

Victorious

WINTER 2013

MAGAZINE FOR FRIENDS AND ALUMNI OF VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON



**Gamers get
business kick-start**

IVF breakthrough

Learning through story-telling



The wonders of flax

Secrets of the past may not be the only valuable knowledge held by some of New Zealand's oldest Māori cloaks.

While researching the properties of harakeke (native flax) to find ways of stabilising the flax fibres in the cloaks before an exhibition at Te Papa last year, Associate Professor of Chemistry Gerald Smith discovered potentially beneficial anti-fungal properties in their fibres.

Gerald believes this natural resistance could be used, in the long term, for new innovations such as treatments to preserve old books and papers, textiles that are protected from fungal attack by environmentally-friendly means or natural packaging for food that spoils easily, such as fruit.

These new possibilities arose from research for a Master's project by Rangi Te Kanawa, a Conservator at Te Papa.

She developed a treatment to bind together deteriorating harakeke fibres, which become brittle over time after exposure to light and humidity, and her treatment was used on some of the cloaks in the exhibition.

While examining the fibres, Gerald and Rangi found that harakeke produced coumarin, a fragrant chemical compound that can be smelled in the aroma of freshly cut grass. Coumarin has anti-fungal properties and also repels pests.

They also identified the presence of a number of metal ions in the fibres, which could be contributing to its anti-fungal properties too.

However, not all of the properties identified in harakeke fibres had such potential.

Harakeke was found to have a particularly high content of a type of sugar polymer called hemicellulose, which results in the production of harmful levels of acetic acid.

"This evolution of acetic acid is known as the vinegar syndrome, because of its vinegary smell. It is a menace in the museum environment because as well as accelerating damage on the item producing it, it is volatile and can float off and affect other exhibits," says Gerald.

More recently, Gerald has shown that potentially damaging hydrogen peroxide is produced by decomposing harakeke fibres.

"It's a balancing act. We need to learn how to control the chemical reactions taking place to bring out the desirable, anti-fungal properties, and limit the undesirable effects of things like acetic acid and peroxide."

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From the Vice-Chancellor

Victoria is now ranked New Zealand's number one university for research quality.

Our top ranking is based on the research performance of our academic staff in the Performance Based Research Fund Quality Evaluation. This independent evaluation is undertaken every six years by the Tertiary Education Commission and assesses the research performance of New Zealand's tertiary institutions.

Being ranked as the top research university in New Zealand will enhance Victoria's reputation both nationally and internationally and assist in the recruitment of outstanding academics and capable students in all disciplines.

The additional research income that will come to the University as a result of this ranking will help to raise further the quality of research and teaching at Victoria.

Perhaps the most pleasing aspect is the external validation that Victoria is New Zealand's most research-intensive university and that our staff are undertaking research of international standing.

For what is distinctive about universities is that academic staff undertake and publish research, creating a research-rich environment in which students learn and are encouraged to themselves carry out or contribute to research.

Our graduates—the most recent group who celebrated their success in May—leave university with research skills crucial for addressing the challenges of today and tomorrow.

Ensuring our graduates are well prepared is why we are always working hard to create the right environment. We know most students get only one shot at university education, so for their sake, we have to make sure we get it right: both in and outside the classroom.

At Victoria, we aim to offer a place to study, discuss and debate; to grow and to know your mind.

Among other initiatives, work on the biggest building project in Victoria's history is drawing to a close. The Hub, our new three-level building with social and study spaces at the heart of our Kelburn Campus, has been a \$67 million project that has also involved significantly refurbishing the main University Library and upgrading the Student Union Building.

From the time a student attends their first lecture to the day they graduate, the University aims to offer a first-rate experience. Of course, the connection with their *alma mater* continues as our alumni go on to achieve at the highest level in a range of fields.

We honour some of these outstanding graduates at our Distinguished Alumni Awards Dinner at the end of July. Each graduate has made a significant contribution to their profession, community and country, and the dinner is one of the highlights of the calendar. I look forward to celebrating their success with the University community.

Professor Pat Walsh
Vice-Chancellor



Te Papa Conservator Rangi Te Kanawa with a korowai (cloak with tassels) that has been treated with sodium alginate to bind together its deteriorating harakeke (flax) fibres.

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3D printing revolutionises design



It might sound far-fetched, but Ross Stevens believes that in just a few years children will receive a computer code instead of a toy with their McDonald's Happy Meal.

"Rather than importing masses of toys from overseas, children will be able to walk out of the restaurant with a code that they can take home, plug into their computer, tweak and then print out on their 3D printer."

The Senior Lecturer at Victoria University's School of Design says 3D printing has become an affordable way to do small-scale manufacturing, and with the cost of printers steadily dropping, he believes every home could ultimately have one.

"3D printers are a way of creating solid objects such as toys, jewellery and furniture with the click of a mouse, building up layers in a process that is more like growing an object than assembling it," he says.

Ross is part of a team at the School of Design exploring the boundaries of what can be created with 3D printing. To test the capability of an

in-home printer, he made a three-metre long, working chandelier.

"After 75 hours of printing, the \$1,300 printer was producing objects of the same quality as the \$50,000 printers we were using just a few years ago."

He says 3D printing is an affordable technology for creating one-off objects, moving people away from mass global production back to independent, local crafting.

"Students are able to spend less time in the workshop and more time on the creative process."

The School has a range of 3D printers from small, \$1,000 machines to large, state-of-the-art machines worth \$500,000.

"Our Industrial Design graduates will enter the workforce with a thorough knowledge of which processes suit various materials, what prints well on which machine and what you can print that you couldn't make physically."

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Rational approach long overdue



New Zealand's drug laws are "stuck in a time warp", says Associate Professor of Criminology Dr Julian Buchanan.

"The way drugs are classified bears little resemblance to the risk posed. Indeed, alcohol and nicotine are more dangerous than many controlled drugs," he says.

New Zealand's drug laws, like other nations, are based on the 1961 UN Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs. Julian says the convention reflects widely-held beliefs of that era, but while

society has moved on, drug law and the classification system haven't.

Julian spent more than a decade working as a probation officer in the UK, before joining academia. He arrived at Victoria in 2011 to join the Criminology programme in the School of Social and Cultural Studies.

Working in courts, prisons and the probation system, Julian says he saw first-hand the damaging consequences of a drug policy centred on law enforcement, and he questions this approach.

"Using the criminal justice system to prevent drug use makes as much sense as expecting the police to tackle obesity. Alcohol and other drug use are health and social issues, not crime issues."

He cites Portugal, Switzerland and Holland as three countries that have taken "a rational approach" to drugs policy and have seen considerable benefits. Their respective initiatives include decriminalising personal possession of illicit drugs; providing addicted opiate injectors with clean drugs; and allowing cannabis to be bought in coffee shops.

Julian says society needs to recognise that current drug laws are woefully outdated, not evidenced-based and are doing more harm than good.

"We need a rational, pragmatic and informed 21st century drug policy that is fit-for-purpose and concentrates attention upon problematic drug use rather than recreational use. The recommendations in the 2011 Law Commission Review would be a good starting place."

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Improving IVF success rates

It could be easier for women to get pregnant through in vitro fertilisation (IVF) in the foreseeable future, thanks to efforts from scientists to eliminate guesswork at critical stages in the process.

The new discoveries are the result of a fruitful research partnership between reproductive biologists Professor Ken McNatty and Dr Janet Pitman, from the School of Biological Sciences, and Professor John Hutton and Dr Jozsef Ekart of Fertility Associates, who have combined their collective expertise on fertility, cell biology and gene mapping to great effect.

Current IVF treatment involves using hormones to stimulate egg production, collecting and fertilising a number of those eggs, and incubating them until the blastocyst stage (an early embryo).

Within three to five days one embryo is chosen to be implanted in a woman's uterus, and, at that point, most couples are given a 50 percent chance that their treatment will lead to a successful pregnancy.

Part of the problem with the process as it stands, says Ken, is that while embryologists select what they believe is the best candidate to implant, the results are "hit and miss".

Jozsef says his doctoral research could change that in as little as five years by allowing embryologists to reliably identify the best eggs and embryos.

Using a gene measuring technique pioneered by Janet, Jozsef measured the levels of eight genes the research team suspected might play a role in pregnancy from cumulus cells, which surround and nourish an egg in an ovarian follicle. He then compared the presence of those eight genes with each egg as it developed firstly into an embryo, and subsequently a successful, or unsuccessful, pregnancy.

Jozsef identified three genes that correlated to the successful development of embryos and one to a successful pregnancy.

His results suggest that if a simple test can be developed to check for the presence of these genes, only the best egg need be fertilised.

"These results give us a 75 percent success rate using four genes as markers. But what we really want is 90 percent from a single, high-quality oocyte [egg]."

To that end the research team is applying for funding to reanalyse the cells already studied to identify either more 'indicator' genes, or the reverse—genes whose presence indicate likely failure.



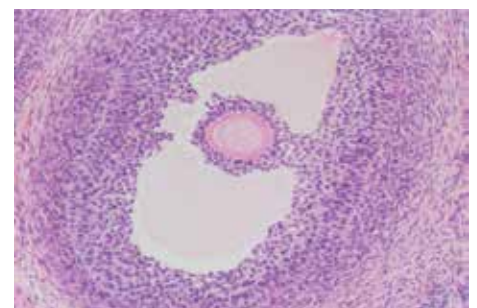
Jozsef says understanding more about the genetic variety of eggs and the ovarian follicle within which they develop could provide another breakthrough in IVF treatment.

"Our study also found that follicles develop in a hierarchical way. It's almost like it's pre-designed which follicle will produce good quality eggs and will ovulate, and which ones are predisposed to dying."

During IVF an average of nine eggs are collected from a patient and, using a range of treatments, they are incubated and prepared to be fertilised at the same time.

"But despite all of our efforts to synchronise their development, they will never be completely identical. We can't overrule their pattern of development," says Jozsef.

"That's very key, because in the future, we could very easily just select eggs from the single follicle we know produces the best ones."



An egg, surrounded by tiny cumulus cells in an ovarian follicle.

Jozsef says it's only a matter of time before these findings become a reality for couples undergoing IVF.

"Once we have the right tools we'll be able to measure even more gene expression, even more precisely. It's refining the method, I think, that will soon lead to being able to tell with certainty which eggs are good and which eggs are not."

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Passion drives change



Passionate individuals have brought about change in youth justice regimes in New Zealand and South Africa, but sustaining progress over time is hard work.

Public policy PhD candidate Ashley Shearar compared the development of ground-breaking approaches to youth offending in New Zealand in the 1980s with more recent youth justice transformation in her home country of South Africa.

Her results show that policy change in both countries was driven by passionate individuals who became social entrepreneurs.

“Those driving change in South Africa had first-hand experience of young people being detained without trial or held in inappropriate conditions under the apartheid regime. In New Zealand, key individuals were motivated by concern over how Māori in particular fared in the welfare and justice systems.”

Ashley also found parallels between the nations in the degree to which advocates of new youth justice approaches wanted community-based solutions, which reflect restorative justice principles.

But “when the rubber hits the road,” says Ashley, it proves difficult to keep enthusiasm alive for approaches that are more inclusive and time consuming.

“People in both countries felt the dream had fizzled as they became bogged down in day-to-day demands and had to compete for funding.”

Ashley says New Zealand was a source of inspiration when she became involved in the South African youth justice transformation movement.

“As well as the overall policy approach, the sensitivity to indigenous people in what New Zealand had done, and the focus on family and community, resonated strongly.”

Ashley worked full time during three years of PhD study—initially as a probation officer in Hawke’s Bay, then in the Department of Corrections’ high-risk response team and, since September 2012, as a senior analyst in the Ministry of Social Development’s youth justice policy team.

Currently, Ashley is helping to develop a New Zealand Youth Crime Action Plan, providing an opportunity for her research findings to inform policy advice.

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Mapping our deep-sea environment



Dense cover of sponges and corals on the summit of a seamount on the Macquarie Ridge, south of New Zealand. Photo: NIWA—CenSeam 2008.

A marine biologist taking part in one of New Zealand’s most significant deep-sea research projects says the results will help identify vulnerable marine ecosystems in the South Pacific region, contribute to New Zealand’s ongoing conservation commitments and reveal new species.

Professor Jonathan Gardner is a lead researcher on the three-year project being conducted by the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA).

The project will use mapping technology and complex biological models to identify vulnerable marine ecosystems—ecosystems that may be damaged by activities such as fishing, oil and gas drilling or dumping.

Using data collected over a number of years on seabed features and habitat types, models will be created for predicting the likelihood of finding different species of deep-sea animals in the region, and estimating their vulnerability.

Cameras and sonar equipment will be sent far below the water’s surface to capture images and data on the deep-sea marine environment, and the animals living there, to test and refine the models.

Jonathan is leading the analysis of genetic connectivity between deep-sea species, such as sea urchins, mussels, corals and brittle stars.

“My work will involve identifying the levels of connectivity among different sites, both near and far, so that we understand how different sites are vulnerable to disturbance.

“It will help to answer important questions such as, if a population was depleted, where would the repopulation of the species come from?

“We know that sites that are well connected are less vulnerable, whereas sites that are isolated or poorly connected are more vulnerable. These vulnerable sites require the greatest protection, because if they are damaged then they may not be able to recover.”

Jonathan says the project is significant for New Zealand’s future.

“We are responsible for an ocean area over 17 times our land area—yet we know surprisingly little about the ecosystems within it. This project will make a significant step towards increasing our knowledge and understanding.”

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Loud and clear

The cochlea remains one of the relatively uncharted areas of the human body. Researcher Dr Paul Teal is helping to unravel its mysteries.

The spiral chamber, located inside the ear, turns sound vibrations into electrical signals that travel along nerves to the brain and allow us to hear.

“The cochlea is essentially a cavity in the bone,” says Paul. “You can’t pull it out and look at it, and it’s difficult to study in the body because of where it is located and the complex processes at work.

“Around the world, there is still a lot of dispute about how it even works.”

Paul, a Senior Lecturer in the School of Engineering and Computer Science, is researching better ways of measuring the cochlear microphonic, which is an electrical signal generated inside the cochlea. This could lead to techniques to more accurately assess hearing loss.

He has joined an international effort to build a finite element model of the cochlea which, if successful, will provide the first realistic, 3D picture of the physics of motion in a working cochlea.

The work is funded by the 7th Framework Programme for Research, a European Union initiative to fund research and development that develops high-quality knowledge. It comes under the Virtual Physiological Human (VPH) framework, which is developing open source digital data on the entire human body.

The ultimate goal for Paul, the only researcher from outside Europe to be part of the project, is to improve the diagnosis and treatment of hearing defects.

A healthy cochlea provides compression which amplifies quiet sounds more than loud sounds. In the most common form of hearing loss, this compression is degraded.

The current, standard test for hearing loss is an audiogram which, Paul says, effectively measures the softest sounds people can hear but is less reliable in gauging how well they hear louder sounds. He is experimenting with the use of advanced signal processing technologies to

collect an electrical signal direct from the cochlea and more accurately assess hearing loss.

Paul is using gold-plated foam ear plugs that have electrodes clipped onto them to harness signals from deep inside the ear.

He hopes his work will result in the ability to customise hearing aids.

“Modern hearing aids are prescriptions based on population averages rather than an individual’s condition. My vision is that we will one day be able to connect people to a device that plays tones and sounds and gives an automatic read-out on the make-up of the hearing aid they need.”

Paul says the existing method of measuring the cochlear microphonic signal is invasive and, to diagnose problems, audiologists tend to opt for other, non-invasive tests that record the sounds the ear produces.

However, these signals have limited use, partly because they are not always present, even in people with normal hearing.

“The reason we’ve gone back to looking for ways of collecting an electrical signal directly from the cochlea is the huge advance in electronics in recent decades.”

Paul is working with a surgeon from the Otago School of Medicine in Christchurch and a Canterbury audiologist to progress this strand of his work.

At the same time, he’s also focused on how to interpret the information gathered from the cochlea.

One of Paul’s breakthroughs has been to develop a model that combines understanding about both mechanical and electrical components in the way the cochlea behaves. The innovation has attracted considerable international interest.

It’s an exciting field of research, says Paul. “There is a lot yet to be learned and that has potential to deliver better treatments for hearing disorders.”

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New view of Polynesian conversion to Christianity



Papetoai octagonal church built in 1821–1822 on the site of a destroyed marae. The eight districts of Mo'orea contributed to its construction. Photo: Hugh Sissons.

Missionaries are often seen as the drivers of conversion to Christianity in Polynesia but research by anthropologist Dr Jeff Sissons puts forward a different view.

Jeff's three-year Marsden-funded study investigated a series of actions that took place in Eastern Polynesia in the early 19th century, in which images of non-Christian gods, marae and temples were burnt or torn down.

The event, which he has called The Polynesian Iconoclasm, began in Tahiti and neighbouring Mo'orea in 1815 and quickly spread to the Leeward Islands, the Austral Islands, Hawaii and the Southern Cook Islands.

Jeff's research shows that in most cases the destruction wasn't simply a consequence of people adopting Christianity, but would have happened anyway—whether missionaries were in the area or not.

"In some cases, missionaries had been in the islands and left, but in others the events happened before they arrived."

In Tahiti, he says, the iconoclasm followed a period of civil war and the return of exiled chief Pomare II, who ordered traditional places and symbols of worship to be destroyed and 67 churches to be built throughout the island.

Jeff found evidence that Tahitians visiting other islands brought news of the events and prompted similar practices.

He says the first churches built in place of the destroyed marae and temples were made of wood from breadfruit trees and many were huge. One in Tahiti, for example, was 712 feet long—the size of two football fields—and had 29 doors. Another in the Cook Islands was originally planned to be 600 feet long, however the building eventually constructed was just under half that size.

What prompted the revolutionary changes, in Jeff's view, was a desire for both unity and renewal.

"These societies had a tradition of annual renewal involving rituals such as wrapping and unwrapping images in white tapa cloth, which were thought to encourage fertility and prosperity.

"The destruction and rebuilding of churches was a different kind of renewal and an opportunity to rebuild and unify societies that had been affected by years of fighting.

"What it shows is that Polynesian people were adopting Christianity but in their own way. Often it was the priests from traditional religions that encouraged the change. In a sense they were indigenous missionaries."

Jeff says the initial mass popularity of Christianity was relatively short-lived. "It became oppressive quite quickly, because chiefs and the former priests who had top positions in the new order used the events to introduce new laws and



An abandoned marae on Mo'orea (northwest of Tahiti) where the Polynesian Iconoclasm began. Photo: Hugo Sissons.

increase their power. By the late 1820s, there were rebellions taking place."

While the arrival of Christianity features strongly in oral traditions in Eastern Polynesia, Jeff says few details are remembered about what led to the iconoclasm and how it altered societies.

Instead he has relied on records held in the Council for World Mission archives in London and other documentary sources.

"It's clear from those accounts that the episodes of destruction were not witnessed by missionaries even if they were in the area at the time."

Jeff's findings will be published in a book that will explain, for the first time, why the iconoclasm happened and how events in the different islands were connected.

"Until now, researchers have focused on individual islands but no one has taken a broader view and explored how news of the events was taken from one place to another."

Overall, says Jeff, the work has produced a deeper understanding of the role Polynesian people played in their conversion to Christianity.

"It wasn't done to them but something they did to themselves. It was Christian conversion as an indigenous political process."

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Protecting traditional knowledge



A growing recognition of the cultural economic value of indigenous knowledge and a determination on the part of indigenous peoples and developing countries to secure their rights is putting the spotlight on intellectual property (IP) law.

A new publication draws on examples from Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands, to analyse the possibilities and limits of IP law when it comes to supporting innovation by indigenous peoples.

Professor of Law Susy Frankel, who co-edited *Indigenous Peoples' Innovation—Intellectual Property Pathways to Development* with Professor Peter Drahos of Australian National University, says traditional or indigenous knowledge has often been expropriated because it is useful, but not treated as legally protectable innovation.

“There can be a situation, for instance, where an indigenous group has a special relationship with, and knowledge about, a plant and its properties. Along comes a company that wants to exploit those properties. They work with the indigenous people to access the traditional knowledge and perhaps even strike an agreement about using it.

“But once they have isolated the active ingredient they can apply for a patent to protect the intellectual property, an option which is

often not available to the indigenous people. That’s because our IP laws are based on the premise that you protect uses of knowledge, rather than the knowledge itself.”

Susy says many indigenous peoples now demand a fair and equitable IP system as an essential part of international negotiations, and New Zealand needs to ensure that its IP law can support Māori to protect and utilise their intellectual property (mātauranga Māori).

“We need to make sure that these goals are part of our international trade strategy, which includes developing a sound policy about local innovation and creativity that addresses all local needs for legal protection and economic support.”

To encourage further research and debate on the topic, the book is available to download for free online: www.victoria.ac.nz/law/centres/nzciel/publications/indigenous-peoples-innovation

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Is it time for an Amazon tax?

“Staggering” is how summer research scholar William Steel describes the tax effects of not collecting GST and duties on goods bought on overseas websites.

Currently, purchases worth up to \$400 can come across New Zealand’s borders for free because the costs of recouping the GST or tariffs on them are seen as prohibitive.

William’s analysis of overseas research suggests ending the exemption would lead to a 27 percent increase in demand for online products bought domestically—in addition to the tax revenue that would be gathered—and a corresponding decline in demand of 45 to 60 percent for products bought offshore.

While that would be good for retailers, William says there is a downside for consumers in terms of cost.

“However, my study shows that while lower prices are important to people shopping on overseas websites, the biggest driver of e-commerce is greater product availability and selection.”

His research looked at solutions to the notoriously difficult issue of where, when and

how to recoup the tax on overseas sales.

“Adding GST and duties to a credit card purchase seemed a no-brainer to me at the start, but there are all sorts of reasons why that’s impractical,” says William.

Instead, he says, there are ways to make the current collection system more effective—including developing a multilateral agreement on a sales tax take with New Zealand’s trading partners and changing the way the *de minimis* threshold is defined.

Booksellers New Zealand CEO Lincoln Gould, whose organisation part-funded the summer research scholarship, says William’s work provides information that will be useful to informing debate about the issue.

William’s supervising team included Dr Toby Daglish, Research Director for the Institute for the Study of Competition and Regulation, Bronwyn Howell, the Institute’s General Manager, Dr Lisa Marriott from the School of Accounting and Commercial Law, and Professor Norman Gemmell, Chair of Public Finance at Victoria.

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Lincoln Gould and William Steel at Booksellers New Zealand.

Learning through story-telling



Bringing theories to life through story-telling is central to Chris Bowden's approach to teaching.

"You can teach theory, you can show research and you can try to explain concepts—but unless you can relate it in some way to the real world, it's difficult for a lot of students to understand," he says.

Chris teaches courses in Education offered by the School of Educational Psychology and Pedagogy in the Bachelor of Arts programme. His teaching style is informed by his work in the community as a grief educator and researcher, and in suicide prevention.

Chris, who has been awarded a 2012 Victoria University Teaching Excellence Award, says students need to be aware of, and think critically and creatively about, wider community, national and international issues. They also need to learn how to respond to and resolve those issues.

"I try to create learning experiences that push the boundaries of my students' comfort zones so that they have to go away and think about how they would respond," he says.

"I want students to have the skills and knowledge to be able to work effectively and ethically with people."

Chris believes universities need to have a direct relationship with communities because students and universities are part of them, and hold knowledge that can benefit them.

Chris embodies his beliefs. Last year, he ran a series of education workshops in the Wairarapa for parents wanting to learn more about supporting at-risk teenagers. He shared evidence-based practice with them, but also learnt from them about the realities and challenges parents, schools and communities face.

"My work in the community gives me a lot of material that I can use in my teaching, and I think the students really benefit from that."

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Science learning online, anywhere



Group alongside whale skeleton. Photo: Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand.

New online science courses are proving popular with both full-time students and members of the public.

Three undergraduate-level courses are being offered this year, that are run completely online and are available to students from any discipline. Members of the public can also enrol as non-assessed participants through the Community Continuing Education (CCE) programme.

Dr Rebecca Priestley, a well-known science writer and historian, and Dr Rhian Salmon, a science communicator with a background in Antarctic research, are members of the Science in Context group at Victoria, created to help bring discussion about science to different audiences.

They have been working together to develop the new courses, SCIE 302 Revolutions in Science; SCIE 201 Energy, Society and the Future; and SCIE 211 Contemporary Issues in Science and Society, which are designed to examine the history of science, the relationship between science, scientists and society, and the communication of scientific ideas and issues.

Rebecca says a major benefit of online learning is that people can watch lectures and complete course assessments at their own pace, with each

course broken down into manageable two-week modules.

Pre-recorded lectures are presented by a range of researchers, with course materials, tutorials in the form of discussion boards and assessments all facilitated online—so students can be based anywhere in the world.

"It has been really interesting observing interactions between learners through the discussion boards—we have students from all kinds of backgrounds completing the course alongside learners from outside the University, who are engaging with the content for their own personal benefit," says Rebecca.

Sally Rawnsley, programme manager for CCE, says the new courses reflect the tremendous breadth and depth of scientific knowledge at Victoria.

"We've been working for several years to include more science content into the range of courses we offer, so this is a really exciting development for our programme."

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Serious fun and games

A summer boot camp set entrepreneurial game design graduates a challenge: to balance the fun of creating a game with the demands of building a start-up.

The 14-week boot camp provided an opportunity for recent graduates and final-year students to learn how to create their own start-up company, and bring a gaming product to market. It was a joint initiative between the School of Design and Wellington's business incubator Creative HQ and was sponsored by the University's commercialism arm Viclink.

Participants from the schools of Design, Engineering and Marketing worked in multidisciplinary teams with creative agency Clemenger BBDO to develop prototype games that helped address a select group of Clemenger's clients' business needs.

Media Design lecturer Kah Chan says many new graduates think they only have three choices—to get a job, go travelling or continue studying.

"The boot camp provides a very clear, alternative path post-graduation," he says.

"It builds on students' existing skills in design, programming and marketing, but it imparts a completely different experience. It's a new challenge for students to continually tie the fun



Max O'Brien-Bowling (left) and William Falloon (right) make the most of Te Papa Tongarewa's Game Master exhibition.

element of a game back to a product that is useful for the client and meets their commercial realities."

Marketing student William Falloon and designer Max O'Brien-Bowling say having access to industry experts and resources was the best part of the boot camp. The team of four, including designer/programmer Ben Jack and James Greenwood, were mentored by Creative HQ business strategist Alan Hucks, and had the opportunity to attend major industry conference AnimFX.

"The boot camp has been a great opportunity to build the foundations of a gaming business," says William.

They all love the industry, and want to keep building on the momentum the camp has created.

"I came to university to make games. And to be doing just that at the conclusion of my degree is great," adds Max.

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Keeping it current

When Dr Anita Brady's students tell her they can no longer blob happily in front of the television, the Media Studies lecturer feels a sense of achievement.

"My job is to ruin mindless media watching for them," says Anita, who has been awarded a 2012 Victoria University Teaching Excellence Award. "After studying with me, I hope they will forever be analysing what they see and hear."

Using topical examples is central to her approach. This year, some of Anita's students have been discussing Beyonce's recent half-time performance at the Super Bowl and last year students debated coverage of Valerie Adams' Olympic gold medal.

"I'm quite prepared to change the topic of a lecture I've prepared if I go on a news site beforehand and find a new story that is relevant to what we are learning," she says. "Subject matter in the media is constantly changing so my teaching material has to do the same."

Anita was commended by the judges for finding innovative ways to keep students involved in learning by, for example, encouraging them to contribute ideas for class exercises and allocating plenty of time for class discussion. "Ideas generated from their own engagement with the media are an important part of the course."

Last year she went even further, surveying her students about their media preferences and asking them to match the results against current theories about media use for an assessment exercise.

"They really enjoyed using data they had created themselves and it led to some interesting discussions about the relationship between theory and practice."

Anita subsequently quizzed her students about how the survey could be improved.

Anita believes engaging students and having enthusiasm for the subject are central to being a



good teacher. "It might sound twee, but I absolutely love what I do and students tell me they find that infectious."

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Charting a course to success

While university life is often what you make of it, a new Student Charter identifies the ingredients for success and commits both staff and students to fostering them.

First proposed by Victoria University of Wellington Students' Association (VUWSA) president Max Hardy in late 2010, the Student Charter was developed by the Academic Office and VUWSA working in collaboration and heeding feedback from the University community on earlier drafts.

The document articulates five goals students are encouraged to work towards to get the most from their studies, and outlines how the University will support students to achieve these goals.

Associate Professor David Crabbe, Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Academic), says the new Student Charter differs from past charters prepared in 1998 and 2000, which were lengthy and seldom used.

"This document was prepared in a spirit of partnership. It reflects our desire to work closely with students to create an environment that provides a good learning experience and a good general student experience, and is a collective statement of responsibility across the University to foster such an environment.

"We deliberately kept it concise so that everyone can use it as a point of reference. It provides broad brush strokes; each statement can be referred to and elaborated on when considering policies, processes and activities in daily university life."



New students get ready for the year ahead at orientation.

The five goals encourage students to be active members of a scholarly community committed to enquiry and integrity; engage intellectually with others; develop autonomy in pursuing knowledge and understanding; broaden their social and cultural engagement; and communicate concepts, ideas and arguments effectively.

David says the Charter is designed as a key document to guide both learning and teaching. It is already being used in the training of class representatives and will be included as part of Victoria's staff induction processes.

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Community support eases transition

More Māori and Pasifika students from low-decile schools in the Wellington region are studying at Victoria as a result of a successful, decade-long outreach programme.

High school students registered with the Outreach Programme attend weekly sessions with one of two full-time coordinators, during which they focus on their study goals, exam preparation and understanding NCEA and University Entrance (UE) requirements. There are evening sessions for parents, and holiday activities, including an end-of-year camp, to motivate students to succeed in school and complete the programme.

Susan Harper, Manager of Recruitment, Admission and Orientation within the Student Academic Services Group, says the programme has proved to be an important bridge to tertiary study.

"Students show remarkable commitment because the classes are mainly held in their own time, either before or after school, or at lunchtime. But the payback is the support they receive to gain qualifications and make the transition from school to university.

"Over time, the programme has made going to university a normal choice for Māori and Pacific students at low-decile schools."

Once at Victoria, the students are connected to Māori and Pasifika student support and pastoral care networks on campus. Some students receive scholarships to help with university costs.

A 2012 review of the programme indicated that of all Māori and Pasifika school leavers in Wellington to enrol at Victoria, 38 percent were programme participants compared to just 13 percent in 2009.



Māori and Pacific Outreach Coordinator Fafoi Seiuli leads a session.

That growth mirrors expansion in the number of schools taking part, which has risen to 14 colleges in the Hutt Valley, Porirua and Wellington.

The review concluded that the programme is achieving benefits for students, schools and the University and for this reason is being extended to all students in low-decile schools in the Wellington region from this year.

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Love the Hub? Join the club!



Students bid the old Quad farewell with paint brushes, spray cans and chalk (above), before the space is transformed into the Hub (below).

Alumni may now need a map when returning to their alma mater—the formerly windswept and barren Quad has been transformed into a vibrant new central building.

Known as the Hub, the three-level building is the cornerstone of recent improvements to the Kelburn Campus, which include the refurbishment of the Library and a revamped Student Union Building.

The Hub features a grand two-storey reading room connected to the Library, informal learning spaces, cafés, food outlets and a pharmacy. It also includes the largest sliding glass doors in the Southern Hemisphere (each weighing 10 tonnes and measuring six metres tall) that connect indoor spaces to the Tim Beaglehole Courtyard, named after Victoria's former Chancellor.

Vice-Chancellor Professor Pat Walsh says the space has quickly become a bustling meeting point for students.

"It's excellent to see that feedback provided by alumni when they were students has informed a building which is being used so wholeheartedly by current students. From beginning to end, students have been involved in all aspects of the redevelopment project through the University's partnership with the Victoria University of Wellington Students' Association Trust. Through this partnership the Hub has truly created a central heart to our Kelburn Campus."

A new way of delivering services for students was also introduced as part of the redevelopment project. Vic Info Ihonui, an information service, was set up in the Hub for students to visit between lectures to find information about the Library, academic, IT and other university services.

Great ideas go viral

Made by students to showcase their innovative work, a group of videos have been viewed by hundreds of thousands around the world and are well worth watching.



The Greenfingers Fogponics System, created by Industrial Design students Adam Ben-Dror, Casey Lin, Robert Skene and Nick Johnston, uses an extremely fine, nutrient-filled mist to grow plants, which can then be easily shared between friends.

player.vimeo.com/video/52987201



Left to right: Joss Doggett, Adam Ben-Dror and Shanshan Zhou.

A cross-disciplinary team of Media and Industrial Design students created the Pinokio lamp, which interacts with its users by tracing their movements and responding to sounds, bringing to life an everyday, mundane object. Pinokio received a vimeo Staff Pick award and more than 800,000 views.

www.pinokio-lamp.com



Constructed by a team of Industrial Design students, the Quakescape 3D Fabricator uses seismic data to paint a 3D model of Christchurch. Each colour reflects the location and size of aftershocks. It was described by the Smithsonian as "probably the world's most beautiful seismograph".

player.vimeo.com/video/52059936



As part of his Honours year, Engineering student James McVay built MechBass—a computer-controlled bass guitar that is capable of playing new note combinations faster than any human player. James' YouTube video has more than 500,000 views.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=5UYMnzXQEtw

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD WINNERS

Distinguished alumni to be honoured

Six of New Zealand's most influential and inspirational leaders and entrepreneurs will be honoured with a Distinguished Alumni Award from Victoria University of Wellington.

The University will present awards in July to alumni who have made an outstanding contribution in their field. They are Claudia Batten, John Campbell, Georgina te Heuheu, Brian Roche and Jeff Tallon. Rugby player Conrad Smith will be presented with the inaugural Distinguished Alumni Award for a Young Alumnus.

Vice-Chancellor Professor Pat Walsh says the recipients illustrate the high calibre of Victoria's alumni and the University is proud to be celebrating their achievements.

"This year's recipients highlight the diverse contribution our alumni make both globally and here in New Zealand.

"The awards illustrate the steps to success that Victoria graduates undertake and all the winners portray the qualities that we aim to instil, including leadership, critical and creative thinking and a commitment to excellence."

Victoria has presented Distinguished Alumni Awards since 2006, introducing the accolades as a way of recognising and honouring the contribution made by its graduates.

The winners will be presented with their awards at a gala dinner at the Wellington Town Hall on Wednesday 31 July. Sponsors of the event are *The Dominion Post*, the Wellington City Council and Woolf Photography. Members of the public are welcome to attend. Tickets are available from www.victoria.ac.nz/alumni



Claudia Batten

Claudia Batten (BCA, 1996; LLB (Hons), 1998) is known internationally for her innovative contributions in the fields of marketing and information technology.

She specialised in contract, intellectual property and technology law at Russell McVeagh before moving to New York where she was part of the founding team of Massive, a ground-breaking network for advertising in video games. Claudia went on to co-found Victors & Spoils, the first

advertising agency built on the principles of crowdsourcing.

Claudia's passion for media, digital innovation and businesses of the future has seen her appointed to numerous boards. In 2007, she was the youngest appointee to New Zealand Trade and Enterprise's US Beachheads Board. Recently, she joined the board of Icehouse which was named one of the world's top 10 start-up incubators by *Forbes* magazine.

Claudia is highly regarded for her outstanding marketing skills, team work and her appetite for new challenges.



John Campbell

John Campbell (BA (Hons), 1988) is one of New Zealand's most acclaimed and respected television journalists. His unique and effective communication style, combined with a determination to seek answers to a wide range of political and social issues, have put him at the forefront of New Zealand journalism.

John began a long and varied career in broadcasting by working as a journalist and then a newsreader for Radio New Zealand. He joined TV3 in 1991,

working in news and current affairs and as a newsreader. He has been presenter of his current programme *Campbell Live* since 2005.

John has won many industry awards, including the Qantas award for Best News Investigation and, on two occasions, the award for Best Presenter. In 2011, *Campbell Live* received the Investigation of the Year award for its work tracking the Samoan tsunami relief funds.



Hon Georgina Manunui te Heuheu

Georgina Manunui te Heuheu QSO (BA, LLB) is of Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Te Arawa, Ngāti Awa and Tuhoe descent. She was the first Māori woman in New Zealand to graduate in Law and gain admission to the High Court as a Barrister and Solicitor in 1972. She is Chairman of Māori Television, and Deputy Chair of the Tūwharetoa Māori Trust Board. Her current appointments follow a long and distinguished public career during which time, among

other interests, she has been an inspirational leader for Māori advancement and the place of the Treaty of Waitangi in building a diverse nation.

Georgina has extensive experience in central government and public accountability enhanced by 15 years as a Member of Parliament. She was a Minister in Cabinet under two National Governments, and from 2008-2011, was Minister for Courts, Minister for Pacific Island Affairs, Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control and Associate Minister for Māori Affairs. Prior to entering Parliament, Georgina was a Member of the Waitangi Tribunal.



Conrad Smith

Conrad Smith (LLB (Hons), 2004) is an outstanding sportsman whose skills and leadership qualities are recognised internationally.

He has been playing for the All Blacks since 2004 and has 69 Test caps to his name. Conrad has played more than 80 games as centre for the Hurricanes in the Super 15 Rugby and captained the team in 2012.

He was a member of the All Black team that won the final game against France in the 2011 Rugby World Cup and, in 2012, he

received the Super Rugby Player of the Year award.

Conrad had a meteoric rise to high-level rugby, moving from the Wellington B team into the All Blacks in a little over 18 months. His success is attributed to the determination, intelligence, speed and vision he shows as a player. He is also known for his leadership skills and is regarded as an inspirational captain.

Conrad fits practising as a solicitor at Gibson Sheat around his rugby commitments.



Brian Roche

Brian Roche (BCA, 1978) has had a significant impact on New Zealand society through his contribution to both the public and business sectors.

He ran a highly successful public sector consulting practice with PricewaterhouseCoopers for 32 years. During this time, successive governments called upon his expertise for leadership roles and heading major initiatives. This included leading Treaty settlements and negotiating sensitive

transactions involving state assets on behalf of the Crown, as well as chairing the New Zealand Transport Authority. He is widely respected for his professionalism and insightful problem-solving skills.

Brian played a pivotal role in securing hosting rights for the 2011 Rugby World Cup and chaired the company that ran the successful tournament. He also chairs the Hurricanes rugby franchise.

Currently Chief Executive of the New Zealand Post Group, Brian makes a major behind-the-scenes contribution to the public and private sectors by mentoring senior personnel.



Jeff Tallon

Jeffery Tallon (PhD in Chemistry, 1977, and DSc, 1997) belongs to an elite group of internationally-recognised New Zealand physical scientists.

A Distinguished Scientist with Callaghan Innovation (formerly IRL), Jeff has been at the forefront of developing a world-leading portfolio of patented high temperature superconducting (HTS) materials. His most outstanding insight was, along with colleagues Bob Buckley and Murray Presland, identifying the high temperature superconductor

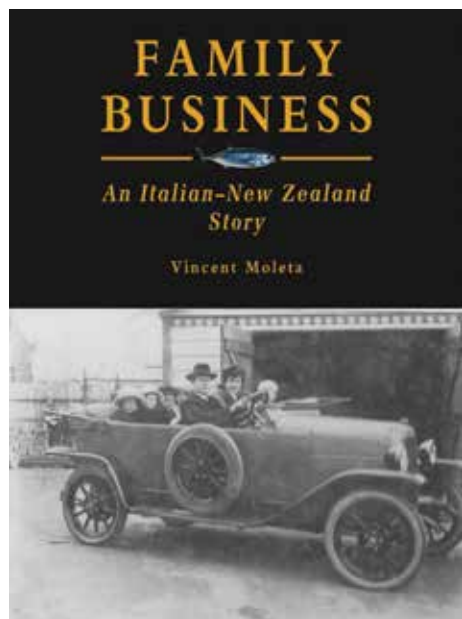
that for 20 years could be used to form long wire.

Jeff's research successes have been published in over 270 papers, his applied work is protected by more than 20 patents and he has a Hirsch Index (a measurement of research standing among the international community) of 49, which is similar to many Nobel Prize winners.

Jeff was co-recipient of the 2009 Prime Minister's Science Prize and has also received New Zealand's highest scientific honour, the Rutherford Medal.

As well as being an innovative thinker and researcher, Jeff has contributed widely to the development of the physical sciences in New Zealand.

An Italian-New Zealand story



Family Business: An Italian-New Zealand Story shows Bartolo and Giuseppina Barnao and their children in the Fiat Bartolo imported from Italy, taken in 1924.

A new book by Dr Vincent Moleta delves deep into his Italian heritage and explores the challenges that immigrants face adjusting to life in a new culture.

Vincent grew up in Wellington, and completed both his Bachelor's and Master's degrees at Victoria in arts and literature. As a junior lecturer, he taught Romance languages, before completing his PhD at Cambridge University on early Italian literary history. He eventually settled in Australia, and was based at the University of Western Australia for nearly 30 years.

Vincent has published numerous books during his academic career, but *Family Business* is his first foray into his family's history, whose roots lie in the small island of Stromboli, north of Sicily in the Mediterranean.

The book gives a vivid description of Stromboli and traces the journey his maternal grandparents, Bartolo and Giuseppina Barnao, made as they travelled from Europe to a new life in New Zealand a century ago.

As Vincent explains, the story of his grandparents was not unlike that of other Italian migrants at the beginning of the 20th century.

"They left Stromboli in large numbers to seek new opportunities—creating a better life for their families, and working hard to build successful businesses."

Bartolo Barnao arrived in New Zealand in 1902 aged just 13, to work with his brother in the fishing industry. He returned briefly to Stromboli to get married, and settled first in Palmerston North and finally in Wellington's Island Bay, running a successful fish market on Lambton Quay for many years.

The book explores the ups and downs of family life and many colourful stories emerge, such as making parmesan cheese from New Zealand milk to export and sell back in Italy, and large wedding celebrations in Island Bay with hundreds of guests.

"Above all, the narrative explores how people adapt to a foreign culture while maintaining their own traditions, developing new loyalties and cementing new friendships," says Vincent.

Family Business: An Italian-New Zealand Story is published by Canterbury University Press.

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Getting together in China

中维情深齐相聚, 昔日校友乐融融

Alumni in China caught up at two events in Beijing and Shanghai during March. The Beijing event was co-hosted by His Excellency Carl Worker, New Zealand Ambassador to China and Mongolia, at his official residence in Beijing. In Shanghai, alumni gathered at New Zealand Central in the heart of the city, home of the New Zealand Consulate. Mr Matthew Dalzell, New Zealand Consul-General, co-hosted the event.



Commerce graduate Christine Wong with Vice-Chancellor Professor Pat Walsh in Beijing.



In Shanghai, commerce graduates James Li and Yun Hong catch up with law alumnus Zhengping Song and his guest Faye Wang.



Director of Shanghai Chamber Music International, Bachelor of Arts and Honours graduate Kirsten Mason, with alumnus Shaun Du, commerce graduate.

Discovering a passion for teaching



Arts graduate Lui Lafou says he “stumbled” into teaching. The fact that he’s remained is no accident.

Lui completed a Bachelor of Arts with Honours in 2004 with the desire to become a diplomat.

Following graduation, he travelled to Samoa in search of work where, he says, he took up an unexpected job as a relief teacher and spent six

months teaching Year 13 English at St Joseph’s College in Alafua.

“I had to teach *To Kill a Mockingbird* to 40 students with only 10 copies of the novel. I had no idea what I was doing; I had to come up with my own strategies and plan,” he says.

“I remember when I finished, one of my students asked if I was coming back. When I questioned why, she said she really enjoyed my

lessons, and that she had learnt something. I knew at that moment I was going to be a teacher.”

Currently a teacher at Bishop Viard College in Porirua, Lui says that his career took a varied course from there. “I went to Tokelau for a holiday and ended up living there for four years teaching. And although I was passionate about teaching, I felt that there was something missing.”

Lui wanted to become a qualified teacher, so he returned to Victoria’s Faculty of Education, where he completed a Postgraduate Diploma of Teaching (Secondary) in 2010.

The postgraduate qualification helped with planning, reading the curriculum and how to cater for differentiation, says Lui. “It opened my eyes to better ways of doing things.”

He says it’s hugely rewarding when a student gets something you’ve taught them.

“You can see it in their eyes that they’ve made the connection—and you think yes, if that’s all that’s going to happen today, I’ve made a difference.”

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Celebrating 30 years of Summer Shakespeare

Summer Shakespeare reached its 30-year milestone this year, with past players gathering to celebrate in the capital.

An event hosted by Vice-Chancellor Professor Pat Walsh marked the opening of an exhibition of images and promotional material from past productions at the St James Theatre, presented by the Summer Shakespeare Trust. The exhibition pictured

some of Victoria’s most well-known performing arts alumni at work at the beginning of their careers.

Professor Adrian Kiernander, director of the first Summer Shakespeare production *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, in 1983, and the 10th anniversary production, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, in 1993, spoke at the event. Adrian is currently Professor of

Theatre Performance at the University of New England, New South Wales.

From the inaugural performance in the old Quad, the annual summer event has become an institution for theatre-going Wellingtonians, many of whom attended February’s event.

To view more photos from the evening, visit www.victoria.ac.nz/alumniandfriends



Victoria Spackman, Sharon Matthews, Stuart Coats and Megan Corby.



Arts, business and law graduates Stacey Goodman and Sarah Lo.



Professor David Carnegie, Pro Vice-Chancellor and Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences Professor Deborah Willis, Adrian Kiernander and David Lawrence.

Leading design



One of New Zealand's pre-eminent designers, Peter Haythornthwaite, received a Doctor of Science degree during December graduation.

The honorary doctorate recognised Peter's extensive creative output, which has drawn national and international recognition.

During a career spanning more than four decades, he has established several successful design companies and received numerous awards, including the 2003 Designers Institute of New Zealand John Britten Award.

In 2007, Peter and his creative team received one of the world's highest design industry accolades—a prestigious gold medal in the Industrial Designers Society of America's IDEA awards—for LOMAK (a light operated mouse and keyboard). The keyboard enables people with physical impairments to use computers more easily through the use of light sensor technology. LOMAK was subsequently included in the permanent collection of New York's Museum of Modern Art.

A former president and council member of the Design Institute of New Zealand, Peter has generously supported the New Zealand design sector through his involvement in a range of initiatives, including co-founding the Best Design Awards in 1988.

In recent years, he has advised New Zealand export businesses on how to build their design capability through the New Zealand Trade and Enterprise Better by Design programme, which he played a key role in developing.

Victoria University has also benefited from Peter's expertise as an Adjunct Professor of Design. In this capacity he acts as a tutor and guest lecturer, enables internships and placement opportunities for students, facilitates research initiatives and provides valuable support for the School's Design Led Futures programme.

Business leader honoured



During May graduation, business leader Rob Cameron, a Victoria alumnus and long-time supporter of the University, received a Doctor of Commerce degree.

The honorary doctorate recognised Rob's distinguished career, which has seen him influence national economic policies and advise on some of New Zealand's largest commercial transactions.

As a business leader, he has made significant and influential contributions to both private and public sectors in New Zealand and, for many years, has been an important contributor to the growth and governance of Victoria University.

Rob received a Bachelor of Commerce and Administration from Victoria University in 1971, beginning his career in the Department of Trade and Industry. He returned in 1974 to complete a First Class Honours degree in Economics, before advising on overseas trade and national development issues as Private Secretary to the Honourable Joe Walding and the Right Honourable Sir Brian Talboys.

While working at the Treasury, Rob received a prestigious Harkness Fellowship to study at Harvard University where he gained a Master of Public Administration in Economics.

On his return to New Zealand, Rob re-joined the Treasury and was a principal architect in the development of the state owned

enterprise model during the early 1980s, before taking up the role of Director of Research at Jarden & Company. He went on to lead the investment banking division at Fay Richwhite & Company, advising on some of New Zealand's largest capital market transactions.

In 1995, he established Cameron Partners Limited, a business which has become one of New Zealand's foremost investment banks.

Rob's economic and financial expertise has been recognised through being made a lifelong Fellow of the Institute of Finance Professionals New Zealand, and he was appointed Chair of the Capital Markets Development Taskforce in 2008.

He has supported not-for-profit organisations, including Special Olympics New Zealand, and is a Director on the Board of KEA, which encourages expatriate New Zealanders to increase their contribution to the country.

Rob has also supported Victoria University for many years, through roles such as Advisory Board membership for Victoria Business School and Board Chair of the Institute for the Study of Competition and Regulation. He was a member of the University Council between 1998 and 2001 and received a Hunter Fellowship in 2003, in recognition of his ongoing and valuable contributions.

From far and wide



Pictured at back from left are Joyce's sister-in-law, mum, father and elder sister, and at front her brother, three-year-old nephew, grandmother and younger sister.

As friends and family from around the globe gathered in Wellington to celebrate graduation, one happy group couldn't be missed.

Joyce Siao Chien Tay arrived in Wellington in 2010 from Malaysia to study accounting and finance. She was sponsored by Malaysian oil and gas company Petronas, and travelled to Wellington to complete her Bachelor of Commerce and Administration at the Victoria Business School.

Before she returned to Malaysia to begin a job with Petronas and continue her professional accountancy studies, Joyce's proud family travelled to New Zealand to see her graduate.

Joyce says they bought the distinctive Kiwi t-shirts, which are a similar colour to the

graduation hood worn by Commerce graduands, at a souvenir shop in Queenstown during an 11-day holiday around the South Island before the ceremony.

"My father suggested my family wear the t-shirts to show their support. It turned out it was also a good idea to wear the same colour at the parade because it was easier for me to recognise them and to stick together easily!"

Joyce says her family began planning for the trip from the first day she left for New Zealand, and brought the little bears for her eye-catching bouquet over from Malaysia too.

More than 1,000 students graduated in Victoria's three end-of-year graduation ceremonies. A total of 1,166 qualifications were awarded, including 57 PhDs.



Waiting for the parade to begin.



Students take part in the parade along Lambton Quay.



Celebrating at Civic Square.



Mayor Celia Wade-Brown addresses graduands at Civic Square.

Help us reduce waste

Does your household receive more than one copy of *Victorious* each issue? If so, and you're happy for only one copy to be sent, please let us know by emailing alumni@vuw.ac.nz or calling +64-4-463 9665. Like many individuals and organisations, the University works to reduce its environmental impact. Alumni can play their part by letting us know when you change your address or by reducing the number of *Victorious* copies sent your household. There are also many ways to stay in touch online—why not visit our website www.victoria.ac.nz/alumniandfriends or networking website LinkedIn (our network is called Victoria University of Wellington Alumni). You can also choose to receive your University news via e-newsletter alone—subscribe to *Vic Connect* by emailing alumni@vuw.ac.nz

New Chair in Fisheries Science

A new position established within the School of Biological Sciences will deepen expertise in the subject of fisheries science at Victoria.

Created through the generous support of the Ministry for Primary Industries through the Victoria University Foundation, the inaugural holder of the Chair, Dr Matthew Dunn, will focus on research that can help inform and support the lucrative fisheries industry (worth an estimated \$1.3 billion to New Zealand's economy each year).

Matthew has joined Victoria following a decade at the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA), where he managed the Deepwater Fisheries Group and was a programme leader for the National Centre for Fisheries.

Originally from the UK, Matthew has a background in fish biology, fisheries stock assessment and economics, and has previously worked at two globally-influential marine centres there—the University of Portsmouth's Centre for the Economics and Management of Aquatic Resources, and the Centre for Environment, Fisheries & Aquaculture Science at Lowestoft.

In his new role, Matthew will be working closely with a range of New Zealand science organisations, while supporting the development of more graduates in the field of fisheries science.

Matthew believes that graduates entering the world of fisheries science need to be highly-skilled quantitative biologists as research techniques become increasingly sophisticated.

"A key part of my role will be helping to ensure that our graduates are equipped for this increasingly important and challenging industry."



As well as teaching undergraduate and postgraduate courses, Matthew is also supervising a number of research students at Master's and Doctoral level.

"As fisheries scientists, we understand that the interaction between fish, fisheries, science and politics is very complex.

"There are many areas of New Zealand fisheries science I hope to explore, with the aim of leading research important to the industry which other organisations may not have the resources or time to tackle on their own."

A gift of music

Commerce students benefited from Emeritus Professor Athol Mann's expertise during his tenure at Victoria, but it is musicians who will enjoy a lasting legacy from the former Dean of Commerce.

Athol is a member of the Victoria Legacy Club, which brings together alumni and friends who intend to leave a gift in their will to Victoria. He has advised the Victoria University Foundation that he will leave a bequest to support the New Zealand School of Music and, in particular, classical vocal performance studies.

Athol led Victoria's Faculty of Commerce and Administration (now Victoria Business School) for 10 years from 1987, following a successful national and international career in accountancy as a partner in a firm which eventually became KPMG.

He was the first New Zealander to serve on the council of the International Federation of Accountants, was a member of the Securities Commission for seven years and a member of the Medical Research Council.

While his career has been in accountancy, Athol originally planned to study history and has had a lifelong interest in the arts. He grew up in a musical family and developed a passion for opera after seeing an internationally acclaimed cast perform Verdi's *Rigoletto* in his home city of Christchurch as a teenager.

He was actively involved in choral singing for 30 years and has held senior positions in a wide range of musical organisations. This includes



being the inaugural chairman of the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra and a current member of the board of New Zealand Opera.

"I have an addiction for music the way some others have an addiction to golf," says Athol.

He describes the decade he spent at Victoria as a "rewarding" part of his career.

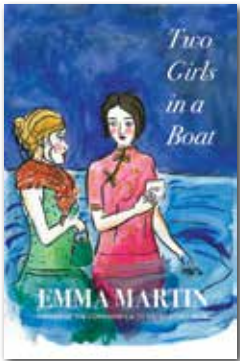
"They were very collegial years which I thoroughly enjoyed. This is an opportunity to do something for Victoria to repay what the University has done for me."

www.victoria.ac.nz/alumniandfriends/support-victoria/leave-a-legacy

Off the Press

Two Girls in a Boat and *Glass Wings* are two works recently published by Victoria University Press (VUP) and are reviewed for *Victorious* by Briony Pentecost.

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



Two Girls in a Boat

By Emma Martin

Two Girls in a Boat is Emma Martin's debut collection. The opening story, *Two Girls in a Boat*, with which Martin won the 2012 Commonwealth Short Story prize, sets the tone for a collection that explores the lives of individuals and families. It is a collection that straddles continents and generations, venturing into often difficult social and personal spheres in stories peopled by characters finding their place and their way in the world.

There is a brittleness, a fragility to some of the characters, and some of the stories. Martin captures each interpersonal dynamic, each moment of interaction or thought with care and warmth, resulting in a collection finely tuned to the ways people express themselves. The characters are complex, each so different, and brought to the page in prose that gives them space to breathe, so that they come alive—uncertain, sometimes ill-prepared, just trying to figure it out.

The prose is light, nuanced, and the stories themselves contain great emotional depth, creating an elegant play between the evocative weight of the narratives and the weightlessness of the prose. The collection is carefully crafted, opening the lives and minds of the characters to the reader with narratives that are beautiful both in their prose and in the quiet ache that resonates through the collection.



Glass Wings

By Fleur Adcock

Fleur Adcock's *Glass Wings* might be viewed as a recollection, as it sifts through her life and times, wryly celebrating (and sometimes mourning the loss of) people, experiences and insects. It is a volume in four parts.

The first, untitled, perhaps a record of ageing, wanders a little through the years, settling finally upon walking sticks, poor eyesight, memory and its failings, the weighty but witty *Charon* (when we've forgotten how to keep afloat, scoop us up, Doctor, in your kindly boat, and carry us across the final moat), and ending with the strangely unsettling but calm *Having Sex with the Dead*.

'Testators' is comprised of a series of poems examining the wills of Adcock's ancestors, dating from the 16th century. 'Campbells' opens with *Elegy for Alastair*, followed by snapshots of Adcock's marriage, pregnancy and student days, and completed by poems celebrating a wedding and the birth of a great-grandson. Finally, 'My Life With Arthropods' looks at life, relationships and the passage of time through the lens of encounters with insects.

Adcock's tone is conversational, with ironic twists and the occasional wink to the reader. *Glass Wings* centres on connections and family, drawing lines between people and memory, at times turning over the mundane to reveal something marvellous or dark. These are poems of honest recall and reflection, an open invitation to pause and savour small moments of interaction.



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

New works for new building



Lonnie Hutchinson's two-part mural 'All that you breathe'.
Donations from alumni through the Victoria University Foundation have helped fund the acquisition of three new art works for the Hub building.

Adam Art Gallery Director Christina Barton says the works were chosen to enhance the visual appearance of the public spaces in the Hub, and

are important new additions to the Victoria University of Wellington Art Collection.

They include 'All that you breathe', a commissioned mural by Lonnie Hutchinson, which can be viewed in the Reading Room on Level 2 of the Kelburn Library; 'Pikimairawea', a bronze sculpture by Rangī Kipa, installed in the Tim Beaglehole Courtyard between the Hub and Old Kirk buildings; and 'Several attentions', a video work by emerging artist Ruth Buchanan exhibited near the Level 1 entrance to the Library.

A large-scale painting on long-term loan to the University, 'New Zealand House Mural' by John Drawbridge, will also be displayed in a new location in the Maclaurin Building.

Research for a greener city



Photo: Justine Hall, Wellington City Council.

Ecological restoration, sustainable growth and enhanced urban design are a few of the many topical issues being explored by students through a new research agreement with Wellington City Council.

The agreement forms part of the Council's 'Our Living City' project, which aims to improve Wellington's liveability and connections to nature.

Eight students joined the Council for a 10-week internship as part of Victoria's Summer Research Scholarships programme. They applied their expertise to diverse projects, from quantifying the economic benefit of the Makara Peak mountain bike park to trialling different ways to increase voluntary participation in community planting programmes. A long-term research project will also be undertaken by a new Post Doctoral Fellow in Cities and Urban Nature.

The agreement builds on Victoria's existing research links with the Council and wildlife sanctuary Zealandia.

Enhancing skills and experience



Health workers attend a training session at Wellington Hospital.

Health professionals from across the lower North Island have two new opportunities to further their professional development through the Graduate School of Nursing, Midwifery and Health.

The School was selected to provide a new graduate-level paper in the Nurse Entry to Practice programme—a national initiative that sees newly registered nurses receive structured support during their first year in the workforce. Around 100 nurses from the Whanganui, Wairarapa, Hutt Valley and Capital & Coast district health boards form the inaugural cohort, and they are expected to complete the programme in 2013.

The School has also introduced a new clinical Master's qualification for midwives. The Master of Health Care in Midwifery Practice is the only clinically based coursework Master's degree in midwifery in New Zealand.

www.victoria.ac.nz/nmh

Working with Weta



Vice-Chancellor Professor Pat Walsh and Sebastian Syhwan, Weta Digital's Chief Technology Officer, sign the scholarship agreement.

Weta Digital has provided special effects for some of the world's biggest movies, from the three *Lord of the Rings* films to *King Kong*, *Avatar* to *Tintin*, summer hit *The Hobbit* and recent blockbusters such as *Ironman 3*.

Now, a new PhD scholarship in Computer Graphics has been established at Victoria by the leading visual effects company.

The University already works with Weta and others on its Computer Graphics programme. Unique in Australasia in the way the course blends computer science and design, this collaboration with industry also ensures the course is relevant and develops graduates with the right skills.

The scholarship covers PhD fees for three years and there may also be opportunities for casual employment at Weta Digital or in the local film industry.

www.computergraphics.ac.nz

Viva Verdi!

With swashbuckling bravado, Te Kōkī New Zealand School of Music (NZSM) is marking the 200th anniversary of Italian opera composer Giuseppe Verdi's birth by presenting a full-scale, four performance season of *Il Corsaro*.

It will be the New Zealand premiere of the three-act opera—a tale of pirates and plunder, flame and blood, true love and impatient passion. Set in the time of the Ottoman Empire, it follows the adventures of Corrado, a pirate captain, as he battles the Turkish Pasha Seid and attempts to set free a harem of slaves.

NZSM postgraduate student Thomas Atkins, one of the leads in the production, says that matters are complicated further when Seid's favourite concubine, Gulnara, falls in love with the heroic pirate, who in turn has left behind his true love Medora in order to fight.

"The opera ends with a beautiful trio sung between Gulnara, Medora and Corrado—it's stunning and a wonderful example of Verdi's genius."

To be performed in late July in Wellington's Opera House, *Il Corsaro* comprises an all-student cast and the NZSM orchestra conducted by Kenneth Young. Direction is provided by Sara Brodie who also led the acclaimed NZSM Opera productions of Handel's *Semele* in 2009 and Benjamin Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in 2011—also a New Zealand premiere.

The lead roles will be double cast—Thomas will share the role of Corrado with fellow tenor Oliver Sewell. His fellow leads include sopranos Daniela-Rosa Cepeda and Elisabeth Harris (as Medora), Isabella Moore and Christina Orgias (as Gulnara) and baritones Christian Thurston and Fredi Jones (as Seid).

"Putting together a full opera season is an intense but rewarding experience," says Thomas. "It's great to be able to work with friends as we have all grown together through the School and benefited so much from the expertise of our teachers—all internationally experienced performers themselves."

For Thomas, the performance is also a swansong to his time at NZSM. He leaves the country in September to take up a scholarship in Opera Studies at the prestigious Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London, following his prize-winning performance at the IFAC Australian Singing Competition finals in 2012.

Thomas says while *Il Corsaro* is not as well-known as Verdi's *Rigoletto* or *La Traviata*, his distinctive style can be heard in this score. "I think the audience will leave humming the tunes—it's very accessible with an action-filled storyline and great music. You don't need to be a big opera buff to enjoy this production."

www.nzsm.ac.nz/events

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