to withstand the elements natural to its harsh coastal environment, while also exhibiting construction details that allow the structure to be disassembled and transported away easily.”

He says the project was a great chance to work across disciplines and to explore design from a slightly more architectural perspective.

The project required students to research and generate ideas, and refine their concepts through to final design. It is one of an ongoing series of projects between Victoria and DOC across a wide range of disciplines including biological and earth sciences, business, social sciences, architecture and design.

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# From microscope to mega screen



Jonny Flutey, Adrian Pike and Professor Kevin Gould (in foreground).

A passion for innovative teaching and some classic Kiwi ingenuity have combined to bring technology reminiscent of television drama series *C.S.I.* into Victoria's labs.

Students in first-year course BIOL 113 Biology of Plants have trialled a 60-inch touch screen television that connects to a microscope camera to display microscopy slides.

Professor Kevin Gould and his students use the touch screen to annotate notes onto images of their experimental material, and save the final version onto a USB stick for review or lab assessment.

Kevin says engaging a class of students with microscopy was his final hurdle in re-making a more interactive course.

"I can look down the microscope and tell the students what to see, but when it's their turn I can't be sure we're looking at and talking about the same thing. Taking turns peering down a microscope was a very stilted way of learning."

Building on a rudimentary prototype, initially just a TV with a piece of Perspex placed over it and a web camera pointed at a cabbage, Victoria's Information Technology Services (ITS) team worked with Kevin and technician Adrian Pike to refine how the idea could attach to, and work with, existing devices in the lab.

Once affordable touch screen technology was available for purchase, ITS attached the high definition touch screen to a trolley for portability and simply rolled it into the lab.

"We're really pleased with the result," says Jonny Flutey, ITS Relationship Services Manager. "Because of the size and quality of the screen, you can clearly see the colour and detail of the cells."

Kevin says the impact on students' learning was swift.

"The students almost immediately figured out how to use the screen, and now they gather around it to label cells, draw diagrams and discuss the possible functions of different tissues in a plant. I've changed from an instructor who tells them what to see, to someone who facilitates their own enquiry-driven learning."

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# Engineering gains full industry accreditation



Victoria's Faculty of Engineering has achieved a critical milestone with the four-year Bachelor of Engineering (BE) programme gaining full accreditation from the Institution of Professional Engineers New Zealand (IPENZ).

The promotion from provisional to full accreditation establishes Victoria's Engineering degree as an internationally recognised qualification, and marks the next stage in the development of the programme which launched in 2007.

Professor John Hine, Dean of the Faculty of Engineering, says the programme intentionally focuses on modern forms of engineering. "We teach courses on the digital technology that drives the modern world, and where there is a high demand for graduates in New Zealand.

"Students can be confident that an engineering degree from Victoria will provide them with an excellent qualification and stand them in good stead for exciting careers as professional engineers," says John.

Pro Vice-Chancellor of Engineering Professor David Bibby says full accreditation also supports New Zealand government and business sector aims to drive business innovation and support science and engineering graduates.

"Full IPENZ accreditation recognises that Victoria's BE programme is supporting a rapidly growing information and communication technology sector by producing quality people to enter the industry," says David.

IPENZ commended several aspects of the programme, including its facilities and laboratories, the accessibility of staff, the level of pastoral care provided to students and the confidence and positivity of graduates with respect to the programme.

The accreditation process involved a visit by a panel of engineers who spent several days looking at all aspects of the programme, talking to staff, students, graduates and employers and inspecting facilities.

Staff members in Victoria's Faculty of Engineering were recognised as having strong research credentials and links to industry, as well as having an excellent rapport with their students.

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

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# Honouring our special friendship with Samoa



*Vice-Chancellor Professor Pat Walsh and the Honourable Tuilaepa Sa'ilele Malielegaoi sign an agreement.*

**Victoria University celebrated the 50th anniversary of Samoan independence and the Treaty of Friendship between Samoa and New Zealand with a series of events.**

These special events culminated in the conferment of the honorary degree Doctor of Laws on the Honourable Tuilaepa Sa'ilele Malielegaoi, Prime Minister of Samoa.

Vice-Chancellor Professor Pat Walsh says the Samoan Prime Minister's contribution to his country and the Pacific region has been immense, and Tuilaepa Malielegaoi has had an enormously positive influence in shaping modern Samoa.

A special ceremony to award the degree recognised Tuilaepa Malielegaoi's lengthy career as a public servant and politician, and his role as Prime Minister of Samoa for 14 years.

In particular, the Prime Minister was praised for his stewardship of the Samoan economy, advocating for improving health and education services in Samoa, and working towards strengthening Samoa's relationships with other Pacific nations, including New Zealand.

In reply, the Samoan Prime Minister gave a moving speech about life growing up in a small village in Samoa, the obstacles he overcame to build a successful career and the important role education played in his life.

As part of the visit, members of the Samoan delegation and Victoria University signed three agreements: a PhD scholarship agreement with the Government of Samoa and scholarship and cooperation agreements with the Scientific Research Organisation of Samoa and the National University of Samoa.

Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Pasifika) Associate Professor Hon Luamanuvao Winnie Laban says the celebrations were a poignant reminder of Victoria University's unique place in Samoa's modern history, and the important role Samoans have played in New Zealand as the country's identity as a Pacific nation has emerged.

"Celebrating Tuilaepa Malielegaoi's lifetime of service was a wonderful moment to honour the powerful legacy of the interwoven histories and relationships between Samoa and Victoria.

"The signing of the three scholarship and cooperation agreements will also provide a valuable framework for reciprocal learning, deepen our cultural and people links, increase the exchange of knowledge and information and ultimately lead to valuable research being undertaken," she says.

A new book, *Samoa's Journey 1962–2012: Aspects of History*, was launched to serve as a literary reminder of the celebrations. Published by Victoria University Press, the collection of essays by Samoan writers reflect on Samoa's development since independence through many aspects of Samoan life, including law, political development, economic and social development, religion, arts, literature and sport.



*Students from Rongotai College performing a fa'atau-pati in the Kelburn Library.*

Guests also visited Victoria's Kelburn Library to view a special exhibition celebrating the 50th anniversary of Samoan independence and the Treaty of Friendship between New Zealand and Samoa.

Winnie says the celebrations are captured beautifully in the Samoan proverb, 'E so'o le fau i le fau'—in weaving many strands together we create the finest of mats.

# Shaping the future

Victoria's architecture and design graduates push boundaries in cities around the world—*Victorious* spoke to three alumni recently acknowledged for their work in Dubai, New York and here at home in Wellington.



*Fairmont Abu Dhabi redevelopment project. Photo: The Buchan Group*

## Justin Beckermann

Architect Justin Beckermann is making his mark in the Middle East.

While working for The Buchan Group, one of the largest architectural groups in Australasia, Justin joined a small group of architects who travelled to Dubai to work on redevelopment projects at the Fairmont Hotel, Abu Dhabi; the Sharjah Marina in the emirate of Sharjah; and the Oman mall in Muscat, Oman.

It was for this work he was selected as a finalist of the Young Architect of the Year category in the 2011 Middle East Architecture Awards.

Justin recently started a new role as Lead Design Architect at Brewer Smith Brewer Gulf in the United Arab Emirates. He graduated with a Bachelor of Architecture with First Class Honours in 2007.

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*Skye in her office in New York. Photo supplied.*

## Skye Duncan

A Bachelor of Architecture with First Class Honours opened a world of opportunity for graduate Skye Duncan, whose talent and passion is promoting healthy, active and sustainable cities.

After graduating in 2002, Skye went on to complete a Master of Science in Architecture and Urban Design at Columbia University as a Fulbright Scholar.

She then joined the New York City Department of City Planning as an Associate Urban Designer, where she was recently awarded the Michael Weil Award for Urban Design for her outstanding performance, dedication and creativity.

Skye is also an Adjunct Assistant Professor in the Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation at Columbia. She teaches an urban design studio course and a graduate seminar called 'form and fabric negotiations'.

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*Ruth Mitchener. Photo supplied.*

## Ruth Mitchener

Industrial design graduate Ruth Mitchener was one of a number of alumni to feature at the 2012 New Zealand Best Awards.

She scooped up a Silver Award for her domestic steam distillation system DeStill, which was also a national finalist at the 2012 James Dyson Awards.

Ruth says she is a passionate designer and creator whose illustrations blend science and art. "This interdisciplinary approach gives me a unique toolset for exploring design challenges."

The Best Award comes on the back of a number of outstanding accomplishments in 2011.

Ruth received a Victoria University Medal for Academic Excellence, as well as a Faculty of Architecture and Design award for sustained excellence. She also received the Methven Award for Innovation and Excellence for the most outstanding final-year project.

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

# Staying in touch

Reminiscing about your university years with former fellow students and friends is now easier with the launch of a new website for alumni.

The Alumni and Friends website includes a secure 'Vic online community' area, where alumni can log in to contact fellow graduates, register for events, create profiles and update contact details and privacy settings.

The website also includes photo galleries of the latest alumni events and news about the University's activities.

Alumni Relations Manager Jill Rodgers says Victoria wanted to create a way for graduates

to easily connect with each other and their alma mater.

"We've set up regional chapters for people to use to form their own networks, wherever they're based now. They can then catch up online or organise meetings to stay in touch outside of our formal events."

Jill says that with the increase in social media and other digital developments, it's important for alumni to have an interactive, engaging digital space where they can share their University-related news.

"People can upload their own photos from recent alumni events they've attended or from

their years here as a student, and keep friends or new contacts aware of developments in their career."

The website also contains information about benefits and services available to alumni and Victoria memorabilia for purchase, as well as information about the University's fundraising projects.

If the Development Office has your email address you should have received a message with a user ID and password for the website. If not, contact the team to set up a profile.

Email [alumni@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:alumni@vuw.ac.nz)

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



# Catching up at home and abroad

Alumni had an opportunity to catch up at events held in Wellington, Auckland, Ho Chi Minh City, Bangkok and Jakarta in September and October. To view more photos from the events or upload your own event shots, visit Victoria's new alumni website [www.victoria.ac.nz/alumniandfriends](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/alumniandfriends)



*Jemima Geach, Sugu Pillay and Jenny Drew caught up at the Museum of Te Papa Tongarewa in Wellington, where Dr Conal McCarthy (Director of the Museum and Heritage Studies Programme) and Dame Dr Claudia Orange (Collections and Research Group Director at Te Papa) gave a presentation on the conservation of New Zealand's heritage items.*



*Alumni living in Auckland gathered at the Copthorne Hotel in downtown Auckland to hear about the future of the Antarctic region from glacial sedimentologist Dr Rob McKay. Parisha Pancha, Jacob Waitere and Louis Leloir chat with Chapman Tripp partner Dermot Ross.*



*A second young alumni event was held in Wellington for local graduates. More than 100 people gathered for a craft beer tasting with ParrotDog brewers Matt Warner, Matt Kristovtski and Matt Stevens, pictured sharing their wares.*



*Young Vietnamese alumni caught up during a boat cruise on the Saigon River hosted by Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) Professor Neil Quigley and other Victoria representatives.*



*Professor Pat Walsh with Hon Tim Groser. More than 50 alumni enjoyed catching up with each other and with senior staff from Victoria's partner institutions in Indonesia.*



*Held at the Grand Hyatt Erawan in central Bangkok, this alumni event was popular with nearly 70 enthusiastic young alumni in attendance. The event was co-hosted by the New Zealand Embassy's Deputy Head of Mission, Todd Cleaver.*

## DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARDS DINNER

# Save this date

Thursday 25 July 2013

Victoria University's Distinguished Alumni Awards celebrate our finest graduates and acknowledge their outstanding contribution to our communities.

Please join us on Thursday 25 July at the Wellington Town Hall for an evening of fine food, wine and musical performance in this landmark event on the University calendar.

To book tickets, visit  
[www.victoria.ac.nz/alumniandfriends/DAA](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/alumniandfriends/DAA)  
or contact the Alumni Office on  
04-463 5246 or email [alumni@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:alumni@vuw.ac.nz)

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# Honouring exceptional alumni



*Clockwise from left: Chancellor Ian McKinnon, Vice-Chancellor Professor Pat Walsh and 2011 award winners Kerry Pendergast, Taika Waititi, Sir Thomas Gault, Piera McArthur, John Shewan, Rod Drury.*

## 2013 Distinguished Alumni Awards call for nominations

Do you know of any Victoria graduates who have made an outstanding contribution to their profession, community or country?

Victoria University's 2013 Distinguished Alumni Awards recognise the successes of our exceptional graduates. Alumni and friends of Victoria are invited to nominate friends, colleagues or associates who hold a degree or diploma from Victoria.

The achievements and contributions recognised span the professional, voluntary, cultural, sporting, public sector, creative and social domains.

Nominations should set out outstanding achievements and honours, and include references from colleagues, community leaders and/or professional associations.

Nominations are welcomed for alumni currently residing overseas. Provision has been made to cover expenses for an international recipient together with his or her partner to return to Wellington to accept the award.

### Young Alumni Award

For the first time, a Young Alumni Award will be offered for a candidate who is 40 years or younger and meets the general criteria of a Distinguished Alumni Award.

Recipients will receive their award at a black-tie dinner on Thursday 25 July 2013. Alumni and friends of Victoria are invited to attend.

For more information about the Distinguished Alumni Awards and to download nomination forms, visit [www.victoria.ac.nz/alumniandfriends/DAA](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/alumniandfriends/DAA), email [alumni@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:alumni@vuw.ac.nz) or phone 04-463 5246. Nominations close 11 February 2013.



# Precious polar literature



*Professor Colin Bull in his library at home in Seattle. Photo: Professor Peter Barrett*

**A large collection of books from the estate of eminent polar scientist Professor Colin Bull (1928–2010) has been gifted to Victoria University by his family.**

The generous donation comprises more than 1,800 items, including reports and books about early polar exploration and scientific discoveries dating back to the 17th century, along with historical studies and novels.

The collection will be housed in the Kelburn Library. Special items will be displayed in a new Antarctic Studies space, the S.T. Lee Reading Room,

being developed through a generous donation by Dr Lee Seng Tee of Singapore. Both donations have been given through the Victoria University Foundation.

Colin emigrated from the United Kingdom to New Zealand in 1951 to take up a Senior Lectureship in Physics at Victoria. During this time, he led the University's 1958–59 expedition to the McMurdo Dry Valleys for the first extended exploration, helping establish the annual expeditions that continue to this day.

Colin left in 1961 to assist in setting up the Institute of Polar Studies at Ohio State University, where he later became Director, Professor of Geology and Dean of Mathematical and Physical Sciences. Professor Peter Barrett completed his PhD there in the late 1960s, and recalls Colin's stories of the pioneering expeditions he led to Spitzbergen and North Greenland in the early 1950s.

“Colin combined a youthful spirit, an adventurous nature, frankness and good humour. He attracted a diverse group of like-minded scholars that established Ohio State as a significant polar science institution.”

Peter travelled to the United States in May to help Colin's widow Gillian, son Andrew and friend Doug Elliott to check and pack the collection for shipment to Wellington—a task that took 10 days to complete.

“The Colin Bull Collection is a valuable acquisition for all with an interest in adventure—writers and artists as well as historians and scientists,” says Peter.

## New Victoria memorabilia



Award-winning graphic artist Sarah Maxey has designed a stunning range of Victoria-branded clothing and memorabilia—the perfect souvenir of your university studies. All products can be purchased at vicbooks on campus or online at [www.vicbooks.co.nz/memorabilia](http://www.vicbooks.co.nz/memorabilia)

## Leaving a bequest to Victoria?



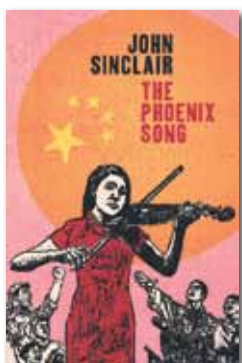
If you have made provision in your will to give a bequest to Victoria University, the Development Office would be very pleased to hear from you. The University is keen to thank donors and acknowledge their support for Victoria.

Please phone 0800 VIC LEGACY (0800 842 534) or visit [www.victoria.ac.nz/alumniandfriends/support-victoria/leave-a-legacy](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/alumniandfriends/support-victoria/leave-a-legacy)

# Off the Press

*The Phoenix Song* and *Three Days in a Wishing Well* 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)



## *The Phoenix Song*

By John Sinclair

In *The Phoenix Song*, John Sinclair invites his readers into a world of intrigue, politics and music in the middle of the 20th century. Protagonist Xiao Magou is a young violin prodigy who leaves her home town to enter a conservatory in Shanghai, both to further her musical tuition and escape the suspicion that is increasingly shadowing her revolutionary parents.

This is not a fast-paced political thriller. Rather, the novel moves slowly, focusing on the protagonist and her family, describing their world while revolution and change build quietly in the background then burst to the fore, unavoidable, perhaps entirely expected, but no less tragic in consequence. Within this tide of historical inevitability, the characters are vibrant and delicately coloured, and all the while the young narrator is becoming increasingly entangled in the uncertain world of politics and ideology.

Slowly, the tapestry is revealed, and the emerging threads of personal relationships, music and politics form an engaging story that spans both continents and decades. Featuring interactions that reveal a careful ear on the part of the author, and rich in historical detail and cultural observation, *The Phoenix Song* provides readers with a refreshing, fictional window on a much-fabled historical period.



## *Three Days in a Wishing Well*

By Kerrin P. Sharpe

*Three Days in a Wishing Well* is Kerrin P. Sharpe's debut poetry collection. It is a finely crafted work, full of deft touches that sat with me long after reading.

Sharpe's poetry calls attention to sound and language and the way consonants can calmly and quietly sit together or clash. There is a wistful note in many of these poems, a softer tone, and sometimes a lingering sense that there is some further layer of understanding to be experienced, if one could just sit long enough within the world of the poem at hand. But enjoying the way these poems were arranged, my eyes found their way to the next page soon enough.

The poems feel vital but somehow also brief—even those that stretch down to the very bottom of the page. Some are dreamlike, and many seem to circle on a word or experience. However, the lightness of wordplay is set against something darker, and the tone is more often solemn than playful.

In trying to summarise this collection, I have returned time and again to Professor Bill Manhire's description on the back cover. He compares the poems to transitory migrating birds. There is indeed something light and gently fleeting about these poems, and something striking in the strands of connection they share—a flock flying wing-tip to wing-tip, perhaps.



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



# Bon Voyage



Photo: Fairfax Media/Dominion Post

## Professor Peter Barrett

One of Victoria's more intrepid explorers, Professor Peter Barrett, founder of the Antarctic Research Centre and Deputy Director of the New Zealand Climate Change Research Institute, is retiring.

Peter's contributions include the major 1967 discovery of the first fossil remains of four-legged animals in Antarctica, confirming the theory that Antarctica was once the centrepiece of a Gondwana supercontinent.

For more than four decades he has led teams drilling the Antarctic margin for a history of the continent's climate and the ice sheet since it first formed 34 million years ago. Many of the more than 60 postgraduate students he has supervised were involved in this work.

Peter is a Fellow of the Royal Society of New Zealand and a recipient of the Marsden Medal, a lifetime achievement award from the New Zealand Association of Scientists. Last year, he was made an Honorary Fellow of the Geological Society of London, one of only two New Zealanders who currently hold the award.

Peter estimates that during his 50-year career he has spent around four years of his life on the icy continent, visiting it on more than 20 expeditions. He has also spent about as much time overseas on research leave, meetings and conferences. He acknowledges the huge carbon footprint, but says it has been necessary to engage with scientists from other countries.

Peter says he is especially proud of his *New Zealand Listener* article in 1981 on the effect of rising carbon dioxide emissions on Antarctica.

"Even then we knew enough to see that continuing to burn fossil fuels was going to change the climate.

"We could foresee that the ice sheets would melt, and satellite measurements over the last two decades show this has begun."

After retiring, Peter will continue work on several projects, including a documentary feature film on climate change science, and a review of Earth's climate history over the last 80 million years. He also has the personal goal of reducing his carbon footprint down to zero.



## Professor Bill Manhire

After a tenure spanning almost 40 years, Professor Bill Manhire is stepping down from the helm of the International Institute of Modern Letters.

Perhaps the country's most well-known poet, Bill joined Victoria in 1973. Since then he has been New Zealand's inaugural Poet Laureate, has won national book awards for his poetry five times, become a Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit and received the Prime Minister's Award for Literary Achievement in Poetry.

But when asked about the highlights of his career, he doesn't focus on his individual success, but talks about the courses he has helped to shape—most important, it seems, is enabling others to follow their creative dreams.

A small undergraduate creative writing course, developed in the early years of his tenure, has grown into a range of specialised workshops; in 1997 Bill was instrumental in developing New Zealand's first Master of Arts in Creative Writing; and in 2001, the International Institute of Modern Letters opened its doors.

"Courses like these were something new for Victoria, and for New Zealand," Bill says. "We wanted to give students something they hadn't had before—an outlet for their creativity—and really foster and support their writing."

Victoria's creative writing graduates include Elizabeth Knox, Ken Duncum and Emily Perkins, who is returning to her alma mater as a Senior Lecturer in early 2013. "If the writers that have come through our doors have been shaped by the course, they have helped to fashion it in return—what we offer is better and more vivid for their contributions."

After he leaves Victoria, Bill will continue performing his work, as well as focusing on being—simply—a writer. "I'll also be going straight to work on my campus novel!"

Bill will be succeeded by Damien Wilkins. "Damien's appointment is very good for the Institute," he says. "The University really is very lucky that it is getting such leadership quality in a key area."

# Shakespeare in the summer sun

**Passion, power and politics—with lashings of glamour—await audiences of this year's Summer Shakespeare production of *Antony and Cleopatra*.**

Summer Shakespeare productions have been a Victoria University tradition since 1983 when students presented *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in the old Quad.

Next year will mark the staging of the 30th production; a milestone reached with the support of the Summer Shakespeare Trust, established in 1985 to provide continuity to each year's show.

Director Alison Walls, an alumna of Victoria's theatre programme and productions from 2009–11, says the Dell in Wellington's Botanic Gardens will be transformed to a place of high emotion and drama.

"Antony and Cleopatra are both that kind of wonderfully large, magnetic and often very difficult personality, but Shakespeare's genius is to reveal the smaller notes of human frailty within that. This is a tragedy on the traditional grand scale, but also in a very human, very recognisable way."

*Antony and Cleopatra* will run from Friday 15 February to Saturday 2 March 2013. Tickets cost \$15 each (or \$10 for a concession) and audience members are welcome to bring a picnic.

A celebration will also be held to mark the auspicious milestone production; email [birthday@summershakespeare.co.nz](mailto:birthday@summershakespeare.co.nz) for more information.

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



Former fellow students Alison Walls, Director, and Catherine Swallow, Production Manager, catch up on a sunny day in the Dell ahead of the production.

## Special edition



Contributors to the edition with Mrs Ailsa Barton.

The Faculty of Law has published a special edition of the *Victoria University of Wellington Law Review* in honour of Dr George Barton QC. Dr Barton, who passed away in 2011 at the age of 86, had a long record of association with the Faculty. During the course of 20 years he held positions as Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, Professor of Jurisprudence and Constitutional Law and Dean of Law.

He taught nearly every branch of law, including international law, legal system, contract, torts, criminal law, evidence, civil procedure, equity and trusts and legal history.

The special edition reflected on Dr Barton's significant contribution to New Zealand and Pacific law. It included tributes from Chief Justice Dame Sian Elias, Attorney-General Hon Christopher Finlayson, former Dean of Law Sir Ivor Richardson and Professor Campbell McLachlan QC.

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

## Informing policy



Professor Jonathan Boston.

The expertise of staff in the Victoria Business School continues to inform the public sector, with a number of academics involved in two major advisory groups this year.

School of Government researcher Professor Jonathan Boston is co-chairing an expert advisory group set up by the Children's Commissioner to explore solutions to reduce New Zealand's child poverty rates.

The group has released a suite of policy ideas for public debate, such as requiring a 'Warrant of Fitness' for rental properties to ensure children live in warm, dry homes.

Dean of the Victoria Business School, Professor Bob Buckle, is chairing a 16-member panel of prominent economists, former government ministers and fellow academics established to test Treasury's analysis of the Crown's future financial challenges before a long-term fiscal statement is presented to Parliament in 2013.

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

## Online resource



Professor Stephen Levine at the Te Ara section's launch at the Beehive.

Two professors from the School of History, Philosophy, Political Science and International Relations celebrated the launch of their addition to New Zealand's online encyclopedia, *Te Ara*, earlier this year.

Stephen Levine and Nigel Roberts spent two years editing the Government and Nation section, which is made of 101 entries about the country's legal system, institutions of government, international relations activity, state sector, identity and founding document the Treaty of Waitangi.

Other staff from the Political Science and International Relations programme, the School of Government and the Stout Research Centre wrote entries reflecting their areas of expertise.

The Ministry for Culture and Heritage is producing *Te Ara*, which is due to be complete by 2014.

[www.teara.govt.nz](http://www.teara.govt.nz)





Wellington Media Collective Trust, 2012.

Following on from 'Behind Closed Doors', the 2011 exhibition that brought to light artworks from private collections in Wellington, the latest exhibitions at the Adam Art Gallery reveal another unsung aspect of the city's cultural history.

The Wellington Media Collective, a confederation of graphic designers, printers, photographers and associates, produced a prolific amount of graphic work for community and political groups between 1978 and 1998. They canvassed the issues of the day through posters, magazines, catalogues and leaflets for groups from trade unions to arts and activist organisations, and these works are the focus of the exhibition titled 'We Will Work With You!'.  
 "The Wellington Media Collective sought to empower disenfranchised groups by providing a visual form for their messages and enabling groups to take the medium into their own hands," says Adam Art Gallery Director Christina Barton.

"Based on the principles of equality and social engagement, the Collective's members and their works have had a lasting impact on the social, cultural and political life of the capital."

The exhibition is part of an archival project underway in collaboration with the Alexander Turnbull Library and the Museum and Heritage Studies programme to ensure that a record of the Collective's work is preserved for the future.

Seeking to extend the Collective's vision, the Adam Art Gallery has commissioned a project by *White Fungus* magazine as part of the exhibition.

A new series of posters and a free newsprint publication will be created that explore a statement—our children are important ... they are the consumers of the future—attributed to the Prime Minister, the Right Honourable John Key.

"These posters will interrogate the impact of neo-liberal thinking on Wellington's urban and architectural fabric over recent decades," says curator Michelle Menzies.

These two projects are joined by a one-work presentation of American artist Martha Rosler's 'The Bowery in Two Inadequate Descriptive Systems' (1974–75), a series of photographs and texts that document what was once New York's most impoverished neighbourhood.

Given that neither the images nor the descriptive words that comprise the work actually reveal the victims of urban blight—those people suffering poverty, homelessness and addiction—this work has become a key monument in debates about the ethics of representation.

"What these exhibitions make visible is the interface between the constructions of visual and graphic art and the lived complexities of social life," says Michelle.

"They ask big questions about how the socially marginalised in a society can be represented, and who can properly do the representing."

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

# The medium is the message



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



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