

VICTORIOUS

Autumn 2014



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Vice-Chancellor

On the University
art trail

Learning through time travel



On the University art trail



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Alumni appeal results

Thanks to the generosity of Victoria's alumni in our 2013 alumni appeal, 18 second-year students will this year receive scholarships valued at \$5,000 each. The scholarships will be awarded on academic merit and financial need. Thank you for your support.

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To sign up to the email newsletter *Vic Connect*, keep in touch with university friends, meet new people and continue to participate in the stimulating intellectual and cultural life of Victoria, contact the Alumni Relations Office.

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Events

Take a look at the University's online database of varied and exciting events available to members of the university community.

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Gifting

If you are interested in supporting students and staff with a donation of funds, resources or time, we'd like to hear from you. Please contact the Executive Director, Development and the Foundation, Shelagh Murray.

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Research and innovation

Victoria's academic staff are leaders in their fields of research expertise. If you have a project that requires the skills and knowledge of our staff, contact Professor Charles Daugherty.

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From the Vice-Chancellor

Alumni and friends, it is an honour to introduce myself to you in the first issue of *Victorious* since I took up the role of Vice-Chancellor in March.

Two notable features of Victoria's culture are ambition and a commitment to excellence. It is this culture that has been central to placing Victoria amongst the global elite of capital city universities. This high standing bears witness to the great strides made by Victoria under the leadership of my predecessor, Professor Pat Walsh.

With your ongoing support, Victoria is now in a position to capitalise upon this hard-won global reputation. Together, we will develop a university that is distinguished internationally by its intellectual influence in global capitals, its creativity and the excellence of its research. Our staff will be proud of the role they play in cultivating creative, social and intellectual capital; in shaping national identity; and in fostering a better world. Our students will view their teachers as professionals committed to developing not only their knowledge but also their competencies and personal attributes. They will enjoy a high-quality learning experience with career opportunities second to none. Our postgraduates will thrive in the same vibrant, highly creative, multidisciplinary environment that attracts our talented staff. And our communities will respect Victoria because of our ability to lead thinking on the major questions confronting societal and environmental wellbeing, because of our determination to act as the critic and conscience of society and because of the positive impact we have on sustainable economic development.

To elaborate on one element of the vision, creative capital is the capacity of an individual or community to imagine new possibilities and express them through creative activity. It is the genius behind art, music and writing, the curiosity and insight that finds new solutions to complex issues and the entrepreneurship that establishes new businesses. Cultivating creative capital is what great universities do.

A second element of the vision I wish to mention is the shaping of national identity. This, of course, has been a traditional and important role for the humanities. In my view, helping to shape national identity must also be at the heart of Victoria's vision—and indeed should be a particular responsibility of a capital city university.

As alumni and friends, you can support your university in many ways.

First and foremost, by way of your own achievements, each one of you builds the standing of Victoria University. Please share these accomplishments with us.

Secondly, we value your wisdom, guidance and involvement. For instance, with your engagement we are more likely to identify national and international collaborative opportunities.

Thirdly, we value your influence. The views you express matter and help to shape opinion and debate.

Fourthly, we greatly benefit from your assistance in providing workplace experience for our students.

And lastly, when you are in a position to do so, we would greatly value your financial support. You might choose to invest in scholarships to help us address the inter-generational inequality resulting from reduced state investment in tertiary education (now barely 50 percent of the direct costs of a student's education versus 100 percent in the 1980s). You might wish to assist students in other ways such as the development of our student entrepreneurship club. Alternatively, you might choose to help our talented staff tackle a pressing research question. No matter whether you choose to invest in talented people, research questions, teaching quality, societal outreach or our facilities, we will ensure every dollar has impact on your university and the wider community.

I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible on our upcoming alumni visits and to listening to your perspectives on how we can make Victoria even more successful—and you even more proud of your alma mater.

Professor Grant Guilford
Vice-Chancellor



Devil in the detail

It can happen so easily. You're a busy nurse in a busy ICU. You're reaching for a small bottle on a refrigerator shelf full of different medications when your pager goes off. At the same time, a parent approaches you, asking for information about a sick child. Distracted, you grab the bottle you want and slip it in your pocket so you can give it to your patient when you have time.

The problem is, you've got the wrong bottle. It's the medication you need, but its dose is a thousand times stronger than necessary. Unwittingly, you administer it, and half an hour later your patient is having convulsions.

"This is not an exaggerated scenario," says Dr Brian Robinson, of Victoria's Graduate School of Nursing, Midwifery and Health. "Something like this happened to the twin babies of the Hollywood star Dennis Quaid in 2007, when they were accidentally given an overdose of the blood thinner, heparin. The children survived, but the case illustrates the danger posed by medication errors."

Dr Steven Prime, of Victoria's School of Psychology, specialises in cognitive neuroscience, and says exact figures of how many accidents like this occur each year in New Zealand are difficult to come by, since

only the most serious cases, involving death or substantial harm, are reported to the Health and Disability Commissioner.

Writing can be small and hard to read, says Brian, and many labels on medicine bottles look similar. "It's all too easy, if you are rushed or tired, to give the wrong drug, or the wrong dose of the right drug."

"There have been studies done in Canada, where I come from, however. One study found that one in five nurses reported witnessing medication errors occasionally or frequently. Another study found 36 cases of medication error in Ontario alone, with 10 deaths.

"It's pretty frightening."

As a first step in addressing this labelling problem a year-long pilot study looking at how people read medical labelling is being conducted by Brian and Steven, with the help of Carrie Bailey, a postgraduate student in the School of Psychology.

"We use standard eye-tracking equipment," says Carrie, who is studying

the issue for her Master's thesis. "We examine how and where test subjects look when they're confronted with, say, a label on a small medicine bottle. We're going to measure how naïve [non-medical] participants behave, compared with medical professionals, and whether there's a training or familiarity effect which might, in some instances, lead to medication errors.

"At this early stage we're looking at simple passive viewing, but later on we'll add factors like cognitive overload, which is when participants are distracted or asked to perform other tasks at the same time."

In future, says Brian, the study may be expanded to encompass life-like simulations in hospitals or clinics.

"The aviation industry has improved and standardised its procedures, something which has definitely increased the safety of flying. There's no reason why the pharmaceutical industry can't do the same in the area of labelling so that medication errors become largely a thing of the past.

"It's research that has a strong practical application and I am confident that we will be able to attract funding."

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The secret life of cats

What does your cat get up to when you're not looking?

Postdoctoral research fellow Dr Heidy Kikillus and Master's student Mya Gaby have been sifting through around 80 hours of footage of local Wellington domestic cats to document their behaviour and habits.

Over eight weeks in summer, 10 pet cats volunteered by their owners wore small video cameras clipped to their collars to record their activities.

Heidy says the cats spent a lot of time staring at things, especially birds, and that they ate a number of insects and lizards. Encounters with other cats were

commonly captured, whereas footage of bird or rodent slaughter was surprisingly non-existent. All the cats exhibited risky behaviours such as crossing roads, climbing on roofs, fighting with other cats, crawling under houses and eating or drinking things away from home.

Funded by Victoria University and the Wellington City Council, the study is believed to be the first of its kind in New Zealand, and the researchers hope it will lead to a larger and more comprehensive study.

Final results of the study can be found at www.ourlivingcity.co.nz



Heidy's cat Pancho Villa models one of the Cat Cams, flanked by researchers Mya Gaby (left) and Heidy Kikillus (right).



Believe it? Or not ...

Objective reasoning is challenging when people evaluate information they already hold an opinion on, a Victoria researcher has found.

Recently, Dr Matt McCrudden, an associate professor of Education, asked secondary and tertiary students to read texts about controversial topics such as same sex marriage and climate change. He found that students tended to evaluate information in a way that was biased toward their prior beliefs.

"This was particularly pronounced when they read weak arguments," says Matt. "They were far more critical of information that was inconsistent with their own beliefs."

Matt says one possible way to minimise belief-motivated reasoning in an educational setting is to ask students to evaluate the evidence and reasoning used to support both sides of an issue.

"This may prompt students to actively question their beliefs, seriously consider alternative views or update their topic knowledge. However, more research is needed to understand the conditions under which task instructions affect belief-motivated reasoning."

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Top accolade for punishment research

The 2013 Royal Society of New Zealand's Mason Durie Medal was awarded to Professor John Pratt, Victoria's Director of the Institute of Criminology. Presented late last year, this prestigious accolade recognises John's work in advancing the frontiers of social science, both on the international stage and in New Zealand.

John's research investigates why the punishment of offenders has changed over time and the reason it takes the form it does at particular times. His most recent work explains why the penal values of New Zealand and similar

English-speaking societies are so different from those of Nordic countries.

Over the years, John's work has been recognised with a range of national and international awards, fellowships and prizes, and his writing has been translated into numerous foreign languages. His 2013 book, *Contrasts in Punishment*, includes extensive fieldwork in the prisons of Norway, Finland, Sweden, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and Australia.

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Doing business with Asia

Most Asian businesses operate seven days a week. That means, says Victoria's new BNZ Chair in Business in Asia, Professor Siah Hwee Ang, that a New Zealand business operating five days a week will be two days behind within one week and 104 days behind after one year.

"If New Zealand doesn't compete on Asia's level we won't survive long term," warns Siah.

"The unfortunate reality is if we put this country up for sale China would buy it tomorrow—it's small change for them."

The Chair, based at Victoria Business School, has been established to focus on

how New Zealand businesses can succeed in the highly competitive Asian market.

Siah's role includes leading executive training, teaching, research and public outreach programmes to help forge innovative and effective engagement in Asia.

He aims to create a holistic view of conducting business in Asia, including lessons we can learn from our Asian counterparts, an analysis of international markets, as well as advice for understanding and embracing cultural differences, particularly for New Zealand firms wanting to expand globally.

"The advantage of my role is that I am able to bring together all the knowledge being generated across the country and provide a broad overview," says Siah. "I am also able to facilitate closer links between businesses and government."

He says New Zealand companies should proactively consider how best to do business with Asian countries.

"Because New Zealand is well endowed with natural resources we will be targets

for everyone who has got some mentality about the future—and the Asians think very long term. So even if we don't want to compete, competition will always come to us, like it or not."

An issue to keep an eye on is the internationalisation of the renminbi (RMB), the official currency of the People's Republic of China, says Siah. "Given that everyone relies on China it's likely everyone will have to use the currency sooner or later. Then there will be a big power struggle between the US and China, which would have serious implications for big banks and businesses here."

The BNZ Chair in Business in Asia is funded by the Bank of New Zealand, the principal sponsor; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade; the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment; and New Zealand Trade and Enterprise; through the Victoria University Foundation.

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About Professor Siah Hwee Ang

Siah was born in Singapore and is a fluent speaker of Mandarin and English. Most recently he held the position of Professor of Strategy at the University of Auckland Business School and previously taught at Cass Business School, City University, London and the National University of Singapore Business School, where he also completed a BBA(Hons) and PhD in Finance.

Small survivors

Some of the smallest organisms in the world are crucial to the survival of many species.

Dr Andrew Martin, from the School of Biological Sciences, has spent over a decade investigating microalgae and bacteria in Antarctica to understand how microbes might be affected by climate change.

These tiny organisms live in the bottom layers of sea ice, and provide the start to the food chain in the ocean, he says.

“Penguins, whales and seals make up very little of the overall organic matter in the ocean,” says Andrew. “If you took everything out of the Southern Ocean and put it on scales, 95 percent would be microbes.”

Andrew and his colleagues have set up incubation experiments that model future climate conditions, to explore how the bottom of the food chain will fare as sea ice continues to melt. Initial findings show that microbes are relatively robust to environmental change.

In one experiment, light-dependant microalgae that normally grow at minus

two degrees Celsius, were incubated in the dark at four degrees. “They were completely fine. It was only when we got to unrealistic temperatures of 10 degrees that we saw a decline in performance.”

Algae are extremely tolerant of various stressors, says Andrew, but human impact on the environment and increased amounts of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere will make these conditions more challenging.

“We know there will be less sea ice in future, and that may actually lead to more microbes in the open water. Although there’ll potentially be a larger food resource, it won’t be concentrated. In Antarctica it’s all about aggregations—if a food resource isn’t easily accessible, an ecosystem can become unbalanced.”

Andrew says that microbial tolerance to environmental stress is impressive. Exactly how that’s going to affect the future for Antarctic wildlife is a far greater mystery.

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Measuring ice thickness in early August, McMurdo Sound, Antarctica. Credit: Caroline Maclaurin

Tikanga resolves conflict

Most collaborative projects face conflict at some point and if group members lack skills to deal with differences, creativity can grind to a screeching halt.

A dissatisfying theatrical collaboration during Kathryn Harris’ undergraduate studies led the Theatre Honours student to devise a strategy that attempts to solve this problem by adapting principles of tikanga Māori, the general behavioural guidelines for daily life and interaction in Māori culture.

Under the guidance of Dr James McKinnon, Director of the Theatre Programme and Theatre lecturer Dr Nicky Hyland, Kathryn involved third-year THEA 301 students in research, incorporating a tikanga framework into their collaborative process as they devised *Mystery Play*, an original piece based on an adaptation of medieval English liturgical drama.

“Given the religious content of the raw material we felt this might be a lightning rod for conflict,” says James.

Everyday aspects of tikanga Māori were brought into the students’ process to build effective collaborative skills and relationships. This included a weekly hui (group discussion), to share perspectives and check in with one another. Students also shared kai (food) at least once a week, which helped strengthen social bonds.

“Creating a dedicated time to air any grievances or opinions meant that issues could be identified early,” says Kathryn.

“Interviews with students afterwards showed that the intervention was generally successful, but there are aspects we need to change. In hindsight, instead of giving the students a ready-made framework it would have been better to present the concept of tikanga and then let them develop their own protocol to promote greater ownership.”

James will present the research findings at the Performance Studies International Conference in Shanghai in July.



From left: Georgia Taylor and Trae Tiaki Te Roimata Tapu Ki Te Ata Te Wiki play shepherds in *Mystery Play*. Credit: David Lafferty

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People power

People should have the power to create a new constitution whenever they wish, but very few countries actually allow that to happen, according to Law lecturer Dr Joel Colón-Ríos.

“Underlying this is a fear in many societies that if people are given the power to bring about important constitutional changes outside the ordinary institutions of government, they will make bad choices.”

He says there is often a clash between constitutionalism, “which in the last instance is about telling people the things they shouldn’t do”, and democracy, “which is about telling people they can govern themselves in any way they want”.

“My research interest is looking at ways in which different constitutional systems deal with this tension.”

The traditional approach, followed by countries such as the United States, Canada and Germany, is to have a written, and supreme, constitution that

cannot be changed by mechanisms such as popular initiatives and referendums.

A handful of other countries, including New Zealand, have no supreme constitution but allow Parliament to make constitutional changes without the direct intervention of the people.

Puerto Rican-born Joel is interested in a third way, currently followed by just three Latin American countries, which he says comes closer to achieving the ideals of both constitutionalism and democracy.

Bolivia, Ecuador and Venezuela have created a process that allows for the constitution to be reformed or rewritten if there is enough popular demand.

In these countries, if a percentage of eligible voters (which ranges from 12–20 percent in the three countries) sign a petition, government is required to call a referendum on whether a special assembly should be convened to rewrite the constitution. The new constitution must then be ratified in another referendum.

“This procedure has never been used,” says Joel, “but it’s interesting to see the emergence of constitutions that allow for their own replacement, albeit through highly democratic procedures. Usually, constitutions aspire for the opposite—to be permanent.”

Joel says that because these Latin American constitutions were adopted after much controversy, “they tend to be regarded with suspicion and as temporary anomalies”, but he thinks their approach has a lot going for it.

“It provides a check on government—elected officials have to be careful because they know the people can replace the entire constitutional order at any moment.”

Joel is the author of *Weak Constitutionalism: Democratic Legitimacy and the Question of Constituent Power*, published in 2012, and is now working on his next book. Its focus is the way in which judges, government officials and citizens have used, and do use, the concept of constituent power in different legal contexts.

“A common perception is that constituent power, or people power, is the type of power that is exercised in a revolution or coup d’état but actually the concept has been present in legal discourse for several hundred years and has been used to both justify acts and limit political power.”

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Simply the best

Mathematics may be the unsung hero of the modern world, but not at Victoria.

From the “modest research environment” Professor Rod Downey found when he arrived in New Zealand 27 years ago, Victoria has developed world-class capability in mathematics.

This includes the mathematical logic group to which Rod belongs, which easily ranks among the top few in the world.

Victoria’s Mathematics programme has enjoyed more than a decade of continuous achievement, winning numerous national and international grants, prizes and invitations to lecture at prestigious events.

In the last year alone, Victoria mathematicians have received four Marsden research grants, a prestigious Rutherford Discovery Fellowship (to Dr Dillon Mayhew), the New Zealand Association of Scientists 2013 Research Medal (to Associate Professor Noam Greenberg) and, most recently, the 2014 Nerode Prize, awarded to Rod as co-author of a paper in multivariate algorithmics and complexity.

In addition, the logic and discrete mathematics group includes Professor Rob Goldblatt, the recipient of the 2012 Jones Medal for lifetime achievement in mathematics, the country’s highest mathematics award, and Professor Geoff Whittle, who is part of a team that recently solved the 40-year-old puzzle known as Rota’s Conjecture.

The success is no accident, says Dr Peter Donelan, Head of the School of Mathematics, Statistics and Operations Research.

“Our strategy has been to hire the best people, those who are outstanding mathematicians regardless of the area they work in. That has led to a really strong capability in pure maths, with a particular strength in logic.”

The group has also focused on attracting and retaining mathematicians at different stages of their career as Denis Hirschfeldt, a former postdoctoral fellow at Victoria and now a professor at the University of Chicago, explains.

“Rod Downey, Noam Greenberg and [Dr] Adam Day are each among the very

best computational theorists of their respective generations. Having three researchers of that level in the same group is an extraordinary achievement, equalled only by two or three other institutions in the world.”

The Marsden Fund has also helped, says Peter, providing a source of continuous support for Victoria’s blue-skies mathematical research since its introduction in 1994.

Despite the subject often being seen as abstract and complex, Rod says we live in the age of mathematics.

That is partly because mathematical logic underpins modern computing, providing the ability to solve problems that came to a halt early in the 20th century because, says Rod, “it would have taken a lifetime to do the next level of calculations”.

“Almost every electronic device we use fundamentally employs mathematics to make it work and almost every advance in science, from biology to physics to archaeology, intrinsically uses modern mathematics as a tool.”

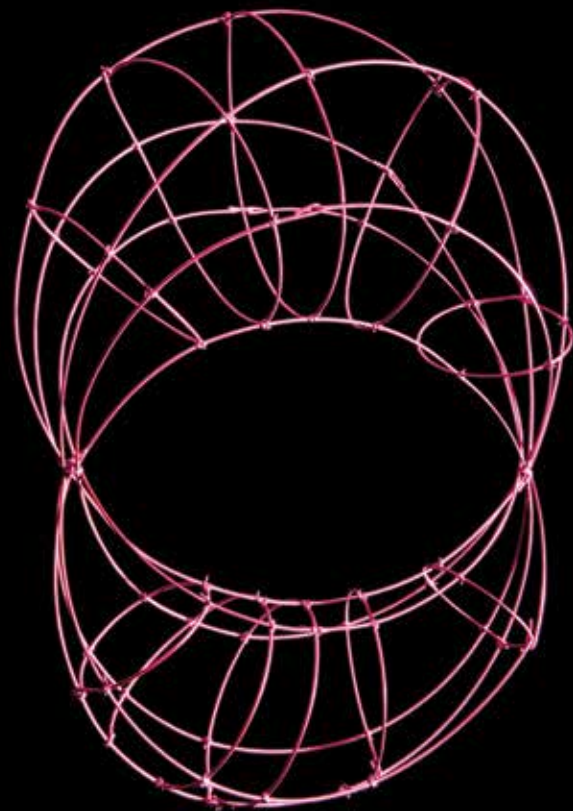
Victoria currently has mathematicians working on problems ranging from making cornflakes crispier to modelling tsunami waves.

However, says Peter, “while applications are undoubtedly important and provide rich motivation for many of us in our research, the beauty itself of the subject remains highly prized by mathematicians at Victoria”.

Rod agrees: “Who knows what is going to turn out to be useful in maths? Famously, the great English mathematician Godfrey Hardy claimed with pride that nothing he did would ever be useful. The number theory he developed is now central in the security of modern banking, his analysis important in quantum physics and his probability theory fundamental in modern genetics!”

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The many talents of mathematicians

Victoria mathematicians provide living proof of the interaction of mathematics and the arts.

Dr Dillon Mayhew, recent recipient of one of the Rutherford Discovery Fellowships awarded to emerging scientific leaders, is also an accomplished French horn player. Australian-born Rod Downey splits his time between computation and complexity theory and devises and performs Scottish country dance, as well as surfing, while Peter Donelan is co-supervising a PhD student exploring the links between mathematics and poetry.

Watch a video about Rod’s work: www.mathsreach.org/Complexity_Computation_and_a_bit_of_Fuzzy_Logic

Find out more about awards and grants received by the Maths group: <http://msor.victoria.ac.nz/Main/AcademicAwards>



Close-up on restorative justice

In the early 1970s, two probation officers in Ontario, Canada considered how best to deal with two young men who had vandalised 22 properties. They asked a judge if they could take the men to meet the victims and see what reparation could be arranged.

The idea was radical at the time and its success gave birth to the restorative justice movement, which has since spread around the world.

In New Zealand, restorative justice was initially introduced in the youth justice sphere and later in the adult jurisdiction. Use of restorative justice ‘conferencing’

is now well established in New Zealand’s criminal justice system and is increasingly employed elsewhere as well, including in schools, workplaces, the military, social work and human rights work.

This year, Victoria University established a professorial Chair in Restorative Justice to provide a focus for collaborative research and teaching on restorative justice theories, policies and practices.

The inaugural holder of the Chair, Professor Chris Marshall, says New Zealand has been a world leader in the field, especially in its use of family group conferences, but our leadership has waned because of limited investment in theoretical and empirical research and in ongoing professional development of practitioners.

Objectives for the Chair include undertaking interdisciplinary research, contributing to public policy discussions, forging national and international collaborations, offering professional development opportunities for practitioners and professionals, and providing teaching and postgraduate supervision in restorative justice theory and practice at the University.

In his first year, Chris wants to spend time meeting stakeholders and listening to practitioners. “One of the exciting things about working in New Zealand is that we’re such a small and cohesive society—it’s so much easier to communicate with people in positions

of influence, whether in the public service, the judiciary, government, community groups or non-government organisations,” he says.

Chris has an international reputation for his pioneering work in the restorative justice arena. He has published extensively on the subject, including his most recent book, *Compassionate Justice: An Interdisciplinary Dialogue*. In addition to his scholarly work, Chris has been a qualified restorative justice facilitator and trainer for more than 15 years.

“There’s nothing quite like doing the work to sustain your belief in it,” he says. “And I really do believe there’s a profound truth behind restorative approaches.”

“The international research on restorative justice is extensive. It typically shows a reduction in reoffending rates where a restorative method has been taken. But its greatest success lies in the high satisfaction rates of victims who participate in it. The healing for victims this approach can deliver is hugely significant.”

Initial funding for the Chair in Restorative Justice has come from The G Trust, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Education, Department of Corrections, New Zealand Police and the New Zealand Defence Force, through the Victoria University Foundation.

What is restorative justice?

Restorative justice:

- brings victims and offenders face to face as part of a restorative process
- focuses on redressing the harm done to victims, while holding offenders to account and engaging the community in the resolution of conflict
- provides opportunities for both victims and offenders to be involved in finding ways to hold the offender accountable for their offending and, as far as possible, repair the harm caused to the victim and community
- is achieved through a meeting, called a restorative justice conference, between the victim and the offender.

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Dealing with a difficult past

There is a consensus at government level in Germany that the Holocaust can never be forgotten but Spain has yet to reach an official, shared view on the Spanish Civil War.

So says Dr Andrea Hepworth, the first student to graduate with a PhD in Spanish from Victoria, whose doctoral research combines her German origins with her love of things Spanish.

Andrea compared memorial sites in the two European countries, both of which

were ruled by dictators in the 20th century, to understand how they have come to terms with their difficult pasts.

In Germany, that included the site of the Buchenwald concentration camp near Weimar, where around 56,000 prisoners died between 1937 and 1945, and Neuengamme, on the outskirts of Hamburg, which has the largest number of preserved concentration camp buildings in Germany.

She also studied the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe in the heart of Berlin.

“Initially it was the Allies who insisted that the atrocities of Nazi Germany not be forgotten but now the government as a whole accepts responsibility for the guilt and remembrance of the Holocaust. There is official consensus that the country can never forget.”

In Spain, Andrea considered the Valley of the Fallen and Carabanchel Prison, both near Madrid and both built by forced labour.

“The Valley of the Fallen, which contains the tomb of General Franco and is one of the most visited sites in Spain, is supposedly a monument to those who died on both sides in the Spanish Civil War but in reality it is the nationalists who are primarily honoured there.

“Little of Carabanchel remains

and there is nothing on the site to acknowledge those who built it and the thousands of political dissidents of the Franco regime who were interred there.”

Andrea says Spanish people are asking for more public recognition of the wounds inflicted during the Franco era.

“It’s complex in Spain for a number of reasons—it was a civil war so Spaniards were fighting against Spaniards.

Everything is also much more recent for Spain—Franco’s dictatorship only ended in 1975. Spain has started to publicly examine its past now, in much the same way Germany did 50 years ago.”

Acknowledging crimes committed in the past is a vital part of healing, believes Andrea, who says the research has helped her personally. “As a child growing up in Germany, I was twice taken on school trips to Neuengamme and felt a lot of guilt about what happened there and in other camps.”

Nicola Gilmour, Director of Victoria’s Spanish and Latin American Studies programme, says Andrea’s PhD is notable for several reasons: “As well as representing a full coming of age for Spanish at Victoria, the comparative work done by Andrea is very new and regarded as cutting edge.”

Latin American Studies at Victoria

- Capability in Spanish and Latin American Studies is growing steadily at Victoria—around 350 students are studying at undergraduate through to postgraduate level this year.
- The Victoria Institute for Links with Latin America facilitates collaborative research, student exchanges and political, economic and cultural relationships.

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Top talent

Professor Grant Guilford began his term as Vice-Chancellor in March. Grant holds a Bachelor of Philosophy and a Bachelor of Veterinary Science from Massey University and a PhD in Nutrition from the University of California, Davis. He worked as a veterinary practitioner before moving into teaching, research, clinical and leadership roles at universities in America and New Zealand. Grant was Head of the Institute of Veterinary, Animal and Biomedical Sciences at Massey University and then Dean of the Faculty of Sciences at The University of Auckland before coming to Victoria.

What made you apply for the role of Vice-Chancellor at Victoria?

It was clear to me that Victoria is a high-quality and ambitious university. One good example of this is the results of the recent Performance Based Research Fund [PBRF] assessment. Victoria's first place shows that the University is not only committed to academic excellence but also a university that can translate ambition into achievement.

Was being a Vice-Chancellor part of your career plan?

I've never been a great career planner but along the way I have been offered, and have taken, opportunities that led to me establishing academic credentials, looking after staff, heading units and then faculties and ultimately leading a university. It's something that has unfolded and each part has brought delightful life experiences which have contributed to the next phase.

What are some of your formative influences?

Many and varied. Being a sixth generation New Zealander has created a sense of whenua. I was raised in a tight-knit family in a small rural town—instilling in me a

feeling of connection to heartland New Zealand. Tramping and fly fishing in our wilderness areas makes me feel privileged to be a New Zealander. Twenty years as a practising veterinarian taught me the importance of compassion. You also become very outcome focused because you have to move to a result—life and death can depend on it—with imperfect information. Making decisions on what you've got and driving to a conclusion has become very much part of what I do.

What are your early impressions of Victoria?

Two things stand out—the genuine excellence in both teaching and research at Victoria and the modesty of the University with regard to its achievements. As Professor Pat Walsh commented during his departure, Victoria now knows it can achieve things of which it can be very proud. But the story of Victoria's excellence has not yet been clearly conveyed to all of our communities of interest.

What are your top priorities as Vice-Chancellor?

The first job of an incoming Vice-Chancellor is to listen and I have been doing, and will continue to do, a lot of that. My overarching goal is to ensure Victoria cements its place amongst the global elite of capital city universities.

There is an immediate need to promote understanding about Victoria's high research and teaching quality. We have work to do to define our distinctive areas of strength—one of which is the humanities, an area which fits well with a capital city university but which is under ill-informed threat all over the world.

On the research side, I am determined to build on Victoria's fantastic PBRF results. That means developing, recruiting and retaining even more people with the ability to lead their fields. Globally, the pool of elite academics is actually quite small and they are in demand at all the world's top universities so we will be looking at additional incentives to encourage top people to stay with or choose Victoria. One of those incentives is ensuring we protect the ability to undertake curiosity-led research alongside translation research. One without the other is about as sensible as a value chain without raw ingredients.

The immediate priority on the teaching and learning side is to develop more vocationally orientated taught Master's

programmes to provide opportunities for our alumni (and others) to return to Victoria at waypoints in their careers—whether to deepen their vocational knowledge or to change career direction. These programmes also assist the University to produce graduates with the right balance of global citizenship, employment readiness and future employability. Put another way, producing graduates with the appropriate mix of broad-based knowledge, specific competencies and personal attributes to thrive in the modern reality of a career spanning three, four or five employers often in widely different sectors.

We will also be increasing our investment in community engagement and partnerships. Partnering is implicit in the University's relationship with tangata whenua and is similarly important with Pasifika communities. Partnering approaches will be fundamental to our ongoing credibility with our overseas students and their sponsors. As a world class capital city university, Victoria is well placed to catalyse the triple helix of town, crown and gown that underpins innovation, entrepreneurship and sustainable economic growth.

What are your personal priorities?

I feel very strongly about caring for our environment. It's not rocket science to understand that a healthy economy requires a healthy society and a healthy society requires a healthy environment. Philosophically, I don't agree with the concept of the human race having dominion over the natural world but see it more as a matter of family, as Māori do, through principles like whakapapa and kaitiaki. We have a duty of care to other species, our fellow travellers in evolutionary time. More prosaically, our environment gives New Zealand a competitive edge in the world. We have to maintain our environmental credentials if we want to attract the top talent we need to go forward as a nation. I also think there are strong business opportunities in the green economy that we can take advantage of.

What do you drive?

Oh dear—yes—that question almost always comes up when people talk about an environmental ethos. Yes, I do drive to work but in an electric car, a Holden Volt. It goes like the clappers without even a puff of carbon. Perfect!



Work in the 'real world'

Christine Min knew nothing about magazine production when she signed up for a Victoria Bachelor of Arts internship—now her name appears in the credits for the latest issue of global fashion quarterly magazine *Lucire*.

In her third year of media studies and marketing, Christine is one of 11 students who completed a successful pilot of the new scheme, designed to match the skills of talented BA students with the needs of Wellington employers.

Christine worked for alumnus Jack Yan, a typeface designer, consultant and publisher, who launched *Lucire* in 1997.

"It was an amazing opportunity," says Christine. "I wrote a few articles, but mainly I put the magazine together, laying

out stories and photos that came in from around the world. It's not as easy as it looks!"

Christine says she learnt a lot about her strengths and weaknesses and the experience opened new career pathways. "I knew I wanted to work in the media but hadn't considered print publications—now I'm interested."

Jack regularly takes on interns and says the Victoria programme is one of the best he's seen.

"It's well structured. Christine and I met before she started work to talk about what each of us wanted to get out of it.

"A lot of interns do come back and work for us—I prefer hiring them rather than total strangers."



Christine Min with her mentor Jack Yan.

Other students worked in areas ranging from museum curation and developing online training modules to running a leadership camp for international tertiary students.

Carine Stewart, the BA internship coordinator, says feedback has been extremely positive and the programme has gone on to be offered as a full course for which students earn 20 points of academic credit as well as gaining 100 hours of work experience.

"The workplace mentors were really impressed by the students—they're like sponges, keen to absorb every bit of real-world learning they can."

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Overseas summer course a first

An action-packed summer course abroad has left 25 scholarship recipients with a new perspective on our Asian neighbours.

The students, who were selected out of more than 200 applications, spent five weeks on a study tour of Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, Laos, Singapore and Indonesia, funded by Education New Zealand.

Law and politics student Hester Steevens says the scholarship gave

her some unique experiences. "I can't imagine many people have operated the barbecue at the ambassador's residence in Bangkok or had the chance to ask the Singapore and Myanmar ASEAN ambassadors about human rights abuses, all within a space of five weeks," she says.

The course enabled students to build global connections and learn about a region critical to New Zealand. While abroad, they received briefings and interacted with staff and students from local partner universities and New Zealand diplomatic missions, non-governmental organisations and companies.

Cara Jacoby, senior coordinator of International Programmes, says it was beneficial for Victoria International to collaborate with partners and diplomatic staff in Southeast Asia. "Normally it's the other way round—we receive international students. This was a first for us in terms of making creative use of an

outbound scholarship opportunity."

The University is hopeful that funding will be awarded for a second offering of the field course in 2015.

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Understanding Southeast Asia

Understanding Southeast Asia was run for the first time last summer, and was open to all disciplines. Students spent two weeks on intensive course work at Victoria before heading to Asia. All costs associated with the study tour were funded by Education New Zealand through the Prime Minister's Scholarships for Asia, with students paying their own course fees.

For images, visit the course Facebook page: www.facebook.com/events/556335664449337



From ideas to action

A laboratory-made bone substitute, smart office dividers and a robotic toy for children with autism are some of the innovative projects students have been working on as part of a new programme at Victoria.

Students enrolled in the Master of Advanced Technology Enterprise (MATE) programme, which ran for the first time in 2013, focus on developing products or services with commercial application. Each project has its roots in research carried out at the University.

For instance, one of last year's projects, called Nacre, investigated the use of a laboratory-manufactured material as a potential replacement for bones and

teeth, and has many potential applications in human and veterinary medicine. "Our product was created from chemical building blocks similar to natural hard tissues, with veterinary dentistry being our initial target market," says Oliver Townend, who was part of the Nacre research team.

Another project began with students looking at acoustics in the classroom. "After talking to hundreds of stakeholders to gain insight into markets and user needs," says one of those behind the project, Liam Harker, "we came up with Hyv: a partitioning system that can be set up in open-plan offices and classrooms to provide privacy and quiet. We've already had some interest, with the Tertiary Education Commission wanting a trial of the prototype."

One of the most intriguing MATE projects involves refining a prototype robotic toy, named Auti, a bundle of fur with legs that will respond positively to gentle touch and sound and shuts down in response to negative behaviours such as hitting or screaming. The idea, says Paul Smith, who directs the MATE programme, is to provide children with autism with something that offers positive behavioural feedback. "The ultimate goal is to create a therapeutic

tool that can help these children behave in more socially acceptable ways. It's an interesting, challenging project—exactly the kind of thing we like our students to be pursuing."

Paul says the idea behind MATE is to build collaborations among people who wouldn't normally work together. "An example would be science and design students: generally these types don't mix, but put them in a group and you get some interesting ideas."

"What MATE is really about is teaching students to work as a team, to think creatively and to show technological and commercial initiative."

The programme already has links with government and business agencies, such as the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment and GROW Wellington.

"The idea is not to churn out large numbers of generic business entrepreneurs," he says, "but to help our students broaden their skills as technology developers and business people. If they have a bright idea about a product or service, they'll know how to develop it and who to talk to in the commercial world."

The Master of Advanced Technology Enterprise (MATE):

- ▶ is a one-year Master's by research programme, founded in 2013
- ▶ brings together small teams of up to 20 postgraduate students from diverse academic backgrounds
- ▶ helps students gain experience in developing technology-based products and services with a strong commercial application.

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Dr Judy Deuling with students Jaimee Murdoch and Nikki Carter.

Learning through time travel

In most museums, precious artefacts may be viewed only behind glass. But in Victoria University's Classics Museum students are allowed to take items out of the cabinets and view them up close.

Dr Judy Deuling, a senior lecturer in Classics, Greek and Latin, admits she used to be concerned about letting students touch items in the collection. "However, our collection is meant to be used and I have accepted that concept," she laughs.

There are more than 160 objects in the museum, ranging from fragments of pottery dating to the earliest Neolithic period to a piece of sculpture dating to 2300 BCE, from the Cycladic Islands.

The majority of items in the collection have been carefully selected to complement the areas taught in Classics at the University. As a result, Judy says, the University collection offers the broadest range of Greek, Etruscan and Roman pottery, painting, sculpture, glass and coins in the country, beginning in the prehistorical Aegean Bronze Age and extending all the way to a coin, dated 401–450 CE, minted by the emperor Theodosius II.

The museum's latest acquisition is a bronze Roman strigil, dated to the third century CE, an instrument with a curved blade that was used to scrape dirt and oil from the body before effective soaps became available.

Students become involved with the collection, through 'set' identification and writing exercises, which encourage them to examine items closely and to identify and discuss the characteristics of those pieces within the collection. Additionally, Classics art tutorials are held in the Classics Museum, both at undergraduate and at Honours levels.

As well as purpose-built glass cabinets, there are drawers of ancient coins in see-through cases that can be flipped over to view both sides of the coins. Likewise, decorative fragments of pottery and samples of papyrus that showcase Greek writing feature in the drawers, but are protected from excessive exposure to light.

"Being able to get so close to these items really brings the Classical world alive for students," says Judy.

Such a valuable resource needs appropriate protection and, recently,

earthquake-proofing measures have been undertaken. Not only have vitrines and large objects been bolted to the floor, special clips and mounts have been tailor-made for each object to ensure they are held securely in place in the display cases. Items that are frequently taken off the shelf as teaching tools have been fixed to removable trays, which are held in place with strong magnetic bases that can be gently moved in and out of the display cases.

With regular school visits, selected hours open to the public, annual visits from the Wellington Classical Association as well as being used by Classics students, the collection has no time to sit around gathering dust.

"It is wonderful to be the guardians of such a serviceable collection of material culture," says Judy.

Victoria's Classics Museum is open to the public on Fridays, subject to availability or by arrangement.

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Shaping tomorrow's leaders

A model APEC forum, international food festival and cultural performance night, and a study tour to Rotorua were highlights of a 10-day intercultural leadership programme held late last year at the University.

Victoria is a founding member and Secretariat of the Greater Mekong Sub-region Tertiary Education Consortium (GMSTEC), a network of universities in Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Thailand, China, Australia and New Zealand focusing on development activities in the region. GMSTEC funding enabled 21 undergraduate students from the GMS-based partner universities to participate

in this one-off programme.

Through seminars, workshops, field trips and social activities, students gained an awareness of global and regional leadership challenges and developed their leadership skills. Local students from the Victoria International Leadership Programme also participated in the programme, providing opportunities for intercultural exchange and networking.

"Our ultimate goal was to encourage collaboration between these students and our own, as well as engagement with challenging global issues," says Jeff Howe, Executive Director, GMSTEC.



GMSTEC Intercultural Leadership Programme students on their field study in Rotorua. Credit: Sahra Covello



Students use one of the new study pods at Kelburn Library.

Transforming the library experience

Recent changes at the Kelburn Library have transformed the Library into a very different experience from what many alumni will remember.

All needs are catered for, including Blue Zones for quiet individual study and Green Zones for group work and conversation. Interactive group study rooms are also available, featuring large screens and walls that can be written on. An attractive space for those wanting to study quietly is the Reading Room, a light and airy room that seats 500 and features a large artwork by

Lonnie Hutchinson at either end. Some floors also offer enclosed study pods with cushions, making the space ideal for collaboration.

Users can access self-service for many tasks or seek assistance from Library staff via Vic Info Ihonui, a new service point designed to answer all students' queries in one space.

Borrowing privileges for the Library's physical collections and access to selected online resources are available to alumni for an annual fee. For further details, email alumni@vuw.ac.nz

A global perspective

If someone told George Nelson at the start of last year that he'd be walking along the beaches of Bali, hearing world leaders speak and drinking a cocktail with John Key, he would have said, "Yeah right!"

However, in October last year, as one of New Zealand's four youth delegates to attend the APEC Voices of the Future and APEC CEO Summit in Indonesia, that's exactly what the Victoria Business School student found himself doing.

This once-in-a-lifetime opportunity

saw him networking with youth delegates from 19 other countries in the Asia-Pacific region and rubbing shoulders with world business leaders.

"I began the trip with a local perspective, and left with a global one," says George.

"New Zealand has a lot to offer the rest of the world, and harnessing and expanding this is an exciting challenge for our leaders of tomorrow."

<http://voicesofthefuture.org.nz/>



The New Zealand delegation. From left: David Ward, Hana Maihi, George Nelson, Cowan Finch, Jordan Grey, Emily Swan, Lester Khoo.

Redesigning Christchurch



Education Centre Perspective, showing outside horticulture and learning spaces. Credit: Will Hope and Luke Bryant

Top architecture students from Victoria University have a vision of making Christchurch's Performing Arts Precinct an epicentre of art, theatre and music.

The students have been part of Studio Christchurch, an initiative hosted last summer by Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology, which set real-world design challenges for a group of young architects from Victoria, Lincoln University, Unitec and The University of Auckland.

During an intensive four weeks, second- and third-year architecture and interior architecture students were challenged to devise creative new concepts for the planned Performing Arts Precinct.

The precinct, adjacent to Victoria Square and the Avon River, with connections to Cathedral Square, is a major part of the proposed redesign of Christchurch city.

The students, who also attended public lectures, took part in field trips and had

input from a range of specialists, critiqued Christchurch City Council's blueprints for the Arts Precinct, tested their solutions and outlined their ideas at public events, including a presentation to the council.

The winning design, by Victoria students William Hope and Luke Bryant, proposes a much larger Ngāi Tahu cultural centre than has been included in the council's current plan. The buildings would include the current modernist-style Christchurch Town Hall and a new contemporary landscape space to celebrate and experience Māori performing arts.

"Working in collaboration with student peers, having physical access and tours through some of the city's most prestigious and damaged buildings, alongside regular lectures by locals and internationals, helped to maximise the potential of our design," says Luke.

Course coordinator Mark Southcombe, a senior lecturer in the School of Architecture at Victoria, says participation

in Studio Christchurch exceeded his expectations. "It was a large and diverse project for students to tackle so early in their architectural careers.

"While students' designs were diverse and speculative, their ideas illustrated possibilities and pitfalls that were true to life and of great relevance as exemplars to Christchurch designers as the city is being reconfigured."

Each group's work was critiqued by renowned New Zealand architect Sir Miles Warren and David Shepard, current president of the New Zealand Institute of Architects.

Other projects created by the students included a new urban quarter, including courtyards and laneways; art galleries; a rehearsal space with large windows, enabling the public to watch performers practise; residential buildings; and a ramp leading to a rooftop green public space.

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Hall without walls

WGTN Hall is one of the newest Halls of Residence on the block, with one big difference—there aren't any walls.

Three years ago Student Recruitment, Admission and Orientation set up a virtual hall for Wellington-based first-year students to enable them to participate in social activities, sports and academic sessions similar to those offered by regular halls.

Hayley Everingham, a Student Recruitment, Admission and Orientation liaison officer, who is coordinating the hall programme, says what's on offer has been adjusted this year based on student feedback.

"We found our students didn't need activities organised in the evenings or weekends as most of them have plenty of local friends already, but they were seeking ways to connect with other students in between lectures," she says.

At the first event of the year students receive their own WGTN Hall t-shirt and learn a WGTN Hall chant.

"It's awesome to see a thousand students in WGTN Hall t-shirts," says Hayley.

"We hope their experience will be something they look back on fondly and that it will foster a feeling of connection with the University."



Boosting accounting in Malaysia

A new Victoria-led initiative is enabling 140 Malaysian accounting students to experience New Zealand's high-quality teaching.

As the lead university in a collaboration also involving Auckland and Canterbury Universities, Victoria is overseeing delivery of its Foundation Programme and first-year Bachelor of Commerce courses through distance learning. After completing the first part of their study course in Malaysia, the students will transfer in equal numbers to the three New Zealand universities to complete degrees in accounting.

"Teachers have said the students are amongst the best they've ever taught,

but it's also clear that the students' performance is reflecting the quality of the teaching they're receiving," says Professor Rob Rabel, Pro Vice-Chancellor (International).

The Malaysian students are based at Kolej Yayasan Saad International College, an institution established by distinguished Victoria alumnus Tan Sri Halim Saad.

The programme is funded by the Malaysian Government to address the need for chartered accountants in Malaysia.

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Making legal history

At a landmark occasion late last year, five recent Victoria University law graduates were admitted to the bar in a ceremony conducted in te reo Māori.

Caleb Bridgeman, Phoebe Monk, Tai Ahu, Marcia Murray and Quinn Rosa requested that the proceedings, before Justice Joe Williams, take place in te reo Māori.

All five made an effort to speak as much te reo Māori as possible, and

Justice Williams spoke entirely in te reo Māori. The crier also did all her announcements in Māori.

"We wanted to raise public awareness of te reo Māori as a language of the courts, and a language of the law," says Tai.

"I hope it encourages people to use it more, and that it will be a precedent for other candidates to also be admitted in te reo Māori."





Elf Eldridge demonstrates robots at his robotics club.

On the road with Elf

Elf Eldridge thinks he may have hit the jackpot with a new job that will take him on the road with robots.

Elf, who is currently completing his PhD in Physics at Victoria and was part of the University's 2013 Know Your Mind recruitment campaign, was snapped up by the School of Engineering late last year to lead its new outreach programme. His mission for the next three years is to travel around New Zealand secondary schools and excite students about engineering.

His school visits will include initiating hands-on projects, such as making and playing with robots.

"The programme will challenge stereotypes about what engineering is and where it can lead," says Elf. "My work aims to help students be well prepared if they choose to pursue engineering at university."

As part of his work, Elf helped to set up a robotics club for budding engineers in

the Wellington region late last year. The group has been meeting once a week to build robots that can do set tasks. Although mostly made up of students in their final years of secondary school, some of those taking part are as young as 11.

Elf says the group has taught him a lot about how to engage students. "It's not the victories, but the near successes that get them excited," he says. "It gives them a problem to solve and a feeling of accomplishment when they figure it out."

Above all, Elf wants to show students the sense of community and collaboration that makes Victoria's School of Engineering a great place to study. "After all," he says, "engineering is about people, not robots."

Watch Elf's Know Your Mind video at www.victoria.ac.nz/elf

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Missionary man

An ordained Anglican priest who describes himself as "punk at heart" is the supervising chaplain at Ramsay House, an Anglican chaplaincy that has been on campus since the 1960s.

Originally from Minneapolis, Mark Johnson began working at Victoria about two years ago. Before that, he spent 17 years as part of an international youth mission organisation in Minneapolis that contextualised the gospel among secular and post-Christian youth culture.

Mark was one of the founders of a ministry for anarchists and atheists that eventually grew into a church called the Salvage Yard. He spent many years doing unconventional ministry, including running a 'Jesus Kitchen' at new age festivals, fronting an evangelistic/worship punk band and feeding people on the streets. He also travelled around the

world speaking at festivals, churches, discipleship schools and conferences.

Although Mark's background isn't in the Anglican Church, he is learning what it means to be Anglican. He was ordained last November.

"I feel like our chaplaincy's role is to let people, especially students, know that they are deeply loved and infinitely valuable."

Mark says stress is a common issue among university students who come seeking help, and it often stems from anxiety, depression and loneliness.

Ramsay House's services and activities include a café, a radio station, an open mike night, a forum for international students to practise their English, social justice events and a weekly meal and prayer service.

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Ideas on tap

Sit back, relax with a drink and hear about some of Victoria Business School's latest research.

That's the concept behind Ideas on Tap, the School's latest research seminar series, which is held at a pub, with the aim of making the research more accessible to the public.

Piloted last year at one of Wellington's oldest pubs, The Thistle Inn, the seminars also encourage interactive discussion.

"The idea is that people can drop in

on their way home from work and enjoy some intellectual stimulation," says Dr Dan Laufer, an associate professor in Marketing.

Topics so far have included the psychology behind consumer reactions to product crises (such as Fonterra) and sports welfare.

To find out about upcoming Ideas on Taps seminars, visit www.victoria.ac.nz/vbs/about/events

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Dr Dan Laufer (left) and Professor John Davies were two of the speakers at Ideas on Tap last year.



Installation view of *Cinema & Painting*, Judy Millar, *Space Work 7*, 2014. Photo: Shaun Waugh

When cinema and painting collide

The Adam Art Gallery's first exhibition of the year, *Cinema & Painting*, featured in the 2014 New Zealand Festival programme.

This major exhibition offered a rethink of the connections between film and painting, highlighting an international group of pioneering filmmakers and historically significant artists, as well as a newer generation of artists.

There was also the unique opportunity to see historical gems such as Len Lye's suite of card stencils and Colin McCahon's *Fog* drawings, as well as the premiere of contemporary works.

This included a new installation by Judy Millar, whose 3D digital 'paintings' represented New Zealand at the 53rd Venice Biennale in 2011.

The next exhibition, to be held from 27 May to 21 September, will feature the work of Dunedin-based artist Kim Pieters.

For images from *Cinema & Painting*, visit www.adamartgallery.org.nz

To view time lapse footage of Judy Millar's artwork being installed, visit www.adamartgallery.org.nz/past-exhibitions/cinema-painting-video

Wellington—a living city

"City of flower-pots, canyon streets and trams, O sterile whore of a thousand bureaucrats!" was poet James K Baxter's description of Wellington in 1953.

Prime Minister John Key appeared to back Baxter's sentiments last year when he referred to Wellington as a 'dying city'. To counter these perceptions, Victoria's Stout Research Centre recently hosted a public seminar series involving some of the city's most passionate supporters.

The series featured presentations

from local and central government representatives, as well as anthropology, psychology, film, theatre and management researchers from Victoria.

Topics included what it means to be a Wellingtonian and the stereotypes associated with living in the capital city, ethnographic research with and on Wellingtonians, economic opportunities for Wellington and the University's 3D production partnership with Te Papa. www.victoria.ac.nz/news/2014/wellingtona-living-city





Who's in my room?

Who's in my room? is the first of an ongoing series where we ask a prominent alumni to return to their old room at their former Hall of Residence and share stories with the current resident.

It's been half a century since Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey Palmer QC has seen his old room at Weir House, currently occupied by first-year student, Joel Rudolph.

Sir Geoffrey, a Victoria graduate, has had a career in politics as a prime minister, deputy prime minister and a member of parliament, and as a law practitioner and professor.

Joel is studying toward a Bachelor of Arts and joined Victoria University on an Excellence Scholarship. He left home in Whanganui in February to move to Weir House, where he is the current resident of Sir Geoffrey's old room, B11.

Sir Geoffrey Palmer

How does it feel to be back at Weir House and your old room?

The place looks very familiar, but is different in many ways. First of all, it was very macho in those days—there were no female students at all and a lot of beer drinking went on. There was no carpet in the hallways or rooms either.

What's your fondest memory of B11?

I was in this room when they were building the overseas terminal. Instead of doing as much study as I should have, I used to watch the construction proceed. I had a record player too. I used to be a member of the World Record Club, which sold records cheaply, and I remember playing a whole lot of Beethoven records.

Do you keep in touch with friends you made at Weir House?

I met a lot of very interesting people in the three years I stayed at Weir House. There were some very able people who went on to make their mark in many different fields. The two people who were across the hall when I was in B11, John McCarthy and David Onley, are both lawyers—both of whom play golf with me.

Was it normal to stay for more than a year?

Yes, it was common for people to stay at least two, and sometimes three years. It was hard to get in though and you had to have a pretty good academic record.

What was the worst?

I didn't like the food very much. There was a lot of saveloys and tripe, I remember. In my second year I got a bit thin and the doctor prescribed stout to build me up.

Did you always know you wanted to be a lawyer?

My mother told me when I was seven years old that I had the gift of the gab and should become a barrister, and I never questioned that judgement for a minute.

What type of student were you?

I was a fairly hard-working student. I got involved in student journalism and eventually became the editor of *Salient*—in those days you had to sell it on campus too. I was usually engaged in some university activity or club. The Student Union was built during my years, and that was a great addition to the place.

What was the best part of living in a Hall of Residence?

We had balls in those days. My now-wife Margaret was a student in Christchurch so I'd travel down on the overnight ferry to go to her ball and she'd come up here to go to the Weir House ball.



Did you get up to any antics?

I nearly got arrested on a panty raid once. The Police got a couple of the girls to identify who did it, and fortunately I wasn't one of them. Eight students were arrested and I was the only law student among them, so I told them not to say anything. There were a lot of antics in my day.

What's the biggest difference for students nowadays?

I still teach at the University and I think the students are preoccupied with getting their degrees, because from an economic point of view life is pretty uncertain for them. For us in the 60s it was paradise. It wasn't a question of getting a job. I could have gone to several law firms to get a job. That doesn't happen now.

What's your advice to incoming students?

From a learning point of view, your university years will set you up for life as long as you take them seriously and try to get the best out of them that you can.

Joel Rudolph

What are you studying?

I'm doing a Bachelor of Arts majoring in Music and Theatre. I'm also taking a couple of English papers this year. From there, I'm not quite sure but it'll be in the musical or theatre direction.

Have you always had an interest in music and theatre?

I have actually, but I don't know where it came from. Neither of my parents have musical backgrounds. My grandmother always said it was her because she'd play opera CDs in the car and I was the only one who would listen.

Was B11 what you were expecting?

Better! A couple of my friends are in shared rooms and I just happened to be in a single room, and I have a view—it was a nice surprise. One of the schools I went to in Whanganui was in a big old building. When I walked into my room here it felt familiar, like I'm closer to home.

What do you think about staying in Sir Geoffrey's old room?

It's so interesting. I'm not very political—although I do have an uncle who is the Labour Party candidate for Te Tai Hauāuru—but I'd known of Sir Geoffrey and his tenure as prime minister. When I explained to my friends who Sir Geoffrey is, they thought it was pretty cool. The older people I told, like my parents and grandparents, said, "Oh he's a really nice guy, I liked him."

What's the best thing about Weir House so far?

The number of pianos around here. I'm a pianist and it's nice not to have to go far to play. Playing music is a great stress reliever too and I only need to go down one floor to bang out a few chords.

What do you get up to in your spare time?

I didn't plan my first trimester out very well, so I've got a heavier workload than I intended—I'm just trying to keep on top of that at the moment. Once my workload eases up, I'll be joining the theatre and film clubs.

Sir Geoffrey had his bed and desk the other way around. Will you follow suit?

I would! But all the extension cords are on the other side of the room now.



In December, one of the celebrations was Māori Graduation, Te Hui Whakapūmau, at Te Herenga Waka Marae, which hosted over 350 Māori graduands, their whānau and staff.

Graduation roundup

It's a highlight of every student's university experience—graduation!

December 2013 graduation saw a total of 1,268 qualifications awarded to 1,178 students, including 61 PhDs.

In May, 2,722 students graduated with a total of 2,509 qualifications, including 36 PhDs.

The Honorary Doctorate recipients for the December ceremony (Paul Baines) and the May ceremony (Eleanor Catton and Professor Roger Clark) are featured on the next page.



Students celebrate at May Graduation.



Siblings Joseph and Therese Boon, who have Friedrich's ataxia, a rare genetically-inherited condition that is eroding their mobility, managed to walk in the May Graduation parade.



Victoria University of Wellington Students' Association (VUWSA) President, Sonya Clark, with Wellington's Deputy Mayor, Justin Lester.



In December, Esther Tumama Cowley-Malcolm, a 60-year-old grandmother, was the first person to graduate with a PhD from Victoria's Pacific Studies programme.

Honorary Doctorate awards

Paul Baines, Eleanor Catton and Professor Roger Clark are the latest recipients of honorary degrees at Victoria University.



Paul Baines (right) with Chancellor Ian McKinnon at Graduation.
Credit: Photography by Woolf



Credit: Photography by Woolf



Credit: Photography by Woolf

Paul Baines, Doctor of Commerce

A distinguished investment banker and businessman, Paul Baines' strategic and governance talents have seen him appointed to the boards of some of New Zealand's largest public, private and not-for-profit organisations.

Paul graduated from Victoria with a Bachelor of Commerce and Administration in 1973, and a Master of Public Policy with Distinction in 1978.

After serving for many years at Credit Suisse First Boston New Zealand, including five as Chief Executive, Paul became a full-time professional director. Boards he has served on include Comalco New Zealand, EDS New Zealand, the Reserve Bank of New Zealand, Telecom Corporation of New Zealand, New Zealand Post, Fletcher Challenge and Fletcher Building, the Todd Corporation, Barnardos New Zealand, IHC Foundation and Gough Gough and Hamer.

Paul has also supported Victoria University for many years, including as the first Chair of the Project Management Committee of the Professorial Fellowship in Monetary and Financial Economics, sponsored by the Reserve Bank; as a board member of Te Kōkī New Zealand School of Music; and as a trustee of the Victoria University of Wellington Foundation.

Eleanor Catton, Doctor of Literature

As the youngest-ever recipient of the Man Booker Prize, in 2013 Eleanor Catton was catapulted to the forefront of New Zealand literature.

Eleanor received a Master of Arts in Creative Writing with Distinction in 2008 from Victoria University and a Bachelor of Arts with First Class Honours in 2009.

Prior to beginning her Master's at Victoria, her flair for writing was acknowledged when she won the 2007 *Sunday Star-Times* short-story competition.

Eleanor wrote her first novel *The Rehearsal* as her Master's thesis at Victoria's International Institute of Modern Letters, receiving Victoria's annual Adam Foundation Prize in Creative Writing for the best portfolio submitted in the Master's programme. Her novel was subsequently published, in 2008, by Victoria University Press and won numerous awards.

In 2013, as well as winning the prestigious Man Booker Prize for *The Luminaries*, Eleanor was awarded the Canadian Governor General's Literary Award for fiction and was made a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit.

Professor Roger Clark, Doctor of Laws

A pre-eminent public international law, human rights and criminal law scholar, Professor Roger Clark has displayed an exemplary commitment to teaching, international public service and research during his career.

Roger graduated from Victoria in 1964 with a Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Laws. He added a Master of Laws in 1967 and Doctor of Laws from Victoria in 1997, along with a Master of Laws and a Doctorate in Juridical Science from Columbia University in New York.

Roger has played a significant role in international human rights law—especially in helping to establish the International Criminal Court in The Hague.

Roger has taught at Rutgers University-Camden for over 40 years, where he insisted on the inclusion of a course on the international protection of human rights, an uncommon part of the law school curriculum in the United States at the time.

In the mid-1980s, he helped shape the discipline of international criminal law that is now taught at the majority of law schools across the United States and is the subject of specialty programmes worldwide.



From left: The Sagaga siblings: Toli, Karen, Karina and Vatau, and Vatau's wife Melesete Sagaga (nee Sagote).

Siblings' stroll down memory lane

The phrase 'keeping it in the family' has taken on a whole new meaning for the Sagaga siblings from Wainuiomata.

Four of six brothers and sisters in the Sagaga family studied law at Victoria University, with three of them now living and working together in the United Kingdom (UK).

The four law graduates—sisters Karen, Toli and Karina and brother Vatau—took an informal tour of Kelburn campus earlier this year, hosted by Assistant Vice-

Chancellor (Pasifika) Associate Professor Hon Luamanuvao Winnie Laban. They had fun reminiscing about their student days and seeing the changes that have taken place on campus since they were studying well over a decade ago.

The eldest sister, Karen, has been working for the New Zealand Police for the last six years, most recently as a prosecutor at the Levin Court, while Toli, Karina and Vatau have lived in the UK for more than eight years. They share a

large house in Kent and work for the Kent County Council, where the two sisters have desks in the same office.

The siblings say they often receive emails intended for one of the others, and it's not uncommon for the sisters to be mistaken for each other in court.

"Our British colleagues think it's a bit weird that we all work together, but it's been a unique experience we've all enjoyed," says Vatau.

Alumni as mentors

Just three days after Tim Coker handed in his last assignment for his Bachelor of Arts degree, he landed a full-time job. His success, he believes, is largely thanks to Victoria's Alumni as Mentors programme.

The History and Media Studies student signed up for the pilot programme last year and was partnered with Helen Anderson, who had finished her BA in Political Studies in 1999. Helen and Tim were one of 30 pairs of mentors and mentees to take part in the inaugural scheme and were matched on their shared background, interests and ambitions.

After an initial training session, it was up to each pair to decide how often to meet and what to discuss.

With the end of his studies looming, Tim's main goal was to find a job. For Helen, the programme was a chance to give back and help someone in the same position she had been in when she finished her studies 15 years ago.

"I've really enjoyed the chance to build on my coaching skills and it's been great to help with the first step of Tim's career," she says.

Helen works as a senior analyst for the Treasury and her mentee sprung to

mind when a human resources project coordinator role came to her attention. She sent Tim a link to the job listing and the rest was up to him.

While he had not previously considered the field, Tim loves the work and thinks he may have found his career path. "I got much more out of the programme than I expected, including a job," he says.

The success of the pilot has ensured the programme will continue, with this year's intake expanding to 50 pairs.

To get involved, contact alumniasmentors@vuw.ac.nz

Mothers-in-law—friend or foe?

Is the rivalry between a mother-in-law and daughter-in-law real or just a cultural stereotype?

It is this family relationship that is at the heart of Dr Christine Leunens' third novel, *A Can of Sunshine*, inspired by her PhD research.

In mid-2008, Christine received a Doctoral Scholarship to do a PhD in Creative Writing at Victoria's International Institute of Modern Letters, where she explored the mother- and daughter-in-law relationship in literature in English.

Proverbs from around the world underline a mother's generous, loving and kind nature, says Christine. However, they depict a mother-in-law with a big nose that she sticks in everyone's business, big eyes that miss nothing and a big mouth always ready to give unsolicited advice.

"A mother-in-law, logically, was once a mother—in fact, still is. So what happened for this transmutation in image to occur?"

Christine says the feelings that a mother-in-law experiences in relation to her son's partner are far more complex

than one would ever imagine—not to mention the idiosyncratic quirks of families and individuals themselves.

"For a mother-in-law, it's not easy to undergo what often feels like a demotion. She's invested years into her children and expects everything to continue in her way. Even if she doesn't, my research shows that such changes still hurt."

In *A Can of Sunshine*, published last year by RSVP Publishing, the two main characters, Edith and Nancy, are mother-in-law and daughter-in-law. "My study inspired me to defy stereotype and venture deeply into the hearts and souls of these women."

Christine's second novel, *Caging Skies*, was published by Random House in 2008, and film rights have been sold to internationally renowned film director and Victoria graduate Taika Waititi.

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Credit: Axel de Maupeou

Bringing English to the jungle

Three hours by boat from the closest town, in the heart of the jungle, has been home for Yong 'Jarod' Jik Kam for the last five years.

The 2009 Bachelor of Education (TESOL) graduate asked to be placed where he was needed most when looking for a graduate teaching position in Malaysia, and was excited at the prospect of teaching in the jungle.

"I thought if I can teach in these conditions, I can teach anywhere in the world," he says.

Jarod's school in the Malaysian town, Song, has concrete buildings with running water and electricity, and the jungle is breathtakingly beautiful, he says. "It's green as far as the eye can see. I think that this is how the world is supposed to be—peaceful, clean and green."

Even with the close proximity to the equator, the density of the jungle makes most mornings cold and misty. "You need a cardigan—it's very much like a Wellington summer."

Although the jungle is home to many

different types of plants and animals, Jarod says they don't pose any serious harm. "I've encountered crocodiles, snakes, scorpions and leeches, but they are easy to avoid."

He teaches children who have grown up in the jungle and don't speak English in their daily lives. "Some cannot speak a word of English or write a sentence after six years of schooling."

"Many of these children come from broken families, extreme poverty and have very little to look forward to. They are too young to realise that where they come from does not determine their future."

"I integrate lessons on discipline, reasoning, leadership, proactivity, critical thinking and hope into every aspect of my work here. I want to build leaders and watch them become successful and then return and build more leaders in their community."



Credit: HopSing Chieng

The Bachelor of Education (TESOL) is an undergraduate education and professional teaching qualification for teachers on government scholarships, to specialise in teaching English in Malaysia.



From West Africa to windy Wellington

Wellington may be a long way from home for Nigerian PhD student Daniel Akinyele, but it's providing the perfect location for him to research the potential of wind power.

Daniel's research explores the use of micro-grids, which are small-scale power generators such as a solar panel or wind turbine, that can be located on residential or commercial buildings. They can be connected to the main network or operated independently.

Daniel is investigating how micro-grids can provide extra power to the network during peak times and act as a back-up source of energy should the main network go down after a natural disaster.

"In a major earthquake," says Daniel, "Wellington could be left without power for days or weeks. If we had a network of micro-grids, the impact could be much less severe."

Daniel says although New Zealand is not yet making the most of its outstanding wind resource, there has been progress.

"In 1993, the Brooklyn wind turbine was the first of its kind in New Zealand and today there are 17 wind farms around the country."

Daniel says small-scale wind production is essential to the New Zealand Government reaching its target of 90 percent renewable energy production by 2025.

"The biggest challenge is making it attractive to home and business owners to install a small power generator such as a wind turbine."

As well as his focus on Wellington, Daniel is investigating how micro-grid technology could be used in less developed regions, such as his home country of Nigeria, where about 60 percent of the country does not have access to electricity.

"Development relies on energy," he says, "and those who don't have it are socially and economically handicapped."

While Wellington and Nigeria are worlds apart, Daniel says the principles behind micro-grids can be used in both places. "In sub-Saharan Africa, however, it would make more sense to use solar, hydro or biomass power because the region has large resources of these."

Daniel is part of a newly formed and rapidly expanding power and renewable energy systems research group at Victoria, led by Dr Ramesh Rayudu at Victoria's School of Engineering and Computer Science.

Daniel was selected, along with fellow group member Hatem Alzaanin, to present his research at the New Zealand Wind Energy Conference and Exhibition that took place in Wellington in April.

A good sport

Despite having “limited sporting ability”, much of the success the 2015 Cricket World Cup rests on Therese Walsh’s small shoulders.

The Victoria Accounting graduate is heading the New Zealand Cricket World Cup operation, following on from her success in a senior role for the 2011 Rugby World Cup.

Therese’s brothers and father were sport-mad but her interests were more academically inclined.

“My mother and one of my brothers had degrees from Victoria and I always knew I would follow in their footsteps. I loved maths, so accountancy was a logical choice.”

Nearly failing an auditing paper in her last year was a wake-up call and Therese knuckled down, ending up with an A in the final exam and being offered an auditing job at KPMG.



“It was a great place to work—I married and had children young and they were very flexible about giving me maternity leave and allowing me to further my interests in auditing non-profits.”

Those skills came in handy when she was asked to take over as Chief Financial Officer for the New Zealand Rugby Union, starting permanent work on the day the news broke that New Zealand had lost its chance to co-host the 2003 Rugby World Cup with Australia.

Therese is realistic about the roles she has gone on to play with both rugby and cricket. “If the All Blacks had lost the final game of the Rugby World Cup, our work would have been viewed very differently. There is a similar risk with the Cricket World Cup although people’s sentiment is not as strong and nor are their expectations.”

Therese won the inaugural Westpac/Fairfax Media Women of Influence award last year.

Passion leads to perfect mix

An eclectic range of studies has turned out to be the perfect mix for Victoria Spackman’s current career.

Having graduated with two quite different degrees—a Bachelor of Arts, majoring in Language, Film and Theatre and a Bachelor of Laws—Victoria has been able to work in various fields.

She is now the chief executive and co-owner of the Gibson Group, where she leads a group of producers, creatives and technicians who produce multimedia and interactive installations and exhibitions for visitor attractions and museums, as well as television programmes and films, both in New Zealand and overseas.

“I talk about my education as being a contrast between the creative and the analytical,” says Victoria.

Although bursting with passion for the theatre, it was not offered as a first-year subject, so Victoria studied Philosophy, Languages and Law instead.

“I kind of fell into law. I was considered a ‘clever girl’ who was told to do either medicine or law when leaving high school,

and there was no way I could do medicine.”

After practising law in Wellington and Auckland for 10 years, Victoria says she is now working hard to change her approach. “Law filters the way you look at the world—you see things through the lens of the law and that is not always a good thing in the creative industries.”

Travelling, for both business and pleasure, has reinvigorated her passion for language. She studied both German and Italian at university and still enjoys the challenge that comes with learning a new language.

After four work trips to China last year she took one month off to live in Xiamen, Wellington’s sister city, where she immersed herself in the Chinese culture and learning Mandarin.

“One of the most interesting things about learning a language is the deeper insight you gain into how people think and the way a culture operates.”





Colin McCahon, *Gate III*, 1970, acrylic on canvas, Victoria University of Wellington Collection. Photographed in situ in Rutherford House, 2014. Reproduction permission courtesy of the Colin McCahon Research and Publication Trust.

On the University art trail

Original artwork by some of New Zealand's major artists is on public display at all of Victoria's campuses.

Historically significant artists such as Colin McCahon, Frances Hodgkins, Evelyn Page and Ralph Hotere rub shoulders with modern and contemporary figures such as Robin White, Julian Dashper, Fiona Pardington and Hye Rim Lee. They are among the artists represented in the University's art collection, which now comprises more than 550 works.

The story of the collection's development originates with members of the University's staff club dipping into their own pockets to purchase a still-life painting of a vase of daffodils by then-prominent local artist, Sam Cairncross in 1947. As the painting was originally acquired for the walls of the staff common room, the painting has been given a special place in Milk and Honey, the University's staff and postgraduate café situated at one corner of the Hub on Kelburn campus.

Since those earliest days, the University has provided modest funds to develop a representative collection of recent New Zealand art. For many years the selection of works was undertaken by academics who were committed art lovers, rather than art professionals.

Two of the most adventurous acquisitions were made by such individuals. Douglas Lilburn and J.C. Beaglehole went out on a limb to buy Frances Hodgkins' *Kimmeridge Foreshore* (circa 1938) while on sabbatical in England in 1956, using their own money to secure the deal. In 1972, Tim Beaglehole, who inherited his father's passion for art, managed to secure funding through a QEII Arts Council grant to match the University's contribution to buy the largest work in the collection, Colin McCahon's *Gate III* (1970).

Christina Barton is director of the Adam Art Gallery, which manages the collection. She says these were bold purchases that showed great foresight and laid important groundwork for the evolution of the University's art collection.

Gate III now hangs in the grand foyer of Rutherford House at the heart of Pipitea campus.

"Bringing one of Colin McCahon's largest paintings to the central city campus recognises how Victoria has expanded," says Christina.

Now that the collection is managed by professional Adam Art Gallery staff, it has grown and expanded in ways that might

have surprised its original advocates. The collection now includes photography, conceptual art and moving image works, and artists have been commissioned to produce works that are responsive to the University.

For example, in 2011, Wellington-based photographer John Lake spent several months observing university life and documented the experience in a portfolio of 10 framed photographs, together with an archive of moving and still images and interviews that provide a lasting snapshot of the Victoria community at that moment.

"We are very proud of the collection, which is widely regarded as nationally significant," says Christina.

"Our role is to ensure that it keeps developing in ways that are true to the original vision of Victoria staff who believed that art can play a vital role in the university environment, and to contribute to the wider work of art historians and curators who recognise the value and importance of New Zealand art and the artists who make it."

For video clips about the collection, visit www.adamartgallery.org.nz/collection/collection-video
To view the VUW Art Collection catalogue, visit www.adamartgallery.org.nz/collection
To organise a tour of the collection, contact ann.gale@vuw.ac.nz





Leading the charge for child safety

Innovative battery technology designed at Victoria University could soon be helping to save the lives of young children all over the world.

Swallowing coin-sized, button cell lithium batteries, commonly found in electronic devices such as toys and remote controls, can result in serious harm or death if not treated within two hours. However, design lecturer Jeongbin Ok has hit upon a solution to minimise the damage.

In collaboration with one of the world's largest battery manufacturers, Jeongbin, who has qualifications in design and chemical engineering, has spent the last three years developing modifications to button batteries.

His invention involves applying a thin layer of highly concentrated food colouring to the surface of button batteries during production. The food colouring is activated by saliva.

"If a child swallows a battery it will immediately stain their mouth, so that caregivers know what has happened and can seek medical treatment immediately," says Jeongbin.

To assess the viability of his invention, Viclink, Victoria's commercialisation office, helped Jeongbin to identify a suitable partner, putting in place a joint

development and licensing agreement. Mass production is expected to begin early next year.

"For Victoria University to be involved in a project that will have global implications for the safety of children is a great opportunity. I hope that once the product is commercialised it will become an industry standard," he says.

Jeongbin is also working on new packaging technology to keep loose batteries secure and provide a safe way of disposing of used batteries.

His research has led to Victoria University being the only academic institution to partner in a national and global initiative, called The Battery Controlled, which is focused on preventing children from swallowing button batteries.

Jeongbin's research has been conducted with support from the Consumer Product Safety Commission in the United States and Consumer Affairs New Zealand.

Did you know?

- ▶ From 2011 until 2013, the National Poisons Centre received 175 calls regarding button battery-related child injuries.
- ▶ Sixty-three children were treated at Starship Children's Health emergency department from March 2009 until February 2012.
- ▶ Children under six years old are at the greatest risk of swallowing button batteries.
- ▶ When a button battery gets stuck in a child's throat, their saliva triggers an electrical current that can severely burn the oesophagus in as little as two hours.
- ▶ Symptoms may be similar to other childhood illnesses, such as coughing, drooling and discomfort.
- ▶ When X-rayed, the battery can be mistaken for a coin.
- ▶ Once burning begins, damage can continue even after the battery is removed.

Source: www.thebatterycontrolled.co.nz

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PhD student Melissa Welsh and Professor Ilan Noy.

The economics of product tracing

It's an issue that crops up regularly in the manufacturing business—a product is found to be contaminated or faulty and must be recalled. Without an effective tracking system through the supply chain, the mistake can cost a company its reputation, or worse, human lives.

A Victoria University PhD student is embarking on a three-year project in which she will analyse supply chain traceability management and its economic importance.

Melissa Welsh is being funded through a scholarship from Victoria and GS1, the global, not-for-profit organisation that develops and maintains standards for supply and demand chains.

Melissa has completed a BSc in Biology and a Master's in Applied Mathematics. "I'm really excited about winning this scholarship," she says. "I intend to begin by investigating current practices and the cost and benefits of certain management processes."

"The most obvious recent example is the Fonterra whey protein contamination scare last year, which presents a strong economic

case for establishing more rigorous supply chain management," explains Professor Ilan Noy, Chair in the Economics of Disasters at Victoria Business School, who will be supervising Melissa's PhD.

However, Ilan emphasises, it's not a case of one size fits all. "It's important to work out an appropriate level of tracking for each product. With something like an artificial heart valve, for example, you need to know where each and every item is in its life cycle but may require less control with other products.

"Cost is an issue—the more detailed your tracing, the more expensive it is to manage."

Dr Peter Stevens, CEO of GS1 New Zealand and Chair of the Victoria Business School Advisory Board comments: "There is recognition that the success of our country's brand is strongly linked to New Zealand's reputation for product integrity. Data on the costs and benefits of traceability will be invaluable."

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Technology connects cultures

For many years, Alaska Native lecturer Dr Beth Leonard has been a face on the screen to students at Victoria but this trimester they finally got to meet her in person.

As co-teacher of Māori Studies paper Science and Indigenous Knowledge, Beth, who is Deg Hit'an Athabascan and a member of the Shageluk tribe of interior Alaska, usually delivers her part of the course via videoconference.

Based at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, this year Beth received a Fulbright fellowship that has enabled her to travel to Wellington and teach alongside her Victoria colleague, Dr Ocean Mercier, for one trimester.

Students are still joining Beth and Ocean's session using videoconferencing, but this time they are on Beth's side of the world. Eleven Wellington students enrolled in the Science and Indigenous Knowledge paper are joined by Master's and PhD students who are being supervised by Beth. Some are based at the Fairbanks campus, as well as one located in California and another in Virginia.

Beth's students will join the Kelburn class for at least eight live sessions, with video and audio feeds of students in multiple locations combined into one and projected onto the Wellington classroom wall.

The students will also be able to connect across time zones and geographical divisions at other times, using innovative teaching tools such as Skype, Moodle, Google Hangouts and VoiceThread.

Beth says being able to bring students from different cultures together in the classroom is invaluable. "It's clearly having an impact because previous students have kept in touch through online forums well after assessments are over."

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Credit: Grant Maiden

Lifting the lamp on Kerry

When Kerry Donovan Brown was 11, his mother enrolled him in the Christchurch School for Young Writers, where he wrote poems about Persian cats and plotted elaborate storylines for fantasy novels.

Seventeen years on, the International Institute of Modern Letters (IIML) Master in Creative Writing graduate has his first novel, *Lamplighter*, under his belt—an otherworldly coming-of-age story steeped in folklore and superstition.

Set in the fictional small New Zealand town of Porbeagle, the story is centred around Candle, apprentice lamplighter to his grandfather, Ignis. As electric lamp posts are being introduced into the town, Ignis, gruff guardian against swamp spirits and spinner of yarns, is set to retire.

“The image of the lamplighter walking along the stopbank lighting lamps and creating stories popped into my head first, but I knew it wasn’t a modern-day concept,” says Kerry. “So Porbeagle was always going to be a village preoccupied with archaic traditions, although the novel is set in the 90s.”

The setting for the novel is inspired by Kerry’s home town of Waikuku Beach, a coastal village in North Canterbury.

“A lot of people from there who read the

book will recognise the place,” says Kerry.

The landscape may be familiar, but Porbeagle is a village where people say ‘avaunt’ to get rid of bad spirits, ‘hail’ each other in greeting and take turns as life-drawing models at town meetings.

“I have always loved worlds that are slightly off-kilter, but familiar in a lot of ways, to the point of being very domestic—such as the writing of Ursula Le Guin or the films of Hayao Miyazake,” says Kerry.

Much of *Lamplighter* draws heavily from real-life experiences, says Kerry, alongside characters and scenes that are completely fictional. It touches on Candle coming out as a young gay male and is infused with fear of his alcoholic grandfather. The book is just 160 pages long, with short, bite-size chapters.

“I quite often find myself reading before bed, and aesthetically I wanted to write a book that offered logical points for the reader to stop reading for the night.”

Kerry read folklore for inspiration while he was studying writing.

“I found the constructive criticism in the workshop environment in the Master’s course particularly nourishing,” he says. “At my book launch, it was really

important for the nine other students in my class to be there because they felt so central to my success.”

As winner of Victoria University’s 2012 Adam Foundation Prize in Creative Writing for best manuscript of the year, a prize won previously by acclaimed writers such as Eleanor Catton, Catherine Chidgey and William Brandt, Kerry’s book attracted considerable publisher interest. However, he settled on the familiar territory of Victoria University Press.

“Having my book published is a foot in the door and I feel lucky to have been picked out of so many incredible writers.

“Since the launch, it’s as if something has been surgically removed from my brain and I’m feeling really creative again.”

One of Kerry’s dreams is to take up writer’s residencies overseas, although he would like Wellington to remain his home base.

“The great thing about the IIML and about Wellington is that there’s a real sense of community among writers. That’s what I want to be part of. I don’t think I’d do very well cloistering myself—I think I’d go a bit mad.”

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The lead characters Macbeth (Jackson Coe) and Lady Macbeth (Kirsty Bruce) are both graduates of Victoria's Theatre programme. Credit: Callum Devlin

Something wicked this way came

The latest Summer Shakespeare offering of a modern-day, biker-gang rendition of *Macbeth* brought Wellingtonians flocking to the capital's Botanic Garden to witness the gritty, spine-tingling story unfold.

With characters using smartphones and sporting leathers and jeans, the darkest of Shakespeare's tragedies was given a fresh, slick treatment.

Producer and Victoria University arts graduate Sally Thorburn says the setting—the Dell in the city's Botanic Garden—was a perfect location and, thankfully, a run of fair weather meant a wet weather venue wasn't required.

"Over the years, Summer Shakespeare productions have been staged in a number of locations around the city, but the Dell really feels like our natural home," says Sally, who has just completed her third season as the Summer Shakespeare Trust's administrator and producer.

The annual shows have been taking place in Wellington for 31 years and are a highlight on the local theatrical calendar. From humble beginnings in 1983, when *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was held in the old Quad at Victoria's Kelburn campus, the productions have evolved significantly.

Sally says strong ties between the Trust and Victoria continue. "Each year, many Victoria alumni, staff and students come together to help create the show.

"Summer Shakespeare is truly a team effort and everyone just pitches in. We simply couldn't do it without their tremendous commitment and enthusiasm."

For the 2014 production, Victoria contributors included the lead actors, members of the cast and crew, the set designer and marketing manager, as well as members of the Trust committee and Victoria University staff members.

Planning will begin in July for next year's

season. In the meantime, a book about Summer Shakespeare is in the pipeline, written by David Lawrence, a well-known theatre director, who is also a long-time supporter of Summer Shakespeare productions and current co-chair of the Trust board.

Many actors in Summer Shakespeare productions have gone on to pursue successful careers in the arts, including Jackson Coe, who played the lead character Macbeth, and Kirsty Bruce, who played Lady Macbeth, both graduates of Victoria's Theatre programme.

"Summer Shakespeare has always been a brilliant training ground and a career launch pad," says Sally.

"We have an ethos of supporting new and emerging artists—this year we even had a secondary school student in the cast."

» <http://summershakespeare.wordpress.com>



Get behind tomorrow's best.

It's amazing what someone can achieve when they are given the opportunity. Making a gift or leaving a bequest to Victoria will help the next generation fulfil their potential, whether that is through research, a new scholarship or a donation to be used where it is needed most.

Gifts of any size are highly valued—to find out more, contact Shelagh Murray in confidence at shelagh.murray@vuw.ac.nz, by mail to Victoria University Foundation, PO Box 600, Wellington 6140, New Zealand or by calling 0800 842 4438.

For more information, visit www.victoria.ac.nz/alumni



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